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“With the Wu Song story as the observing window, the author examines virtually every single aspect of the relationship between orality and writing in the Chinese context … This is an endeavor unsurpassed both in breadth and in depth. … Many of her findings may have very important implications for future studies in traditional Chinese fiction and drama as well as in Chinese oral and folk literature.”

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Wu Song Fights the Tiger

The Interaction of Oral and Written Traditions in the Chinese Novel, Drama and Storytelling

Vibeke Børdahl

niaspresS
Wu Song Fights the Tiger
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After my first study on Yangzhou storytelling, The Oral Tradition of Yangzhou Storytelling (Børdahl 1996), I wanted to explore the tradition in the larger context of performed genres in China. The way oral and written cultures, oral and written languages were intertwined in Chinese popular literature had become one of my main interests. The new project had, however, a tendency to branch off ever so often into side- or subprojects that delayed, but also, I hope, enriched the study.

The first of these was the arrangement of the International Workshop on Oral Literature in Modern China, hosted by the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS), Copenhagen, 29–31 August 1996. Scholars from America, Asia and Europe met in a discussion of the orally performed arts of China, and a group of storytellers from Yangzhou participated, performing and taking part in the discussions. The workshop resulted in the anthology, The Eternal Storyteller – Oral Literature in Modern China (Børdahl ed. 1999).

From 1997–1999 I stayed for longer periods in Taiwan, USA and China to visit research institutions, libraries and colleagues. Professor Boris Riftin, Russian Academy of Science, who at that time was visiting professor in Taipei, not only introduced me to the precious collections of popular literature in the Fu Ssu-nien Library of the Academia Sinica; he was also my mentor and a never-tiring teacher. In 2000 I spent a year of research for the present project in the inspiring milieu of the Danish Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities (DIASH), Copenhagen. I feel greatly indebted to my colleagues and to Birgitte Possing, the leader of the institute. During the research stay at DIASH I completed Chinese Storytellers. Life and Art in the Yangzhou Tradition in cooperation with my friend the photographer Jette Ross (1938–2001) (Børdahl and Ross 2002). Another book was written for Nordic readers, Tiger, tiger – Wu song og tigerrn i kinesisk historiefortælling, again featuring the photos of the late Jette Ross (Børdahl 2004).

At that time the project ‘Large-scale Registration of Chinese Storytelling’ was initiated. Four masters of Yangzhou pinghua – Dai Buzhang 戴步璋, Fei Zhengliang 費正良, Gao Zaihua 高再華 and Ren Jitang 任繼堂 – had their full repertoires filmed on video in Yangzhou 2001–2003 and archived on VCD. This comprised 360 hours of storytelling, and four sets of the entire collection were donated to research libraries in Beijing, Taipei, Copenhagen and Washington D.C. The video collections contain unique source materials on Chinese storytelling. This is the first time storytellers’ repertoires are registered and provided in day-to-day performances, based solely on the storytellers’ own habits of progression and division (not shortened, rearranged or otherwise manipulated for extraneous purposes). A bilingual volume (English and Chinese) was published to serve as a guide and catalogue to these collections, Four Masters of Chinese Storytelling (Børdahl, Fei Li 費力 and Huang Ying 黃瑛 eds 2004).

In 2001 a translation from English into Chinese of my doctoral thesis, The Oral Tradition of Yangzhou Storytelling (1996), was started with support from DIASH and the Danish Research Council for the Humanities (Statens Humanistiske Forskningsråd). This could not have been undertaken without the assistance of my Chinese friends, co-translator Mi Feng 米鋒, Copenhagen,

The most time-consuming of the subprojects of the present study has, however, been the establishment of a research database. Jens-Christian Sørensen at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, first took the initiative to design a website called *Welcome to Chinese Storytelling*, www.shuoshu.org, also with photos by Jette Ross (BØRDAHL and SØRENSEN 2003, continuously updated). Soon after the publication of the website, he suggested that we should arrange my research materials into a database. This should serve as a research tool for my own work but also as a generally available tool for future research. Without Jens-Chr. Sørensen’s expertise and enthusiasm for the database, I would never have dared to embark on such an enterprise. The *Research Database on Chinese Storytelling* (BØRDAHL and SØRENSEN 2013) is described in more detail in Chapter 1, 1.7–9.

A major grant from the Norwegian Research Council in 2003–2006 allowed me not only to proceed with the development of the database, but also made possible the participation of part-time research assistants to cooperate on the project. In Oslo the competent Chinese students Feng Yining 馮一寧, Yu Jing 喻京 and Hu Juan 胡涓 helped with the transcription and translation work for this study. The translations were accomplished in collaboration with the author as indicated at the end of each translated text, selected for Part Two of this volume. Chapters 13–16 contain, however, only a part of the translations. More texts are available in the database for further research.

The financial support from the Norwegian Research Council further permitted the arrangement of two international workshops with relevance for the project. The first was organized in Yangzhou 2005 under the title ‘Lifestyle and Entertainment in Yangzhou’. About twenty scholars from all over the world took part in discussions of the local culture of Yangzhou in oral, written and pictorial/architectural art (OLIVOVÁ and BØRDAHL eds 2009). The workshop was planned in collaboration with Lucie Olímová, from Palachy University, Czech Republic, and Huang Ying, Yangzhou University, as an activity of the scholarly network, the Yangzhou Club – one of the facilities of the website www.shuoshu.org. The second workshop took place in Oslo 2007 under the title ‘The Interplay of Oral and Written Traditions in Chinese Fiction, Drama and Performance Literature’ and attracted more than thirty scholars from America, Asia, Australia and Europe (BØRDAHL and WAN eds 2010).

I am grateful to friends and colleagues who volunteered to read the early versions of the manuscript for the present book and gave encouragement and valuable suggestions. My friends Mette Thelle, Alison Wilkinson, Karin Bjørndal-Riis and Ebba Wergeland read portions of the manuscript and tried to keep my spirits up during periods when I found the project especially difficult.

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My Chinese ‘sister’, Huang Ying, from Yangzhou, has spared no effort in helping, not only with transcriptions and translations for the database, but also with the book *Four Masters*, that she co-edited. She was our indispensable local coordinator for the arrangement of the Yangzhou workshop in 2005.

During the final stage of writing the book Margaret B. Wan, Assistant Professor of Chinese Literature, Utah University, U.S.A. and author of several studies of the orality/literacy issue in Chinese novels, and Minna Skafte Jensen, Professor Emerita of classical studies, Odense University, Denmark, an eminent scholar in the field of Homeric studies, both read the entire manuscript and gave highly useful comments.

Understanding and support from the editor-in-chief of NIAS Press, Gerald Jackson, has been conducive to my work ever since we met in the early 1990s. Now – twenty years later – it is about time
to express my thanks for a unique friendship and help, not only with the present book, but also with
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diligence, in spite of having already retired from the staff of NIAS Press.

Finally my thanks go to my husband Per. Being my first reader, before I dare to give the pages to
anybody else, and my last, when I hope to see a nodding head, he has not always been patient and
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Through the years several foundations have sponsored the project, the travels, the workshops
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study possible and helped the books to see the light of day.

The publication of this volume was partially supported by grants from the Research Council of
Norway and the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange.

The results of the present study have continuously been published in international scientific
journals and anthologies. Many chapters of this book are thus partly based on previously published
articles, where further details and sources can be found. For the Introduction, cf. BørdaH 2007c;
for Chapter 5, cf. BørdaH 2003 and 2010a; for Chapter 6, cf. BørdaH (Yi Debo) 2010c; for
Chapters 7 and 8, cf. BørdaH 2007b; for Chapter 9, cf. BørdaH 2005 and 2009; for Chapter 11,

Høvik, 17 September 2012
Vibeke BørdaH
Note to the Reader

Transcription of Chinese and Chinese characters
Chinese words and expressions are transcribed into the pinyin-transcription. In the main part of the study Chinese characters are rendered in the traditional form, fanti. When quoting from original written or printed texts, the characters are rendered in the form found in each particular text.

Margin notes
Chinese expressions are found in the margin notes in English translation, pinyin-transcription and Chinese characters on their first occurrence in each chapter. See also Index.

Titles of oral repertoires
Translated titles of oral repertoires are written in small capital letters, in order to distinguish them from book titles in italic typeface, e.g. WATER Margin (oral repertoire), Water Margin (novel).

Numbering of chapter sections, examples, tables and figures
The book chapters are subdivided into sections that are numbered according to chapter and section, e.g. Chapter 7, section 5 is numbered 7.5. Examples, tables and figures are similarly numbered according to chapter and section, e.g. an example in Chapter 7, section 5 is called: Example 7.5. If there are several examples in the same section, these are called a, b, c. Example 7.5.b is therefore the second example in section 5 of Chapter 7. The same principle is used for tables and figures.

Colours in examples and tables
Colours are used in order to mark different verbal forms of two or more versions of a text. There are many kinds of difference, and the colours have different functions in each case. Please, see the explanation of colours given before each example or in the note at the end of each table.

Translated texts in Part Two
In the translated texts of Chapters 13–16 (Part Two) the reader will get an impression of the original format of each text: the size of the Chinese characters is often used to differentiate various functions of the text, and therefore this difference is kept also in the translations. Larger font corresponds to larger characters, normal font corresponds to normal characters and small font to small characters. This is of particular importance in drama, where song and dialogue are often distinguished by the size of the characters. Further, stock phrases and stage instructions of the translated texts are marked by italic typeface (this is not a feature of the Chinese originals, but it is an essential topic of this study.)
The motivation behind this study is my fascination with oral storytelling and my wish to understand better the interplay between oral and written cultures. This interest of the linguistic and narratological aspects of storytelling and its written counterparts takes in the present study as point of departure a famous tale of Chinese storytelling, ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’.

The story is old, popular, entertaining and interesting in many ways. It has survived and lived well in Chinese oral and written culture through seven hundred years to the present day, being transformed into many different genres of novel, drama, and storytelling. Because of its many transformations and its strong capacity for survival, I have chosen it for detailed exploration. The aim of the present study is limited to the interplay of the oral and the written, and many aspects that could have been analysed and discussed are therefore left without much comment. One will look in vain for elaborate analyses of the story’s anthropological, psychological and politico-historical aspects. The history of the story and some possible implications of the theme are here merely hinted at, before I shall embark on the true theme of the study in the following chapters.

The tale of the hero Wu Song and his life-and-death struggle with the man-eating tiger on Jingyang Ridge in Shandong goes back to the late Song dynasty (906–1279). In its Gilgamesh-like primordial resonance of the battle between man and nature, the story has kept audiences spellbound to the present time. The episode is among the most popular Chinese tales, told and retold, written and rewritten, in a wealth of oral, oral-related and written genres since the 13–14th centuries.

Wu Song is, however, not the only famous tiger-killer in Chinese folklore, nor is he the first. In the stories about Wu Song the narrator will now and again refer to those men of old who were famed for their bravery in fighting tigers, notably the semi-historical Bian Zhuang (Zhou dynasty, 1122–770 B.C., mentioned by Confucius (551–479 B.C.) and the Tang dynasty officer Li Cunxiao (d. 894). A few engravings in stone from the Han period (206 B.C. – A.D. 220) bear witness to the awe-inspiring fighting between man and tiger.

The story about Wu Song and the tiger has been popular in China since the Yuan period (1279–1368). The tiger tale belongs to a longer cycle of events, the Wu Song saga about one of the good fellows that became outlaws during the early 12th century. Stories about Wu Song were among the tales of storytellers already during the Song period (960–1279). The episode about how he
Wu Song Fights the Tiger

barehanded conquered the man-slaughtering tiger is documented for the first time as the title of a non-extant Yuan drama: 'Wu Song Fights the Tiger with a Broken Shoulder Pole', Zhedan'er Wu Song da hu.

In Chinese theatre, the oldest extant version of the tale is from the late 16th century, where the whole saga of Wu Song was treated in a southern drama by Shen Jing (1553–1610), entitled 'The Noble Knight-errant', Yixia ji. The episode of Wu Song's encounter with the tiger is found in the fourth act: 'Subduing the cruel beast', Chu xiong.

Figure a. Wu Song fights the big beast. The earliest picture of Wu Song and the tiger, wood cut carving in the upper part of the page of the Shuangfengtangben edition of Shuihu zhuan, 1594, Chapter 22. See Chapters 3 and 13.

Figure b. A hunter fighting a tiger. The hunter’s weapon is thrust down the animal’s throat. Han dynasty engraving on stone, preserved on paper rubbing. From Jiaxiang, Shandong.
Previously, the saga was already incorporated into a larger cycle of stories about heroic outlaws who had taken refuge in the moors of Liangshan in Shandong around 1100. Legends about the historical figure Song Jiang and his band of one hundred and eight good fellows had for several centuries circulated in oral storytelling, in various kinds of folk reading, as well as in poetry and pictorial art. But only as late as the 16th century is the tiger tale found in extant editions (late 16th century, 1594 and 1610) as a chapter of the novel Water Margin, Shuihu zhuan.

Eyewitness reports of oral performance of the tale go back to the middle of the 17th century. Storytelling flourished in particular in the Lower Yangzi area and has had its centre in the old cultural town of Yangzhou up to the present. In the professional performing arts all over China, this story was always a frequent item of the repertoire. There is also a flora of popular printed booklets containing the story, meant for either reading or performance or both.

The meeting between the hero and the tiger on the mountain is the first major episode in Wu Song’s saga inside the novel of Shuihu zhuan. The rest of his story can be summarized as a series of encounters with beautiful and/or strong women, where he likewise manages to come out of the battle as a winner, in the sense that he resists sexual temptation. Not only does he beat the ‘tiger on the mountain’, but also the ‘tiger in the heart’. The codex for the bandit-heroes implied that sexual abstinence was seen as a major virtue. Wu Song’s fighting of the tiger and his fighting of women (and his own sexual feelings) seem a latent, if not explicit, theme in the Shuihu zhuan. His cruelty and bloodthirstiness grows from one episode to the next. China’s famous erotic novel Jin Ping Mei or The Plum in the Golden Vase, Jin Ping Mei cihua (1617), retells the tiger tale to form the first chapter. The later happenings between Wu Song and his sister-in-law, the extraordinary beauty and ‘man-eater’, Pan Jinlian or Golden Lotus, famous for her tiny ‘lotus feet’, is taken over to furnish the warp of the weft for the rest of this novel. With Jin Ping Mei the parallel between the tiger and the sexually potent woman is explicit:

Figure c. Fighting a tiger. A warrior stabbing a tiger with a sword. Han dynasty engraving on stone, preserved on paper rubbing. From Xuchang, Henan.
Figure d. Wu Song fights the tiger. Illustration to Chapter 23 of the *Shuihu quan shu*, Yuyutang edition, 120 chapters (Late Ming). Facsimile reprint in *Shuihu zhuan banke tulu* 1999.
Figure e. Listening to storytelling. Vertical scroll (left) and middle section (right). Painting by Wang Su from Yangzhou (Late Qing). Here summertime storytelling takes place in a garden, but the usual setting was and is in the storyteller’s house.
This book is an instance of a beautiful woman who is embodied in a tiger and engenders a tale of the passions.

Apparently, the mountain tiger is the less formidable of these two opponents. To conquer his own heart is a battle Wu Song wins only at the cost of losing an essential part of his human empathy.

Figure f. Wu Song kills his sister-in-law and takes revenge for his elder brother. Illustration from Chapter 87 of the **Jin Ping Mei**, Chongzhen edition 1628–44.
The figure of the tiger with its strong connotations of the supernatural – equal to dragons, the superhuman – equal to kings and rulers, and the immortal – keeping up appearances even after death, might have been the occasion for a tale full of signs and wonders. One might imagine fantastic, hyperbolic and horror-inspired myths and beliefs making up the better part of Wu Song’s meeting with the big beast.

Contrary to such expectations, the tale of Wu Song and the tiger, both in novel, drama and performed narrative genres, provides little occasion for description of folk beliefs (in the sense of transcendental or magic rituals and convictions). What is related about the tiger and the tiger-killer is by and large coloured by a rationalism and psychological insight that seems divorced from what we might think of as folk religion in China and elsewhere. This extraordinary tale that surely has superhuman overtones, testifies mainly to a sceptical and mocking stance among storytellers and storytelling audiences in China, an example of detached ‘disbelief’ vis-à-vis the supreme powers of nature, whether outside or inside man – the tiger of the mountain and the tiger in the heart. The suggestive irony, dry humour or even farcical comedy with which both the majestic animal and the imposing hero are treated, seem to be essential ingredients of a Chinese Weltanschauung that has deep roots in both upper class literati spare time reading and popular entertainment of the theatre and teahouse culture.
PART ONE

Investigating ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’ in Written and Oral Sources
1

The Oral and the Written in Chinese Popular Literature – a Case Study

1.1. An episode of storytelling

This book is about Chinese oral professional storytelling, shuoshu (formerly called shuohua), and its relations with literary culture in the past and present. The theme is explored by concentrating the attention on one single episode from the storyteller's repertoire, the story about how the legendary hero Wu Song killed a tiger with his bare hands, ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’, Wu Song da hu.1

The central story of the investigation belongs to a longer series of events with semi-historical background (around 1120), written down four hundred years later as ten chapters in one of the earliest Chinese novels, Shuihu zhuan [Water margin],3 in extant printed editions since the 16th and early 17th centuries. The tiger story is also the opening story of the first chapter of China’s erotic classic, Jin Ping Mei cihua [Jin Ping Mei in verse and prose] (1617), also known as The Plum in the Golden Vase.4

The tale of Wu Song – how this tiger killer took deadly revenge over his sister-in-law and her lover, after she had murdered his elder brother, and then later became an outlaw in the band of Song Jiang and his one hundred and eight men – one of the most exiting and bloody sagas from Chinese entertainment culture, has not only been transmitted in the novel, zhanghui xiaoshuo [chapter-divided fiction], but also in drama, xiqu, and in the performed narrative arts, quyi, also called ‘telling and singing’, shuochang, through more than seven hundred years (Jiang Kun and Ni Zhongzhi 2005: 10–13). The story of Wu Song and the tiger is among the most famous and widespread, both in written, oral-related and oral sources.

Eyewitness reports of oral performance of the tale go back to the middle of the 17th century, when the ‘father of storytelling’ in China, Liu Jingting (1592–1674/75), won fame from his performance of this tale (Zhang Dai storytelling shuoshu 說書 shuohua 說話 Wu Song 武松 Wu Song Fights the Tiger Wu Song da hu 武松打虎 Water Margin Shuihu zhuan 水滸傳 Jin Ping Mei in verse and prose Jin Ping Mei cihua 金瓶梅詞話 (1617) Song Jiang 宋江 novel zhanghui xiaoshuo 章回小說 drama xiqu 戲曲 performed narrative arts quyi 曲藝 telling and singing shuochang 說唱 Liu Jingting 柳敬亭 (1592–1674)
In the professional performing arts of storytelling, story-singing, ballad-singing, drum-singing, and other genres this story is a frequent item of the repertoire. Such instances of the story can be investigated both from contemporary performances, recorded on audio- or videotape, and from oral-related written texts – transcribed, edited and published with different aims and approaches. There is also a flora of popular printed booklets containing this kind of texts, aimed for entertainment reading and/or as an aid for professional or amateur performers. Sometimes other texts, related to the investigation by genre and/or theme, are included in the discussion, such as the fourteenth-century so-called ‘plain tales’, *pinghua*, where only Wu Song’s name is mentioned, but the focal tale is lacking.
The aim of the study is to provide a detailed picture of the linguistic and narrative variation of the tiger story as found in oral and written sources from the beginning to the present.

1.2. Chinese and Western concepts of orality and literacy

China has one of the oldest and most influential scriptural cultures in the world. The Chinese writing of today, i.e. the Chinese characters, Hanzi, are units based on a system of logographic representation which is fundamentally the same kind and system of writing that we find in the earliest documentation of this scriptural form, going back to the late second millennium B.C. (BOLTZ 1994: 3–9, 52–72; COULMAS 2003: 50–59). This non-alphabetic writing has throughout the 20th century manifested its enduring continuity and adaptability, entering the data-age with bravura. Cultural-political movements since
the 1920s and 1930s to replace the Hanzi with an alphabetic writing, presumably more adequate in a modern world, are definitely abandoned since the 1990s (Chen Ping 1999: 196–197). The Chinese dialects and the historical stages of Chinese for which this writing system has served as the written representation are manifold. Through history the surrounding languages (Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese) took over the normative language of ‘classical Chinese’, wenyuan, (also called ‘literary Chinese’) and adopted the Chinese characters in various ways to their own languages, often in combination with other writing systems (Norman 1988: 74–79; Coulmas 1989: 11–113).

In contrast to the development in Europe, where Latin after the Reformation gradually lost its hegemony to a variety of written vernaculars, China maintained a common written language in spite of the spoken dialects, fangyan. Chinese as written and as spoken during various periods and in various parts of the country, and the mutual interaction between these different, but intrinsically related spheres of verbal communication, form the background of the present study (Ge Liangyan 2001: 4–5, 10–20; Brokaw 2005a: 10–14).

A study of oral tradition in a non-Western setting immediately implies a number of questions and problems that are intimately bound up with differences of language and culture east and west: one is forced to look through a double prism. The confrontation between a Chinese and a Western research tradition, both deeply indebted to and imbedded in their own linguistic and philosophical backgrounds, creates, however, new room for discussion.

The dichotomy of ‘orality’ and ‘literacy’ has since the 1970s acquired a specialized ‘scientific’ sense among Western scholars of oral theory (Thomas 1992: 6). The current ordinary meaning of ‘literacy’ used to be ‘the ability to read and write’, but as a term in oral theory it can be defined as ‘the specific characteristics of written texts and the specific function of writing in society’. Fifty years ago ‘orality’ was neither a word in current usage, nor a scientific term, but as the complementary word in the dichotomy it has the corresponding meaning of ‘the specific characteristics of oral texts (or oral performances) and the specific function of oral communication in society’ (Finnegan 1977(1992): 16–24; 1992: 6; Thomas 1992: 15–28). The ‘binary opposition’ that seems inherent in the expression of ‘orality and literacy’ was at the root of the vision about a ‘Great Divide’ between oral and written verbal art (Foley 1995: 66). The widespread rejection of this ‘divide’ among Western researchers has come about at the same time as oral traditions worldwide were given more attention in field work and were scrutinized in detail (Ge Liangyan 1995: 18).

The dichotomy does not have an essential place in Chinese studies of oral traditions, and only recently do we occasionally find an equivalent pair of concepts in Chinese in the form of foreign translation loans: ‘orality’, koutouxing [oral nature] and ‘literacy’, shumianxing [bookish nature]. The Chinese words for oral literature, kouchuan wenxue [orally transmitted literature] and written literature, antou wenxue [desk work literature] reflect a less ‘binary’ view.

Nevertheless, the dichotomy of orality and literacy is useful to emphasize the differences between oral and written usages in human communication and
verbal art. Such differences exist on many levels of analysis and from many different points of view (Finnegans 1977: 17). However, a binary rhetoric should not lead us to overlook characteristics that are common to oral and written literatures or to underestimate the complexity of the relationship between oral and written manifestations of verbal art (Bauman 1986: 7–10). Both oral and written traditions belong to language and linguistic competence, and in the attempt to define oral features *vis à vis* written, one is navigating in dangerous waters.

**While linguistic theory during the early part of the 20th century would tend to see oral language as primary and writing as secondary (Saussure [1915] 1965: 45), such a view has been vigorously debated in more recent philosophical/linguistic currents (Derrida 1967: 42–44; see also Harris 1986: 24–28). Basic epistemological questions are at stake, nothing less than human cognition in the deepest sense. Maybe this is the reason why the question of orality and literacy seems far from being outdated? The modern electronic technology has established a third category for us to consider: the media – radio, TV, internet. At the outset it is, however, by no means clear how ‘media’ should be categorized *vis à vis* the ‘oral’ and the ‘written’. Even if the ‘Great Divide’ is rejected as point of departure for the investigation, the fertility of ideas around the concepts of orality/literacy or oral/written/media are fascinating incentives for the study.**

Accepting that the apparently clear-cut ‘opposition’ between the two *words* does not correspond to a similarly clear-cut reality in verbal communication and verbal art, one still feels the need for these terms to describe features of ‘orality’ and ‘literacy’ as constitutive factors in both oral and written literature (cf. Thomas 2000: 259–260; Jensen 2011: 181).

### 1.3. The evanescence of oral literature

Historical sources on present-day individual local genres of oral professional storytelling in China go back to the late Ming (17th century). The modern genres have, however, sprung from traditions that can be traced more than a thousand years to the Tang (618–906) and Song (960–1276) periods. Storytelling is therefore a relatively ‘young’ phenomenon as a professional genre with certain conventions, existing in a society where writing and written culture has had a strong and privileged position for about three thousand years. There has been a constant diffusion of ideas, styles and formulas between the written and oral genres. This is in marked contrast to the Homeric tradition existing – so it is generally assumed – as orally performed professional entertainment in a largely pre-literate society with little use of writing during the first half of the first millennium B.C. While the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* have sprung from a ‘primary oral tradition’, the Chinese storytelling genres under study all belong to oral culture coexisting with literate culture (Crossland-Guo 2002: 7–11).

Knowledge of oral tradition and oral art is tied up with the particular medium through which these activities are observed. For studies of oral traditions
of earlier periods the main sources or media of observation are written texts that seem to reflect oral performance in a particularly close relationship, so-called oral-derived texts or oral-related texts. The Chinese term for this kind of text, shuochang wenxue [telling and singing literature], also rendered here as ‘performance literature’, does not imply anything about the direction of influences between literature and oral traditions. While the oral performance is characterized by a higher degree of flexibility, not only allowing, but inevitably causing the ‘same’ story to come out differently in every instance of repeated performance, the written text – also the oral-related written text – tends towards fixation of the language into permanent versions with a tighter and more ‘impeccable’ form, defined by the scribe or editor, rather than by the performer. In Chinese oral arts, the two activities of performing orally and committing oral stuff-material to paper seem but rarely to be undertaken by one and the same person. Even when it happens, there seems to be a fundamental difference between the two activities, each calling forth its specific framework and genre rules (Iguchi 2003: 94–112; BørdaHL 2004: 3).

The dilemma is that written representation used to be the only way to know something about the linguistic form of oral traditions, but since the oral performance was transferred to the written medium, it would by definition be a written and not an oral text any more (Thomas 1992: 111). Complementary information on performance practice might sometimes be found in accounts of oral performance situations in written literature, pictorial and sculptural art depicting performers and audiences, historical places relevant to former performance arenas, props and musical instruments – handed down or unearthed in archaeological sites. Significant as this kind of information often is, it is only rarely useful for the study of oral literature as a particular linguistic form of verbal art.

In China the rise of storytelling is sometimes dated back to the former Han dynasty (206 B.C. – A.D. 25), based on archaeologically excavated tomb figures in clay or wood that apparently are engaged in some form of entertainment,
expressed in drumming, singing, laughing. The form of these ‘telling and singing figurines’ does, however, not give sufficient explicit information about their function. It is doubtful that this kind of jocular behaviour or entertainment could be connected to the professional storytelling that arose about a millennium later.

From the Tang period (618–907) so-called ‘transformation texts’, bianwen, have been preserved, pointing to a tradition of singing and telling Buddhist legends (MAIR 1983: 1–27). The genre seems to have died out before the Song dynasty, when storytelling was gaining ground as a profession. But important elements of the bianwen became constant features of Chinese drama and storytelling.

In China, there is still an amazing number of orally transmitted genres, many of them with a documented history of several hundred years, and in some cases going back more than a thousand years. We may experience these art forms with all our senses and enjoy every aspect of gesture and mime that inevitably accompanies any such performance. The artist, depending on the genre in which he or she excels, may or may not use song and musical accompaniment, but will in any case play on the instrument of his whole body. In the present time, careful investigation of such performances is important, not only in order to expand our knowledge of the possibilities and varieties of human communication in oral performance in our own time, but also to help us understand better the oral traditions of earlier times. Just like reconstructions of the phonology of languages long lost are ultimately dependent on knowledge of the phonology of the modern languages, in the same way present-day oral arts may give us a key to unlock many secrets of the vanished oral traditions. Even if findings in contemporary oral storytelling can only be suggestive for earlier periods, they have the potential to illuminate significant questions (JENSEN 2011: 19–23).

Before the invention of the phonograph and tape-recorder, oral literature was evanescent by nature, and spoken words disappeared physically the very moment they had been uttered. Tape and video-recordings enable us to ‘freeze’ the oral performance, so that we may repeat the sound or film recording without change. It enables us to study many aspects that were earlier a matter of surmise. It is possible to compare various performances in detail and thus go deeper into the study of oral transmission and individual variety. But one should not be blind to the fact that the very ‘accurate similarity’ of every repetition of a recorded performance, the ‘textualizing’ that the recording implies, is in deep contrast to the continuous reformulation and ever changing variety that constitutes perhaps the life nerve of oral literature.

Some traditions have a long and strong history, and the oral building blocks of the tradition seem durable, being handed down by way of mouth from generation to generation. Memory, repetition and reformulation in oral settings and ways, including a wealth of memorizing techniques where verbal art is combined with other arts and handicrafts, form the conditions of their continuous existence as languages within languages. The ‘oral medium’ in its
broad sense embraces not only what is expressed through the mouth, but also what is expressed with the whole body in performance, through the accompanying music, and even through extra accessories and props such as costumes and masks, set pieces or pictures shown during performance.

The only way to preserve oral literature outside of the oral medium was until recently the preservation by transformation into written texts. But the very process of writing, including the different tools that served as writing tools in various societies through history, would invariably influence both form and content, substance and function. The modern electronic media enable us to preserve not only the sound, but also the visual part of oral tradition.

However, we must remind ourselves that even this kind of ‘truthful’ preservation is far from complete inasmuch as it involves only two of our senses, the aural and visual aspects. We may repeat what was registered by the tape recorder and camera, but from the full experience of the live performance we shall still for some time to come be lacking the smell, taste and feeling. More important, we shall never be able to make an imprint of the live performance as a living thing insofar as life is always unpredictable, but our recording will be for ever predictable as a frozen copy (Reichl 2000: 106).

1.4. Popular culture in China – oral and written

Many of the Chinese storytelling genres are transmitted in living traditions of entertainment up to our time. The traditional performance arts, comprising a wealth of genres and forms, offer a unique territory for research in oral tradition in general and storytelling in particular. In Western scholarship of ‘oral theory’ and related fields there has until recently been only a modest interest for the Chinese traditions. Evidence from Chinese oral culture is worthwhile, not only as a supplement, but also because the case of Chinese storytelling and performed arts may provide us with a new perspective on the probabilities and possibilities of oral culture globally.

In China, the themes of the long continued tales, as well as the rules for learning and performing the art, have survived through the centuries. At the turn of the 21st century storytellers of the elder generation who were educated on the basis of oral transmission, ‘transmitting by mouth and teaching from the heart’, *kou chuan xin shou*, and performed according to traditional rules, were active until recently (Børdahl, Fei Li and Huang Ying 2004). The enormous repertoires demand hundreds of hours of continuous performance, day after day, month after month.

The ‘orality’ and the improvisational aspect of the Chinese professional oral arts was questioned: was the storytellers’ art ‘genuinely oral’ or only ‘pseudo-oral’, i.e. a kind of artistic performance of written texts learned by heart? (Wivell 1975; see also Scholes and Kellogg 1966: 30). To establish a universal definition of the genuine oral performance seems problematic. Instead one might strive to acknowledge the specific conditions of every ‘oral’ tradition: the categories of methodology must fit the object and be so fine-meshed that one catches the essential characteristics of the tradition (Thomas 1992: 107; Børdahl 1996: 218–220).
While Western theories and discussions are valuable as background and methodological equipment, it is no less important to look into the way Chinese scholars treat their own heritage, and it seems particularly fruitful to inquire into the storytellers’ and other oral artists’ own understanding of their art as reflected in their professional terminology.

In Chinese literary history there is a long-standing tradition for dividing the written legacy into the ‘refined’, ya, and the ‘trivial’, su. The idea of the refined embraces ‘high literature’ appreciated by the well educated, while the trivial represents the ‘low literature’ associated with the broad population, i.e. the popular literature whether in oral tradition or in written (Idema and Haft 1997: 52–60). Both drama literature and performance literature (telling and singing literature) were considered ‘trivial literature’, su wenxue. The term, which is still in current usage, does not only tell about the lowly level assigned to the written products of the popular arts; it is probably in the first place a reflection of the low opinion about the performed arts as ‘orally performed’. The traditional low status of oral culture would also infect written texts rooted in the oral milieu.

The oral ‘telling and singing’ genres, shuochang, were thus traditionally considered low style and popular. However, within written genres, the schism was between those genres and forms that belonged to the high style, written in ‘literary Chinese’ (also called ‘classical Chinese’), wenyan, and those that traditionally belonged to the low style, written in ‘vernacular Chinese’, baihua. As in many other societies, there is a close connection between the oral genres and the low-style written genres.

In this book I am mainly concerned with the ‘trivial’ genres of both oral and written popular culture, but as we shall see, the elegant high style formats and the trivial low style formats are not necessarily separated in watertight compartments, but play an important role in the formation of verbal art as spoken and as written (McLaren 1998: 5).

1.5. The storytelling form of vernacular fiction

The Chinese novel and short story, handed down in printed editions from the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) periods, are characterized by a narrative style, referred to as the ‘storytelling form’, the ‘storyteller’s manner’, the ‘simulacrum of the oral storyteller’, the ‘storyteller’s rhetoric’, etc. This narrative style implies that the narrator’s persona is inevitably cast in the mold of a professional storyteller who apparently ‘tells’ his tales for a ‘listening’ audience: the written text incorporates a number of linguistic signals to establish a kind of pseudo-oral communication situation. This style in vernacular fiction lasted until the impact of the Western novel at the beginning of the 20th century. Not only its literary function, subtly changing through time in the hands of different authors, but also its enduring continuance as a genre constituting framework have been explored from many angles.

Chinese storytelling, shuohua, later shuoshu, has existed since the Song dynasty (960–1276) as a professional oral art, and its persistence as a living
social phenomenon into the 21st century is no less remarkable than the textual survival of the ‘eternal storyteller’ in the novel and short story. Many of the present local genres can be traced more than four hundred years in historical sources. Their roots must be sought in much older traditions for which the sources are unfortunately scarce and scattered. New genres keep growing out of the former, and their interrelationships are often most complicated.

An important aim of the present study is to scrutinize the ways a ‘story-teller’s manner’ is manifested in the early vernacular genres, in the full-grown novel, in a number of the pre-modern storytelling genres that are documented in written sources and in some of those still performed on the stage. The novel editions from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries that are studied in this book are not the first *Shuihu zhuan* editions, but they are along with the *Jin Ping Mei cihua* the first to have preserved the tiger tale. There is no reason to consider one of them *a priori* as predecessor of the others. I have endeavoured to keep detached from such an approach and instead analyse the shared passages in their linguistic and narrative relationships, without implying an immediate derivation between the editions that have haphazardly survived and been preserved to our time. The comparison of textual stability and divergence between the editions endeavors to map out the correspondences and classify them according to a number of categories of shared language. When some kinds of sharing point to more than one possibility of transmission, by written or oral methods, such potentialities seem well worth a discussion. The genre-defining characteristics of the novel are therefore analysed with a view to oral and literary background of the ‘simulacrum of storytelling’ that became such a strong and long-lived convention of Chinese fiction.

### 1.6. Oral traditions of telling and singing

In late imperial China, the status of oral literature was even lower than that of the genres written in the vernacular style. The narrated and chanted genres constituted the spiritual food of the majority of the population who were neither able to read nor write. They habitually participated in the activities of folk song, telling of folktalest, legends and myths and enjoyed the oral performances of drama, storytelling and balladry by professional and semi-professional entertainers. Among the country’s leading people, the officials and literati, the literature in vernacular written style and the popular oral culture were both considered trivial, low and folksy (McDermott 2006: 96). In spite of the general opinion, both kinds of literature did, however, find supporters and aficionados even among the educated scholars. There was always some traffic between the learned society and the folk entertainment culture (McLaren 2005: 158–163; Brokaw 2007: 499–506). The oral and written vernacular genres through the centuries deeply influenced each other.

The professional oral traditions in China were practised in a society deeply imbued with writing and literature. The interplay of oral and literary components forms a basic pattern in Chinese storytelling. This has important implications for our understanding of the linguistic, aesthetic and social functions of the oral
arts. At the same time as these arts were welcome among the illiterate and poor, who had little opportunity for literary education, they also had an important role as entertainment for the educated classes and even for the learned connoisseurs. Storytelling was never considered merely a substitute for those who could not read – it was a self-contained art of the spoken and dramatized word.

The Chinese umbrella expression for oral performance traditions and genres, ‘telling and singing’, shuochang, is a compound word belonging to the type of nouns that are based on the composition of two verbs in coordination, tell-sing or telling-singing. The meaning of this kind of words is frequently based not only on the additive sense of the two constituting parts, but a lexical meaning adds something to the sum of the components (Chao Yuen-ren 1968: 363, 372–378). In this case the concept implies not just any kind of telling and singing, but there is the added meaning of ‘performance’ in a broad sense, involving both professional artistic performance and performance as a part of daily life activity in various contexts. We should note that the expression is ambivalent and therefore highly comprehensive: it means not only ‘telling and singing’, but also ‘telling or singing’.18

Although many Chinese performance genres are characterized by combining prose narrative with recitation or singing of poetry, called the prosimetric format, or prosimetrum, we cannot translate shuochang as ‘prosimetrum’, because this would only be an equivalent of one part of the meaning of the Chinese concept, i.e. the additive understanding of ‘telling and singing’. The other meaning, ‘telling or singing’ would be suppressed. We might miss the point that only some of the Chinese oral performance genres of shuochang are

Figure 1.6. Performance of Suzhou tanci, Suzhou 2000. The two performers take turns in singing to their own accompaniment and telling. They also impersonate the characters of their story and interact in dialogue. Photo by Jette Ross.
truly prosimetric in the sense of having a balanced alternation between verse and prose, *yunsan jiaocuo*. Other genres are cast in metric verse throughout, and still other genres, such as Yangzhou storytelling, *Yangzhou pinghua*, are mainly in prose with only occasional poems inserted. Further, verse does not automatically imply singing or musical accompaniment. In some genres there is, indeed, a shifting between singing in verse (with or without musical accompaniment) and telling in prose. But in other genres, verse passages may be recited, not sung, so that the alternation between prose and verse has a different character from that of the genres with singing.

The concept of *shuochang* is broad in the sense that it includes professional, semi-professional and non-professional forms of verbal art, embracing full-fledged artistic performance traditions such as Suzhou story-singing, *Suzhou tanci*, along with ballad-singing, folksongs, nursery rhymes, jingles and ditties of all kinds. In opposition to the wide range of this term, the term *quyi* points to those genres of *shuochang* that are performed by professional artists for a public audience. In general the *quyi* genres require professional training, and many of these genres have a long history as professions of livelihood (Jiang Kun and Ni Zhongzhi 2005: 10–11).

The transformation of the Chinese society from the 1980s is reflected by fundamental changes in the areas of human communication and performance. Modern lifestyle combined with new information-technology constitutes a major threat to the age-old genres of oral entertainment in China. There is little doubt that the ongoing modernization is bringing about rapid and fundamental changes. As radio, TV, internet and IT-industry take over the performance arena, there is a growing tendency to deflate the dialectal characteristics and approach the norm of Modern Standard Chinese. There is another tendency to base the education of future performers on written materials and learning by heart from books and ‘fixed’ tape-recordings, something that stands in a sharp contrast to the oral transmission from master to disciple by way of ear and eye and the constantly changing wordings of education-in-performance (Børdahl 2013).

There is an urgent need to investigate this field while there is still time. The electronic media, however much they may threat the milieus of oral culture, also offer unique ways of preserving oral performance in stable and comprehensive formats, methods of unprecedented truthfulness *vis à vis* the living arts.

1.7. General approach and field work

The approach of the study is interdisciplinary, combining methods from linguistics, literary theory (mainly narratology) and oral theory research. In the West the ‘Homeric Question’ incited an avalanche of studies of what orality and literacy meant in the context of the epic poetry of ancient Greece. The pioneering studies of the compositional elements of the Homeric epics by Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord (with a special focus on the 20th-century Balkan
poets of the Parry-Lord collections) and the rich discipline of ‘oral theory’ that sprung from their efforts are valuable for any study of oral tradition, East or West. However, since the professional traditions of Chinese oral storytelling survived through a millennium to the present, the study of the modern living forms provides information that seems out of reach in most oral traditions elsewhere, and certainly in the case of the Iliad and Odyssey. Moreover, it is necessary to stay alert towards historical and cultural differences that have shaped our ideas of ‘orality’ and ‘literacy’. A wider spectrum of possibilities than we would perhaps be prepared to expect from a basically Western outlook and experience is what we must try to come to terms with.

While Chinese literary history and literary theory have a large number of their own dichotomies, useful for the analysis and categorization of the diachronic and synchronic literary scene (including oral literature), the orality/literacy dichotomy is an imported concept from more recent decades. After the pioneer foundation laid by Parry and Lord in the 1930s to 1960s, it was the studies of Jack Goody, Walter J. Ong and Marshall McLuhan in the 1970s and 1980s that brought this dichotomy to the fore in Western research on oral tradition. The criticism of the ‘patriarchs’ shows how difficult and multilayered the questions related to orality and literacy are. Nevertheless, treated in its cultural-specific context, the dichotomy seems still of major importance for an understanding of the structurally distinguishing features and the particular conditions of existence of the oral arts worldwide. The dichotomy itself is by no means considered a non-ambivalent pair of binary concepts. On the contrary, the exploration of the deeper meaning behind the dichotomy is the inspiring force of the study. Approaching the oral tradition of Chinese storytelling from the theoretical aspect of the dichotomy of orality and literacy, the theory of the dichotomy is at the same time investigated on the basis of the sources gathered.

The study is based on personal fieldwork on oral storytelling of the Shuihu [Water Margin] cycle in the Lower Yangtze area, as well as on the collection and analysis of other oral, oral-related, and literary texts belonging to the Water Margin theme. My earlier research in Chinese storytelling is mainly concerned with one of the major local genres of oral literature in China, Yangzhou storytelling, Yangzhou pinghua. In my previous study The Oral Tradition of Yangzhou Storytelling (first edition in English 1996, revised and augmented edition in Chinese 2006) a corpus of spoken tales (mainly audio-recordings) were treated from a synchronic and genre immanent aspect, and analysed in detail on various levels internal to the texts: the phonological, grammatical, stylistic and narrative levels. The investigation pointed to the need for further research of oral and literary interdependences.

While the present study is anchored in my research on Yangzhou storytelling, material from other genres and sources outside of this tradition are here taken into account. The analysis has both a diachronic perspective and a broadly synchronic descriptive perspective, based on performances and texts from a larger geographical area. The ‘oral texts’ (preserved on tape- and video-recordings) represent a number of the shuo chang and dramatic genres of the
vernacular literature
baihua wenxue
白話文學

20th century, while the written texts are examples from a spectrum of genres comprising both shuochang wenxue [telling and singing literature], also called 'performance literature', and literary genres from the rich growth of Chinese popular fiction, vernacular literature, baihua wenxue (including both drama, novel and other prose genres). The study is based on three kinds of primary source material:

1. Oral texts (tape- and video-recordings) representing a spectrum of spoken/recited/chanted/sung texts of storytelling and other performed arts, as well as performed drama versions.

2. Oral-related written texts (printed and handwritten) belonging to the category of trivial literature, su wenxue, comprising performance and drama texts with close relationship to the corresponding oral genres. In this group of texts there are also storytellers’ private manuscripts and note books, jiaoben, as well as stencilled play scripts for internal use among the performers.

3. Written texts (printed) from the vernacular literature, baihua wenxue, with a more indirect relationship to oral sources, comprising the Song and Yuan ‘plain tales’, pinghua, the Ming and Qing novels, zhanghui xiaoshuo, and short stories, huaben.

The central corpus of primary sources is restricted by theme, focusing on the saga of Wu Song, assigned to the first half of the 12th century, around 1100–1120. The famous episode of his life-and-death struggle with a man-eating beast on the Jingyang Ridge in Shandong province, ‘Wu Song da hu’ [Wu Song Fights the Tiger], from the SHUIHU cycle is the central case study. This story is handed down in orally performed genres, as well as in written genres mainly for reading (such as the novel) and in written genres for both reading and performance (such as drama and performance literature).

The approach is genre-transcendent, spanning oral, written and media-produced forms of literature. The collection of oral performances includes a large number of instances of the tiger tale and other portions of the Wu Song saga, personally recorded by the author 1989–2010 on audio- or video-tape. This collection is supplemented with commercially produced tapes and CDs, ca 1985–2010, and copies from radio broadcasts, ca.1960–2000. The written corpus embodies not only written genres through more than seven hundred years, such as pinghua [plain tale], 20 zhanghui xiaoshuo [chapter-divided fiction, novel] (aimed at a reading audience) and xiqu [drama] (various subgenres, aimed at both a reading audience and for performance), but also popular oral-related manuscripts and chapbooks (with a close relationship to performance), such as dagushu [drum tales], kuaishu [fast tales], pinghua or pingshu [storytelling] and qingqu [ballad-singing]. In the group of written materials, printed versions of oral performances from the 1950s to the 1990s edited for a broad national readership, called xin huaben [new storyteller books], are also included.

A unique sampling of contemporary Yangzhou storytellers’ handwritten jiaoben [scripts], formerly kept secret in the storytellers’ families, is analysed both with a view to their textual and social aspects of usage. The variations
between the performance genres of China with respect to the diffusion, form and usage of scripts should remind us that the concept of ‘orality’ in the study of oral literature must constantly be scrutinized and redefined as the interdependence between written and oral elements in a given performance genre is explored. We are studying oral performance in a society where writing has an immensely long history and strong penetration. The circumstances under which oral-related documents are created are often highly obscure, and their purpose and function may change over time (Han 1973: 182; Ge Liangyan 2001: 60).

The collection of source materials for the study is called the Wu Song Project Collection and it is available for research in the Research Database on Chinese Storytelling (Bør Dahl and Sørensen 2013) to be found on the website of Chinese Storytelling www.shuoshu.org. In the following sections this database collection is introduced and an overview of the analytical method of the study is provided. Further information about the database is found in the list of Sources, Appendix A, at the end of this book.

1.8. Contents of the Wu Song Project Collection

The project is based on a collection of texts – oral and written – all containing narratives belonging to the saga of Wu Song which is part of the larger saga of the Water Margin. The core material of the collection is the tale of ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’, Wu Song da hu, in versions from novel, drama and storytelling (also called ‘performed narrative arts’).

The earliest extant version of what was later called the Water Margin saga is found in the plain tale, pinghua, Xuanhe yishi [Legends of the Xuanhe Era], ca 1300. This version only contains a few of the stories that were assembled to form the novel. Only with the novel was the name of Water Margin established, but many of the stories circulated already earlier. For this reason one can speak of a Water Margin complex of stories or story-cycle, even before the novel had taken form (Ge Liangyan 2010: 40). In Xuanhe yishi Wu Song is mentioned among the band of outlaws of the Liangshan moors (see Chapter 2, Figure 2.5), but nothing further is told about his adventures. The text is, however, a highly interesting document in the history of Chinese storytelling and the rise of the novel, cf. Chapter 2, 2.3–2.12.

The tale about Wu Song and the tiger is extant in early editions of the novel Shuihu zhuan in both ‘simple editions’, jianben, since the late 16th century, and ‘full editions’, fanben, since 1610. Three Shuihu zhuan editions of the tiger tale are discussed in the study, but more editions are available in the database, cf. Chapters 3–5. The database also includes the version found in Jin Ping Mei cibua (1617) which is considered along with the other novel editions.

The tiger tale belongs to the repertoire of Yuan drama, Yuan zaju, but only the title survives. From the Ming period drama versions are extant since the late 16th century in the ‘plays of the marvellous’, chuanqi, and later in a number of local and national drama genres. Several drama versions are
analysed in the study, and more drama texts are available in the database, cf. Chapter 6.

The tale has been a highly favoured subject of the ‘telling and singing arts’, *shuochang yishu*, since the early 17th century, as described by eyewitness accounts of the performances of the legendary storyteller Liu Jingting. It is preserved in a number of oral related texts since the 19th century to the present, cf. Chapters 7–8.

From the latter half of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century the material includes performance versions from a number of *shuochang* genres, recorded in oral form on audio- and videotape, or purchased as cassette-tape, CD and DVD, cf. Chapters 10–11.

### 1.9. Textual analysis of the items

Each item of the Wu Song Project Collection representing a version of the tale of Wu Song and the tiger is analysed according to a number of features: a) textual unit; b) storyline; c) prose/verse; d) narrator type; e) fixed phrases; f) proper names; g) stock phrases. The database facilitates searching and listing of all the items according to these criteria and the subcategories under each feature. This textual analysis is the basis for the treatment of the various versions of the focal tale in the book chapters. The analytic criteria are defined and described in tables 1.9.a–g.

The Wu Song Project collection of the Research Database is thus created with a view to two main purposes: 1) To serve as a depository of source materials for the present study; 2) To give access to the findings of this study through the analytical framework. The database, like the present study, is constructed with a main focus on the *linguistic form* of the tale in written and oral sources, old and new. The idea is to uncover the inter-textual relations between a number of versions of the tale, both as *words of performance* (oral texts) and as *words of written texts*.

#### Table 1.9.a. Textual unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Each item of the Wu Song Collection stands in a certain relationship to the concept of ‘textual unit’. It may constitute one such unit, with a certain name, e.g., ‘round, session’, <em>hui</em>, or ‘chapter’, <em>huī</em>. In this and other cases a certain interplay between the oral and written spheres is apparent. The focal tale may form part of a larger unit or it may occupy several units. The question of textual unit reflects on the one hand the habits of oral entertainment, and on the other hand reading habits <em>vis à vis</em> written materials. The following textual units are registered so far:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Session, <em>chang</em> 場</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Day, <em>tian</em> 天</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Section, <em>duanzi</em> 段子</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Session, chapter, <em>huī</em> 回</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Scroll, <em>juan</em> 卷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Volume, <em>ben</em> 本</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collection, <em>ji</em> 集</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Act, <em>chu</em> 出</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1.9.b. Storyline

For each of the versions of the tiger tale to be analysed in this study, a storyline indicating the main episodes occurring in the specific version is provided. The system of episodes is devised in such a way that it covers all the versions of the tiger tale that constitute the core material of the study. The establishment of single episodes is therefore based on inter-textual analysis. Actions, persons and things that play a role in the various versions are noticed. The ingredients may have a major role in some versions, but only a minor role or no role in other versions. It is the mutual correspondences of the episodes/ingredients of the tale that constitute the system of episodes. The analysis strives for economy, insofar as the number of episodes is reduced to the minimum necessary to take into account the diverging storylines found in the core material.

### Table 1.9.c. Prose/verse

The alternation of prose and verse is among the pertinent features of the early vernacular fiction, a genre convention shared with the better part of the performance genres of ‘telling and singing’, *shuochang*. In some genres verse is inserted with fairly long intervals into the prose narrative, clearly distinct from the truly prosimetric genres where prose and verse play more equal roles. The proportion of prose and verse in each item is indicated as follows:

- Metric throughout
- Metric with occasional prose passages
- Prosimetric, balanced occurrence of prose/verse
- Prose with occasional verse
- Prose throughout, with no verse inserted

The mode of performance as ‘singing’ or ‘speaking’ of the various portions in metre or prose is further discussed in subentries to each chapter, cf. in particular Chapter 7.4.

### Table 1.9.d. Narrator type

The narrator types are defined according to the system of Gérard Genette (Genette 1980: 228–248. See also Bordahl 1996: 181–2, 189): undefined, extradiegetic, intradiegetic, heterodiegetic, homodiegetic, covert, overt:

- Undefined, as in some drama texts consisting exclusively of dialogue
- Extradiegetic, i.e. the narrator is on a level above the story told
- Intradiegetic, i.e. narrator is a person inside the story told
- Heterodiegetic, i.e. the narrator tells about events in which he has not participated
- Homodiegetic, i.e. the narrator tells about events in which he has participated
- Covert, i.e. the voice of the narrator is covert, usually under third-person narration
- Overt, i.e. the voice of the narrator is overt, referring to itself in the first person

Definitions can be combined, apart from the opposite pairs which exclude each other. Most narratives of the *Wu Song Collection* are told from the perspective of an ‘omniscient’ third-person narrator who stands above the tale and plays no part in it, i.e. the extradiegetic, heterodiegetic type in Genette’s system. However, in some of the texts the narrator intermittently speaks in the first person, ‘I’, *wǒ* 我, and may even point to his own name as the performer of the tale. In such cases the narrator of the text changes from covert third-person narrator to overt first-person narrator.
Table 1.9.e. Fixed phrases

Fixed phrases are stable expressions used repetitively in a given version (item) or shared between a number of versions of the focal tale. It is the frequency with which an especially stable combination of words occurs in the material that enables us to localize these expressions.

This category points to expressions, i.e. word combinations on the grammatical level of the phrase, sometimes constituting a full sentence, but only rarely longer than the sentence. Most of the fixed phrases in the core material of the tiger tale are phrases constituting parts of sentences, e.g.:

- black rock, *qing shi* 青石
- with slanting eyes and white forehead, *diaojing bai’e* 吊睛白額
- why should I care if you are eaten up by a tiger or a wolf?, *wo guan ni wei hu shi wei lang* 我管你是喂虎是喂狼

A subcategory of the fixed phrases functions as proper names for objects, such as names of good wine. Another subcategory functions as meta-narrative markers or so-called ‘stock phrases’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.9.f. Proper names</th>
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</table>

Proper names of persons and places signalize the basic plot ingredients to be expected in a certain story. Names of things also play a role and sometimes have the form of fixed phrases, e.g. the wine names of the tiger tale. The proper names are among the linguistic units that have the highest inter-textual currency, e.g.:

- Wu Song, *Wu Song* 武松
- Jingyang Ridge, *jingyanggang* 景陽崗
- Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge, *san wan bu guo gang* 三碗不過崗

Table 1.9.g. Stock phrases

Stock phrases, *taoyu* 套語, also called meta-narrative formulary phrases, are here understood as a subcategory of the fixed phrases. They are treated apart, because of their particular narrative functions, defined as words or phrases that serve as meta-narrative markers of the shifting of mode, time or focus of the tale. This part of the formulary language seems closely associated with conventions of genre. The stock phrases include:

- Verse-introductory expressions
- Formulary expressions of narrative transition and progression
- Formulary phrases of simulated dialogue with the audience

All the texts, whether written or oral, share the same language, insofar as there is a basic continuity in Chinese throughout the seven or eight hundred years when the Wu Song saga has existed. Although the Chinese language manifested in early vernacular texts is evidently not homogeneous compared to later stages, there is nevertheless a large portion of vocabulary and grammar that is shared throughout the period. Chinese is eminently suited to incorporate linguistic expressions from different periods as formulary sayings and set phrases into the language of normal speech at any given period.

The database facilitates a comparative study of a large textual corpus, not only within the categories that have been designed for this project, but also
for further research – in particular since the core material of texts are made available for searching and indexing both in Chinese and in English. In the English translations passages that are identical in several versions of the tiger tale are also rendered in identical wordings, so that it is even possible, to a certain extent, to search for special phraseology in the translated versions.

By investigating a ‘story’ (theme or subject matter) that has existed through centuries in a variety of oral and written forms, I hope to further the discussion about the dynamics of oral-written interactions in the popular literature of China.

Notes

1 Throughout the study the title of the focal story is often shortened as ‘Wu Song and tiger story’ or simply ‘tiger story’.

2 A possibly earlier illustration in the so-called Stuttgart fragment (see Chapter 3) is unfortunately corrupted, see Figure 13.1.

3 The translation by the brothers DENT-YOUNG 1997 is the basis for the excerpts rendered in this study, but with modifications as indicated in the notes.

4 For translations of Jin Ping Mei cihua used in this study, see LÉVY 1985 and ROY 1993. A discussion of Jin Ping Mei in relation to oral storytelling is found in LÉVY 2010.

5 See Sources, Appendix B.

6 For the Icelandic sagas Gisli Sigurdsson has argued for a similar situation of oral and written traditions existing side by side, cf. SIGURDSSON 2004: 332–333.

7 Some written sources stand in a particularly close relationship to oral performance traditions. Such texts are often called ‘oral-derived’ or ‘transitional texts’. These terms, however, imply a one-way derivation from oral form to written/literary form, cf. JENSEN 2011: 179–187. In Chinese culture we generally find that the influence between the oral and the written spheres is reciprocal. We shall call texts that exhibit this kind of relationship ‘oral-related texts’, leaving room for the possibility of influence in both directions. Other terms for oral-related texts are ‘oral-connected texts’, ‘performance-based texts’, cf. BENDER 2003: 3–4, 68–69.

8 In this study I make a distinction between ‘drama literature’, xiqu wenxue, and ‘performance literature’, shuochang wenxue, reserving the latter concept for the storytelling and story-singing genres. This name is simply a short form of the expression ‘performed narrative literature’. Both drama and storytelling are of course performed genres.

9 Cf. Zhongguo da baike quanshu 1983. Many of the traditions are now on the brink of extinction, but the political climate is at present in favour of supporting the traditions under the umbrella of ‘intangible cultural heritage’, see the website ‘Second list of intangible cultural heritage, issued by the State Council, 20 May 2006, www.chinaheritagenewsletter.org/007/2007-9-28.

10 Cf. FINNEGAN 1992b. The bibliography of this general guide to research in oral tradition shows that up to this point the study of Chinese oral literature had not received noticeable proportions. The journal CHINOPERL Papers (Chinese Oral and Performing Literature), Harvard, is so far the only Western scientific journal devoted to this field.

Among the pioneering Chinese works on oral traditions in China, the following have been of basic importance for this study: Chen Ruheng 1958, 1985; Lou Zikuang and Zhu Jiefan 1963; Hu Shiyings 1980; Zheng Zhenduo [1938] 1987; Tan Daxian 1988, 1993; Jiang Kun and Ni Zhongzhi 2005.

Most local traditions of storytelling have a rich reservoir of technical terms and slang expressions that are used by the insiders of the profession during discussions of their art or for the training of young aspirants. Many of these expressions are coined in ways reminiscent of nursery rhymes or jingles, enumerating various elements of oral narration. Such terminology will be highlighted, mainly as used among Yangzhou storytellers, but also expressions of general usage within the performance arts of China, see Bør Dahl 1996: 441–466, 1999; see further Yangzhou quyi zhi 1993: 245–257; Zhongguo quyi zhi, Jiangsu juan 1996: 641–649; Zhongguo xiqu quyi cidian 1985: 657–683.

In Chinese scholarship, this term seems to be coined relatively late on the background of Western narratology (Meng Zhaolian 1998: 142). The same idea is expressed by Chinese scholars using terms like ‘storybook fiction’, huaben xiaoshuo, and by giving evidence for oral origin or oral inspiration in the novels, but most often the ‘storyteller form’ is taken for granted in the novel and early short story, huaben. The question of the style of Chinese vernacular fiction and its relationship to early oral genres of performance is a topic of longstanding academic discussion. A direct link and uncomplicated transfer of texts and style between the oral storytelling and the huaben xiaoshuo is generally presumed in scholarship before the 1960s as exemplified in Cyril Birch’s introduction to his collection of Ming short stories, cf. Birch [1958] 1980 10–11. Chinese scholarship on the documentation of oral storytelling in various genres, contemporary and earlier, gained momentum through the latter half of the 20th century, and Western sinology contributed in particular by introducing the oral-formulaic theories of Lord and Parry, cf. Dudbridge 1970: 1–9, and by developing narratological aspects of the text analysis. The various English designations of a storyteller’s style in fiction point to some of the path-breaking studies of Western scholars: ‘The storyteller’s manner’ was coined by Wilt Idema in his study of the origins of vernacular fiction, cf. Idema 1974, xii, 70. ‘The simulacrum of the oral storyteller’ refers to the ideas of Patrick Hanan in his studies on the narrative context of the vernacular story, cf. Hanan 1967, 1973, 1977, 1981; for this expression, see Hanan 1977: 87. ‘The storyteller’s rhetoric’ in Shuihu zhuan [Water Margin] is studied in detail in a Ph.D. dissertation by Deborah Porter 1991, and this expression is also preferred by Anne McLaren who has written extensively on some of the earliest printed texts with close relationship to performed oral genres, cf. McLaren 1998. The topic of the early transition from oral storytelling to vernacular literature as exemplified by the case of Shuihu zhuan is most thoroughly treated in Ge Liangyan 2001.

Two studies particularly devoted to these questions are Zhao Henry 1995 and Rolston 1997. See also Lévy 1981, in particular his ideas about ‘une écriture vulgarisante’, pp. 123–131, and Rolston 1993: 120–12.4.
1. The Oral and the Written in Chinese Popular Literature

16 For a discussion of the change of name for this genre, cf. Lévy 1999.

17 As a consequence of literati interest in popular vernacular literature, commentary editions of fiction, edited by renowned men of letters, were having a good market since the late Ming, cf. Rolston 1997: 2–5, 91. Extravagant editions of novels and drama with fine illustrations were published at this time for a readership among the well-off and well educated, cf. Hegel 2005: 247–248. Chapbook editions of novels, drama and songbooks had a wide distribution during the Qing period among readers with limited literary education, cf. Brokaw 2007: 476–506.

18 While the word quyi [melodic arts] came into current usage only in the latter half of the 20th century, shuochang, combined with chantefable, cihua 詞話, into the expression shuochang cihua, is attested as a genre name for performance literature already in early Ming, cf. McLaren 1998. In its modern usage, shuochang is used alone or in expressions such as ‘tell-sing arts’, shuochang yishu 說唱藝術, ‘tell-sing literature’, shuochang wenxue 說唱文學, and ‘tell-sing literature and art’, shuochang wenyi 說唱文藝. Sometimes it serves as an umbrella term covering the same meaning as quyi, sometimes it refers in particular to literature where telling and singing are combined and alternate in the fashion of chantefable. In the latter usage it is regularly translated as ‘prosimetric’ literature or ‘prosimetrum’, cf. Mair 1997: 367. For shuochang as an umbrella term this translation is, however, inaccurate, cf. Børdahl 2003: 71.

19 Suzhou tanci is performed to the accompaniment of the pear-bellied lute, pipa 琵琶, or the three-stringed banjo, sanxian 三弦. Sometimes there is only one performer, but more often two, each with an instrument, cf. Bender 2003: 13.

20 For short introductions to works and genres mentioned in this and the following section, cf. Idema and Haft 1997.

Wu Song and Storytelling in Early Sources
2

Wu the Pilgrim in Early Stories, Plain Tale and Pictures

2.1. Storytelling of the Song period

Various written and pictorial sources from the Song period (960–1279) bear witness to Chinese storytelling, in the early period called shuohua [telling tales]. The entertainment areas of the Northern and Southern Song capitals, Bianjing (modern Kaifeng) and Lin’an (modern Hangzhou) are described in a kind of ‘guide books’ for the ‘man about town’ of that time. There are sections devoted to the storytelling genres and repertoires, the branches or ‘schools’ of storytelling, the names and nicknames of performers, as well as the kind of boots and stages where performance took place.¹ Besides this written documentation, pictorial art from Song, showing the daily life in the streets of Bianjing, incorporate the storyteller’s corner into the scenery.

Storytelling as popular art and the storyteller’s profession as a livelihood are well documented through these sources, and they are the earliest witness about this phenomenon in China. The oral performances are naturally gone for ever. As problematic testimony about the conceivable content and form of this art there are, however, some extant types of written and printed texts from the following centuries, sometimes with illustrations, that demonstrate a certain connection to the oral storyteller’s language and narrative habits. The most important of these texts are the so-called ‘plain tales’, pinghua, and chantefables or ‘verse tales’, cihua, of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Riftin (Li Fuqing) [1970] 1997; McLaren 1998; Breuer 2001). These texts are discussed below in sections 2.4–19.

Among the oral repertoires of the Song storytellers, the guide book Dongjing menghua lu [Reminiscences from the Eastern Capital (Bianjing)] (1147)² mentions the ‘telling about the tri-partition’, i.e. the tales of the Three Kingdoms, the historical period when China was divided into three states after the fall of the Han dynasty. This theme has been in living oral tradition up to the present.

¹ As problematic testimony about the conceivable content and form of this art there are, however, some extant types of written and printed texts from the following centuries, sometimes with illustrations, that demonstrate a certain connection to the oral storyteller’s language and narrative habits.

² Among the oral repertoires of the Song storytellers, the guide book Dongjing menghua lu [Reminiscences from the Eastern Capital (Bianjing)] (1147) mentions the ‘telling about the tri-partition’, i.e. the tales of the Three Kingdoms, the historical period when China was divided into three states after the fall of the Han dynasty. This theme has been in living oral tradition up to the present.
Another historical theme mentioned by title is the *History of the Five Dynasties*, i.e. the tales of the period between the Tang and the Song dynasty when five short-lived dynasties rose and fell in rapid succession (907–960). Apart from these titles, the other repertoires are only mentioned as categories, not as titles of content, namely ‘expounding history’, *jiang shi*, ‘adventure’, *xiaoshuo*, and ‘telling jokes’, *shuo hunhua*.

Partly overlapping with this list of repertoires is the concept of the so-called ‘four schools’, *sijia*, of storytelling, found in two later guidebooks about the Southern Song capital, the *Ducheng ji sheng* [*The Marvels of the Capital*] and the *Mengliang lu* [*The Millet Dream*] (ca 1300), with a number of categories, not exactly clearly distributed into ‘four schools’, but all characterized as ‘tales of old and new – flowing like water’:

- ‘adventure’, *xiaoshuo*, also called ‘silverwords’ *yinzi’er* 銀字兒
- ‘telling about crime cases’, *shuo gong’an* 說公案
- ‘telling about martial heroes’, *shuo tieqi’er* 說鐵騎兒
- ‘telling sutras’, *shuo jing* 說經
- ‘telling comic sutras’, *shuo hun jing* 說諢經
- ‘telling about meditation’, *shuo canqing* 說參請
- ‘expounding history’, *jiang shishu* 講史書

In a work that in some aspects reminds of the above mentioned guide books, *Zuiweng tan lu* [*Talks of the Old Drunkard*], compiled by a certain Luo Ye, allegedly from Song, the storytellers’ repertoires are explained and named according to a somewhat different system, although the main categories from the guide books are discernable. The system as such is not of immediate concern here, but we may note at least that the author largely follows the same order of the repertoires as that mentioned above. However, the work provides some unique information about the themes of storytelling at the period when it was compiled.

### 2.2. Wu the Pilgrim in tales of staff-fighting

In his introduction Luo Ye adds titles of stories or names of their main protagonists in a number of stories that he refers to as examples of the different types of repertoire. Four stories, distributed into different categories, refer to characters that in later sources belong to the Water Margin story complex (cf. Ge Liangyan 2001: 17; Zheng Gongdun 1983: 95–98). In the list of ‘crime case’, *gong’an*, the story of ‘Sun Li the Stoney Man’, *Shitou Sun Li*, is mentioned. ‘Martial heroes’ are here divided into several subgroups according to the kind of weapon that the heroes use for fighting and duelling. The first of these groups is ‘broadsword’, *podao*, where ‘Blue-faced Beast’, the nickname of Yang Zhi, Qingmian shou Yang Zhi, occurs. In the following category of ‘staff’, *ganbang*, are listed another two examples of stories, represented by nicknames known from the Water Margin cycle, namely *The Tattooed Monk*, Hua heshang, and Wu the Pilgrim, Wu xingzhe. Later in the list of stories about ‘staffs’ another story turns up, called ‘The Road-blocking Tiger’, *Lanlu hu* (translated in Ma and...
Lau [1986] 2002: 85–96). This story, too, as known from later collections of short stories, huaben, is closely bound up with the theme of fighting with cudgel and staff.

The appearance of 'Wu the Pilgrim' in Zuiweng tan lu as a subject for storytelling, alongside with three other nicknamed bandit heroes, bears evidence about the currency of such tales already during the Song period. Their distribution into different categories might indicate that these stories were not seen as a continuum, but perhaps belonged to separate cycles of stories, or were just individual tales.

The fact that Wu the Pilgrim and the other characters are mentioned by their nicknames shows that there are fixed epithets attached to these persons from the very beginning. In the novel, Shuihu zhuang, as handed down since the 16th century, this attribute of Wu Song is not attached to his person from beginning to end, but points to a specific, rather late, episode in the ten-chapter

Figure 2.1. The storyteller’s corner. Detail from the painting ‘Spring Festival along the River’ by Zhang Zeduan (created ca 1111–1125).
saga about how he became an outlaw (Chapters 23–32 in the Rongyutang edition, cf. Chapter 3, 3.2). It occurs for the first time at the end of Chapter 31, when Wu Song is dressed up and disguised as a monk in the tavern of Zhang Qing and his wife Second Sister Sun. Whether this epithet originally had the same connotations as in the novel, or Wu Song – in the early popular legend – was a staff-fighting monk from the beginning, is open to speculation. In any case, the listing of Wu Song’s story together with that of The Tattooed Monk (nickname of Lu Zhishen in the novel) is perhaps not quite incidental, since Wu Song and Lu Zhishen are in later sources described as a close pair of brothers-in-arms. This is confirmed both in picture eulogies from the Song period, in the earliest prose fragment of the Water Margin theme surviving in a plain tale on the threshold to the 14th century, in the tradition of pictorial presentation since the mid-fifteenth century, and finally in the novel since the 16th century. These two characters of storytelling whose sagas may in the beginning have been told as individual tales, are thus linked from the earliest stage, and both are found in the category of ‘cudgels and staffs’.

In the tale about Wu Song and the tiger as exemplified later in novel, drama and many different genres of storytelling, the staff of the hero is usually a prominent ingredient, but not always. As for the close bond to Lu Zhishen, this seems to be less apparent in genres outside of the novel. And even in the novel it is perhaps not an extremely important part of Wu Song’s life story. While Wu Song in the Ming novel Shuihu zhuan enters brotherhood with Song Jiang before his own ten-chapter saga starts – before the tiger story – his brotherhood with Lu Zhishen is only related at the very end of the Wu Song cycle. Both of these incidences of brotherhood appear to have no integrated function in the Wu Song saga proper, but belong to a superior plan of integration between various individual story cycles as it took shape in the complex of the Ming novel (see also Ge Liangyan 2001: 36–40).

2.3. Wu Song in stories of the streets and tales of the lanes

Even though the Water Margin theme is not mentioned explicitly in the guidebooks of the Song period, and the names of Wu the Pilgrim and The Tattooed Monk in Zuiweng tan lu may refer to individual tales, we do have other indications that sagas about the outlaws of the Liangshan marshes were already beginning to take form in oral tradition of the Song period, be it as folktales or as tales told by the professionals.

In a collection of picture eulogies, huazan, by the painter Gong Shengyu (1222–1304), preserved by the poet-scholar and compiler Zhou Mi (1232–1298), the existence of the saga of Song Jiang and his men in oral tradition is detailed in clear words. The zan were short characterizations of each of the thirty six men in the band of Song Jiang, intended as inscriptions for paintings or drawings of the figures. However, we do not know if such pictures were intended for book illustrations or for other purposes in the Song period. The pictures from the Song period have not survived, but from the Yuan (1279–1368) and early Ming we have similar collections of portraits of the band with the names and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zhang Qing</td>
<td>張青</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Sister Sun</td>
<td>孫二娘</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Zhishen</td>
<td>魯智深</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

picture eulogy huazan

畫贊

Gong Shengyu (1222–1304)

Zhou Mi (1232–1298)
nicknames of each person. Gong Shengyu tells us, according to Zhou Mi, that he relied on the ‘stories of the streets and tales of the lanes’, which had left a deep impression on him in his youth. He had originally never seen any books or other writings about Song Jiang’s men, but later he found a short notice about Song Jiang and his thirty-six men in one of the official biographies. Only then did he know that Song Jiang had really existed.

The praise poems of Gong Shengyu are rendered in unbroken succession as a list of 36 items, giving first the nickname and name of each hero, followed by four four-syllable verses with rhymes on the equal lines. The arrangement of the list of praise poems tells us, among other things, that the band of Song Jiang was known as a group of men of this particular number – 36 – from the earliest time when we hear about them, both in the official channels and in the ‘streets and lanes’. A poem for Wu Song is number fourteen in the list, arranged just after Lu Zhishen. It says:

**Example 2.3**

行者武松：汝優婆塞，五戒在身，酒色財氣，更要殺人

Pilgrim Wu Song: You resisted women, obeyed the Five Precepts, among Wine, Women, Wealth and Force, you were inclined to kill people.

This is the earliest mention of Wu Song in written sources that can safely be dated to the 13th century. The eulogy on Wu Song in the first two verses describes him as a devoted monk, sticking to celibacy and refraining from the five sins of Buddhist doctrine. However, the next two verses suggest that the first are to be taken with a spoonful of salt, since he among the temptations of ‘wine, women, wealth and force’, *jiu se cai qi*,\(^\text{11}\) has a predilection for going amok and killing wildly – the first and worst of the five sins. The description is clearly connected to his nickname, and his personality is described in terms of the moral codex of monks.

In the later novel Wu Song has no particular background as a monk, even though he has certain characteristics in common with the moral attitude expected of monks, in particular his very pronounced misogynist features. The real monks of the novel are, however, often described as libertines, tremendously arousing Wu Song’s anger and lust for killing.

Since Gong Shengyu was able to characterize every individual of the group, it seems most likely that there were stories circulating about all the major heroes in his time. The tradition about their names, nicknames, and their places in the hierarchy seems however to have been in a fluent stage that was gradually stabilized only later as the novel of the outlaws from the marshes came into being.

2.4. Plain tales and storytelling

Among the first extant written texts that show some relation to early storytelling are the so-called ‘plain tales’, *pinghua*, also translated as ‘popular tales’ and ‘folk books’, a corpus of printed texts, sometimes collected into anthologies of
several *pinghua*, dating from the late 13th and the 14th centuries. The name of this genre is a homonym of what became later the general genre name for prose storytelling (without music), called *pinghua* or *pingshu*, since the 17th century (Riftin [1970] 1997: 47–52; Idema 1974: xv–xvi, 80–89; Lévy 1981: 15, 1999: 34–35). The first syllable is usually written with the character ‘plain’, *ping*, in the early *pinghua* texts, while the genre of oral storytelling is written with the character for ‘comment’, *ping*, so that *pinghua* in the sense of oral storytelling could be translated ‘commented tale’. However, these two ways of writing the homonyms often overlap and at times have been used as synonyms. In the modern period, Fuzhou storytelling, *Fuzhou pinghua*, is usually written with the ‘plain’ character, while Yangzhou storytelling, *Yangzhou pinghua*, is written with the character ‘comment’. While the genre name is not in itself an unambiguous indication about the relationship of the early *pinghua* texts to oral storytelling, the linkage by name in this case has a long and intertwined history.12

Considering the wealth of different performance formats found among the performed narrative genres of China, it is noteworthy that the written textual format of the plain tales of the Yuan period – lengthy tales in prose with occasional verse and set pieces – is closer to the oral performance format of the modern *pingshu* or *pinghua* storytelling as exemplified in *Yangzhou pinghua* than to any other orally performed genre. Among the later written genres it is the novel, i.e. the long prose fiction or ‘chapter divided fiction’, that is closer in form.13

Among the plain tales that have survived from late Song or early Yuan to the present and are defined as *pinghua* in their titles, we find some, printed in Fujian in 1321–23, that to a striking degree correspond with the storytellers’ repertories that were given a name already in the guide books of Northern Song. One plain tale treats the Three Kingdoms and another the Five Dynasties. The other extant plain tales all treat various historical periods or military expeditions. As Rüdiger Breuer writes, many ‘details speak for a close proximity to oral-performative practices’ (Breuer 2001: 6–23, 181–186). Even if these *pinghua* texts have apparently been compiled from a number of different sources, they do at the same time exhibit features of relationship to early oral storytelling, perhaps being based to some degree on storytellers’ manuals or performance scripts.

The printing technique of these books has a number of special characteristics (Hegel 1998: 172–183). Most of the plain tales are illustrated with woodcut pictures, covering the upper third of each page. The illustrations correspond to the text below and thus form a continuous pictorial representation of the main happenings of the story, a kind of early ‘comics’ technique. These texts – printed books with pictures on every page – immediately seem to present themselves as reading matter for consumption by a readership far beyond the storytellers’ own circles, maybe even among both the barely and the highly literate public (Breuer 2001: 198–207).

However, as Anne McLaren has shown in her studies of the *chantefables*, *shuochang cihua*, of the Ming Chenghua period (1465–1488), we should not un-
derestimate the ‘script’ function of such texts for amateurs who would want to
vocalize the words for themselves and their close friends and family (McLAREN
1998: 69–70). In this sense, even the printed versions could be seen as ‘memory
books’ or ‘scripts’ for their reader-as-performer – to be elaborated on while being
shared through reading aloud and singing during times of leisure. While both
pinghua and shuochang cihua as printed books might have had a large readership
among the semi-literate, the professional storyteller would not need the pictures
for his personal aide-memoire. As printed and illustrated texts these books show
certain characteristics that link them to performance-culture, but it is unlikely
that they were fabricated as true storyteller’s scripts or as exact copies of such
manuscripts.

2.5. The plain tale Xuanhe yishi and Song Jiang’s thirty-six men

A number of works from the early 14th century that do not have the pinghua term
incorporated into their titles, but otherwise exhibit much the same narrative and
linguistic form, are also considered to belong to the plain tale category.14 Such
is the case with a work of mixed origin, treating the final years of the Northern
Song dynasty, the Xuanhe yishi [Legends of the Xuanhe Reign (1119–1126)] and
dated to approximately 1300.15 In this work, some of the tales about the bandit
leader Song Jiang and his legendary 36 generals are told in a semi-chronicle
framework (cf. HENNESSEY 1981: 47–61). While the official dynastic history
works mention the activities of Song Jiang and his men only in bypassing, and
other official historical sources, such as biographies of the generals and officials
of the time, are also rather reticent on the subject, the Xuanhe yishi devotes quite
some space to this story which is, however, only a small fraction of the chronicle
related in the work.

The Song Jiang episode of the Xuanhe yishi contains the earliest fragment of
the Water Margin theme that is extant in written sources.16 It is arranged – like
the rest of the work – as a prose narrative with verse, telling how a number
of men become bandits and join Song Jiang in his mountain lair, ending with
a passage where the emperor invites the band to join the imperial forces and
subdue other bandits. At a certain point of the tale Song Jiang receives a Heav-
enly Letter naming each of the thirty-six generals of his later following, with
their names preceded by their most common epithets. The name of Wu Song
the Pilgrim, Xingzhe Wu Song, is mentioned as number thirty, right after The
Tattooed Monk Lu Zhishen, Hua heshang Lu Zhishen. In the Xuanhe yishi
nothing more is told about him (or Lu Zhishen), but the list of the thirty-six
names is pointless unless these names are understood as part of a larger context,
shared with the potential readers of the plain tale. Wu Song was about the same
time already a well known figure of folklore, storytelling and drama. Only a
couple of the many stories that were later brought together in the novel Shuihu
zhuan are found in the plain-tale version of the theme, but this version – even
though it comprises the fate of the band from beginning to end – has an anec-
dotal incomplete form that is suggestive of a much richer tradition of tales (cf.
The list of men in the Heavenly Letter has quite a few names written in variant forms that were not used in the later novel. This testifies to a fluid stage of the Water Margin tales in the early period of transmission, oral and written, before the appearance of the novel had led to a more stable conception of plot, characters and names, at least inside the genre of the novel. The plain tale of *Xuanhe yishi* has nothing further to tell about Wu Song’s exploits, and the story of the tiger on Jingyang Ridge is not mentioned.

However, the text, being the earliest written source of the tale of the outlaws in the band of Song Jiang and representing an early stage of vernacular narrative, is most interesting in the context of the present study. In the following couple of sections the subject of oral storytelling and its possible connection to written and printed texts, such as *Xuanhe yishi* and other plain tales of the Yuan period, are treated. In due time we will return to the real story – about Wu Song.

### 2.6. The narrative form of *Xuanhe yishi*

In the *pinghua* texts, as well as in the *Xuanhe yishi*, there is a combination of historical conventions in literary Chinese, *wenyan*, with a number of features from a narrative framework usually called the ‘storytelling form’, the ‘storyteller’s manner’, or the ‘simulated context of the storyteller’, mainly with a view...

The Song Jiang episode – nine pages in the *Xuanhe yishi* – might exemplify an early stage of what was potentially developed as the ‘storytelling form’ of later fiction. On the one hand the text of the *pinghua* genre might point to the ultimate roots of the written vernacular in oral speech and dialects used in performance. On the other hand the status of the printed *pinghua*, might point to a stage on the way from the oral to the written – or alternatively from one written form to another.

The narrative framework of *Xuanhe yishi* and the other plain tales are here analysed with a double perspective: First, in what ways is it similar to and different from the so-called ‘storyteller’s manner’ of the later novel *Shuihu zhuan* (cf. Chapter 3). Second, are these similarities and differences significant for the question about the relationship of the *Xuanhe yishi* to early oral storytelling as a professional art?

The main characteristics that are generally accepted as typical of the narrative style signaling the ‘storyteller’s manner’ in the later novel are:

- Textual subdivision into ‘sessions’
- Alternation of prose and verse
- Narrator type
- Narrator’s comment and simulated dialogue with the audience
- Storyteller’s stock phrases

(Idema 1974: 23, 70)

### 2.7. Textual Subdivision

In the Ming novel the text is typically divided into ‘sessions’, *hui* [rounds or returns]. The use of *hui* as a textual unit seems to bridge the oral and the written modes, pointing to the link between the storytellers’ oral performance in ‘sessions’ and the printed and numbered unit of a ‘chapter’. The performance units for oral genres of storytelling seem, however, to be highly genre-dependent, since the idea of what constitutes a ‘session’ is closely related to the length and kind of performance (cf. Chapter 7, 7.3).

As for the *Xuanhe yishi*, the entire text is only divided into two ‘scrolls’, *juan*, pointing exclusively to the written mode of a paper manuscript, not to any unit of oral performance. In this respect the ‘manner’ of the novel is therefore more insistent on ‘mirroring’ an oral communication situation in the written mode, while the earlier plain-tale book does not aim for ‘simulating’ an oral framework in this respect.

The continuous text of each *juan* is broken up by two devices, namely 1) the division into time periods in chronicle fashion – a literary mode of history writing; and 2) division between prose and verse – a mode that had strong roots in Chinese performance literature since the Tang period. This mode was reflected not only in the Yuan drama *zaju*, (cf. Chapter 6), but also in the other vernacular genres since the Song and Yuan period,
such as the pinghua plain tales on historical themes, as well as the short fiction, xiaoshuo.\textsuperscript{21}

\section*{2.8. Prose and verse}

Throughout the prose text of the \textit{Xuanhe yishi} poems and set pieces are inserted fairly regularly, providing the text with the characteristic alternating modes of regular and irregular phrases. This format immediately distinguishes the text from historical works where verse is never inserted in this way (Hennessey 1984: 40). The larger part is in prose, but the poems occur frequently enough to give an essential impression of the shifting between prose and poetry. Although this format could hardly be called prosimetric in the sense of balanced alternation between prose and verse that is found in many former and contemporary genres of storytelling in China, the prose-with-verse of \textit{Xuanhe yishi} is closer to both the ‘manner’ of the \textit{Shuihu zhuan} and to the pinghua genres of oral storytelling in the modern period. However, the portions in prose are comparatively brief, providing only an outline of the happenings related, including a few exchanges of dialogue. On this point, the text seems remarkably close to the format of traditional storyteller’s scripts of Late Qing/Early Republic in the genre of Yangzhou pinghua (Børdahl 2005, see also Chapter 9).

\section*{2.9. Narrator type}

With a view to narrator type, the Song Jiang episode of the \textit{Xuanhe yishi} demonstrates the adoption of a covert omniscient third-person narrator who does not take part in the story told,\textsuperscript{22} which is in accordance with the narrative style most often used in historical chronicle and many other genres of both fiction and non-fiction. The overt type, however, where the narrator intermittently ‘declares himself’ as ‘the storyteller’, shuohuade, is not found in the \textit{Xuanhe yishi}. This narrative device, considered the most striking feature of the ‘manner’, is typical not only of the Ming novel and short story, but also of some genres of oral storytelling of the modern period, such as Yangzhou pinghua (Børdahl 2003). In the plain-tale format, there is no insistence on having the narrator play out a storyteller’s role in full as part of the written text. The plain tale reflects more passively, so it seems, some features of oral telling and reciting. However, the presence of the narrator as the person who is engaged in telling the story and reciting the poems for his listeners (readers) is communicated through other means than the direct labelling of the narrator as ‘storyteller’.\textsuperscript{23} The same function is imbedded in the narrator’s rhetorical questions and comments, even if this device is not equally demonstrative. Simulated dialogue with the audience and narrator’s comment are regular features of the narration of \textit{Xuanhe yishi}, just as they are pertinent features of both the Ming novel and modern storytelling. We find a handful of instances where the narrator addresses his audience in short questions that are answered by a narrator’s comment, most often in the form of a couplet. Here is an example of this kind of question from the story about how Yang Zhi, one of the 36, was caught up in a
snowstorm, came into trouble when he tried to sell his precious sword and soon joined the brotherhood of the outlaws:24

Example 2.9

What was the snow scene like? It was really:
A wild flurry, melting over a monk’s teacup;
A dense squall thinning out the tavern’s wine.

This kind of simulated dialogue with the audience is restricted not only to the portion on Song Jiang and his fellows, but is used throughout the work, preponderantly in those sections that are more fictionalized and vernacular in style, such as the story of Emperor Huizong and the actress Li Shishi.

The difference between the Xuanhe yishi and the novel (and also oral storytelling of the modern time) is that such questions and comments are short and relatively infrequent, not developed into a major constituent of the written plain tale. This might seem to remove the plain tale from its presumed oral antecedents, but not necessarily. We shall discuss this further below (cf. 2.15).

2.10. Stock Phrases

What is generally considered the most obvious linguistic inheritance in the Xuanhe yishi from the oral storytellers of Song and Yuan is a number of so-called ‘stock phrases’, taoyu or guding yongyu. Among these expressions there is a group of words or phrases of meta-narrative function, serving as markers of the shifting of mode, time or focus of the tale. The beginning, progression, digression and conclusion of the story may all have their typical formulaic markers. Appeal to the audience on the part of the narrator may also be indicated by formulaic expressions among this kind of stock phrases (Børdahl 2010: 85–90).

In the later ‘storyteller’s manner’ of the Ming novel and short story, similar phrases are an important part of the ‘storyteller’s rhetoric’, which grows into a literary convention for vernacular fiction writing.25 In the plain tales, a certain convention is already established, but how and to what extent it might originate in imitation of oral storytellers’ spoken language will be discussed below (McLaren 1998: 261–270; Lévy 1981: 123–131).

Xuanhe yishi has a number of such stock expressions, some comparatively fixed and frequent like tags, others tending towards free combination, but apparently with no obvious demarcation line between ‘stock phrases’ and free phrases.

2.11. Verse-introductory Expressions

The list of pre-verse phrases from Xuanhe yishi in Table 2.11 below is not complete, but it includes the better part of these expressions and in particular all those that occur more than once.26
While the alternation between prose and verse is undoubtedly a narrative style taken over from earlier Chinese oral performance traditions, it is not obvious that the expressions in the list or every single of them should have been adopted from oral storytelling. A similar habit existed already in the Buddhist influenced prosimetric performance tradition, transmitted in manuscripts called ‘transformation texts’, bianwen, from the Tang period. Victor Mair has described the usage of verse-introductory formula in the bianwen, typically in combination with the showing of pictures, bianxiang (MAIR 1989: 6, 23, 88).

Mair observes: ‘The nearer an orally derived text is to its source of inspiration, the more fluid and unstable it will be because the oral exemplar changes with each retelling. Conversely, a text that has been written, rewritten, and copied several times gradually takes on a fixed form’. From this assumption, Mair infers that such formulas are in all likelihood not ‘evidence of direct

| Table 2.11. Pre-verse phrases from Xuanhe yishi |  |
|-------------------------------------------------|  |
| Indeed:                                         |  |
| zheng shi 正是                                   |  |
| It was really: *                                 |  |
| que shi 却是                                    |  |
| Truly:                                           |  |
| zhen shi 真是                                   |  |
| That was truly: *                                |  |
| zhenge shi 真個是                               |  |
| It might be called:                             |  |
| ke wei shi 可謂是                               |  |
| It said: *                                      |  |
| dao shi 道是                                   |  |
| The poem says: *                                |  |
| shi yue 詩曰                                   |  |
| There is a poem that testifies to this:          |  |
| you shi wei zheng 有詩為證                      |  |
| Later generations had a poem about it which says:|
| hou you ren yi shi dao 後有人一詩道              |  |
| He offered a poem:                              |  |
| shangxian yi shi 貢獻一詩                      |  |
| The poem as follows:                            |  |
| shi yun 詩云                                   |  |
| There is a poem as follows:                     |  |
| you shi yun 有詩云                             |  |
| Then she made a poem as follows:                |  |
| sui cheng shi yun 逢成詩云                     |  |
| First she recited two lines of a poem as follows:|
| shang yin shi er ju yun 上唸詩二句云            |  |
| Later generations had a poem about it as follows:|
| hou you ren yi shi yun 後有人一詩               |  |
| Later generations recited a poem about it as follows:|
| hou you ren nian shi yishou yun 後有人唸詩一首云|  |
| There is one historical poem about it as follows:|
| you yong shi shi yi shou yun 有詠史詩一首云     |  |
| Among historical poems there is one as follows: |
| yong shi you yi shi yun 詠史有一詩云            |  |
| Overcome with emotion he dedicated a poem:      |  |
| you gan er tu shi yi shou 有感而賦詩一首        |  |
| The lyric says:                                 |  |
| ci yue 詞曰                                   |  |
| She made a small lyric and recited it as follows:|
| Zuo xiao ci zi shu yun 作小詞自述云             |  |
| She recited a lyric saying:                     |  |
| Kou zhan yi ci dao 口占一詞道                    |  |
| Then he made a song saying:                     |  |
| sui zuo ge yue 遂作歌曰                         |  |
| Thereafter still another song saying:            |  |
| hou zai ge yue 後再歌曰                         |  |

Note: Phrases marked with * in Tables 2.11, 2.14, 2.15, are found in the passage about Song Jiang and his men.
derivation from oral performance’, even though they may bear witness to ‘a reflection and stylization of actual phrases customarily but not compulsorily employed by picture storytellers.’ Crossland-Guo Shuyun who has continued the study of verse-introductory formulas in bianwen, apparently – on the background of her more accurate registration of the occurrence of variants of pre-verse formulas – has quite some difficulty defending Mair’s view of the role of formulaic phrases in oral performance versus written text (Crossland-Guo 1996: 33–34). ‘Fluid’ or ever changing patterns of expression are traditionally seen as characteristic of written literary texts, in opposition to the ‘formulaic character’ of the oral performances and their ‘derived texts’. When a certain type of sentence, such as those found in the position before verses, is manifested in ever changing language and not coined in standard phrases, is this a sign of oral or literary custom? And on the contrary, when we find a set of standard phrases in this position, is it a signal of oral performance or literary convention? A kind of evidence for this question can be adduced by empirical investigation of storytelling forms that we are still able to observe in their oral manifestation.

In oral performance of the modern period the shifting between prose and verse is immediately felt from the tone of recitation, rhythm and rhyme of the verse passages. The professional performer decides according to his mastery of the handed down repertoire where to enter the verses. There would be no need in principle to announce the shift, certainly not for the oral genre of pinghua, where only one storyteller performs without assistance of musicians. Nevertheless, in oral storytelling from the 20th century as exemplified by Yangzhou pinghua, shifts between prose and verse (including sayings in rhythmic form) are not infrequently announced, sometimes with tag words or pre-verse formulas, sometimes with free phrases that declare a poem or set piece to be recited. But just as often the verse passages are entered without any tag expression or declaration. The places where such tags or declarations are used belong to the transmitted tradition and they are not arbitrarily added or omitted. When such tags and declarations are used, they give special weight to the ‘quoted’ verses or sayings.

On the written page, in particular in a manuscript or a printed version from the period when there was no firm tradition of indenting verse or punctuating the text, these expressions would, however, help the reading considerably by indicating where the verse would start. This would support not only understanding, but also help vocalizing the text for oneself or others (the minimal amateur performance). Most of the verse-introductory formulas of the Xuanhe yishi can easily enter into combinations with other words. This is obvious from the list above, where the verse portions to be recited are announced in a variety of wordings that apparently form an open list where new formulations might be added at will. However, the better part of the expressions do have a relatively short and fixed form and several of these shorter forms are frequently used in the text, so that they give that certain ‘stock phrase’ feeling to the text. In the later vernacular fiction zheng shi, dan jian, shi yue/yun and you shi wei zheng (cf. Table 2.11) belong to a relatively small number of high frequency phrases, constantly used to indicate the verse portions and set pieces. The ‘storyteller
style’ that a modern reader of Chinese novels associates with these expressions is therefore also easily transferred to the earlier period, when reading a text where these words are used. But one cannot take the later novelistic ‘storyteller’s manner’ as a proof that the usage found in early texts such as the plain tales were actually typical of early oral storytelling.

There is a parallel in the usage of tags for dialogue, such as ‘he said’, to mark the shift between narration and dialogue. In oral performances of Yangzhou pinghua, as registered in the recent period, such tags are rare. Usually the shift from narration to dialogue is indicated by a change of the timbre of the voice, since the storyteller impersonates the various persons of his tale. But these characteristics of the human voice cannot be transferred to writing, and in the printed editions of modern storyteller’s books, xin huaben, published since the 1950s, this feature is compensated by tags (and/or punctuation markers, such as colon and quotation marks in modern print). The short phrases in the plain tales introducing verse might have served the same purpose. They might have been at the outset added for the legibility of the written page and not necessarily because they reflected habits of an oral performance tradition.

2.12. Pre-verse formulas as typographical aid

In order to discuss some typographical questions, I shall include a short discussion of some other Yuan plain tales, as well as the Ming Chenghua chantefables. In the plain tales for which the original printed versions exist, we can observe how pre-verse expressions are used as typographical aids. Let us compare the list of stock phrases with those found in one of the pinghua texts of the early 14th century, the Xin quan xiang San guo zhi pinghua [Newly edited fully illustrated Plain tale on Three Kingdoms], published in 1321–23.31 For this text the original woodcut edition is preserved and accessible in facsimile, something that allows to study not only the words, but the technique of visual representation on the page, used by the printers of early semi-vernacular texts.32

In the San guo zhi pinghua the whole text is printed in continuous columns of characters, without indentation for paragraphs or poems. However, the shifting to verse is often, but not consistently, marked by the phrase ‘the poem says’, shi yue, ‘the song says’, ge yue, and ‘the eulogy says’, zan yue, set off in contrastive white on black cartouche, a method that is also, although irregularly, used to insert titles of various important episodes.33 Some other phrases of the same function are also set off in this way: ‘There is a poem that testifies to this’, you shi wei zheng, (sometimes set off, sometimes not) ‘later there was a poem testifying to this’, hou you shi wei zheng, ‘another poem’, you shi, ‘there is a sacred eulogy’, you miaozan. In this way the alternation between prose and verse is fairly clearly indicated on the page.

In the early genre of obviously oral-related texts, the Ming Chenghua chantefables, Ming Chenghua shuochang cihua, printed 1471–1478, but possibly from woodblocks that are more than a hundred years older,34 the shift from prose to verse is indicated by ‘stage instructions’ such as ‘Sing!’, chang, ‘Tell’, shuo, and ‘Speak in dialogue!’, bai, which are inserted into the text whenever
the mode of performance changes. These short ‘orders’ are typographically set off from the rest of the text in black cartouche. In the printed chantefables the verse portions are further – in contrast to the pinghua of the Yuan Zhizhi reign 1321–23 – set off by indentation. Therefore the stage instructions of ‘sing!’ and ‘tell!’ are redundant (McLaren 1998: 109). The indentation alone would be enough for the reader to see at a glance in which of the modes the text is to be vocalized.

McLaren considers the stage instructions to be an example of ‘oral residue’ in the early phase of vernacular print (McLaren 1998: 262). These inserted instructions do of course bear witness to the oral performance traditions of the shuochang arts, including the oral amateur culture. But one might interpret this phenomenon otherwise, namely that the stage directions could have belonged to earlier prints where the verse portions were not indented, so that these short orders in cartouche would help the reader in the same way that tags such as ‘the poem says’ (also in cartouche in the pinghua texts) give ‘directions’ to the

Figure 2.12. A page from Hua Guan Suo Recognizes His Father, with stage directions in black cartouche: bai [dialogue], chang [sing] and shuo [tell].

Hua Guan Suo
Recognizes His Father
Hua Guan Suo ren fu zhuan
花關索認父傳
dialogue
bai
白
sing!
chang 唱
tell!
shuo 說
reader, whether silent or vocalized. It seems likely that these short expressions were part of the printing technique for oral-related texts, but that the expressions as such were not meant to be vocalized in performance.

2.13. Pre-verse phrases in literary and colloquial language

The longer verse-introductory expressions of the Xuanhe yishi, coined in free word combinations, do not generally exhibit particular features of the spoken vernacular. Only a couple of them use the more colloquial dao. Most of them follow wenyan grammar and end with the tag words of wenyan, such as yue and yun. Such pre-verse expressions coined in wenyan are found likewise in early Ming wenyan short stories continuing the genre of the Tang classical tale, chuanqi, which was devoid of verse. In the story collection Jian deng xin hua [New stories written while trimming the wick] (1378) by Qu You poems are inserted quite often, preceded by expressions in wenyan, identical with or highly reminiscent of the longer pre-verse expressions in Xuanhe yishi. It does not seem likely that Qu You's habit was derived from Xuanhe yishi, but rather that both works shared common conventions from wenyan note-form literature, biji (XUE Hongli deng 1981: 16, 17, 19, 37). The 'storyteller style' of the vernacular short story, buaben, exhibits a markedly different set of pre-verse formulas (cf. BØRDAHL 2010b: 136–137, 144).35

The literary form of pre-verse expressions is, however, not in itself an argument against oral provenance, since both poems and their introductory passages might belong to the more formal part of an oral performance. As more or less solemn declarations of the verse portions that are to follow, such expressions might have been spoken in a high style form to fit the literary form of the poems. In modern Yangzhou storytelling both verse passages and tags for verse (when used) are spoken in high style 'square mouth', fangkou, (cf. BØRDAHL 1996: 83–85, 94–96) and coloured by wenyan grammar. In this case the modern forms of such tags could easily have been taken over from the vernacular fiction of Ming and Qing, adding a literary flourish to the storyteller's oral style. A mixture of colloquial (dialectal) prose with pre-verse expressions and poems in wenyan flavoured language is, in fact, a feature of modern storytelling.

Were these expressions as we find them in the earliest written documents, such as the plain tales, modelled on orally performed phrases of storytellers of Song and Yuan? Were they created by the writers/editors of the plain tales as a written mode for bringing out clearly the shifts between prose and verse on the printed page? Or did they simply mainly follow a written literary convention for introducing verse? The question will be treated in connection with other features that point towards oral versus written models for the plain tales.

2.14. Formulary expressions of transition and progression

The list of formulary expressions of narrative transition and progression, Table 2.14, is fairly complete. Only two of the expressions are used more than once in the Xuanhe yishi, namely qie shuo (6) and que you (2). The formulative character
of the expressions is therefore not obvious from this source alone, but is based on the occurrence of the same expressions or the same type of expressions in the other plain tales, as well as their perpetuation in *chantefables* and in the later vernacular fiction.

This group of expressions consists of ‘opening words’, *fayuci*, occurring at the beginning of paragraphs and sections. In his study of the plain tale and novel versions of the ‘Three Kingdoms’ theme Boris Riftin has shown how this type of formulary expressions in the *Sanguozhi pinghua* are integrated into the narrative text, serving as markers of narrative progression, much in the same way as time expressions and names of persons, which both are – together with the phrases above – the most frequent initial elements of a section (Riftin 1997: 150–151).

As Anne McLaren has demonstrated with a view to the *chantefables* of the 15th century, these phrases were not only part of the prose sections, but also occurred inside the verse. The phrases could therefore not, in such places, have been left out without destroying the rhythm and therefore must belong to the passages as performed. This is among the best arguments that these phrases actually had a spoken existence, and were not just typographical aids, serving as textual markers of the printed page, such as seems largely the function of the short tag phrases for verse.36 The short dissyllabic opening words in the *Xuanhe yishi*, for example, seem redundant, and they might be removed without disturbing the grammar or intelligibility of the sentences where they occur. But the longer expressions are logically integrated into the phrases where they occur and not removable. Therefore the similarity between the longer and the shorter transitional expressions, the evidence of their occurrence in verse sections of the later *chantefables*, both corroborate that these expressions were probably part of the spoken idiom from which at least some elements of the plain tale stemmed.37

Phrases of transition of the *San guo zhi pinghua* are not usually placed in any specially marked place on the page, since paragraphs are not indented in this original edition. A few times, however, a white space (the size of one character) is left in the column before a new ‘paragraph’ starts, usually followed by: ‘Let’s,

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**Table 2.14 Formulary expressions of narrative transition and progression in *Xuanhe yishi***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The story says</th>
<th>Meanwhile, let’s not tell . . ., let’s, however, tell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>hua shuo</em> 話說</td>
<td><em>qie xiu shuo</em> . . . <em>que shuo</em> 且休說 . . . 卻說</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meanwhile, let’s tell *</td>
<td>Let’s not tell . . ., let’s rather tell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>qie shuo</em> 且說</td>
<td><em>xiu shuo</em> . . . <em>qie shuo</em> 休說 . . . 且說</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let’s tell, however</td>
<td>It’s been said already, so let’s just tell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>que shuo</em> 且說</td>
<td><em>hua que tiguo</em>, <em>zhi shuo</em> 話且提過只說</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meanwhile, let’s not tell . . ., let’s just tell</td>
<td>There was, however . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>qie xiu shuo</em> . . . <em>zhi shuo</em> 且休說 . . . 只說</td>
<td><em>que you</em> 卻有</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---
2.15. PHRASES OF SIMULATED DIALOGUE WITH THE AUDIENCE

Phrases of ‘simulated dialogue’ point to questions and answers in the written text which are not part of the dialogue between the characters of the story told, but belong to the narrator’s interjections. The most frequent forms of these rhetorical questions are listed below, but there are many other questions of this kind in various free forms. Narrator’s simulated dialogue with the audience occurs regularly in the Xuanhe yishi as well as in the other plain tales, most often just before a couplet or poem (cf. 2.9). Therefore the questions to the audience might also have been treated as expressions signalizing the shift from prose to verse. The habit of asking a rhetorical question to the audience (or reader) just before reciting a poem is part of the convention for the plain tales, and in this
sense the questions can be treated on a par with the other tag expressions for poetry. Some of them also seem to qualify as ‘stock phrases’, since they have a fixed form and occur quite often. In general the question forms used for the rhetorical questions to the audience are, however, not different from those forms used in the dialogue between the characters of the tale, see Table 2.15.

These linguistic forms are simple and easy to understand, sometimes coined in a wenyan-like style, such as ‘How was XX?, XX ru he (wenyan), sometimes in the vernacular spoken style, such as ‘What did it say?, dao ge shendi (baihua).

The pre-verse formula of the rhetorical question zen jiane, also seen in some of the other plain tales, such as Wu Wang fa Zhou pinghua [Plain tale on King Wu’s Expedition against Zhou], is on the one hand reminiscent of certain formulas for the Tang bianwen (cf. CROSSLAND-GUO 1996: 30, 2001: 215) and on the other hand of the pre-verse formula dan jian which belongs to the standard phrases of the later vernacular fiction. Zen jiane together with the pre-verse formula you shi wei zheng are among the very few ‘stock phrases’ that are found in Late Qing/Early Republic storytellers’ scripts from Yangzhou, that were in the possession of present-day storytellers, but these phrases are not found in any of the oral performances that I have recorded since the 1980s.

Some of the rhetorical questions of Xuanhe yishi are, however, not asked in connection with a poem, but since they are clearly not part of the conversation between the characters of the tale, they belong to the simulated dialogue. The narrator makes a special point of something he is telling by putting a question to the audience which he himself will immediately answer. Such questions are in most of the plain tales connected with the naming of characters from the story, e.g. ‘What was the name of those three or four officials? ’ zhe san si guiguan xing shen ming shei? However, such rhetorical questions have the same form as ordinary questions in dialogue between characters of the story. They cannot be said, I think, to reflect any special ‘storyteller style’ in their linguistic form. But the fact that the narrator frequently asks this kind of questions during the narration of events might be a sign of the oral style of storytelling, indeed, one of the most significant features pointing to such origin.

In the Xuanhe yishi formulaic expressions of conclusion are absent. The first of the two juan closes with a long quotation from a historical lecture (cf. HENNESSEY 1984: 51–52), and the second with a poem. There is no expression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.15. Phrases of simulated dialogue in Xuanhe yishi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That XX, how was he (it)? * na XX ruhe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did it say? * dao ge shendi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you know if that XX did . . . * bu zhi na XX . . . me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How was it said? dao shen lai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you know what happened to XX? bu zhi XX xingming ruhe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How did it look? Zen jiane</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Plain tale on King Wu’s Expedition against Zhou
Wu Wang fa Zhou pinghua
武王伐紂平話

What was the name of those three or four officials?
na san si guiguan xing shen ming shei
那三四貴官姓甚名誰
leading from one *juan* to the next. However, we may notice that the rhetorical questions we have just discussed, sometimes seem to have a function very close to that found with the conclusive ‘stock phrases’ between each *hui* of the novel. In the plain tale the question ‘Do you know what happened to XX?’, *bu zhi XX xingming ruhe*, is raised now and again, followed by a couplet. This feature is highly reminiscent of the way the narrator of the novel creates suspense before the end of each *hui* and leads the reader on to the following.

In modern storytelling of *Yangzhou pinghua* the narrator is constantly building up suspense, ‘crisis’ *guanzi*, which is released by the rhetorical questions to the audience and the narrator’s explanations. This is a highly prominent and frequent feature of this genre of oral professional storytelling, and this method is also used to finish one session of storytelling, which will usually end with ‘selling the crisis’, *mai guanzi*, where the storyteller stops the narration in the middle of a most exciting event. While the purpose of this kind of ending is obvious, there is no stock phrase of conclusion or other passage leading on to the performance of the following day. The narrator will, however, continue by telling the solution to the problem of the day before, but he does not explicitly entice his audience with a stock phrase at the end. In former times the owner of the teahouse used to have a so-called ‘tea master’, *chafang*, who would tell the audience to, please, return the next day: ‘Please, come early tomorrow!’, *Ming’er qing zao!* but this was not part of the performance by the storyteller (Fei Li 1991: 122; Børdahl and Ross 2002: 54).

The storytellers are in fact capable of ending their performance almost anywhere, creating always some kind of ‘crisis’ to finish the day’s entertainment. This aspect of modern storytelling has a parallel in the form of the plain tale, where the plot moves forward from one excitement to the next, accentuated by rhetorical questions and comments in verse, but without any fixed expressions of conclusion. There are no special endings, neither for internal divisions (comparable to the *hui* of the novel), nor for the text as a whole, the scrolls, *juan*. In this regard the plain tale is also close, both to the printed 15th-century *chantefable*, and to extant storytellers’ scripts from *Yangzhou pinghua*.

2.16. Plain tales and storytellers’ scripts

Plain tales were considered by Lu Xun in the 1920s – and most Chinese scholars of the vernacular literature agreed with this view until recently – to be documents derived from storytellers’ scripts, i.e. the manuscripts that storytellers might supposedly keep as *aide-mémoire* for their performances. In modern Chinese such scripts are called *diben* or *jiaoben*. In the sources on early Chinese storytelling from the Song period, we find alongside with the naming of the storyteller as *shuohuade*, the expression *huaben* [story, script?]. This word was by the scholars following Lu Xun considered an equivalent to script, *diben*, meaning ‘the storyteller’s script’, *shuobuaren de diben*. Apart from the sense of script (or ‘promptbook’ as it was usually rendered in English), *huaben* became established in Chinese scholarship as the term for the vernacular short story,
called *huaben*, that presumably was, just like the plain tales, originally based on storyteller’s scripts.\(^{44}\)

While a consensus about the original meaning of *huaben* has been difficult to attain, the term ‘*huaben* fiction’, *huaben xiaoshuo*, has gained wide acceptance as a broad genre in Chinese literary history. As a term for the early Chinese short story from the Song to the Ming period, *huaben* is generally acknowledged as the current term.\(^{45}\)

The terminological confusion reflects the uncertainty about relationships between oral performance culture and book culture. With a view to the transformation texts of the Dunhuang caves, dating from Tang to early Song, Victor Mair has summed up such possible relationships in a list, which seems equally useful for a consideration of the plain tales.\(^{46}\) While the Dunhuang manuscripts might be candidates as *real scripts*, the plain tales would always stand at least one step removed from this status, since they are printed texts. Below Mair’s list is rephrased with a view to the plain tales (Mair’s formulation in quotes).

1. Plain tales could be printed texts, copied from ‘promptbooks, *aides-memoire*, or scripts copied by the storytellers themselves for use in performance.’
2. They could be printed texts, copied from scripts ‘composed by someone else for the storyteller to deliver.’
3. They could be printed texts, copied from manuscripts that ‘were essentially apprentice’s notes, . . . intended for professional training purposes.’
4. They could be printed texts, copied from manuscripts ‘taken down *during* performance by an author (or auditor) for personal use or for someone else who wished to have a record of the performance.’
5. They could be printed texts, copied from manuscripts by ‘an auditor who had written out the story from memory *after* an individual performance – again for his own use or for someone who engaged him specifically for that purpose.’
6. Or plain tales, ‘though obviously a product of oral *ambiance*, are strictly speaking, written and printed literature, conceived, executed, and enjoyed in the study.’

### 2.17. Storytellers’ scripts and performance

The idea that the comparatively long *pinghua* tales together with some of the earliest of the shorter tales in the vernacular, *huaben*, might be samples of storytellers’ ‘scripts’ was from the outset founded on criteria found in these same printed versions. It has therefore, as pointed out by Wilt Idema in the 1970s, been difficult to evade a circular argumentation, where the storytelling origin of the texts is defended by referring to what is considered ‘storytellers’ manner’ in these same or even later texts. While the plain tales have been considered ‘promptbooks’ or ‘scripts’ for storytellers during the Song and Yuan periods, they have also been considered popular folk books, primarily for reading and only marginally influenced by oral storytelling.\(^{47}\)
It is thus useful to make a clear distinction between 1) the oral professional *performance* of stories that undoubtedly took place since the Song period, but from which we have no direct evidence (no sound recordings); 2) written scripts of the oral profession, also not extant as scripts from the early period; 3) printed texts with features that arguably reflect oral storytelling or scripts from oral storytelling.

When we talk about later printed texts as ‘remnants from’, ‘derived from’ or ‘related to’ the storytellers’ art, we must specify how. Reflecting the oral performance and its linguistic idiom? Reflecting the written *aide-mémoire* of the performers and the linguistic form of such written notebooks? This is rarely one and the same thing, since what a script as *aide-mémoire* will contain depends on the kind of performance genre and the degree of improvisation expected in the given genre.

Modern fieldwork demonstrates that verse portions of scripts reflect fairly closely the linguistic form of such passages, even though many features of oral performance would not traditionally be expressed in the written form, such as the vocal timbre of recitation, the musical melody and rhythm of singing, the accompaniment by percussion and other instruments, the facial expressions and gestures, etc. Prose portions in scripts, on the other hand, reflect the spoken idiom in a much more loose sense, both in the prose genre of *pinghua* with only a few verse portions in each performance and in prosimetric ‘drum-singing’, *dagu* (Iguchi 2003: 94–113, 2007; Børdahl 2005). In present day Suzhou story-singing or *chantefable*, *Suzhou tanci*, there seems to be a high degree of dependency on written scripts, both for the verse and the prose portions, even though many storytellers talk about the way they improvise. It is difficult to estimate the divergence between prose portions as performed and as written in scripts (Bender 2003: 77–78).

As for the extant scripts of *Yangzhou pinghua* there is evidence that some of the dialogue in the scripts will actually be performed very much according to the verbal form of the script, but otherwise the prose of the script is only an extremely short and succinct summary of the tale compared to performance (Børdahl 2005: 257–258, 272).

2.18. The style of scripts and the style of performance

While Lu Xun held the plain tales to be closely derived from the oral storytelling of Song, he did not go into detail about how such derivation would have taken place or for which purpose. The *Xuanhe yishi*, however, he considered a patchwork of various simple historical texts, written in such a ‘flat and insipid’ style that it could never have been a story of the storytellers’ repertoire, since it ‘lacked spirit’ (Lu Hsun (Lu Xun) [1959] 1964: 153).

Likewise Idema has described the plain tales as ‘discontinuous, and at times barely comprehensible story . . . [their] pai-hua (baihua) prose is often jerky and abrupt . . . the pai-hua portions of the p’ing-hua (pinghua) texts would appear to be only partial and shortened fragments of their sources without giving any adequate idea of the characteristics of these sources’ (Idema 1974: 85). These
features are considered an argument for the distance between the plain tales and their presumed oral antecedents. A storyteller should according to this line of thought be able to tell his stories better, or else there would hardly be an audience for him. The plain tales are too sketchy to resemble a storyteller’s tale. This argument is based on an equation between script and oral tale.

A comparison of the *Xuanhe yishi* with extant storytellers’ scripts of the late Qing and early Republic, might lead to an opposite view: The composite nature of the materials, lifting passages from various popular history books and mixing them with oral sagas, penned down in a staccato and abrupt style with little elaboration of detail, seems to correlate extremely well with what we now know about extant storytellers’ scripts more than five hundred years later. These extant scripts do not elaborate on matters that could and should be improvised during performance, according to the rules of the art. The summary form that is natural for these true aide-mémoire manuscripts of oral prose performance contains only the bare outline of the prose tale. The verse and set pieces are written in full (since these must be learnt by heart). This form is amazingly close to that of the plain tales and the *Xuanhe yishi* in particular.

Compared to modern storyteller’s scripts, the *Xuanhe yishi* – if it was based on a script – seems to have been edited, if only sparingly, into a more readable shape, not just copied out for printing. It is exactly the ‘flat and insipid’, ‘jerky and abrupt’ features that are in common with extant scripts, while the framing of verse and sections with stock phrases is far more regular and consistent than what can be found in available handwritten storytellers’ scripts of the modern period, where such features are marginal or non-existent.

However, the characteristics of the plain tale that remind strongly of storytellers’ scripts as we know them today can only be considered close to the written legacy of storytelling that the storytellers themselves were involved with – their scripts.

As for the oral form of these same tales in professional performance, that is a very different question. Lu Xun argued that those early written tales – he thought of some of the other plain tales and in particular some of the short vernacular stories, *huaben* – that showed a better developed plot construction and elaborate description of detail, ‘had the knack of storytelling’ (Lu Hsun [Lu Xun] [1959] 1964: 152–153; *Lu Xun quan ji*, 1973, Vol. 9: 260). Lu Xun did not here differentiate between oral performance and the writing of stories.

How the storytellers of Song and Yuan actually performed their tales is of course not recoverable. Little is known about literacy among Song storytellers, but on the other hand, even if most storytellers were illiterate and had no scripts (which was also the situation among Yangzhou storytellers as late as the 1930s) (Chen Wulou (pseudonym Si Su) 1962, 1994), one should not exclude that scripts could be produced for storytellers usage by friends in their milieu who had a minimum of education. It is quite possible that their scripts – if they happened to have scripts – might remind of the plain tales, as can be inferred from knowledge about storytellers’ scripts in the recent period.

It is much more problematic to refer the ‘highly skilled’ narration of some early *huaben* directly to the storytellers, even if they were the inspiration. As
Liangyan Ge has formulated it: ‘The text could be situated at any point along the line of transition from the oral to the written without being directly used as a promptbook in an actual storytelling presentation’ (Ge Liangyan 2001: 60).

It is likewise important to realize that apart from scripts consisting entirely of verse, it would be far off the mark to imagine that professional storytellers would perform verbatim according to written scripts. Therefore the recreation of such stories in writing, perhaps based on scripts, perhaps on listening to oral storytelling, perhaps on a combination, might reflect the oral performance much more truthfully than a storyteller’s script. Such a recreation would, however, at the same time reflect the abilities and preferences of its author, since it could not in general be a notational word-by-word rendition.

I say ‘in general’, because we cannot exclude that some of these writers (including perhaps some well educated storytellers) were, like the storytellers themselves, gifted with an exceptionally good and well-trained memory that would allow them to transmit a heard story in very much the same form. Among the Yangzhou storytellers of the 20th century, there is at least one who has done precisely that.50

2.19. **XUANHE YISHI AND THE FORMAT OF STORYTELLER’S SCRIPTS**

In conclusion, the *Xuanhe yishi* has many features in common with storytellers’ scripts of the Late Qing/Early Republic period: alternation between prose and verse, verse written in full, prose sometimes copied or paraphrased from *wenyan* sources, sometimes paraphrased in a compact or rudimentary vernacular style. A few formulas and rhetorical questions signalling verse portions are also in common. But the pre-modern scripts have extremely few, if any, stock phrases of transition. The transitional phrases of the plain tale might reflect oral storytelling, as evidenced in part from their linguistic status in the plain tales, in part by their usage in the later *chantefables*. They seem, however, to function mainly as a modus of written vernacular, established together with the printing technique for these texts in the Yuan period. Such features, closely connected with printing conventions, would hardly have much to do with the form of performance scripts handwritten by storytellers or literate persons in the close circles of them.

The *chantefables*, as McLaren has shown, seem to be truly oral-connected printed texts, close to previous scripts for performance, and aimed at a reading audience which habitually would use the *chantefable* texts as a kind of pseudo-scripts for recitation by reading aloud and singing in the family. It is significant that modern *tanci*, the genre closest to the Ming *chantefable*, is much dependent on scripts, not during performance, but scripts are frequently consulted, even in breaks during performance (Bender 1998: 367).

The plain tales, including the *Xuanhe yishi*, were printed one hundred and fifty years earlier than the *chantefables*, at a time when the printing of vernacular texts was only just beginning. Their printed format is obviously aimed at a readership beyond the milieu of professional storytellers. However, certain formal characteristics that we have discussed above, may suggest that the material on
which these texts were based, might indeed have been storytellers’ scripts. This is particularly true of the Xuanhe yishi, exactly because of its ‘jerky and abrupt’ prose. The more detailed and developed the prose portions of the plain tales are, the more such passages would seem to have undergone a process of literary rewriting (Breuer 2001: 227).

2.20. The one hundred and eight good men of Water Margin in pictorial art

During the Yuan dynasty Chinese drama – the other major genre of oral performance – had a rich growth in the genre of zaju. Individual heroes of the Water Margin sagas play an important part in providing stuff material for this drama tradition. The name of Wu Song is mentioned in the titles of several Yuan zaju, but the texts of these dramas have not survived, cf. Chapter 6, 6.2.

However, in the Chenghua reign (1465–1488) of early Ming, the same period that saw the printing of the chantefables, evidence about Water Margin tales appears again – this time not as verbal text, but in pictures.

As mentioned, the pictures from the Song period for which the picture eulogies, huazan, had been prepared, are lost, but from the Chenghua period an album by the painter Du Jin (15th century) has survived. While the huazan, just like the scarce notes in the official histories, mention only the thirty six ringleaders of Song Jiang, this album, entitled Shuihu renwu quantu [Complete portraits of all persons of the Water Margin] (Du Jin (Ming) 1986), contains double portraits of all the 108 good men, which is the number found in the later novel Shuihu zhuan. This album is the earliest source where the number 36 is superseded by the figure of 108.

The heroes are not clearly differentiated as major and minor, but the original thirty six generals appear mostly in the beginning of the album. However, all one hundred and eight men, depicted as highly individual characters, are always arranged in pairs in the middle of a page with scenery of nature or buildings as background. Their names, but not their nicknames, are written on the picture.

In this album the names correspond with those found in the later novel, while – as we noticed earlier – many of their names in the Xuanhe yishi were written differently, not only with homonyms, but also with characters of both different form and sound, albeit so close in sound that they are easily identifiable.

In Du Jin’s album, Wu Song stands together with Lu Zhishen (Du Jin 1986: 11). This is reminiscent of the fact that Wu the Pilgrim was mentioned together with The Tattooed Monk (alias Lu Zhishen) in the earliest written source, Zui-weng tanlu. Lu Zhishen appears just before Wu Song, both in Gong Shengyu’s picture eulogies from Song, and in the list of Xuanhe yishi from Yuan. The picture album is therefore true to this precedence, while the coupling of most of the other characters has no parallel in the earlier sources.

In this very first pictorial presentation of Wu Song he is depicted in a monk’s dress, with a rosary around his neck and a flyswatter in his left hand. Lu Zhishen stands behind him with a staff in his left hand, dressed also in monk’s
attire, but a different kind of toga-like robe. Both of them look very calm and friendly, with a humorous smile on their lips. Wu Song is not very grand or masculine, and his stature is a little on the short side. While his grandeur is mentioned in the later novel and elsewhere as standing in a striking contrast to the small size of his elder brother, the dwarfish Wu the Elder, Du Jin has drawn him as a kindly fellow of nothing more than normal proportions. There is no trace of the great drinker, the heroic tiger-killer or the bloodthirsty avenger with whom he is associated in most later traditions.

Du Jin’s drawings include all the 108 bandits known from the novel as handed down. Since these are not mentioned in earlier written sources that have survived, the list bears witness to the existence of a Water Margin complex of tales during the lifetime of this artist. Otherwise one can hardly imagine how the painter would have caught on the idea of the 108.

There is some discrepancy between the lists of Xuanhe yishi, Gong Shengyu’s eulogies and Du Jin’s picture album, pointing to a more fluent stage of the story cycles, before printed versions of the whole Water Margin saga could have been produced (see also Chapter 4, 4.12). But the arrangement of characters displayed in the album is amazingly close to the person gallery of the later novel, as extant in the earliest editions that have survived. This could hardly be
expected unless there existed since the mid-15th century – ca one hundred years before the first extant editions of the novel – either a very stable tradition of storytelling around the Water Margin theme, or written versions of the novel were already circulating, or both of these pre-conditions were present.

Notes

1 A rich collection on the life in the entertainment quarters of the Song capital is found in Idema and West 1982: 11, 56–87.


3 Cf. Ducheng ji sheng, in: Meng Yuanlao deng: Dongjing menghua lu, wai si zhong, see section Washe zhong ji. This work was written in imitation of Dongjing menghua lu, but described the scenery of Lin’an (modern Hangzhou), the capital of Southern Song (1225–1278).

4 Cf. Mengliang lu, in: Meng Yuanlao deng: Dongjing menghua lu, wai si zhong, see section Xiaoshuo jiang jing shi.

5 Luo Ye: Zuiweng tan lu (Song) 1958. On Wu xingzhe, see p. 4. The dating of this work is difficult, since little is known about the author, and the textual history is fragmentary, cf. Nienhauser 1986: 807–808.

6 Since the dating of the Zuiweng tan lu is problematic and the work can only tentatively be attributed to the Song period, it is necessary to keep in mind that some or all of the contents of the work may come from a later period, probably the Yuan period. But on account of the similarity between this work and the guide books of the Song period, I have chosen to treat it in this context.


9 These designations are also found in the Mengliang lu, in the section Xiaoqiao jiang jing shi, cf. Meng Yuanlao deng: Dongjing menghua lu, wai si zhong.


11 This four-syllable expression is among the fixed phrases that follow the Wu Song tale through history up to the present (Jin Ping Mei cihua, Chapter 1, Fuzhou pinghua, Yangzhou pinghua, cf. Chapter 8, 11.)

12 See the discussion of the connection between 'history telling', shuoshu 說書, quoted from Jin dynasty sources (1115–1234), 'telling of history', jiang shi 講史, in the Song dynasty sources, and the printed texts of the pinghua genre from Yuan, in Jiang Kun and Ni Zhongzhi 2005: 298–301. See also Breuer 2001: 3–5.
For the Three Kingdoms theme, Boris Riftin has demonstrated how the relationship between the novel *San guo yanyi* and the plain tale *San guo zhi pinghua*, cf. below, was essential, both with a view to the narrative form and the episodes of content. The plain tale provided not only the basic framework, but also extra episodes not found in other works, cf. Riftin 1970, 1997: 201–219.


The historical foundations to the Water Margin complex of tales are treated in detail in Irwin 1953: 9–22. About Song Jiang and his bandit lair, see page 17.

This characteristic is typical of oral-related written materials, reflecting names as heard, rather than as seen and copied from written sources. Cf. Mair 1989: 119; Irwin 1953: 53–54, n 40; Ge Liangyan 2001: 111–112. Also the place names for the happenings in the stories of Song Jiang and his men are in a fluent stage in the early period, cf. Irwin 1953: 31–32.

Another extant edition of *Xuanhe yishi*, prepared by a certain Wang Luochuan in Nanjing 1896, is divided into four juan, cf. Hennessey 1984: 34 n 55.


Some of the short fiction is tentatively dated to the ‘early period’ from the Song to the early Ming (ca 1450), even though it is only preserved in Ming collections. Cf. Hanan 1973: 212.


A performer is implied in the prologue poem of the first juan, but the ‘simulated context’ is not so obvious as the translation by Hennessey would indicate, cf. Hennessey 1981: 3 and Hennessey 1984: 39. An alternative reading might put more emphasis on the myth of a ‘true friend’, zhiyin 知音, so that the first line, ‘Let me, for the moment, hush the lute upon my knee’, mainly alludes to this story. In that case the poem is not so much a mirror of a storytelling situation as it is a reminder of what integrity and true friendship mean (the usual association of the legend about the lute player Bo Ya 伯牙 and his friend Zhong Ziqi 鐘子期).

The translation of the passage below is from Hennessey 1981: 51. The story about Yang Zhi is told in less than one page of the facsimile edition of *Xuanhe yishi*, Zhou Guangpei 1994: 487. In the *Rongyutang* edition of the *Shuihu zhuan* Yangzhi’s story is told over several chapters (beginning in Chapter 12) and has a considerably different plot construction.

There are about twenty more pre-verse phrases that occur only once.


Examples of this are found in the Yangzhou storyteller’s performances, Børdahl 1996, Part Two.

McLaren 1998. Chapter 2, treats in detail the question of reading/vocalizing/performing of the chantefables from the fifteenth century, see pp. 40–42, 50–51, see also pp. 283–284.

While ‘one only saw’, dan jian, seems to be exclusively used before verse, one finds integrated into the prose ‘he/one only saw . . .’, zhi jian, 只見, an expression which is often followed by a fixed saying or simile. ‘It was really’ que shi, is not only used as a tag introducing verse, but also inside the narrative prose or dialogue in its ordinary sense ‘that was however’. When such fixed expressions or ‘stock phrases’ are used not only in fixed positions (before verse, beginning or ending paragraphs, etc., but enter into passages of prose narration or dialogue, this would seem to be a criterion supporting their currency in spoken language and eventually in oral performance.

The format and narrative structure of the San guo zhi pinghua are studied in detail in Riftin [1970] 1997, see 139–165. In the case of Xuanhe yishi the earliest printed text that is transmitted is from late Qing, and therefore an analysis of the page layout is not relevant. With a view to both the plain-tale texts of the Yuan period and the chantefables of early Ming, McLaren 1998 has shown how an analysis of the layout of the printed page may supply evidence not only of the usage of the text as reading material, but also of how the written and printed mode of vernacular shuochang was gradually developed, see in particular pp. 109–111.

This format is similar to the printing of drama during the Yuan, cf. West 1998: 243–244.

Cf. Jiang Kun, Ni Zhongzhi 2005: 334. Zhao Jingshen was the first to suggest this in his article ‘Tan Ming Chenghua kanben "shuochang cihua"’ 1972.


McLaren 1998: 263. In some of the modern metrical genres, such as Shandong clapper tales, Shandong kuai shu, a few stock phrases of introduction, connection and conclusion are found as part of the verse, also in contemporary performances, cf. Børdahl 2010b: 153, 155; see also Chapters 8 and 10.

The expression qie shuo occurs also in dialogue passages in the Xuanhe yishi, corroborating the oral usage of this expression, cf. Xuanhe yishi deng liang zhong 1993: 50.

In the four-juan edition of Wang Luochuan 1819, one juan ends with a formulaic transitory sentence, not found in the two-juan edition examined here. Cf. Hennesssey 1984: 34 n5.
This feature is also in common with the longer stories, *huaben*, of Song and Yuan origin, cf. LIU Zhen 1997: 245–247.

In the other plain tales, that I have had occasion to skim through, such as *Xin bian Wu dai shi pinghua* 新編五代史平話 [Plain tales of the Five Dynasties] (Yuan, reprinted 1955) the usage of stock phrases like those above seems also in a fluent stage where many free combinations are used, adding more forms to those already entered into the list above. The *Wu Wang fa Zhou pinghua* 武王伐紂平話 [Plain tale on how King Wu punished Zhou], seems more standardized and the total number of such phrases more limited. The stock phrases of transition are limited to three, two of them the same as in the *San guo zhi pinghua*: ‘Let’s, however, tell’, *que shuo*, ‘the story says’, *hua shuo*, and the third is a variant form ‘the story divides into two parts’, *hua fen liang duan*. Further, in this plain tale we find one of the fixed phrases describing the passage of time that were later perpetuated in the ‘manner’ of vernacular fiction: ‘Time passed like an arrow, days and months went by like the shuttle’, *shaoguang si jian, riyue ru suo* 韶 光 似 箭 ﹐日 月 如 梭. Simulated dialogue with the audience is coined as ‘What happened to him?’, *xingming ruhe*, ‘how did he look?’, *zen jian de*, and ‘Who was it that . . .?’, *de shi shei*. . . .的 是誰.

In the twelfth century *chantefable* *Xixiang ji zhugongdiao* 西廂記諸宮調 [Medley about the Western Wing] by DONG Jieyuan the expression *yiben hua* 一本話 [a story] is used repeatedly, cf. DONG Jieyuan (Song) 1955: 3, 10.

The Japanese scholar Masuda Wataru has argued convincingly that *huaben* during the Song period would simply mean ‘a story’, and not have the connotation of a written story or script, cf. MASUDA 1965. But the understanding of the word *huaben* continued fluctuating according to the theoretical outlook of the scholars. For a discussion of the definition of *huaben* in Chinese and Western scholarship, cf. LEVY 1981: 11–19. See also CHEN Wulou 1989. YANG Yi tacitly departs from the usual definition of *huaben* as a storyteller’s script and defines the concept exclusively as a literary genre. Cf. YANG Yi 2004: 304–308.

Items from the Tang are sometimes included as well, cf. HU SHIYING 1980: 30–31. Some of these *huaben* from Tang, including one story that ends with naming itself a ‘picture book’, *huaben* 畫本, are reprinted in XIAO Xiangqí and OUYANG JIAN 1991: 85.

Cf. MAIR 1989: 110: ‘1. They (the *bianwen* manuscripts) were promptbooks, *aides-mémoire*, or scripts copied by the storytellers themselves for use in performance. 2. They were composed by someone else for the storyteller to deliver. 3. They were essentially apprentice’s notes, . . . intended for professional training purposes. 4. They were taken down during performance by an author (or auditor) for personal use or for someone else who wished to have a record of the performance. 5. An auditor wrote out the story from memory after an individual performance – again for his own use or for someone who engaged him specifically for that purpose. 6. Though obviously a product of oral *ambiance*, transformation texts are strictly speaking, written literature, conceived, executed, and enjoyed in the study’.

Wilt IDEMA considers the Yuan period *pinghua* as ‘folk books’ with marginal influence from storytelling, cf. IDEMA 1974. Boris RIFTIN also recognized their similarity to European ‘Volksbücher’, but describes in detail how they at the same time reflect

Cheng Yizhong mentions a few texts among the early huaben that he considers very close to actual storyteller’s scripts, because of their written style, consisting of portions copied from various sources and inserted into short and sloppy summaries of the plot. He considers Xuanhe yishi to belong to this category. CHENG YIZHONG 1980: 23–26, 35–45.

No genuine storyteller’s script has been preserved from Song or Yuan, and until recently modern storytellers’ scripts were rarely studied. In the 1950s-60s, Věna Hrdličková, did field work among storytellers in the Beijing area, cf. HRDLIČKOVÁ 1964, 1968. Chen Wulou (pseudonym Si Su) was engaged in research on Yangzhou folk culture and storytelling, cf. CHEN WULOU (SI SU) 1962, 1994, 1999. The pioneering research on scripts by these scholars had considerable impact, but many linguistic and narrative aspects of such scripts were not yet dealt with in detail. In recent years Junko Iguchi 2003, 2007, has provided some new evidence on storytellers’ scripts in the tradition of Laoting dagu 樂亭大鼓 [Laoting big drum] in North China, and I have also undertaken some case studies of scripts in the tradition of Yangzhou pinghua, BØRDAHL 2005, 2009. However, it must be acknowledged that the study of scripts is a field of its own, which demands special expertise that one can only hope to acquire through extended studies. My own essays are just a small beginning. Still, I feel that my recent acquaintance with storytellers’ scripts has told me something essential about the kind of text that such scripts belong to. I have therefore in this chapter adduced some of the observations drawn from these manuscripts, see Chapter 9.

Most of the ‘new storyteller books’, xin huaben, on Yangzhou storytelling have been created by scholars who have made sound recordings of oral performances and edited them into book form. There is, however, one case where xin huaben were created by a storyteller, Fei li, son of Fei Junliang, who kept his fathers scripts and then rewrote them into books, based on his own performance practice as his father’s student, cf. FEI JUNLIANG, WANG FUCHANG, FEI LI 1985 and FEI JUNLIANG, FEI LI 1986.
Wu Song Fights the Tiger in the Novel
3

The Novel and the Episode of Jingyang Ridge

3.1. Ten Chapters on Wu Song

The Ming novel Water Margin, Shuihu zhuan, contains ten chapters, hui, especially devoted to the saga of the hero Wu Song.¹ The first of these chapters, in some editions Chapter 22, in some Chapter 23, has the title:

横海郡柴進留賓
景陽崗武松打虎

Chai Jin Entertains Guests in Henghai County, Wu Song Fights a Tiger on Jingyang Ridge

The first part of the title couplet is concerned with a transitory passage of a few pages leading from one saga – about Song Jiang – over to another, namely the Wu Song saga. In this first part of the chapter Wu Song is spending his time as a refugee in the manor of Lord Chai Jin, after fleeing from his hometown where he has supposedly killed a man during a drunken fit, an accident that is only hinted at in the novel. Unexpectedly he meets Song Jiang here for the first time, and they take a great liking to each other and become sworn brothers. Wu Song is, however, about to leave the residence and return home, taking leave of Chai Jin and Song Jiang under much festivity. The second part of the title couplet points to the main contents of the chapter – the episode about how Wu Song on his way home bare-fisted conquered the man-slaughtering tiger on the Shandong mountain ridge.

The tale consists of two parts: first the story about how Wu Song arrives at a tavern where the innkeeper has a strong and good wine, called ‘Three Bowls and You Cannot Cross the Ridge’, San wan bu guo gang. Next the story about how the drunken hero climbs the ridge of Jingyanggang and meets the tiger.

The story can be seen as a prelude to the following chapters where Wu Song meets his beautiful sister-in-law, Pan Jinlian, who is an adversary no less worthy of his steel than the man-eating tiger (cf. Yang Yi 2002: 41).
In the final chapter of the ten-chapter cycle, Wu Song bumps into Song Jiang for the second time and is rescued from imminent danger. A year has passed since they met, and Wu Song recounts the happenings:

'Yes, after I left Mr. Chai’s and said goodbye to you,' Wu Song explained, ‘I came to the Jingyang Ridge and killed the tiger and had it taken to Yanggu where the governor made me captain. And then my sister-in-law behaved disgracefully – she had an affair with this Ximen Qing and poisoned my brother. I killed them both and gave myself up to the authorities. At first my case was dealt with in the district, but then it was transferred to Dongping, where Governor Chen [Chen Wenzhao] came to my rescue and had me banished to Mengzhou.’ He went on to tell how he ran into the Gardener [Zhang Qing] and his wife, the Ogress [Mu Yecha], at the crossroads, how in Mengzhou he made the acquaintance of the Young Master [Shi En] and beat up Jiang the Door-God [Jiang Menshen], and later killed General Zhang [Zhang Dujian] and fourteen others and escaped to the Gardener’s again. He explained why the Ogress advised him to dress as a monk, how he tried out his swords on Centipede Hill, killing Wang the Daoist [Wang Daoren] and how he got drunk at the village inn and beat up the younger Kong [Kong Liang]. All his affairs, from beginning to end, he recounted to Song Jiang.

(Translation Dent-Young 1997: 194–195)²

After this meeting, Wu Song travels, dressed as a monk, to Erlongshan [Twin Dragon Peak] to join Lu Zhishen’s band of outlaws. Wu Song’s ten-chapter saga only covers about a year of his life. But during that year he shows himself as the embodiment of the heroic codex of the Liangshan bandits, not only by fearlessly opposing the unjust behaviour of the gentry, by constantly making friends with other men of good will and valour, but also by his contemptuous rebuff of any sexual advances by the females that he encounters, and his cruel and random killing not least of women that get in his way.

At this point the saga of Wu Song ends, and he only plays a sporadic and minor role in the later portions of the novel. The storyline of Song Jiang continues from here, and only much later are we told how Wu Song and Lu Zhishen join forces with the men of Song Jiang.³

Although written versions of the tiger story existed already in the performance-related literature of drama from the Yuan period, it is only with the novel that it is preserved in extant editions.

### 3.2. Early editions of ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger on Jingyang Ridge’

The textual history of the Shuihu zhuan is highly complicated and it is not the purpose of this study to retrace the paths of its development.⁴ Let it only be briefly mentioned that there is a long tradition, as long as the first editions that have survived, to consider the work authored or compiled by two men from the 13th–14th centuries, namely Shi Nai’an, who might have been born already in
the 13th century, but whose existence is more legendary than historical, and Luo Guanzhong (ca 1330–1400), a playwright who is honoured with the editorship of both *San guo yanyi* [Romance of the Three Kingdoms] and *Shuihu zhuan*. Most contemporary researchers are sceptical about this attribution, but there are no other obvious candidates for the authorship. Moreover ‘authorship’ of the early Chinese novels is a concept that needs to be qualified in connection with a deeper understanding of the rise of the novel and its relationship to oral traditions (Ge Liangyan 2001: 166–167).

The earliest editions of *Shuihu zhuan* that are preserved to the present time, although only in fragments, are from the early 16th century, the Ming dynasty reign periods of Zhengde (1506–1521) and Jiajing (1522–1566). There is a general consensus to consider 1540 the latest possible year for the earliest extant editions of the novel.5

The fragments of these surviving editions from before 1540 do, however, not contain the Wu Song saga. This story is found for the first time in a couple of editions belonging to the system called the ‘simple editions’, *jianben*. The simple editions are characterized by having detailed plot, but simple description, while the so-called ‘full editions’, *fanben*, have a sometimes slightly simpler plot, but far more detailed description. The extant copies of the two lines of editions are not the first in their respective lines. The question of their mutual relationship has been much debated.8 In the preserved editions derivation seems to go both ways (Ma Yau-woon 1992: 35–40), but in his latest work Ma Yau-woon is convinced about the primacy of the *fanben*. In his view all the *jianben* that have survived are sloppy editions, full of mistakes, created by clumsily shortening the *fanben* (Ma Yau-woon 2004: 60). Since we take the Wu Song saga as point of departure, it is in two *jianben* editions that the first textual versions of this story are found, beginning with the tale about Wu Song’s life-and-death struggle with the tiger on Jingyang Ridge.

In the following the manifestation of the tiger tale in two of the earliest versions, belonging to the *jianben* editions,7 is compared with the earliest version found in the *fanben* editions (Plaks 1987: 288). (For bibliographic information on the editions, see Sources, Appendix B, Novel).8

In Table 3.2.a the full names of these editions are listed, but in the following they will be referred to by the shorter names, bolded in the table.9

Further, the earliest edition of *Jin Ping Mei* [Gold, Vase, Plum, also translated as ‘The Plum in the Golden Vase’, entitled *Jin Ping Mei cihua* [Jin Ping Mei in verse and prose] (1617), is also taken into consideration. In Chapter 1 of this novel the tale of ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’ serves as the starting point of the novel.

The three versions of the tiger tale from early editions of the novel *Shuihu zhuan*, namely Chapter 22 from the Stuttgart fragment (16th century), Chapter 22 from the *Shuangfengtangben* (1594) and Chapter 23 from the *Rongyutangben* (1610), are compared from the point of view of their narrative and linguistic relationships – their text-linguistic interrelation. The layout of the printed pages is often significant for an understanding of the relationship between oral and written traditions, as well as between various written/printed traditions. This
aspect is therefore given detailed consideration. Evidence from *Jin Ping Mei cihua*, as well as other editions of *Shuihu zhuan* (including at times chapters from other parts of the Wu Song saga) will occasionally be mentioned, but focus is foremost on the three early *Shuihu zhuan* editions.

### 3.3. Page layout and textual unit

The Stuttgart Fragment and the *Shuangfengtangben* editions of *Shuihu zhuan* both consist of a number of ‘scrolls’, *juan*, which are further subdivided into ‘chapters’, *hui*. The tiger story is found in scroll five, Chapter 22 in both editions. The pages are cut in wood as whole pages, with many ‘vulgar’ characters, *su zi* (simplified characters, *jianti zi*), and ‘wrong characters’, *cuo zi*, i.e. mostly homophonic loan characters, sprinkled in the text.

The Stuttgart Fragment has a picture on top of each page, *shang tu*, with captions on both sides for a seven syllable sentence, divided into 4 and 3 characters.

<table>
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<th>Table 3.2.a. Earliest editions of <em>Shuihu zhuan</em> containing the chapter of Wu Song and the tiger</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stuttgart fragment</strong>, <em>Chazeng jiaben</em> [Edition A with additional chapters] (late 16th century, <em>jianben</em>) The Whole Story of the Noble and Righteous Men of the Water Margin, Capital Edition Complete with Illustrations, with Addition of the Tian Hu and Wang Qing Chapters, Scroll Five <em>Jingben quan xiang chazeng Tian Hu Wang Qing Zhongyi shuihu quan zhuan juan zhi wu</em> 京本全像插增田王慶忠義水浒全傳卷之五</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shuangfengtangben</strong> [Edition from the Shuangfengtang printing house] (1594, <em>jianben</em>) The Story of the Noble and Righteous Men of the Water Margin, Capital Edition with Additions and Corrections, Complete with Illustrations, and with Many Commentaries <em>Jingben zengbu jiaozheng quanxiang Zhongyi shuihu zhuan pinglin</em> 京本增補校正全像忠義水浒傳評林</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rongyutangben</strong> [Edition from the Rongyutang printing house] (1610, <em>fanben</em>) The Story of the Noble and Righteous Men of the Water Margin with Commentary by Li Zhuowu <em>Li Zhuowu xiansheng piping Zhongyi shuihu zhuan</em> 李卓吾先生批評忠義水滸傳</td>
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<th>Table 3.2.b. <em>Jin Ping Mei cihua</em> with the tale of Wu Song and the tiger retold in Chapter 1</th>
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<td><em>Jin Ping Mei cihua</em> (1617) Jin Ping Mei in verse and prose <em>Jin Ping Mei cihua</em> 金瓶梅詞話</td>
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3. The Novel and the Episode of Jingyang Ridge

3.3. Page layout and textual unit

The Stuttgart Fragment and the Shuangfentangben editions of Shuihu both consist of a number of 'scrolls', juan, which are further subdivided into 'chapters', hui.10 The tiger story is found in scroll five, Chapter 22 in both editions. The pages are cut in wood as whole pages, with many 'vulgar' characters, su zi (simplified characters, jianti zi) and 'wrong characters', cuo zi, i.e. mostly homophonic loan characters, sprinkled in the text.11 The Stuttgart Fragment has a picture on top of each page, shang tu, with captions on both sides for a seven syllable sentence, divided into 4 and 3 characters (sometimes 4 + 4 characters). The rest of the page contains the main text, xia wen, in 13 columns of 23 characters.12 Poems are not indented, but each verse line is separated by a space. The division between chapters is marked by a circle, under which the number and title of the chapter are written.

In the Shuangfentangben each page has an upper commentary of small columns with three characters, shang ping, (also called 'brow commentary', meipi,) a picture in the upper middle portion of the page with captions at both sides, zhong tu, and a lower section of main text, xia wen, of 14 columns of 21 characters. Poems are indented by five spaces. The division between chapters is marked by a circle and indentation of the chapter title in the running text.

The pictures of both jianben editions have a flat and stiff, naïve and direct quality, apparently with little moral taboo.13 The pictures of the two editions only partly correspond to each other, and the captions have different texts. Some pictures bridge the contents of two chapters.

Figure 3.3.a. Stuttgart Fragment, beginning of Chapter 22.
This page layout is reminiscent of some of the plain tales from the first decades of the 14th century and the chantefables of the mid-15th century. But there are also significant differences, such as the lack of directions in cartouche to ‘sing’ and ‘speak’, and the clear marking of bui by indentation and a circle above the number of the bui. The insertion of meipi commentary and the indentation of poems in the Shuangfengtangben link this edition to the fanben format, cf. below.

The liberty of sexual description found among the illustrations in the two jianben editions does not have counterparts in the plain tales or the chantefables, and it is also absent in the fanben editions of Shuihu zhuan.14

The Rongyutangben edition consists of 100 juan corresponding to the 100 bui, all of which are numbered. The tiger story is found in Chapter 23, di ershsisan bui, beginning on a new left hand page with a chapter-initial whole-page illustration to the right.15 The pages are likewise cut in wood as whole pages. There are far less ‘vulgar’ characters, but this text also features some
‘wrong’ homophonous characters’. The pages have a sporadic upper commentary of small columns with three characters, *meipi*, and a full-page main text of 11 columns with 22 characters, occasionally with an interlinear comment (not in Chapter 23). After each *hui* a commentary, attributed to Li Zhuowu (Li Zhi, 1527–1602), is inserted.

On the text pages poems are indented by one character and chapter-title couplets by three characters. Other couplets are not indented. The commentary in the end is indented by one character and circles added to characters of these columns. After the chapter-final commentary the page is left empty.

No pictures are found on the text pages, but in front of each chapter, i.e. each *juan*, there are two full-page pictures that correspond to the contents of the couplet title.

Each line of the couplet is repeated on the picture where it belongs. This layout is of course closely adapted to the way the original work was published, namely in 100 separate volumes, *juan*, beginning with a double-page of ‘inserted illustrations’, *chatu* (cf. Hegel 1998: 179–197). The pictures fill the whole space of the page and are full of details referring to the textual contents. Their style is very different from those two *jianben*, more polished, free and natural in the depiction of movements, but also – as it seems – less direct and uninhibited in the choice of pictorial subject.

The page layout of the *Jin Ping Mei cihua* follows that of the *Rongyutangben* in most respects. It has 100 *hui*, arranged in scrolls, *juan*, of 10 *hui* each. There is
The chapter titles of the three Shuihu zhuan editions and Jin Ping Mei cihua, containing the word ‘chapter’ or ‘session’, hui, indicate this term as the textual unit of division of the narrative inside the novel. Also the final sentence of each chapter, belonging to the category of stock phrases or meta-narrative phrases (see Chapter 5, 5.2) mentions the hui as the next textual unit: ‘explanation [follows] in the next session’, xia hui fenjie, or ‘please, listen to the explanation in the next session’, qie ting xia hui fenjie.

The words used in the chapter-concluding phrase point to ‘listening’, ting, and ‘explaining’, fenjie, not to reading and writing. That the end-phrase plays on the oral situation of storytelling, where the storyteller explains and the audience listens can hardly be contended. The meaning of hui is here close to the original meaning of ‘returning’, i.e. a ‘session’ in a series of ‘sessions’ to which both storyteller and audience ‘return’ (see also Cihai 1948: 300).

Apart from the chapter-final phrase, the narrative unit of hui is, however, not part of the narrative text in the three novel editions, insofar as there are no further references to the ‘session’ as performance inside the tiger tale. However, in Chapter 51 of the Rongyutangben there is a description of a female
performer who gathers money after each *hui*. In a memoir from 1638 Zhang Dai describes how he heard the famous storyteller Liu Jingting perform Wu Song and the tiger, and how expensive it was to hire the artist. Here the meaning of *hui* is connected with the payment for a storytelling session.

Example 3.3

一日說書一回，定價一兩

He told one session of storytelling a day. The price was one silver tael

(Zhang Dai (Ming/Qing) 1986: 68).

Both of these examples indicate that a *hui* in connection with early storytelling was the unit of performance that the performer expected to get paid for. The language used both for the numbering of the *hui* at the start and for the

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(Zhang Dai 張岱 (1599–1684?)

Liu Jingting 柳敬亭 (1592–1674)
concluding phrase is in vernacular style which is the general style of the narration. One might say that the hui functions as an imitation of the storytelling situation, the session, and as such belongs to the narrative as a manifestation of the ‘storyteller’s manner’. At the same time it has a purely written/literary function as a division marker of the printed text into book chapters. In that sense the word bridges the meaning of ‘session’ and ‘chapter’.

The unit of scroll, juan, on the other hand displays a purely written/literary function. It does not in principle indicate any unit of the narrative, but only a unit of paper and binding. In the Rongyutangben and the Jin Ping Mei cihua this different status of the unit is also reflected in the language, where the numbering of the scrolls is written in explicit wenyan style: ‘twenty-third of the scrolls’, juan zhi ershisan, respectively ‘First of the scrolls’, juan zhi yi (Jin Ping Mei cihua). In the jianben editions, the Stuttgart Fragment and Shuangfengtangben, the difference between the two kinds of units, the narrative textual unit, and the paper scroll unit, is indicated mainly by the placement of the scroll number in the margin of the text, written in a laconic pseudo wenyan style, respectively: ‘Complete Water Margin scroll five’, Shuihu quan juan wu juan, and Water Margin scroll five, Shuihu wu juan.

The layout of both the simple editions of the Stuttgart Fragment and the Shuangfengtangben, as well as the full edition of Rongyutangben and the Jin Ping Mei cihua point first and foremost to their function as commercial editions for a reading audience. In clear contrast to the Ming Chenghua chantefables, there is nothing in the printing technique that would suggest oral performance (with the novel texts functioning as librettos or scripts). The textual features of the printed texts nevertheless show certain affinities to oral performance. The way the text is divided into units exemplifies the interaction between oral performance and book production.

3.4. Prose and verse

Both jianben and fanben editions of Shuihu zhuan are mainly in prose. The Stuttgart Fragment and the Shuangfengtangben have two inserted shi poems in hepta-syllabic metre. The Rongyutangben has the same two shi poems and three more. Both editions also have a long poem, an ‘old ballad’ gufeng. The title of the tiger story has the form of a couplet with tonal symmetry and asymmetry of the syllables (composed according to a matrix of shifting tones), and at the chapter ending of the Rongyutangben there are two further couplets (not indented). They are absent in the two jianben.

The alternation of prose and verse is among the pertinent features of the early vernacular fiction, a genre convention shared with the better part of the performance genres of ‘telling and singing’, shuochang. In the Shuihu zhuan poems and couplets are, however, inserted with fairly long intervals into the prose narrative, clearly distinct from the truly prosimetric genres where prose and verse play more equal roles. The novel Jin Ping Mei cihua comes much closer to the prosimetric oral genres, featuring 20 poems and songs over the 39 pages of Chapter 1, where the tiger story is retold.
The proportion of prose and verse in the *Shuihu zhuan*, as well as the fact that there is no indication that the poems should be sung, does however correspond amazingly well with the format of storytelling genres, such as *Yangzhou pinghua* in late 20th century performance (Børdahl 2003: 88–92). During the Qing dynasty Kangxi period (1662–1723) *Jin Ping Mei* was also performed in Yangzhou, probably as story-singing, *tanci, xianci*. It is not clear when this repertoire was lost in local oral performance (Wei Ren and Wei Minghua 1985: 268; *Yangzhou quyi zhi* 1993: 116).

Both *jianben* and *fanben* editions of *Shuihu zhuan* begin the chapter with a poem of the *shi* type (the same poem), coached in *wenyan*-like laconic sentences, with rhyme and rhythm obviously intended for the ear, if also only the ‘inner ear’ of silent reading. The decorative function of the poems, breaking the running text of vertical character columns into sections with white spaces above and around the poetic lines, should also be taken into account. The poems offer pleasant breaks in a compact page and serve to sectionalize the chapters/sessions, *huì*.

In the *Rongyutangben*, a so-called ‘storyteller’s stock phrase’ (meta-narrative phrase, cf. Chapter 2, 2.8–11), ‘The story goes . . .’ *hua shuo*, follows after the introductory poem, revoking an oral performance of storytelling. The fictional ‘simulacrum’ is established from the very beginning of the chapter/session, first with the ‘reciting’ of a poem as was presumably also the habit among storytellers, and next with a stock phrase of beginning the oral performance. The narrative frame is ‘telling’, *shuo*, albeit for reading. It is noteworthy, however, that the two *jianben* do not use the *hua shuo* formula, but start the narrative directly: ‘There was a man . . .’, *nahan* . . . The *Jin Ping Mei cihua*, on the other hand, incorporates a considerably higher frequency of storyteller’s stock phrases compared to the *Rongyutangben*.

Unlike the Ming *chantefables* and many later *shuochang* genres, as well as the drama, the novel has no indications that certain portions, such as poems or other set pieces should be sung or chanted, *chang*, while other portions should be ‘told’, *shuo*, or ‘spoken’, *bai*. But the *Jin Ping Mei cihua* sometimes indicates the tune of the songs, *ci*, something that we also find in drama scripts and some later texts of performance genres.

### 3.5. Narrator Type

The narrators found in the *jianben* and *fanben* editions of *Shuihu zhuan* belong to the *extradiegetic, heterodiegetic, third-person narrator* type, according to the system of Gérard Genette – the same type as that of the epics of Homer (Genette 1980: 227, 245; see also Børdahl 1996: 181–182, 189–194). In the three editions the narrator is mainly *covert*, but in the *Rongyutangben* the narrator at a certain point changes to the *overt* form, declaring himself as ‘the storyteller’, *shuohuade*, openly (in contrast to the covert type of Homer). This feature of the narrator is even more explicit in the *Jin Ping Mei cihua*.

Through the meta-narrative phrases of transition the narrator of the *Rongyutangben* is on the point of being overt: the first-person pronoun is not used,
but it is the logical subject of stock phrases such as ‘Let us resume our story’, *que shuo*, ‘Let [me, us] tell now . . .’, *zhi shuo*, and ‘Please, listen to [my] explanation in the next session’, *qie ting xia bu fen jie*. The most striking example of an overt narrator is, however, in the ‘simulated dialogue’ in the first episode of the text, where the *Rongyutangben* has ‘Storyteller, why did Chai Jin not like Wu Song? In fact . . .’, *shuohuade, Chai Jin yin he bu xi Wu Song? Yuanlai . . .* This kind of open declaration of the narrator as a storyteller is used relatively seldom in the *Rongyutangben*. In the *Jin Ping Mei cihua* the overt narrator as well as the overt narratee is a frequent feature, in Chapter 1 expressed by stock phrases such as: ‘Storyteller, why do you only want to tell . . .?’ *shuohuade, jin zhi ai shuo . . . zuo shen?* and ‘Dear audience, listen now . . ., *kanguan, tingshuo* . . .

In the two *jianben* the explicit overt narrator is not found. In the Stuttgart Fragment the above situation is told in plain third-person narration. In the *Shuangfengtangben* a rhetorical question (narrator’s question to the audience) is inserted ‘Why did Chai Jin not like Wu Song? In fact . . .’ *Chai Jin yin he bu xi Wu Song, yuanlai . . .*. The devices of meta-narrative phrases and simulated dialogue add strongly to the ‘presence’ of the narrating instance in the shape of a storyteller. But this aspect of the ‘storyteller’s manner’ in the novel has markedly different penetration in the three editions of *Shuihu zhuan* – weakest in the Stuttgart Fragment, relatively weak in the *Shuangfengtangben* and stronger in the *Rongyutangben*. In the *Jin Ping Mei cihua* the ‘manner’ of storytelling or story-singing is marked even more regularly and frequently.

All over the Stuttgart Fragment exhibits very few elements of the ‘manner’, which could be an argument for considering the textual form as older than that of both the *Shuangfengtangben* and the *Rongyutangben*. This view is based on the idea that although the ‘manner’ established a simulacrum of storytelling, such imitation is lacking in the earliest texts that are closely connected to a genre of storytelling, such as the Ming *chantefables*. It is also largely absent in late Qing/Republic storyteller’s scripts (*Børdahl* 2005). Anne McLaren has observed: ‘The complete absence of explicit rhetoric in the *chantefables*, in spite of the insistent storyteller style, would further support this view. In general, the adoption of an explicit mode marks the transition from more or less direct imitation of an oral mode to a literary imitation where the oral mode is a rhetorical device’ (*McLaren* 1998: 113–114, 266; see also *Idema* 1974: XXXIV, 71–72, 105, 117; cf. Chapter 2, 2.9. and Chapter 5, 5.3. of the present volume). In Chapter 5 we shall discuss the potential relationship of these editions to oral professional storytelling in the pre-Ming and Ming periods.

### 3.6. Narration and dialogue

The language of both the *jianben* and *fanben* editions of *Shuihu zhuan* is the early written vernacular, *baihua*, with comparatively few passages in literary written style, *wenyan*. The two *jianben* are briefer, not only because they lack an amount of descriptions and dialogue exchanges, but also because the sentences are more concise and abrupt. The grammar and vocabulary – also of the short, concise sentences – reflect, however, the early *baihua* norm (b)
rather than *wenyan* (w). Occasionally *wenyan* formulas, such as ‘how’, *ru he*, ‘why’ *yin he*, ‘here’ *zai ci*, are used instead of corresponding pure *baihua* forms, e.g. *zendi*, *zheli*, but these semi-literary forms are so common in written *baihua*, both in dialogue and in narration, that they can hardly be considered markers of *wenyan*, even if they imply a more concise style.27 In the narrative portions of the *Rongyutangben* a sprinkling of the genitive particle *zhi*, adds a slightly elegant touch. In some dialogue passages sentences with *zhi* signal formal speech. The sentences in the *Rongyutangben* with *wenyan* particles are either absent in the *jianben* or they are without particles.

The language of Chapter 1 of *Jin Ping Mei cihua* where the tiger story is retold has a different character in the first portion, the so-called prologue. Here I shall only compare the three *Shuihu zhuan* editions with the language found in the section about the tiger story in the central part of the chapter (*Quanben Jin Ping Mei cihua* 1982: 52–63).

The language is divided into two main categories, *narration* and *dialogue*. *Dialogue* refers to the direct speech between the characters of the story as well as monologues (soliloquy) and ‘inner speech’, i.e. thought. Everything that is not dialogue (including monologue, etc.) is considered *narration*.28

3.7. Narration

Narration is further divided into three categories, *summary*, *description* and *comment* (Han 1981: 18–19). The prose passages of narration consist mainly of a summary of actions, and description is embedded in these action recordings.

Whenever the narrative of the *Shuihu zhuan* editions shifts to a scene of description, it usually also shifts to poetry, which is introduced with standard tags (cf. Chapter 2, 2.9 and Chapter 5, 5.6). There is little pure description, just as there are few poems. Some of the poems have the function of comment, rather than description, or of both description and comment. In the *Rongyutangben* Wu Song is described from the point of view of Song Jiang in a prose poem occurring shortly after the two of them have met in Chai Jin’s residence; the wind that signals the arrival of the tiger is described in a hepta-syllabic *shi* of four verses. These two poems are lacking in the two *jianben*. But the *shi* about the wind is found in *Jin Ping Mei cihua* in approximately the same form as in the *Rongyutangben*.29 After Wu Song has killed the tiger, a description follows in a long hepta-syllabic poem, called an ‘old ballad’, *gufeng*, found in all the novel versions: the tiger’s majestic exterior while alive is depicted and combined with a poetic summary of the fighting between man and beast, the death of the animal and its magnificence even after death. When Wu Song is feasted and carried through the streets of Yanggu Town in procession, the crowd is described as seen by Wu Song sitting high above. This passage in the *Rongyutangben* (lacking in the *jianben* and in *Jin Ping Mei cihua*) is in prose, but it is introduced with the stock-phrase-like expression ‘look how’ (or ‘one could see how’), *zhi jian*, that often precedes prose passages of vivid description.

In *Shuihu zhuan*, narrator’s comment occurs mostly, but not exclusively, in the form of verse, sometimes combined with descriptive passages, sometimes
Table 3.7. Example of narrator’s comment in prose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stuttgart Fragment</th>
<th>Shuangfengtangben</th>
<th>Rongyutangben</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>原來武松吃醉便打庄客</td>
<td>原來武松吃醉了便要打他庄客</td>
<td>原來武松初來投逹柴進時也一般接納待次後在莊上但吃醉了酒性氣剛莊客有些顧管不到處他便要下拳打他們因此滿莊裡莊客沒一箇道他好眾人只是嫌他都去柴進面前告訴他許多不是處柴進雖然不趕他只是相待得他慢了</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>因此柴進相待得慢</td>
<td>因此柴進相待得慢</td>
<td>因此柴進相待得慢</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In fact, Wu Song used to drink heavily and then often would beat the other guests in his residence, and because of this Chai Jin’s behaviour towards him had grown much cooler.

In fact, Wu Song used to drink heavily and then often would beat the other guests in his residence, and because of this Chai Jin’s behaviour towards him had grown somewhat cooler.

In fact, when Wu Song first arrived he had received a grand welcome. But later he was always getting drunk and owing to his impetuous temperament he was inclined to get a stick and beat the servants whenever their ministrations failed to meet his standards. Consequently there was not one of them who looked on him favourably. They all hated him, and invented all kinds of stories to tell Chai Jin about him. So although Chai Jin did not turn Wu Song out, his behaviour towards him had grown much cooler.

Note: For comparison of the original Chinese texts the version from the Stuttgart Fragment is taken as point of departure. When the Shuangfengtangben has deviating characters, these are rendered in green. In the Rongyutangben those characters that follow the deviations of the Shuangfengtangben are likewise in green, while those that deviate from both jiaben are rendered in purple. The portion in blue shows a sentence where the two jiaben editions differ between them. To what extent the uniform passages are the same, is obvious from the passages in black. Characters in complex form, fanti, and simplified form, jianti, are considered identical.
Song takes leave of his sworn brother, Song Jiang, repeats the prolepsis about his heroic deed and great fame. These two poems are found in all three editions of *Shuihu zhuan*, but not in *Jin Ping Mei cihua*. They emphasize the heroic stature of Wu Song and predict the coming events in the chapter and further on. This is one kind of narrator’s comment which in the *huaben* short story often served to introduce a story. In this case both poems have more or less the same contents. The first of them is placed at the beginning of the ‘session’ (the book chapter), the following is placed at the point where the tale of ‘Wu Song and the tiger’ proper starts. In *Jin Ping Mei cihua* these poems are lacking and the story of Wu Song serves a very different purpose than that of the *Shuihu zhuan*. Wu Song’s feat on Jingyang Ridge should here rather be seen as a symbol of his masculine power that will soon be tested in a confrontation with the female sex (Yang Yi 2004: 377; Gè Liangyan 2006: 43). With this tale the erotic theme of *Jin Ping Mei cihua* is introduced, while Wu Song as a hero is soon placed in the shadow.

When Wu Song in *Shuihu zhuan* rejects the innkeeper’s advice to stay for the night in the tavern and expresses his misgivings about the truth of his warning, the innkeeper returns inside in a huff, after which the Rongyutangben has a short moralizing poem, resembling a common saying, about the situation when people continue to make the same mistake and fail to understand a piece of well-meant advice. It is ambivalent if the poem should be understood as narrator’s comment, or as a *bon mot* expressed by the innkeeper. This poem is lacking in the *jianben* and in *Jin Ping Mei cihua*, but in the latter it turns up in Chapter 9 in a totally different situation.

Finally, at the end of the chapter, Rongyutangben has a saying and two couplets, warning about future disasters. The final couplet is strongly moralistic, expounding the lasting fame of worthy personalities (pointing to Wu Song). None of these poems, sayings or couplets are found in the *jianben* or in *Jin Ping Mei cihua*.

Occasional explanatory comment in prose is introduced by ‘in fact’ *yuanlai*. Rongyutangben has three comments of this type, while the *jianben* only have one. *Jin Ping Mei cihua* has five in the portion about the tiger tale, three in common with the Rongyutangben.

Narrator’s comment diffuses into the continuing summary of actions. On the whole, explanatory comment is given far less scope in the tiger tale of *Shuihu zhuan* and *Jin Ping Mei cihua* compared to the oral traditions of prose storytelling that are still in living transmission (Børdahl 1996: 191).

3.8. Dialogue

A considerable part of the text is dialogue and monologue (including thought), introduced by tag expressions, but with markedly different sets of expressions between the editions. Table 3.8 lists tags for dialogue, monologue and quotations of written sentences and sayings (pre-verse formulas are treated in Chapter 5, 5.6).

While the Stuttgart Fragment and the Rongyutangben both use the *baihua*-form *dao* as the pre-dialogue tag throughout — the only exception being the
form ‘gave a shout’ jiaosheng – the Shuangfengtangben uses the wenyan-form yue, but not in a completely consistent manner. At times the verb before the dialogue or monologue is left without an attached yue, and in a few cases dao is attached instead of the usual yue. The use of yue hardly reflects a more literary style, but seems to function automatically as a colon in the written text, purely a marker of direct speech with no concomitant high-style features in the passages where it occurs. As such it has also been used up to the 20th century in storytellers’ scripts (cf. Børdahl 2005: 249). If vocalized, this verb would have an archaic high-style ring, fitting as a tag for poems, but hardly elsewhere. Shuangfengtangben does not use the verb ‘tell, say’ shuo in the position before direct speech, but only as an action verb inside the narration or dialogue passages, as well as in the stock phrase ‘let’s resume our story’, que shuo. The impression that this edition is written in ‘pseudo-wenyan’ is, as far as the tiger tale is concerned, based on the usage of yue and the terseness of the style. Apart from the commentary in the meipi written in simple wenyan, there are no explicit wenyan markers, such as zhi, ye, zhe, yi, hu, in the main text of this chapter.

The quotation marker ‘the saying is’ changyan dao occurs only in the Rongyutangben. The phrase introduces a sentence of folk wisdom, sometimes uttered by the characters of the story, sometimes representing the narrator’s comment on the situation he is relating. This kind of expression is close to the verse-introductory formulas and the stock phrases of appeal to the audience (see Chapter 5, 5.2–3), but usually the saying that follows does not have metrical form, even though it may feature a number of poetic devices such as alliteration, parallelism and regular rhythm. In the Rongyutangben at large it serves, together with the marker ‘there is an old saying’ zi gu dao, as a high-frequent marker of narrator’s comment (Porter 1991: 282).

In Chapter 1 of Jin Ping Mei cihua the dialogue tag yue is used throughout the first introductory part of the chapter that is written in semi-wenyan, sometimes called the ‘prologue’. But at the point where the story proper begins and Wu Song and his family are introduced, the tag is shifted to dao, sometimes in composite verbal expressions in the same way as the Rongyutangben. Here the use of yue versus dao clearly serves the purpose of emphasizing the solemn (ironically solemn) atmosphere of the introduction in contrast to the more homely everyday flavour of the general narrative style.

3.9. High and low registers in dialogue

A Bakhtinian hetero-glossia is typical for the novel versions, but less conspicuous in the jianben versions (Bakhtin 1991: 259–324; Ge Liangyan 1995: Chapter Six 219–250). In the dialogue passages, the Rongyutangben not infrequently uses wenyan markers to signal a change of register from everyday speech to a more solemn tone. The high-style register characterizes polite and important speech of the heroic or upper class characters, using the final particle ye and the genitive particle zhi, e.g. 1) Chai Jin’s presentation of Wu Song during the first encounter with Song Jiang: ‘He has stayed here for one year’, jin zai cijian yi nian ye, 2) Wu
Table 3.8. Tags for dialogue and monologue in the Shuihu zhuan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stuttgart fragment</th>
<th>Shuangfengtangben</th>
<th>Rongyutangben</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dialogue</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘said’ dao 道 (10+)</td>
<td>‘said’ yue 曰 (10+)</td>
<td>‘said’ dao 道 (10+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘shouted’ jiaodao 叫道 (3)</td>
<td>‘shouted’ jiaodao 叫道 (6)</td>
<td>‘shouted’ jiaodao 叫道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘shouted’ jiaodao 叫道 (2)</td>
<td>‘shouted’ jiaodao 叫道</td>
<td>‘shouted’ jiaodao 叫道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘shouted’ jiaodao 叫道</td>
<td>‘shouted’ jiaodao 叫道</td>
<td>‘shouted’ jiaodao 叫道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘shouted laughing’ xiaodao 笑道 (3)</td>
<td>‘shouted laughing’ xiaodao 笑道 (5)</td>
<td>‘shouted laughing’ xiaodao 笑道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘shouted’ xiedao 謝道</td>
<td>‘shouted’ xiedao 謝道 (3)</td>
<td>‘shouted’ xiedao 謝道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘asked’ wen yue 問曰</td>
<td>‘asked’ wen yue 問曰 (2)</td>
<td>‘asked’ wen yue 問曰</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘answered’ dadao 答道</td>
<td>‘answered’ dadao 答道 (2)</td>
<td>‘answered’ dadao 答道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘shouted’ jiaosheng 叫聲</td>
<td>‘shouted’ jiaosheng 叫聲 (2)</td>
<td>‘shouted’ jiaosheng 叫聲</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monologue</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘speculated’ si dao 思道</td>
<td>‘speculated’ xunsi yue 寻思曰</td>
<td>‘speculated’ xunsi yue 寻思道 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘thought by himself’ zixiang yue 自想曰</td>
<td>‘thought’ xiangdao 想道</td>
<td>‘thought’ xiangdao 想道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘on reflection said’ cunxiang . . . shuodao 存想 . . . 說道</td>
<td>‘said to himself’ ziyun zishuo dao 自言自說道</td>
<td>‘said to himself’ ziyun zishuo dao 自言自說道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quotation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘was written’ xiedao 寫道 (3)</td>
<td>‘was written’ xiedao 寫道 (3)</td>
<td>‘was written’ xiedao 寫道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘was written’ xiedao 寫道</td>
<td>‘was written’ xiedao 寫道 (2)</td>
<td>‘was written’ xiedao 寫道</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘was written’ xie 寫 (2)</td>
<td>‘was written’ xie 寫 (2)</td>
<td>‘the saying is’ changyan dao 常言道</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Number of occurrences in Chapter 22 of the two jianben, Chapter 23 of the Rongyutangben are indicated. No number = 1 occurrence.
### Table 3.9. Terms of address, self reference and reference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stuttgart Fragment</th>
<th>Shuangfengtangben</th>
<th>Rongyutangben</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Little brother</strong></td>
<td><strong>Little brother</strong></td>
<td><strong>Little brother</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>xiaodi</em> 小弟</td>
<td><em>xiaodi</em> 小弟</td>
<td><em>xiaodi</em> 小弟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Wu Song self-</td>
<td>(Wu Song self-</td>
<td>(Wu Song self-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>depreciative to</td>
<td>depreciative to</td>
<td>depreciative to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Jiang)</td>
<td>Song Jiang)</td>
<td>Song Jiang)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Brother Wu</td>
<td>Second Brother Wu</td>
<td>Second Brother Wu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Wu Erlang</em> 武二郎</td>
<td><em>Wu Erlang</em> 武二郎</td>
<td><em>Wu Erlang</em> 武二郎</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Song Jiang to</td>
<td>(Song Jiang to</td>
<td>(Song Jiang to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu Song) (2)</td>
<td>Wu Song) (2)</td>
<td>Wu Song) (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Brother</strong></td>
<td><strong>Second Brother</strong></td>
<td><strong>Second Brother</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu <em>Erlang</em> 武二郎</td>
<td>Wu <em>Erlang</em> 武二郎</td>
<td>Wu <em>Erlang</em> 武二郎</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Song Jiang to</td>
<td>(Song Jiang to</td>
<td>(Song Jiang to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu Song) (2)</td>
<td>Wu Song) (2)</td>
<td>Wu Song) (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>You, Thee</strong> *</td>
<td><strong>You, Thee</strong> *</td>
<td><strong>You, Thee</strong> *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ruo</em> 若</td>
<td><em>ruo</em> 若</td>
<td><em>ruo</em> 若</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Song Jiang</td>
<td>(Song Jiang</td>
<td>(Song Jiang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>respectfully</td>
<td>respectfully</td>
<td>to Wu Song,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to Wu Song, and</td>
<td>to Wu Song, and</td>
<td>and Wu Song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu Song to the</td>
<td>Wu Song to the</td>
<td>to the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magistrate) (3)</td>
<td>Magistrate) (3)</td>
<td>Magistrate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Our house</strong></td>
<td><strong>Our house</strong></td>
<td><strong>Our house</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>anjia</em> 倚家</td>
<td><em>anjia</em> 倚家</td>
<td><em>anjia</em> 倚家</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(innkeeper’s self-</td>
<td>(innkeeper’s self-</td>
<td>(innkeeper’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reference in</td>
<td>reference in</td>
<td>reference in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dialect)</td>
<td>dialect)</td>
<td>dialect)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Waiter</strong></td>
<td><strong>Waiter</strong></td>
<td><strong>Waiter</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>jiubao</em> 酒保</td>
<td><em>jiubao</em> 酒保</td>
<td><em>jiubao</em> 酒保</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(reference, only)</td>
<td>(reference, only)</td>
<td>(reference, only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Waiter</strong></td>
<td><strong>Waiter</strong></td>
<td><strong>Waiter</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>jiujia</em> 酒家</td>
<td><em>jiujia</em> 酒家</td>
<td><em>jiujia</em> 酒家</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(reference, only)</td>
<td>(reference, only)</td>
<td>(reference, only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Host</strong></td>
<td><strong>Host</strong></td>
<td><strong>Host</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>zhuren</em> 主人</td>
<td><em>zhuren</em> 主人</td>
<td><em>zhuren</em> 主人</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(address) (3)</td>
<td>(address) (3)</td>
<td>(address) (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The innkeeper</strong></td>
<td><strong>The innkeeper</strong></td>
<td><strong>The innkeeper</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>dianzhuren</em> 店主</td>
<td><em>dianzhuren</em> 店主</td>
<td><em>dianzhuren</em> 店主</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(reference)</td>
<td>(reference)</td>
<td>(reference)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good guest</strong></td>
<td><strong>Good guest</strong></td>
<td><strong>Good guest</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>keguan</em> 客官</td>
<td><em>keguan</em> 客官</td>
<td><em>keguan</em> 客官</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(innkeeper’s address to</td>
<td>(innkeeper’s address to</td>
<td>(innkeeper’s address to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu Song) (2)</td>
<td>Wu Song) (2)</td>
<td>Wu Song) (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good guest</strong></td>
<td><strong>Good guest</strong></td>
<td><strong>Good guest</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>keguan</em> 客官</td>
<td><em>keguan</em> 客官</td>
<td><em>keguan</em> 客官</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(innkeeper’s address to</td>
<td>(innkeeper’s address to</td>
<td>(innkeeper’s address to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu Song) (2)</td>
<td>Wu Song) (2)</td>
<td>Wu Song) (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Song’s outcry at the sight of the two tigers: ‘Now I am finished!’ *wo jin fan si ye*, and 3) his reply to the District Magistrate: ‘It was not through any merit of my own’, *fei xiaoren zhi neng*. This characteristic is not found in the two *jianben* where we find in the corresponding passages 1) a lack of *wenyan* marker, respectively: *zai ci yi nian* and *zai cijian yi nian*; 2) and 3) the utterances are lacking.

In the *Jin Ping Mei cihua* the tiger tale portion includes Wu Song’s two *wenyan*-coloured expressions, in approximately the same form, e.g. ‘Now I am finished!’ *jin fan wo si ye*, and ‘It was not through any merit of my own’, *fei xiaoren zhi neng*. But further the hunters speak in awesome *wenyan*-style when they first meet Wu Song on the Ridge: ‘Are you a human being or a ghost?’, *ni shi ren ye, shen ye*. The innkeeper’s reference to his tavern as ‘our house’, *anjia*, is in local dialect, but this does not automatically imply low style. Forms marked with * are found in *Jin Ping Mei cihua*, Chapter 1. In this version the hunters use *an* 師父as first-person pronoun.

### Table 3.9, continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>My humble person *</th>
<th>My humble person *</th>
<th>My humble person *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>laoye 老爺</td>
<td>xiaoren 小人</td>
<td>xiaoren 小人</td>
<td>xiaoren 小人</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu Song self-asserting</td>
<td>(Wu Song self-asserting to the waiter)</td>
<td>(Wu Song self-depreciative to the Magistrate) (2)</td>
<td>(Wu Song self-depreciative to the Magistrate) (2)</td>
<td>(Wu Song self-depreciative to the Magistrate) (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>laodye 老爺</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu Song self-asserting</td>
<td>(Wu Song self-asserting to the waiter)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The polite forms are **bolded**; the other forms are mostly neutral daily language, but Wu Song’s self-references ‘father’, *laodie 老爹*, *laoye 老爺*, are menacing low style. The innkeeper’s reference to his tavern as ‘our house’, *anjia*, is in local dialect, but this does not automatically imply low style. Forms marked with * are found in *Jin Ping Mei cihua*, Chapter 1. In this version the hunters use *an* 師父 as first-person pronoun.

And like the use of *wenyan* to mark dignified speech is not a pronounced feature of the *jianben* editions, nor is the dialectal pronoun *an* used in these editions. In the *Jin Ping Mei cihua* the dialectal first-person pronoun *an* is used by the hunters (and in the later part of the chapter also a few times by Jinlian). As mentioned before, the episode in the tavern is only a short ingredient in this version.
A sense of alternating registers is also embedded in the usage of terms of address and of self reference. Here it is not a question of wenyan grammar, but of vocabulary belonging to polite, lofty speech versus daily, sometimes impolite or menacing speech.

As can be seen from the use of terms of address and self reference, there is in the three editions an explicit shifting in register in the speech of the characters. The terms of address and self reference belong to the more pronounced signals of register, mostly implying a number of other linguistic markers that emphasize different registers of high and low styles.

In the Rongyutangben, wenyan-flavoured language occurs mainly in the chivalrous exchanges between Wu Song and his sworn brothers, as well as vis à vis the Magistrate, but also in more solemn declarations towards the crowd of common people who come to watch the dead tiger. Wu Song speaks politely and with a touch of wenyan in his discourse with his equals and superiors, while he talks in low style, at times rudely, with the innkeeper and in his monologues. The innkeeper speaks politely to his customer, but apart from his quotation of the official warning about the tiger, his speech is never couched in wenyan-like high style. Such difference of register would obviously be much more clearly reflected in sound, as is well known from present-day storytelling in Yangzhou and elsewhere (Børdahl 1996: 83–98; 2004; 2010).

In the jianben there is a similar shifting between high-style and low-style register, with high-style in the dialogue of the major figures. But the difference is not equally pronounced. The dialectal first-person pronoun an is not found, and the rude self-references of Wu Song are fewer or lacking. As already mentioned, there are no explicit wenyan markers, so that the difference in style depends on choice of vocabulary and the frequency of semi-literary expressions, such as ru he, yin he, zai ci.

In Jin Ping Mei cihua the hunters use the pronoun an referring to themselves. In this text the episode in the tavern is not found, and therefore we do not have occasion to discuss the variation in language between Wu Song and the inn-keeper. There is no record of the conversation between Wu Song and Song Jiang, but we notice the high-style register in which Wu Song speaks to the Magistrate of Yanggu District, using the pronoun ruo with reference to his Highness and xiaoren with reference to himself. Later in Chapter 1 of this version, conversations between Wu Song and his elder brother and sister-in-law are rendered. Their language is subtly individualized, but all of them speak in a daily vernacular register, the same as that used for the narrative portions. However, the language of Pan Jinlian is at times particularly low-style and offending, at times sweetly ingratiating with a corresponding use of polite terms of address.

3.10. Storyline

For each of the versions of the tiger tale to be analysed in this study, a storyline, indicating the main episodes occurring in the specific version, is provided as part of the comparative analysis. The plot or storyline of the tiger tale as it is realized in the three Shuihu zhuan editions is tabulated below, Table 3.10. Each
episode is indicated by a bolded caption and arranged in the sequence in which it occurs in the text. Textual markers of transition, such as meta-narrative phrases and poems, are indicated. The Stuttgart Fragment exhibits only few meta-narrative phrases.

While some episodes are clearly marked by intervening poems or meta-narrative markers, others have no such foundation. Ultimately a tale could be divided into as many ‘episodes’ as it contains verbal predicates. The system of episodes is here devised in such a way that it covers all the versions of the tiger tale that constitute the core material of the study. The establishment of single episodes is therefore based on inter-textual analysis. Actions, persons and things that play a role in the various versions are noticed, and while some of these have a major role in certain versions and only a minor role or no role in other versions, it is the mutual correspondences of these ingredients of the tale that constitute the system of episodes. The analysis strives for economy, insofar as the number of episodes is reduced to the minimum amount that is necessary to take into account the diverging storylines found in the core material (see also Chapter 8, 8.1).

The two jianben editions are arranged in three sections marked by poems and sometimes meta-narrative markers, including a total of fifteen episodes. The Rongyutanben has six sections, likewise including the same fifteen episodes. The jianben are about one third of the length of the Rongyutangben. Obviously the latter contains many passages not found in the former, so why do these passages not count as extra episodes? The narration in the Rongyutangben of the episodes of the storyline is manifested as a sequence of more ‘embroidered’ or ‘fully told’ versions of the same episodes, with longer descriptions or dialogues, but they do not contain ingredients that would set them off as particular episodes. Moreover, these longer passages do not contain elements of story material corresponding with passages functioning as particular episodes in versions of the tiger tale from other genres, i.e. on the inter-textual level of analysis.

Since the Shuihu zhuan editions are probably the earliest published extant versions of the story, the storylines of these texts might be seen as representing ‘the original’ Ur-version. However, as already mentioned, these jianben and jianben versions are not the earliest extant editions of Shuihu zhuan as a novel; they are only the earliest that contain the tiger story. For one thing, there exist editions that are about fifty years older than the present jianben editions under study here. For another, it is generally acknowledged that other written and printed editions must have preceded those surviving to this day.34

Interestingly, Chapter 1 of the Jin Ping Mei cihua contains story material about the prelude to the tiger tale that is not found in the Shuihu zhuan editions, but is sometimes reflected in later performance literature (see Chapter 8, 8.13).

Taking into consideration the oral traditions from which both novel, drama and later performance genres have arisen, there is still less reason to consider the storyline of the Shuihu zhuan editions as an Ur-form from which all other versions have ‘developed’ or are ‘derived’. Comparing the various storylines of the versions of the tiger tale that constitute the core material for the present

Table 3.10.a Storylines of the three editions of Shuihu zhuan with textual markers of transition (cf. Chapter 5, 5.6)

Table 3.10.b Storyline of the Jin Ping Mei cihua with textual markers of transition
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stuttgart fragment Chapter 22</th>
<th>Shuangfengtangben Chapter 22</th>
<th>Rongyutangben Chapter 23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poem</td>
<td><em>Shi yue</em> 詩曰 Poem</td>
<td><em>Shi yue</em> 詩曰 Poem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying with Chai Jin</td>
<td>Staying with Chai Jin</td>
<td>Staying with Chai Jin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departure</td>
<td><em>Departure</em></td>
<td><em>Departure</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zheng shi 正是:</td>
<td><em>Zheng shi</em> 正是:</td>
<td><em>Zheng shi</em> 正是</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poem</td>
<td><em>Shi yue</em> 詩曰 Poem</td>
<td><em>Shi yue</em> 詩曰 Poem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Que shuo . . .欲說</td>
<td><em>Zhi shuo</em> 只說</td>
<td><em>Zhi shuo</em> 只說</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelling home</td>
<td>Travelling home</td>
<td>Travelling home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tavern</td>
<td>The tavern</td>
<td>The tavern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The warning</td>
<td>The warning</td>
<td>The warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The inscribed tree</td>
<td>The inscribed tree</td>
<td>The inscribed tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The proclamation</td>
<td>The proclamation</td>
<td>The proclamation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rock</td>
<td>The rock</td>
<td>The rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The wind</td>
<td>The wind</td>
<td>The wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tiger appears</td>
<td>The tiger appears</td>
<td>The tiger appears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three ways</td>
<td>Three ways</td>
<td>Three ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking the staff</td>
<td>Breaking the staff</td>
<td>Breaking the staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fighting</td>
<td>The fighting</td>
<td>The fighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The killing</td>
<td>The killing</td>
<td>The killing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Dan jian</em> 但見:</td>
<td><em>Dan jian</em> 但見:</td>
<td><em>Dan jian</em> 但見:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old ballad</td>
<td>Old ballad</td>
<td>Old ballad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two tigers</td>
<td>Two tigers</td>
<td>Two tigers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hunters</td>
<td>The hunters</td>
<td>The hunters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reward</td>
<td>The reward</td>
<td>The reward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zheng shi shen ren xiahui fenjie 正是甚人下回分解</td>
<td>Zheng shi shen ren qie ting xiahui fenjie 正是甚人且聽下回分解</td>
<td>Bijing . . . zheng shi shen ren qie ting xiahui fenjie 畢竟 . . . 正是甚人且聽下回分解</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3.10.b. Storyline of the *Jin Ping Mei cihua* with textual markers of transition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jin Ping Mei cihua with textual markers of transition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prologue</strong> (the first part of Chapter 1 is not concerned with the Wu Song tale)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kanguan ting shuo</em> 看官聽說</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Zhengshi</em> 正是</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Hua shuo</em> 話說</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Song</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wu Song and Wu the Elder</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wounding a man</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staying with Chai Jin</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travelling home</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The warning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The proclamation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The rock</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The wind</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Danjian</em> 但見</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Poem</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The tiger appears</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Three ways</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breaking the staff</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The fighting</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The killing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Danjian</em> 但見</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Old ballad</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Two tigers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The hunters</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The reward</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>You shi wei zheng</em> 有詩為証</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Poem</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wu the Elder, Pan Jinlian and Wu Song</strong> (the last part of Chapter 1 relates the story of how Wu the Elder married Pan Jinlian and the following happenings after Wu Song reunited with his elder brother and moved into their home; in <em>Shuihu zhuang</em> these events belong to the following chapters, and they are not part of the focal tale of this study).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bijing wei zhi houlai heru, qie ting xiahui fenjie</em> 畢竟未知後來何如且聽下回分解</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Enough about . . ., now we shall perform about . . .**

**Anxia . . ., dan biao . . .**

**按下 . . ., 單表 . . .**

**Wu the Elder**

**Wu Dalang**

**武大郎**

If you do not know what happened later, please, listen to the explanation in the next session.

**Bijing wei zhi houlai heru, qie ting xiahui fenjie**

**畢竟未知後來何如且聽下回分解**
study, a different situation can be envisaged. The variation of the storylines of the tiger tale in novel, drama and storytelling is an important witness about oral and written aspects of their textual existence and mutual relationship.

Notes


2 Translation quoted with minor adjustments from Dent-Young 1997: 194–195. In the present study the translation of Dent-Young 1997: 1–17 is used as a basis for the translation of the tiger tale in the novel, but the translation of stock phrases, fixed phrases and many other details are changed in order to be able to show the inter-textual correspondences in the core material of tiger tales.

3 A resumé of the contents of all the chapters of the Shuihu zhuan in its longest version (120 chapters) is found in Irwin 1953: 117–201. The ten chapters of the Wu Song saga are summarized on pages 125–129.

4 Detailed studies of the textual origin and the derivation of early editions of Shuihu zhuan, are found in (English) Irwin 1953, C.T. Hsia 1968, Plaks 1987, Ge Liangyan 2001; (Chinese) Ma Yau-won (Ma Youyuan) 1992, 2004; Shi Changyu 2002a.


6 See Irwin 1960. For a resume of the debate and the views of the most important scholars in this field, see Ge Liangyan 2001: 106–109.

7 The exact dating of the early simple editions is problematic. A group of jianben editions, entitled Jingben chazeng Tian Hu Wang Qing Zhongyi shuihu quan zhuan 京本插增田虎王慶忠義水滸全傳 [The Noble and Righteous Men of the Water Margin, Capital Edition, Complete with Addition of the Tian Hu and Wang Qing episodes], from the Ming Wanli period (1573–1620), is sometimes considered to be earlier in the system of editions. A number of them are kept in European libraries: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Oxford Bodleian Library, Copenhagen Royal Library and the Library of the Vatican, Rome. These editions typically only include a number of scrolls, juan, from the latter part of the novel. In the 1980s an item was discovered in Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, containing a large portion of the first part of the novel, including the Wu Song saga, cf. Ma Yau-won 1992: 55–72; 2004: 1–5. Based on textual comparison, he considers the Stuttgart edition to be earlier than the Shuangfengtang edition (called the Pinglin 詩林 edition, according to the last two characters in its title), mainly because Ma Y. W. finds many improvements, gailiang 改良, in the language of the latter, cf. Ma Yau-won 2004: 40.

8 The Research database on Chinese Storytelling contains a number of further editions for comparison, cf. Sources, Appendix A.

9 The Stuttgart fragment is named according to the place of the library that holds a unique original printing of this jianben edition. The Shuangfengtangben and Rongyutangben editions are named according to their original publishing houses. The Shuangfengtang edition, also often called the Pinglin edition, is among the earliest simple editions, mostly dated 1594, cf. Irwin 1953: 210; Liu Shide 2002b: 253; Ma Yau-
woon 1992: 5, 32; Plaks 1987: 296–301, 533. Most of the preserved items of this edition are incomplete, but there is one complete copy in Japan, 103 hui, cf. MA Yau-woon 1992: 97–110. The Stuttgart fragment could be earlier than the Shuangfengtangben and has interesting details of meta-narrative phrases, see Chapter 5, 5.4–6.

10 The first thirty chapters of the Shuangfengtangben (including nearly the whole of the Wu Song saga) are numbered, while the subsequent 74 hui are left unnumbered. Cf. Shuihu zhi zhuan pinglin, in: Guben xiaoshuo congkan 1990, Vol. 12: 2, Preface.

11 Many of the ‘vulgar’ characters are forms that are the present-day ‘correct’ forms, i.e. simplified forms that have been authorized in the 1950s in Mainland China and are now used instead of the original standard forms. Among the ‘wrong’ characters we find the word ‘brother’, gege 哥哥, written a couple of times with the homonym character for ‘song’, ge 歌, in the Shuangfengtangben, but not in the Stuttgart fragment. The use of homophonic characters is characteristic for texts that are closely connected to a milieu of oral communication, but the usage might also reflect a customary ‘sloppy’ shorthand writing for less serious literature, cf. GE Liangyan 2001: 108, 111–113, 116.

12 For the printing conventions of books in a similar format to the jianben editions, see Hegel 1998: 172–197.

13 This feature is apparent especially in the following chapter about Pan Jianlian and Ximen Qing, where their sexual activities are given full display.

14 In the illustrated Chongzhen (1628–1644) edition of Jin Ping Mei, erotic scenes are frequently depicted with extraordinary straight-forwardness. But in the present study we are only concerned with the original cihua edition (1617) of this novel, which has no illustrations.

15 In the Rongyutangben where each hui corresponds to a ‘scroll’, juan, i.e. a separate volume, the number of the juan is printed on the first and last pages of the juan. In the first character column of the first page of the Chapter 23 is written: ‘Mr Li Zhuowu’s commentary edition of The Noble and Righteous Men of Water Margin, twenty-third of the scrolls’, Li Zhuowu xiansheng piping Zhongyi Shuihu zhuan juan zhi ershisan 李卓吾先生批評忠義水滸傳卷之二十三, and in the last column of the final page of commentary to the text the same line is repeated, with an additional ‘the end’ zhong 終. In the Stuttgart fragment and Shuangfengtangben each juan contains a number of hui. The tiger story is contained together with some previous and following hui in the fifth scroll, wu juan 五卷, indicated in the margin column of each page.

16 For example the word ‘hook’, gou 劈, used several times in combination with ‘can’, neng 能, in the composite word ‘able to’, nenggou 能夠 or 能覓. This homophonic loan is an example of a ‘vulgar’ simplification that has not been authorized in the modern period.

17 The format of the Rongyutangben gives more emphasis to the commentary, since certain passages are underlined (with circling) corresponding to the remarks in the meipi and in the end commentary. For the attribution of this commentary to Li Zhi 李贄 (Li Zhuowu), see Plaks 1987: 513–517; Rolston 1997: 31–33.

18 Sun Kaidi 1982: 212 mentions that the Rongyutangben edition found in Beijing Library (present National Library) lacks Chapters 11–30 and has no illustrations. This is also the case with my microfilm version of this edition, sent to me from the same library. However, several other sources mention without reservation the chapter-initial illustrations of the Rongyutangben and these are rendered in the facsimile editions.
of this famous edition, cf. Hegel 2005: 246 and Shi Nai’an, Luo Guanzhong 1988: jiaodian shuoming 3; see also Ming Rongyutang ke Shuihu zhuang, Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1975. The layout of Jin Ping Mei cihua has some points in common with the Rongyutangben. The work is arranged in 100 chapters. Each page has 11 columns with 24 characters, poems and set-pieces are indented. The oldest edition from 1617 did however not have any commentary or illustrations.

19 The illustrations have in the modern facsimile edition been added as a double page of inserted full-page illustrations from the Chongzhen (1628–1644) edition, placed in the same way as the illustrations of the Rongyutangben. The illustrators display the same liberal attitude as is found in the jianben editions of Shuihu zhuang, but here erotic description is of course a main theme. The drawings of the Chongzhen edition of Jin Ping Mei show a far more sophisticated and detailed technique than that of the jianben of Shuihu zhuang.

20 Richard Irwin suggests that the original division of the first non-extant editions of the Shuihu zhuang must have been the scroll, juan, since Chinese books before the genre of the novel had been established as ‘chapter-divided fiction’, zhanghui xiaoshuo, were generally published in separate rolls or scrolls, juan, with little concern for the textual sections. Further there is in Chapter 45 a reference to scroll 3, juan san, as earlier pointed out by Chinese scholars, cf. Irwin 1953: 47. This view is actually in correspondence with later findings concerning the division of oral-related texts, such as the Ming Chenghua chantefables (discovered in 1967). As Anne McLaren has shown, there was no aspiring to the condition of oral performance in these truly oral-connected texts, but they would rather appear as ‘textual’ scrolls, cf. McLaren 1998: 267–268.

21 The meaning of hui as used in storytelling is found inside the narrative text of the Rongyutangben (Chapter 51) where a scene of story-singing is described and the expression hui yi hui 回一回 is used for the situation where the female story-singer collects money for her performance and ‘makes the round’ hui yi hui: 看 官 喝 采 道 是 過 去 了﹐我 們 且 回 一 回 . . .

22 Three of the poems have end-rhyme –ang, one has –an, and one has -ai (end-rhyme for every second stance).

23 The narrative function of this interjection, apart from revealing the narrator openly as a storyteller, is studied in Porter 1991: 161–162.


25 Narrators of the Chinese novel were soon to develop into much more sophisticated and personalized types, but this development came after the Shuihu zhuang editions of the present study and began with the fiction of Ling Mengchu凌濛初 (1580–1644) and Li Yu李漁 (1611–1680), cf. Rolston 1997:10–11, 231–236, 287–301. In Rolston 1993: 123 it is stated that the professional oral storyteller who was the only real model for vernacular fiction in its early history ‘rarely used first-person narration’. This seems beyond what we can know, but we do know that storytellers from the twentieth century did intermittently tell in the first person and refer to themselves as ‘storytellers’ during their performances, i. e. the overt type of narrator. The better part of their narratives is, however, just like the Ming novel editions, told in the third person, i.e. the extradiegetic, heterodiegetic, third-person narrator type.

26 Markers of baihua grammar are prominent: verbal suffixes le 了, zhe 著; verbal complements de 得, xia 下, qi 起, lai 来, ebu 出, qilai 起来, etc.; prepositions ba 把, jiang 将, zai 在, etc.; measures bei 盃, ge 個, wan 碗, etc.; pronouns wo 我, ni 你, ta 他,
3. The Novel and the Episode of Jingyang Ridge

tamen 他們, zhe 這, na 那, nali 那裡, etc.; particles of exclamation li哩, etc. The usage is often somewhat different from MSC, see Norman 1988: 111–132.

27 The jianben editions use the ‘pseudo-wenyan’ formulas more frequently than the Rongyutangben, e.g. Stuttgart Fragment in the episode of the tavern at the foot of Jingyang Ridge: ‘What do you mean by that expression?’ zhe shuo ruhe huan 這說如何喚 and Shuangfengtangben ‘What does that mean?’ zhe ruhe shuo 這如何說 vis à vis Rongyutangben: ‘What do you mean by calling it ’Three Bowls and you cannot Cross the Ridge’? zende huanzuo San wan bu guo gang 怎地喚做三碗不過岡.

28 Later in this investigation we find that the distinction between narration and dialogue is blurred in some genres of drama and storytelling, cf. Chapter 6, 6.8 and Chapter 10, 10.7. In some versions of the tiger tale, animals, in particular the tiger, also speak and think. But in the three editions of Shuihu zhuan, as well as in Jing Ping Mei cihua, that is not the case.

29 One or two characters are different. It is difficult to know if such minor differences might be due to different memorization of the poem or typographic error.

30 The form and function of this opening poem in Chapter 23 of the Rongyutangben is further analysed in Porter 1991: 136–137.

31 In the present-day Wang School of Yangzhou pinghua, the tiger tale starts with Wu Song taking leave and travelling home, corresponding to the place where the second poem is inserted in the novel. However, in this tradition there is no introductory poem, cf. Børdahl 2003: 80–81. If we presume an oral origin somewhere in the process of the creation of the textual editions of Shuihu zhuan, these two proleptic poems might have originated with storytellers who began their performances of the tale at different points.

32 In the novel, Wu Song’s speech is not marked as Shandong dialect, but in the contemporary drama tradition of chuanqi both Wu Song and the local hunters’ speech is marked by the use of the pronoun an, cf. Chapter 6, 6.4. Interestingly, in Jin Ping Mei cihua the hunters use the pronoun an about themselves. (In this text the episode in the tavern is not found, and therefore we do not have occasion to discuss the variation in language between Wu Song and the inn-keeper.)

33 For a discussion of Wu Song’s character as it appears from the narrator’s comments in the Rongyutangben, see Porter 1991: 141–142, 153–156, 165, 181–182.

34 The chapters where one would expect to find the tiger tale are unfortunately lacking in the oldest extant editions, and therefore the two editions that are scrutinized here are at least fifty years later than the dating of the first extant editions (before 1540) and probably one hundred years later than the first editions mentioned in catalogues of the late 15th/early 16th centuries, cf. Ge Liangyan 2001: 2–5. See also Irwin 1960.
4.1. Shared language

In this chapter the linguistic form of the tiger tale in the early editions of *Shuihu zhuan* and *Jin Ping Mei cihua* is scrutinized and various kinds of language shared between the editions discussed. The categories of shared language are designed to show textual relationships not only for the written texts of the novelistic genre, but also for the whole spectrum of oral and written genres of the project. Thus, the analysis is based on experience not only from the novel editions, but also from the texts of the tiger tale found in drama and performance literature of later centuries, as well as in oral performances of the recent period. These other manifestations of the tiger tale will be dealt with in subsequent chapters, but it is necessary to keep evidence from this later material in mind while beginning the discussion of shared language in the novel.

Units of inter-textual sharing and intra-textual repetition are here defined with a view to show how the texts of comparison are similar to or different from each other in their linguistic material of strings of words. The categories are established to describe various kinds of textual entities that are found repeatedly in the material.

These categories are proposed as a basis for drawing a profile of the inter-textual and intra-textual relationships between expressions and passages of the tiger tale in its various manifestations, moving from the larger units to the smaller.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.1. Shared language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniform passages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraphrased passages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulary expressions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within the general category of shared language, two main subcategories are set up, namely ‘shared passages’ and ‘formulary expressions’. Shared passages are not particularly characterized by formulary language, although they may contain such expressions as part of the shared passage. They are often longer than one sentence, and the sharing is in general limited to a number of texts within the same genre. ‘Formulary expressions’, on the other hand, are characterized by a fixed form, sometimes repeated inside the same version of the tale, or found with inter-textual distribution among a number of versions. These expressions are, with a few exceptions, on the level of word or phrase. Many of the formulary expressions are genre-transgressing.

As in Chapter 3, three early editions of *Shuihu zhuan* are analysed, namely the two simple editions, *jianben*, i.e. Chapter 22 of the Stuttgart fragment (late 16th century), Chapter 22 of the *Shuangfengtangben* (1594), and the full edition, *fanben*: Chapter 23 of the *Rongyutangben* (1610).1 Chapter 1 of *Jin Ping Mei cihua* (1617) is also currently taken into consideration, but not entered into the immediate comparison.

### 4.2. Uniform passages

The category of ‘uniform passages’ refers to the relationship between two or more texts of the tiger tale, i.e. an inter-textual feature. Two or more texts may share, word by word, sentences, whole paragraphs or larger passages. Sometimes minor discrepancies between the passages do occur, but as long as these are limited to a few words (characters), the passages are considered ‘uniform’, although not completely identical.

Restricting the field of observation to the tiger tale and comparing only a few, albeit important, early editions of the novel, the intra-textual and inter-textual correspondences are clarified. Refraining from a comparative method that – so to say – ‘automatically’ implies mutual derivation between written editions, the aim is to give room for a discussion of the various possibilities of transmission that the linguistic structure might indicate. The relationship between the Ming novel and early storytelling is by no means taken for given as an exclusive and uni-directional influence from the oral to the written. And likewise, influence from the Ming novel to later storytelling is not seen as an axiom, but rather as a possibility that needs qualification. From this point of departure I want to look at the textual details.

### 4.3. Poems and uniformity

The introductory poem of the three novel editions will serve as the first example of uniformity, Table 4.3. The poem is not found in *Jin Ping Mei cihua* Chapter 1.

This poem is not identical as a ‘set piece’ of four verses (in the table the half-lines are arranged under each other), but each of the four verses is present in almost the same form in the three texts. The verse lines have been distributed
### Table 4.3. Introductory poem in three editions of Shuihu zhuan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stuttgart Fragment</th>
<th>Shuangfengtangben</th>
<th>Rongyutangben</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>勇士聲華似孟嘗</td>
<td>勇士声華似孟嘗</td>
<td>延士声華似孟嘗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>福如東海納賢良</td>
<td>福如東海納賢良</td>
<td>有如東海納賢良</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>自信一身能打虎</td>
<td>自信一身能殺虎</td>
<td>武松雄猛千夫懼</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>浪言三碗不過崗</td>
<td>浪言三碗不过崗</td>
<td>柴進風流四海揚</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>武松雄猛千人懼</td>
<td>武松雄猛千人懼</td>
<td>自信一身能殺虎</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>柴進風流四海揚</td>
<td>柴進風流四海揚</td>
<td>浪言三碗不过崗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>報兄誅嫂真奇羡</td>
<td>報兄誅嫂真奇特</td>
<td>報兄誅嫂真奇特</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>贏得高名万古香</td>
<td>贏得高名万古香</td>
<td>贏得高名万古香</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This brave man was as famous as Meng Chang</td>
<td>This brave man was as famous as Meng Chang</td>
<td>This noble man was as famous as Meng Chang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blessed with good fortune he had talent and virtue boundless like the Eastern Ocean</td>
<td>Blessed with good fortune he had talent and virtue boundless like the Eastern Ocean</td>
<td>Blessed with good fortune he had talent like the ministers of the Eastern Cabinet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident that he could fight the tiger all alone</td>
<td>Confident that he could kill the tiger all alone</td>
<td>Strong and mighty was Wu Song, striking a thousand men with awe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He did not care about the saying ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge’</td>
<td>He did not care about the saying ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge’</td>
<td>Free and talented was Chai Jin, renowned across the Four Seas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong and mighty was Wu Song, striking thousands with awe</td>
<td>Strong and mighty was Wu Song, striking thousands with awe</td>
<td>Confident that he could kill the tiger all alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free and talented was Chai Jin, renowned across the Four Seas</td>
<td>Free and talented was Chai Jin, renowned across the Four Seas</td>
<td>He did not care about the saying ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenging his brother, Wu Song killed his sister-in-law – admirable indeed –</td>
<td>Revenging his brother, Wu Song killed his sister-in-law – strange indeed –</td>
<td>Revenging his brother, Wu Song killed his sister-in-law – strange indeed –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thereby gaining everlasting fame</td>
<td>Thereby gaining everlasting fame</td>
<td>Thereby gaining everlasting fame</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: For comparison of the original Chinese texts the version from the Stuttgart Fragment is taken as point of departure. When the Shuangfengtangben has deviating characters, these are rendered in green. In the Rongyutangben those characters that follow the deviations of the Shuangfengtangben are likewise in green, while those that deviate from both jianben are rendered in purple. To what extent the uniform passages are the same, is obvious from the passages in black.

Characters in complex form, fanti, and simplified form, jianti, are considered identical.
into two different sequences. From the point of view of the tiger tale as a narrative unit, it is possible to regard the *Rongyutangben* version of the poem as more logical than that of the two *jianben*. Chai Jin should not be mentioned after the name of the wine, since he belongs exclusively to the beginning of the story as told in *Shuihu zhuan*. So we may think of the poem in *Rongyutangben* as a 'better' version, purely on the basis of the intra-textual narrative logic of both versions. But to consider it an 'improvement', would imply thinking in terms of textual derivation between the *jianben* and the *fanben* editions, which is beyond the scope of the analysis, since we are unable to take into consideration all the extant early editions of *Shuihu zhuan* in their totality.

The difference between the three versions, the reshuffling of the lines and the minor verbal divergences can of course be explained from written derivation: in that case one will end up with the usual two positions, i.e. either it is a case of editorial polishing of an inferior edition (from *jianben* to *fanben*), or – the other way round – it is a case of erratic copying from a superior edition (from *fanben* to *jianben*). However, one might also consider the case as typical of the transmission of such 'set pieces' in oral culture, where a poem is remembered by heart and the order of the lines is easily confused. The difference between the poems might therefore point to oral transmission as an explanation of the variation.

### 4.4. The old ballad about the tiger

The last poem found in the *jianben* editions is a long poem, called an 'old ballad', *gu feng*, describing the tiger, see Table 4.4.a. In many versions of the tiger tale, both in novel and performance literature, we find that the longest poem, sometimes a prose-poem, *fu*, is the tiger poem. The versions found in the two *jianben* lack four lines compared to that of the *Rongyutangben*. Some lines have a few different characters. *Jin Ping Mei cihua* also contains the tiger ballad in a version that is partly the same as the *jianben* versions, partly the same as the *Rongyutangben*.

If we look at the tiger ballad from the aspect of written derivation, it is hardly possible to decide the direction of influence. The Stuttgart fragment version seems to be the least sophisticated. In the fifth line we see that the *Shuangfengtangben* has changed one character and the *Rongyutangben* has changed another character. Both of these changes would seem to be based on a version such as the Stuttgart fragment. In this case it is not logical to think of the Stuttgart fragment as a sloppy rewriting from one of the other editions. Another of the divergent passages might be the result of leaving out a verse by mistake, i.e. derivation from *Shuangfengtangben* to Stuttgart fragment. But it could also be a case of improving an unclear passage, i.e. derivation from Stuttgart fragment to *Shuangfengtangben*.

One might think that a poem of this length which is rendered in versions as close to each other as those above must be based on written transmission, i.e. copying and editing, a perfectly possible explanation, of course. However, experience from oral storytelling of the recent decades gives evidence that a poem
### Table 4.4.a. The old ballad about the tiger in three editions of *Shuihu zhuan*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stuttgart Fragment</th>
<th><em>Shuangfengtangben</em></th>
<th><em>Rongyutangben</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>景陽岡頭風正狂 *</td>
<td>景陽岡頭風正狂 *</td>
<td>景陽岡頭風正狂 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>万里陰雲埋日光 *</td>
<td>万里陰雲埋日光 *</td>
<td>萬里陰雲埋日光</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>紛紛遍地草芽黃 (*)</td>
<td>紛紛遍地草芽黃 (*)</td>
<td>紛紛遍地草芽黃 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>視目晝霞掛林薮</td>
<td>視目晝霞掛林薮</td>
<td>視目晝霞掛林薮 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>慄人冷露滿穹蒼</td>
<td>慄人冷露滿穹蒼</td>
<td>慄人冷露滿穹蒼</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>忽聞一聲霹靂響</td>
<td>忽聞一聲霹靂響</td>
<td>忽聞一聲霹靂響</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>山腰飛出獸中王</td>
<td>山腰飛出獸中王</td>
<td>山腰飛出獸中王 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>谷口樂鹿皆奔忙</td>
<td>谷口樂鹿皆奔忙</td>
<td>谷口樂鹿皆奔忙 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>乍見後魂魄散 *</td>
<td>乍見後魂魄散 *</td>
<td>乍見後魂魄散</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>存孝遇時心膽狂</td>
<td>存孝遇時心膽狂</td>
<td>存孝遇時心膽狂 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>清河壯士酒來醒</td>
<td>清河壯士酒来醒</td>
<td>清河壯士酒未醒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>忽在岡頭偶相迎</td>
<td>忽在岡頭偶相迎</td>
<td>忽在岡頭偶相迎 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>上下尋人虎飢渴</td>
<td>上下尋人虎飢渴</td>
<td>上下尋人虎飢渴 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>撞着猙獰來撲人</td>
<td>撞着猙獰來撲人</td>
<td>撞着猙獰來撲人 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>虎來撲人似山倒</td>
<td>虎來撲人似山倒</td>
<td>虎來撲人似山倒 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>人去迎風成泥坑</td>
<td>人去迎風成泥坑</td>
<td>人去迎風成泥坑 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>拳頭腳尖如雨點</td>
<td>拳頭腳尖如雨點</td>
<td>拳頭腳尖如雨點 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>淋漓兩手鮮血染</td>
<td>淋漓兩手鮮血染</td>
<td>淋漓兩手鮮血染 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>近看千鈞勢力大</td>
<td>近看千鈞勢力大</td>
<td>近看千鈞勢力大 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>遠觀八面威風歛</td>
<td>遠觀八面威風歛</td>
<td>遠觀八面威風歛 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>身横野草錦班消</td>
<td>身横野草錦班消</td>
<td>身横野草錦班消 (*)</td>
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<tr>
<td>緊閉雙睛光不閃</td>
<td>緊閉雙睛光不閃</td>
<td>緊閉雙睛光不閃 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Jingyang Ridge a sudden squall, Day hides its face in a thick black pall; Red leaves reflect their colour like flames on the marshes, Yellow grass sprouts grow throughout the land; Twilight cloaks the desolate void, And a deadly chill pervades the world. A sound like thunder splits the ears As the King of Beasts on the slope appears.</td>
<td>On Jingyang Ridge a sudden squall, Day hides its face in a thick black pall; Red leaves reflect their colour like flames on the marshes, Yellow grass sprouts grow throughout the land; Dim light cloaks the desolate void, And a deadly chill pervades the world. A sound like thunder splits the ears As the King of Beasts on the slope appears.</td>
<td>On Jingyang Ridge a sudden squall, Day shows its face in a thick black pall; Maple leaves reflect their red colour like flames on the marshes, Yellow grass sprouts grow throughout the land; What meets the eye is twilight cloaking the desolate void, And a deadly fog pervades the world. A sound like thunder splits the ears As the King of Beasts on the slope appears.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
He proudly bounds, teeth and claws on show,
At the entrance of the valley the deer are all running in a panic.

Bian Zhuang sees it and gets frightened out of his senses,
Cun Xiao encounters it and gets scared from his wits.
The Qinghe hero, no longer tight,
Waits alone, but ready to fight.
To watch that man-eater hunt a meal,
The way it springs, with glaring eyes, would make you squeal!
He falls on the man like an avalanche,
But the man meets its power as if it were a heap of mud;
Blows and kicks, a relentless flood,
Both hands soaked in the crimson blood.

When you look at it closely its fierce power is mighty,
When you look at it from afar its awe-inspiring posture is imperial.
There it lies now, bright stripes fading,
Sprawled among weeds, both eyes clouding.

He proudly bounds, teeth and claws on show,
At the entrance of the valley the deer are all running in a panic.

Bian Zhuang sees it and gets frightened out of his senses,
Cun Xiao encounters it and gets scared from his wits.
The Qinghe hero, no longer tight,
Waits alone, but ready to fight.
To watch that man-eater hunt a meal,
The way it springs, the monster would make you squeal!
He falls on the man like an avalanche,
But the man meets its power as a cliff, he doesn’t flinch;
He grips with the force of a missile crashing –
And the tiger’s paws in the mud are thrashing,
Blows and kicks, a relentless flood,
Both hands soaked in the crimson blood.

When you look at it closely its fierce power is already used up,
When you look at it from afar its awe-inspiring posture is all but gone.
There it lies now, bright stripes fading,
Sprawled among weeds, both eyes clouding.

He proudly bounds, teeth and claws on show,
At the entrance of the valley the deer are all running in a panic.

Bian Zhuang sees it and gets frightened out of his senses,
Cun Xiao encounters it and shows his great valour
The Qinghe hero, still half tight,
Waits alone, but ready to fight.
To watch that man-eater hunt a meal,
The way it springs, the hideous monster would make you squeal!
He falls on the man like an avalanche,
But the man meets the tiger as a cliff, he doesn’t flinch;
He grips with the force of a missile crashing –
And the tiger’s paws in the mud are thrashing,
Blows and kicks, a relentless flood,
Both hands soaked in the crimson blood.

Dreadful carnage! On the blood-soaked ground
Fur and whiskers are strewn around

Note: For explanation of the colours, see Table 4.3.
The verse lines shared with Jin Ping Mei cihua are marked with *; if one character is different, it is marked (*); if more than one character is different, but the line can still be recognized as related, it is marked ( ).
See also Table 4.4.b
The three versions of this poem might be a result of drawing on oral versions by different storytellers or versions that simply circulated as a common stock of oral poetry at the time when the novel was taking form. Borrowing and editing from written models is not the only conceivable process in the case of the uniform verse passages.

In this connection it is interesting that the version of the tiger ballad found in *Jin Ping Mei cihua* has thirteen half-verses in common with the three *Shuihu zhuan* editions, but in five of these lines *Jin Ping Mei cihua* has some diverging characters;
four half-verses in common with the two jianben editions and one half-verse in common with only Shuangfengtangben; eight half-verses in common with the Rongyutangben, and the rest of the half-verses are similar to single verses from the jianben or Rongyutangben, but have one or two diverging characters. This version could not have been produced by rewriting from the Rongyutangben. It could have been based on another jianben or fanben edition, or several such books, but it could also be the result of oral transmission in the sense that the poem could be in living tradition among storytellers at the time when the Jin Ping Mei cihua was committed to paper. The relationship of the jianben editions to each other and to the fanben of the Rongyutangben edition cannot, of course, be established only on the evidence of a couple of poems in a single chapter. Here I am merely looking at the tiger tale as an example, and discussing various kinds of potential written and oral relationships between the extant versions.

4.5. Paraphrased passages

The concept of paraphrase is needed to describe a relationship of a close, but not identical, linguistic similarity, paragraph by paragraph, and sometimes even sentence by sentence, between two or more texts. I doubt that it would be possible to define this kind of similarity in an absolute sense. It seems more feasible to ‘define the concept by the members of the category’, which means that rather than forcing upon the material a definition of ‘paraphrase’, I shall present examples of what I think constitutes paraphrases within the core material of the study.

Two or more texts may share whole paragraphs or larger portions, not as word-by-word identical passages, i.e. uniform passages, but as paraphrases of the same content. Paraphrasing may involve amplification, reduction and alternative phrasing (with or without amplification or reduction) of a given passage.

4.6. Prose, uniformity and paraphrasing

The following example in Table 4.6.a is from the beginning of the chapter about the tiger tale as found in the two jianben editions and Rongyutangben. In both jianben editions this prose passage follows directly after the first poem. In the Rongyutangben there is an additional fairly long passage before Wu Song is introduced, cf. translation in Part Two, Chapter 13, 13.1–3.

In this example, the Stuttgart fragment and the Shuangfengtangben have almost uniform texts, but the Shuangfengtangben lacks a few sentences towards the end. The Rongyutangben represents an amplified version, both in respect to passages that are paraphrased (shown in the example) and in respect to additional portions with no corresponding parts in the two jianben, see translation in Part Two, Chapter 13, 13.3. In most of the paraphrased passages a certain proportion of uniform passages enter into the paraphrase.

The Rongyutangben contains all the sentences of the Stuttgart Fragment (also those that are not found in the Shuangfengtangben), and at the same time
4. The Novel and Shared Language

Table 4.6.a. The beginning of the tiger tale in prose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stuttgart Fragment</th>
<th>Shuangfengtangben</th>
<th>Rongyutangben</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>那漢清河人姓武名松排行第二在此一年宋江道江湖上多聞武二郎名字不期在此相會擒住武松手到後堂席上宋清與武松相見宋江讓武松同在上坐武松推坐第三位</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>那漢清河人姓武名松排行第二在此一年宋江曰江湖上多聞武二郎名字不期今日却在這裡相會多幸多幸柴進維武松坐地宋江連忙讓他一同在上坐武松推坐第三位</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That fellow came from Qinghe, his surname was Wu and given name Song, he was the second son in his family. He had been here for one year. Song Jiang said: 'I have heard much about Second Brother Wu among the rivers and lakes fraternity. But I had no idea I was to meet him here.'

He took Wu Song's hand and led him into the inner hall to sit beside him. Song Qing was introduced to Wu Song. Song Jiang immediately asked him to sit beside him at the place of honour. Wu Song modestly refused and took the third place.

'SThis gentleman is from Qinghe District, his surname is Wu and given name Song, he is the second son in his family. He has now been at this place for one year.' Song Jiang said: 'I have heard much talk of Second Brother Wu among the rivers and lakes fraternity. But I had no idea I was to meet him here today. What a pleasure this is!' 'It's a great thing when men of honour meet by chance like this,' said Chai Jin. 'We shall celebrate with dinner, so we can have some talk.'

Song Jiang was pleased to take Wu Song's hand and lead him into the inner hall. He called Song Qing and introduced him to Wu Song. When Cai Jin invited Wu Song to sit down, Song Jiang immediately asked him to sit beside him in the place of honour. Wu Song naturally refused. This modest show of reluctance went on a long time until finally Wu Song was prevailed upon to take the third place.

Note: In the Stuttgart fragment sentences not found in Shuangfengtangben are in blue, while the shared portions are black. In the Shuangfengtangben those characters that deviate from the Stuttgart Fragment are in green. In the Rongyutangben those portions that are in common with the Stuttgart fragment are in black and blue, those that follow the Shuangfengtangben are green, and those that are particular to the Rongyutangben are in purple. The passage is not found in Jin Ping Mei cihua.
Let us resume our story: After travelling for several days, Wu Song had reached the district of Yanggu. There he perceived in front of him a tavern.

Let us just tell that Wu Song, after parting from Song Jiang, spent the night at an inn. Next morning, having breakfasted and paid for his room, he tied his bundle, grasped his cudgel and took to the road.
Song walked into the tavern and sat down. He then asked the host to bring him some wine. **Just look how the innkeeper came with three bowls and two jin of cooked meat which he laid in front of Wu Song.** He quickly filled three bowls with wine that were emptied right away. Wu Song then called out again: ‘Host! Why don’t you come and pour the wine?’ The waiter said: ‘Good guest, the sign says: “Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge”.’ Wu Song said: ‘But what’s that supposed to mean?’ The waiter said: ‘Whenever a guest drinks three bowls of this wine he’ll get drunk and is unable to cross the Ridge’. Wu Song laughed and said: ‘But I’ve had three bowls, how come I’m not drunk?’ The waiter said: ‘This wine of mine is called “Falling at the Door”. At first you only savour the delicious flavour, but after a while you will fall down.’ ‘Stop talking nonsense!’ said Wu Song. ‘Bring me another three bowls!’ Seeing that Wu Song was still entirely steady, the waiter brought him another three bowls. Wu Song drank and said: ‘Surely a good wine!’ He went on guzzling for a long while. Then he took out some silver and shouted: ‘Dear host, tell me if this silver is enough to pay for the wine and meat?’ The innkeeper said: ‘This tavern, advertised by a sign which read: “Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge”.

Wu Song entered the tavern and sat down. He then asked the host to quickly bring him some wine. **Just look how the innkeeper came with three bowls and two jin of cooked meat which he laid in front of Wu Song.** He quickly filled three bowls with wine that were emptied right away. Wu Song then called out again: ‘Host! Why don’t you come and pour the wine?’ The waiter said: ‘Whenever a guest drinks three bowls of this wine he’ll get drunk and is unable to cross the Ridge’. Wu Song laughed and said: ‘But I’ve had three bowls, how come I’m not drunk?’ The waiter said: ‘This wine of mine is called “Falling at the Door”. At first you only savour the flavour, but after a while you will fall down.’ ‘Stop talking nonsense!’ said Wu Song. ‘Bring me another three bowls!’ Seeing that Wu Song was still entirely steady, the waiter brought him another three bowls. Wu Song drank and said: ‘Certainly a good wine! Host, whatever I drink, I’ll pay for, just keep me filled up!’ The waiter said: ‘Oh, good guest! Don’t go on drinking! When you’re drunk on this wine there’s no remedy.’ ‘Enough talking of bullshit! And if you’re thinking of doctoring the wine, watch out, I’ve got a nose for that sort of thing!’ The waiter found it was no use, so he poured another three bowls. ‘Bring me another two catties of meat!’ Wu Song said. The waiter cut two catties of beef and put it in a big dish which he then placed in front of Wu Song. Then he poured another big bowl of wine. Wu Song drank it off and said: ‘Now that’s what I call good wine!’ One more bowl was poured. And that made exactly three Wu Song had drunk and the host wasn’t going to pour any more. Wu Song started to bang on the table. ‘Host! Why don’t you come and pour the wine?’ The waiter said: ‘Good guest, more meat I’ll bring you, if that be what you desire.’ ‘I want more wine – but don’t worry, you can cut me some more meat as well.’ ‘If it’s meat you want,’ the waiter repeated, ‘I’ll bring it for you, but no more wine.’ ‘What’s all this?’ Wu Song said to himself. To the waiter he said: ‘Why don’t you want to sell me any more?’ ‘Good guest!’ said the man. ‘You seen our sign, haven’t you? Says it clear enough, don’t it? “Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge”’. Wu Song said: ‘But what’s that supposed to mean, “Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge”?’ The waiter said: ‘Although it’s a local brew, this wine of ours has got more class than many a famous vintage. Whenever a guest who comes to our inn here, he drinks three bowls of this wine he’ll get drunk and is unable to cross the Ridge. That’s why we say, “Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge”, All our guests, just three bowls you know, and after that they don’t ask for no more’. Wu Song laughed and said: ‘Oh, so that’s it! But I’ve had three bowls, how come I’m not drunk?’ The waiter said: ‘This wine of mine is called “Flavour through the Bottle”, but it is also called “Falling at the Door”.’ At first you only savour the delicious flavour, but after a while you will fall down.’ ‘Stop talking nonsense!’ said Wu Song. ‘Are you afraid I won’t pay you? Bring me another three bowls!’ Seeing that Wu Song was still entirely steady, the waiter brought him another three bowls. Wu Song drank and said: ‘Certainly a good wine! Host, whatever I drink, I’ll pay for, just keep me filled up!’ The waiter said: ‘Oh, good guest! Don’t go on drinking! When you’re drunk on this wine there’s no remedy.’ ‘Enough talking of bullshit! And if you’re thinking of doctoring the wine, watch out, I’ve got a nose for that sort of thing!’ The waiter found it was no use, so he poured another three bowls. ‘Bring me another two catties of meat!’ Wu Song said. The waiter cut another two catties of beef, poured another three bowls of wine and Wu Song went on guzzling for a long while. He only cared about drinking. Then he took out some silver and
Wu Song grasped his cudgel, rose to his feet and said: ‘Who says I’m drunk?’ He marched out of the door. ‘And you can forget all that stuff about “Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge”.’ He shouted back. So off he went, brandishing his cudgel. But then the waiter was chasing after him, crying: ‘Good guest, please wait! Up there in the Jingyang Ridge there is a big beast with a white forehead. He comes out to attack people at night. The government notice says: “The travellers must gather into groups and cross the Ridge during the three watches from ten to four o’clock. It’s forbidden to cross at any other time.” It is getting late, but I see that you are about to leave. You are just throwing your life away! You’d much better spend the night here. Tomorrow you can wait till a sufficient number’s gathered, and then you all cross the ridge together.’ Wu Song laughed.

Table 4.6.b, continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.6.b, continued</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is too much!’ Then he poured another six bowls for Wu Song to drink. After this Wu Song grasped his cudgel, left the door and started marching. But then the waiter was chasing after him, crying: ‘Good guest, please wait! Up there in the Jingyang Ridge there is a big beast with a white forehead. He comes out to attack people at night. The government notice says: “The travellers must gather into groups and cross the Ridge during the three watches from ten to four o’clock. It’s forbidden to cross at any other time.” It is getting late, but I see that you are about to leave. You are just throwing your life away! You’d much better spend the night here. Tomorrow you can wait till a sufficient number’s gathered, and then you all cross the ridge together.’ Wu Song laughed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>called: ‘Host, come and count this silver, see if it’s enough to pay for what I’ve drunk and eaten.’ The waiter had a look and said: ‘More than enough, you’ll get some change.’ ‘I don’t want your change; just give it to me in wine.’ ‘But good guest, if you want it in wine, that’s another five or six bowls! I’ll warrant you can’t manage that.’ ‘I don’t care if it’s more than six bowls, just bring it!’ You’re such a big man,’ said the waiter, ‘if you pass out, how are we ever going to carry you?’ ‘If I needed the likes of you to carry me, I wouldn’t call myself a man at all!’ But the waiter still didn’t want to bring the wine. Wu Song began to lose his temper. ‘It’s not as if I’m not paying you for it. If you don’t stop trying to provoke me, I’ll smash the place up, I’ll turn your bloody house upside down!’ ‘The bugger’s drunk, I’d better humour him,’ the waiter said to himself. And he brought another six bowls, all of which Wu Song drank. Having consumed altogether no less than fifteen bowls, Wu Song now grasped his cudgel, rose to his feet and saying: ‘Who says I’m drunk?’ he marched out of the door. ‘And you can forget all that stuff about “Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge.”’, he shouted back. So off he went, brandishing his cudgel. But then the waiter was chasing after him, crying: ‘Good guest, where do you think you’re a-going to?’ Wu Song halted and said: ‘What are you shouting about? I’ve paid for everything, haven’t I? Why all this song and dance?’ ‘I’m only trying to help,’ the waiter said. ‘You’d better come back inside and read the government notice.’ ‘What government notice?’ ‘Recently, up there in the Jingyang Ridge there is a big beast with slanting eyes and a white forehead. He comes out to attack people at night. Done for twenty or thirty good men already, he has. The hunters are under orders to trap him, there’s a deadline set by the government. And there’s signs posted up in all the approaches to the ridge, warning the people living on both sides of the ridge that: “The travellers must gather into groups and cross the Ridge during the three watches from ten to four o’clock. It’s forbidden to cross at any other time.” And what’s more, single travellers are not allowed to cross the Ridge during the day time and they are supposed to wait till there’s a group. It’s late now, it’ll soon be night, I said to myself, “he’s just throwing his life away.” You’d much better spend the night here. Tomorrow you can wait till a sufficient number’s gathered, and then you all cross the ridge together.’ Wu Song laughed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: See explanation of colours in the note to Table 4.6.a. See also the full English translations in Part Two, Chapter 13, 13.1–3.
researchers see the *Rongyutangben* (or a similar early edition, now lost) as the written master version of the *jianben*, which are then considered to be cheap and sloppy condensations for a less demanding readership. Some tend to think of the process going in the opposite direction, so that the *Rongyutangben* (or a similar earlier edition) was written/edited by people who had the *jianben* at hand (see also Chapter 12, 12.10, 12.14–15). The passage of Table 4.6.b is not found in *Jin Ping Mei cihua*, apart from the extract from the text written on the proclamation about the dangerous tiger on Jingyang Ridge, see Table 4.6.c. That passage is close to the *Rongyutangben* version, but has some variant characters and words. It is shorter than the *Rongyutangben* version and follows the *jianben* on that point. The passage is repeated later in the chapter with a slightly different wording, closer to the *jianben*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.6.c. Extract from the proclamation about the tiger on Jingyang Ridge, as found in <em>Jin Ping Mei cihua</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jin Ping Mei cihua</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First occurrence: 可教過往經商結夥成群于巳午未三箇時辰過岡。其餘不許過岡。這武松聽了。呵呵大笑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second occurrence: 過往客商等。可于巳午未三箇時辰結夥過岡。其餘時分。及單身客旅。白日不許過岡。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Characters unique to the *Jin Ping Mei cihua* version are written in red colour.

The Stuttgart fragment and the *Shuangfengtangben* versions of Wu Song’s drinking in the inn are both less than a third of the *Rongyutangben* version. The three versions follow the same storyline closely, and about 90% of the text of the *jianben* versions is found also in the *Rongyutangben*. The paraphrased passages are densely interlarded with uniform passages shared with the *jianben*. Some portions of the *Rongyutangben* version have a more independent character. Such amplifications do, however, not change the direction of the storyline, but only furnish more description or dialogue to a scene. Sometimes a short uniform passage, common to the three editions, occurs even inside these passages.

Uniform passages shared between the two *jianben* versions can mostly be found as split up character sequences in the *Rongyutangben*, following character by character in the same sequence as in the *jianben* versions, but with supplementary words, phrases and sentences inserted between the identical
word strings. Reading the blackened portions of the Rongyutangben example above in Table 4.6.b, i.e. the uniform passages shared by the three versions, one finds an almost complete copy of a jianben (which jianben is not clear, the Rongyutangben shares something from both). Compared to the Shuangfengtangben the main difference is that the tag word for ‘say’ is yue in this edition and dao in the Rongyutangben. The Stuttgart fragment uses dao and shows no explicit difference from the Rongyutangben, apart from being shorter, more laconic and with less meta-narrative marking. The uniform and paraphrased passages include portions which (apart from the fixed phrases, cf. 4.8–9) are not particularly formulaic in structure and usage. Therefore the sharing of these text portions appears to be a result of written transmission (copying and editing between written versions). However, as mentioned above, the direction of derivation is not immediately clear, i.e. from jianben to fanben or the other way round.

The Jin Ping Mei cihua version of the tiger story in Chapter 1, shows strong relationship to the Rongyutangben. However, in many places where the fanben deviates from the jianben, characters and phrases of the Jin Ping Mei cihua are the same as those in one or the other of the jianben. Table 4.6.d shows a passage from the Rongyutangben and Jin Ping Mei cihua where the two versions follow each other rather closely. The Rongyutangben passage is about the same length as the similar passage in Jin Ping Mei cihua. Sometimes the Rongyutangben has a more developed description, while Jin Ping Mei cihua is more laconic, sometimes it is the other way round. A large part of the words and phrases are in common, but in almost every line there are divergences. This amount and kind of variance is typical for the whole passage of the tiger story in Jin Ping Mei cihua compared to Rongyutangben, but in some places Jin Ping Mei cihua is considerably shorter. Several standard episodes of the tale, such as the drinking scene in the tavern, are left unmentioned. On the other hand Chapter 1 of Jin Ping Mei cihua includes much story material that does not belong to the Shuihu zhuan, and the second part of the chapter tells the story about Pan Jinlian that is only told in later chapters of Shuihu zhuan, not in the chapter of the tiger story.

The linguistic difference between the two versions can easily be imagined as the rewriting by a thoughtful author, who recycles the story, but not without adding and detracting things here and there. Such rewriting is perhaps an attempt at modernizing, regularizing or just smoothing some of the phraseology.

However, the similarity between the versions is also highly reminiscent of the relationship between oral performances in our time of this story by individual storytellers of the same school, such as the performers of the Wang School of Yangzhou storytelling. Portions of the tale that the storytellers have learned from their master in childhood or youth, practising and memorizing sentence by sentence, are generally as close to each other as the two versions exemplified in Table 4.6.d, while other portions may deviate much more radically from each other (Børdahl 1996: 247–364), cf. Chapter 12, 12.9. At the
At this moment what Wu Song on Jingyang Ridge provided for that savage tiger, in less time than it takes to eat a simple meal, was a surfeit of blows and kicks: he beat the big beast till it did not move. For a moment it lay helpless, faintly panting. Then Wu Song let go and went to find the broken end of his cudgel. With this, fearing lest the big beast revive, he belaboured it a while longer, till the breath was quite gone out of it. ‘I might as well drag the dead beast down the mountain,’ he decided. But when he thrust his hands into the bleeding mass and started pulling, how on earth was he to move it? In fact, he was only exhausting himself, till his arms and legs began to fail and he couldn’t move. So he went back to the black rock and sat down to rest. He thought: ‘It’s getting quite dark now. If another tiger should appear, I don’t think I’d be able to cope. I’d better try and get down off the ridge.’ He picked up his hat, which had fallen beside the rock, and skirting round the thickest part of the forest, set off at a steady pace down the mountain.

He had hardly gone half a mile when just look how at this moment two big beasts emerge from the brushwood! ‘Aiya!’ Wu Song cried, ‘now I’m finished!’

In less time than it would take to eat a meal, Wu Song had so beaten this ferocious tiger with his fists and his feet that it was no longer able to move. Panting hard, he let go of the tiger and went looking for his broken quarter-staff, which had fallen by the side of a pine tree. He was afraid the tiger might not really be dead, so he hit it another ten blows or so with his stick. But the tiger had already breathed its last. Wu Song thought to himself, ‘I might as well take advantage of this stroke of luck and drag the tiger down to the foot of the ridge.’ But when he approached the pool of blood in which it was lying and tugged at the tiger with both hands, he couldn’t get it to budge. It so happens that he had exhausted his strength, with the result that his hands and feet had turned to jelly. Just as Wu Song was sitting on the rock, resting, he heard a rustling noise in the underbrush on the slope of the hill. From his mouth no word was uttered, but in his heart he was alarmed. ‘It’s already dark! If another tiger were to jump out at me, how could I hope to overcome it?’

Before he had finished speaking, lo and behold, two tigers emerged into view on the slope below. Wu Song cried out in consternation: ‘Aiya! This time I’m done for!’

Note: Words and phrases that are in common between the two versions are written in black. The different translation of these portions is due to the translators. Portions where Rongyutangben differs are in blue; portions where Jin Ping Mei cihua differs are in red. Portions shared with the Stuttgart fragment are underlined in the character version of both editions.
time when the *jianben, fanben* and *Jin Ping Mei cihua* editions were printed, the tiger story was not only in written transmission, but also in oral transmission among storytellers in the Lower Yangzi area as is well documented by contemporary sources about the famous storyteller Liu Jingting. One should not preclude the possibility that the version found in *Jin Ping Mei cihua* was based on oral sources, and written down by a person close to storytellers’ milieu, if not a story-singer by profession.

### 4.7. Formulary expressions

Another kind of shared language, namely formulary expressions, seem closely connected to the performance-oriented aspects of oral storytelling. But formulaic wordings are obviously important ingredients, both in the novel editions and in drama versions. The formulary linguistic units are usually on the level of sentence or phrase, seldom more than one sentence. Among the formulary expressions a distinction is drawn between ‘fixed phrases’ and ‘meta-narrative phrases’ (often called ‘stock phrases’).

### 4.8. Fixed phrases

The fixed phrases are stable wordings on the level of phrase and sentence that are used repetitively in a given text or are found to be wordings shared between a number of versions of the focal tale. It is the frequency with which an especially stable combination of words occurs in the material that enables us to localize these expressions.

The category points to expressions, i.e. word combinations on the grammatical level of the phrase, sometimes constituting a full sentence, but only rarely longer than the sentence. Most of the fixed phrases in the core material of the tiger tale are phrases constituting parts of sentences.

### 4.9. Fixed phrases with intra- and inter-textual occurrence

The fixed phrases occur both as an inter-textual and intra-textual feature. They are characterized by their frequent occurrence in the core material. Some fixed phrases occur repeatedly both inter-textually and inside the same text. The wine name ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge’, *San wan bu guo gang*, is generally repeated several times in each version of the tiger tale (only very few versions lack this expression), see Table 4.9.

Fixed phrases, as used in this study, are not the same as ‘set phrases’, *chengyu*, or ‘sayings’, *yanyu, changyan*, etc. There is no lack of *chengyu and yanyu* in the texts, but these are not necessarily among the expressions that have a stable existence throughout the material of tiger tales. Although such expressions have a special status in the Chinese lexicon and belong to the dictionary items, they are only occasionally part of the fixed phrases that form a linguistic link between the various versions of the tiger tale in many genres. For the present purpose of mapping out the sharing of linguistic material in the various oral
and written versions of ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’ within the collected core material, there is a need to designate the reoccurrence of certain expressions throughout the material. Fixed phrases are found in identical form or slightly modified form in a number of the versions of the tiger tale.

### 4.10. Fixed phrases with inter-textual occurrence

Some fixed phrases only have inter-textual frequency, but are in general not repeated inside the text. In the example passage below, the two *jianben* ver-

### Table 4.9. Fixed phrase with intra- and inter-textual occurrence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stuttgart fragment</th>
<th>Shuangfengtangben</th>
<th>Rongyutangben</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>見個酒店招旗寫道三碗不過崗</td>
<td>見一個酒店招旗上寫三碗不過崗</td>
<td>望見前面有一箇酒店挑着一面招旗在門前上頭寫着五箇字道三碗不過崗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There he saw a tavern, advertised by a sign: ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge’.</td>
<td>There he saw a tavern, advertised by a sign: ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge’.</td>
<td>He perceived in front of him a tavern, advertised by a sign with five characters as follows: ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: See explanation of colours in the note to Table 4.6.a. Fixed phrases are underlined. This passage is not found in *Jing Ping Mei cihua*.

### Table 4.10. Fixed phrases with inter-textual occurrence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stuttgart fragment</th>
<th>Shuangfengtangben</th>
<th>Rongyutangben</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>酒家道這酒叫佐出門倒初人口時香美好少刻時便倒</td>
<td>酒家曰我這酒呌做出門倒初人口時香少刻時便倒</td>
<td>酒家道這酒呌透瓶香又喚做出門倒初人口時醇好吃少刻時便倒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The waiter said: ‘This wine of mine is called “Falling at the Door”. At first you only savour the nice and <em>good</em> flavour, but after a while you will fall down.’</td>
<td>The waiter said: ‘This wine of mine is called “Falling at the Door”. At first you only savour the nice flavour, but after a while you will fall down.’</td>
<td>The waiter said: ‘This wine of mine is called “Flavour through the Bottle”, but it is also called “Falling at the Door”. At first you only savour the <em>delicious</em> flavour and <em>good</em> taste, but after a while you will fall down.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: See explanation of colours in the note to Table 4.6.a. Fixed phrases are underlined. The passage is not found in *Jin Ping Mei cihua*. 
Proper names and fixed phrases

Proper names play a similar role as the fixed phrases, insofar as they belong to the wordings that reoccur both intra-textually and inter-textually, constituting a basic link between all the versions of our tale. Many proper names have a linguistic form similar to the fixed phrases, and there is no clear distinction between fixed phrases and this part of the proper names. In connection with the proper names, appellations of the main characters in the tiger tale are listed, such as the innkeeper in the tavern and the tiger, since the appellations for these figures, though not by far as stable as the fixed phrases and the proper names, are nevertheless highly significant for each genre and each version of the tale.

Some of the fixed phrases are repeated not only inter-textually, but also occur several times intra-textually, i.e. inside the single version of the tale. Many of the fixed phrases are, however, mentioned only once in each version, and it would not be possible to single them out as fixed phrases on the background of one version of the tale.

In Table 4.11 the fixed phrases of the two jianben and the Rongyutangben editions are listed, with some exceptions: the couplet title of the chapter of the tiger tale has widespread occurrence in the material of tiger tales, but will be treated under proper names. The wine names discussed in Tables 4.9 and 4.10 are not repeated in Table 4.11. In the three editions of Shuihu zhuan the following fixed phrases are found, arranged in the order of their first occurrence in the text.

Phrase 1) is the standard presentation of Wu Song as a character in the story, both when he introduces himself and when he is introduced by others. This phrase also has a currency far beyond the genre of the novel. Phrases 2), 4), 5), 6), 8), and 10) are fixed phrases that are not repeated inside the single tale, but have a certain currency throughout the core material, sometimes in slightly varied forms. Phrase 3) ‘Good wine!’ is singled out as a fixed phrase because of the special emphasis with which this exclamation is used throughout the corpus of tiger tales. While it is used only once in the two jianben and twice in the Rongyutangben, it has in the later performance traditions of drama and performance arts become a prominent and repeatedly used expression during Wu Song’s drinking bout. Phrase 6) from the Rongyutangben is a proverb which occurs in Jin Ping Mei cihua, as well as in a number of the versions of the tiger tale in performance literature and oral performance (but not in the two jianben). Phrases 7) and 8) are fixed phrases that describe the tiger and its actions currently found throughout the material. Phrase 9) ‘black rock’ just like the name of the wine ‘Three Bowls and you Cannot Cross the Ridge’ has an especially wide circulation in the corpus of the tiger tales. The phrase usually occurs several times in each version.
### Table 4.11. Fixed phrases of the novel versions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stuttgart fragment</th>
<th>Shuangfengtangben</th>
<th>Rongyutangben</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) #</td>
<td>清河人姓武名松排行第二</td>
<td>清河縣人姓武名松排行第二</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>武松來到陽谷縣</td>
<td>武松行了幾日來到陽谷縣</td>
<td>武松在路上行了幾日來到陽谷縣</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3)</td>
<td>好酒</td>
<td>好酒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4)</td>
<td>大步自過景陽岡</td>
<td>He strode off alone towards the Jingyang Ridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) #</td>
<td>青石</td>
<td>青石</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8)</td>
<td>一撲一望一剪三般</td>
<td>(The tiger’s) three strategies: springing, looking and sweeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) *</td>
<td>青石</td>
<td>青石</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) ( )</td>
<td>是人是鬼</td>
<td>Are you a man or a ghost?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: See explanation of colours in the note to Table 4.6.a. Phrases that are used more than once in the texts, here Chapter 22 of the jianben and Chapter 23 of the Rongyutangben, are marked with #. Phrases that occur in Jin Ping Mei cihua are marked with *. If one character is different the phrase is marked (*). If more than one character is different, but the phrase still recognizable as ‘the same’, it is marked ( ).
A comparison of the three editions of the tiger tale in *Shuihu zhuan* shows that eight of the eleven fixed phrases are found in all versions, even though Chapter 22 of the two *jianben* is only about one third of the length of the corresponding Chapter 23 of the *Rongyutangben*. Since the fixed phrases are not defined on the background of their shared occurrence in the novel versions, but on their repeated occurrence in the whole corpus of tiger tales, as well as on their repetition inside the individual texts, the distribution of these phrases in the novels signifies the essential nature of the fixed phrases: they represent important building blocks of the tale.

These basic expressions are present to a very high degree in the simple editions, the *jianben*, in spite of their short and compressed form. It is also noteworthy that *Jin Ping Mei cihua* includes all of these expressions, except the phrase ‘Good wine!’ that is excluded because the episode of the tavern is not told. The phrases mainly follow the form of the *Rongyutangben*, but sometimes in a variant form.

The distribution of these fixed phrases in the written and oral traditions of the story will be studied in later chapters.

### 4.12. Proper names and appellations

Proper names of persons and places are among the most important ingredients of the language that is shared between various versions of a tale. They signalize the basic plot ingredients to be expected in a version of the particular story. Names of things also play a certain role and have sometimes the form of fixed phrases, e.g. the wine names, mentioned above. The proper names are among the linguistic units that have the highest inter-textual currency, not only between various genres of written texts for reading and for performance, but also in pictorial art.

![Wu Song](Figure 4.12.a)

A work of twenty ‘wine cards’, *yezi*, used for drinking games, is mentioned already in the 1490s. Here the names and nicknames of the men of Song Jiang are preserved in the description of the cards (MA Tiji 2004: 361). Still extant is a Late Ming work, *Water Margin Cards, Shuihu yezi*, with forty illustrations in woodcut with names and inscriptions. While the artist of the former *yezi* was not aware of the novel *Shuihu zhuan* and his naming of the heroes is closer to the *Xuanhe yishi* and Gong Shengyu’s praise poems from the Song period, Chen Laolian’s naming of the heroes is consistent with that of the novel. With the tradition of drinking cards we can observe how the names of the heroes are moving from a more fluent stage of oral entertainment during the 15th century to a more fixed stage, where the printed novel has gained ground in the 16th century. But at the same time we should not neglect the evidence of later folk art, where the episodes and the names of places and persons are still fluctuating and often clearly dependent on spoken dialect (Riftin 2007).

The names of the major characters of the tiger tale, are, however, highly stable and remain the same throughout the tradition of the Liangshan heroes from the beginning to the present.

The name of the hero Wu Song and of the mountain where he fights the tiger, Jingyang Ridge, are the two most stable ingredients of the tale, belonging
to all the versions of the core material. No other names found in the material have this status of being indispensable to the tale. Not even the tiger can be said to have a similar stable linguistic presence. Words signifying the animal, as well as epithets, vary from version to version, being however, relatively stable within the individual genre (Børdahl 2007c). Here follows a list of proper names and appellations of main characters in the three editions of *Shuihu zhuan*. Occurrences in *Jin Ping Mei cihua* are marked with an asterisk *.

Among the names found in the three *Shuihu zhuan* editions, only the names from the *jianben* editions are currently found in many of the versions of the tiger tale in the corpus. The *Jin Ping Mei cihua* also shares only the names found in the *jianben* (but not the names that belong to the episode in the tavern which is not mentioned in this version). The extra names that are part of the *Rongyutangben*, namely Song Gongming (the *zi* of Song Jiang), Opportune Rain (the *hao* of Song Jiang), Mount Taishan (mentioned as part of a saying),

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**Figure 4.12.** Wu Song (left) and Song Jiang (right), drawn by Chen Laolian (1598–1652). From *Shuihu yezi*, a collection of 40 wine-card illustrations, used for drinking games.

Chen Laolian
陳老蓮
(1598–1652)
famous painter, also called
Chen Hongshou
陳洪綬

adult name
*zi*

style
*hao*
### Table 4.12. Proper names and appellations of the novel versions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stuttgart fragment</th>
<th>Shuangfengtangben</th>
<th>Rongyutangben</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Names of persons</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu Song 武松*</td>
<td>Wu Song 武松*</td>
<td>Wu Song 武松*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Brother Wu</td>
<td>Second Brother Wu</td>
<td>Second Brother Wu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>郎武二郎</td>
<td>Wu Erlang 武二郎</td>
<td>Wu Erlang 武二郎</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Jiang 宋江*</td>
<td>Song Jiang 宋江*</td>
<td>Song Jiang 宋江*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chai Jin 柴进*</td>
<td>Chai Jin 柴進*</td>
<td>Chai Jin 柴進*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song Qing 宋清</td>
<td>Song Qing 宋清</td>
<td>Song Qing 宋清</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place names</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henghai County</td>
<td>Henghaijun 橫海郡*</td>
<td>Henghai County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jingyang Ridge</td>
<td>Jingyanggang 景陽岡*</td>
<td>Jingyang Ridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qinghe (District)</td>
<td>Qinghexian 清河縣*</td>
<td>Qinghe District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yanggu District</td>
<td>Yanggu xian 陽谷縣*</td>
<td>Yanggu District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wine names</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge</td>
<td>Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge</td>
<td>Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San wan bu guo gang 三碗不過 岡</td>
<td>San wan bu guo gang 三碗不過 岡</td>
<td>San wan bu guo gang 三碗不過 岡</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falling at the Door</td>
<td>設門倒</td>
<td>設門倒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chu men dao 出門倒</td>
<td>Chu men dao 出門倒</td>
<td>Chu men dao 出門倒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appellations of the innkeeper</td>
<td>Appellations of the innkeeper</td>
<td>Appellations of the innkeeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jiuja 酒家, juibao 酒保</td>
<td>Innkeeper jiuja 酒家</td>
<td>Innkeeper jiuja 酒家, juibao 酒保, jiudianjia 酒店家</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host dianzhu 店主</td>
<td>Host dianzhu 店主, zhurenjia 主人家</td>
<td>Host zhurenjia 主人家, dianzhuren 店主人</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: See explanation of colours in the note to Table 4.6.a. Phrases that occur in Jin Ping Mei cihua are marked with *.
Lin County, and Cangzhou, are used only in the full editions of the *Shuihu zhuan*, but – with the exception of Cangzhou – are not found in any other versions of the tale in my material. Song Qing (the younger brother of Song Jiang) is mentioned in both the Stuttgart fragment and the *Rongyutangben*, but he does not belong to the flora of tiger tales in drama and performance.

These extra names from the *Rongyutangben* are, however, part of the 70 chapter version of *Shuihu zhuan*, named *Di wu caizi shu* [*The Fifth Book of Genius*] (1641), arranged by Jin Shengtan (1608–1661) from the first seventy chapters of the *Rongyutangben*. This edition became the standard edition through almost three centuries (17th–20th century), readily available for people to buy and read (cf. Hsia C.T. 1968: 78–79, 82; IDEMA and HAFT 1997: 204; Nienhauser 1986: 293). The old simple editions, *jianben*, and full editions, *fanben*, were long out of print, surviving haphazardly in rare book collections and well-protected libraries, until their rediscovery in the early 20th century (Plaks 1987: 293). Reprints and facsimile editions were published only during the late 20th century.

In consideration of the inventory of names found in the Jin Shengtan edition the question arises why the extra names were not part of the popular performance culture of later periods, if they were based on the written novel, as is often assumed. This feature seems to be one of the indications of the relative autonomy of the oral traditions vis à vis the printed culture.

Notes

1 The *Research Database on Chinese Storytelling*, cf. SOURCES, Appendix A, contains material for several more editions of the ‘Wu Song and tiger’ tale in *Shuihu zhuan* and the material is prepared with a view to inter-textual research. Among other things, the English translations of the chapters of the tiger tale contain markers to indicate textual sharing with other editions. Uniform passages are indicated by enclosing in the translation the shared portion within arrows < > and the database item number of the text or texts that share the passage. The three editions under study here are found under their item numbers, as follows: Stuttgart Fragment (item 565), *Shuangfengtangben* (item 21), *Rongyutangben* (item 41). Another important edition found in the database is: Chapter 22 of the *Jingjian heke San guo Shuihu quan zhuan* 精鐫合刻三國水滸全傳 [*Exquisite Edition of Three Kingdoms and Water Margin Printed Together*], called the *Heke* [Two-in-one], dated to the Ming Chongzhen period (1628–44) (item 22). The upper third of each page contains the *Shuihu zhuan* in 109 chapters, while the lower part of the page contains the *San guo yanyi*. This edition, also entitled *Yingxiong pu* 英雄譜 [*The Book of Heroes*] belongs to the *jianben*. Furthermore, the database contains Chapter 23 of the combined simple and full edition in 120 chapters, entitled *Li Zhuowu piping Zhongyi shuihu zhuan quan shu* 李卓吾批評忠義水滸傳全書 [*The Complete Story of the Noble Knights-errant of the Water Margin with Commentary by Li Zhuowu*], called the *Yuanwuyaben* 袁無涯本 according to the printer (ca 1614) (item 23), cf. IRWIN 1953: 210; MA Yau-woon 1992: 32. Items 21 and 22 are textually very close, and so are items 23 and 41.

2 The lines of the poem are near identical between the three editions, but the sequence of the verse lines is different. In the English translations available in the *Research Database on Chinese Storytelling* arrows and item numbers are inserted, so that it is possible
to see which passages are identical and which deviate. This poem is found in 565, 21, 22 and 41 (not in 23), cf. note 1. The lines follow in the same sequence in 565, 21 and 22, but in a different sequence in 41 (Rongyutangben). The first character is yong, brave, in 565 and 21, but yan, noble, in 22 and 41. In the two jianben and Rongyutangben there are altogether three poems, shi, which exhibit this kind of nearly identical linguistic form.

3 In his comparative study of Shuihu zhuan and Jin Ping Mei cihua Liu Shide takes the stand that the author of Jin Ping Mei cihua cannot have based himself on any of the jianben editions. While this view is otherwise based on close-reading of a number of passages shared by Shuihu zhuan editions and Jin Ping Mei cihua, the author does from the very start of his analysis exclude the jianben from consideration. It seems to me that the evidence from the tiger ballad should also be taken into account, before excluding the jianben (or oral transmission) as a source for Jin Ping Mei cihua, cf. Liu Shide 2002: 253–254, 266.

4 For a discussion of a somewhat similar situation in the written versions of the Icelandic sagas, see Sigurðsson 2004: 309–313.

5 If we take this term in a loose sense, all the versions of the tiger tale might be said to be ‘paraphrases’ of the same basic master model. Theoretically there is a continuum of degrees of sharing, ranging from the closest possible identification between two texts, which means ‘the same text’ (e.g. two copies of the same printing or two CDs with the same recording) to the furthest possible distance (e.g. two completely different stories in two non-related languages and formats).

6 The different views about the precedence of the fanben or the jianben are presented in Ma Yau-woon 1992: 29–51, see the tables on pages 35–40. After his later meticulous comparison of the extant jianben, this scholar is convinced of the precedence of the fanben and the secondary status of the jianben, cf. Ma Yau-woon 2004: 45–61. However, Andrew Plaks and Ge Liangyan argue for the view that the surviving exemplars of jianben and fanben may point to adaptations from fanben, but that this argument does not invalidate the view that the jianben as a genre were primary and later copies were drawing on two sources: both earlier jianben and fanben, cf. Plaks 1987: 297–301; Ge Liangyan 2001: 106–107. Moreover, Ma Yau-woon’s examination of the different jianben and fanben editions is based on a ‘logic’ of written transmission/book fabrication, cf. Ma Yau-woon 2004: 45–47, 60. The study of storytellers’ scripts from the tradition of Yangzhou storytelling during late Qing and early Republic may add some arguments to this debate, cf. Chapter 9 of the present study. The typical short and abrupt style of the prose and the sometimes extreme slovenness that characterises the Yangzhou storytellers’ scripts from Late Qing and Early Republic tell us a different story about how a text can ‘logically’ be composed. The scripts are meant as triggers of memory, not as reading material. Therefore these texts have a different ‘logic’. This alternative ‘logic’ is presently lacking in the discussion of the origin and derivation of the jianben and fanben editions. If knowledge about oral performances or truly oral-related texts, such as storytellers’ scripts, are taken into consideration, we might be able to analyse the features of the early Shuihu zhuan editions from a new perspective.

7 In the Wu Song and tiger tale, there is usually incorporated a passage about the proclamation of the authorities concerning the dangerous tiger. This passage contains a set-piece about crossing the Jingyang Ridge: ‘Travellers must gather into groups and cross the Ridge during the three watches from ten to four o’clock’, wanglai keren jieluo chengdui yu si wu wei san shi guo gang 往來客人結夥成隊於巳午未三時過岡. In many versions, including the novel Shuihu zhuan, the passage is rendered first by the innkeeper who informs Wu Song about the danger. Next, Wu Song reads the written message in almost the same form on the wall of the temple. This passage and slightly
varied versions of it are found throughout the core material of the tiger tale. It stands between the category of fixed phrases and that of poems and set-pieces.

8 'Three Bowls and You Cannot Cross the Ridge' is, alongside with the title phrase, the most frequently used phrase of the whole corpus of tiger tales, and usually this expression is repeated many times over in each version, but even so, we find some versions where this name is not used. 'Flavour through the Bottle' (lacking in the two jianben) and 'Falling at the Door' are mentioned in many versions throughout the corpus, but usually only once in each text.

9 This type of names will be listed both as fixed phrases and as proper names in the database.

10 The title couplet may be considered a 'set piece', belonging to the uniform verse-like passages, shared by both simple and full editions of the novel. The title couplet has gained a currency far beyond the genre of the novel and serves as a fixed phrase in a number of other genres where the tiger tale is found. The abbreviated titles 'Wu Song fights the tiger on Jingyang Ridge' Jingyanggang Wu Song da hu, and the two shorter versions of this line, 'Wu Song fights the tiger' Wu Song da hu, and 'Fighting the tiger' da hu, have individual status as fixed phrases. These are the most widespread in the material, since they serve as the most frequent titles of the focal tale.

11 The proverb 'Clouds follow the dragon, wind follows the tiger' among the fixed phrases of the Rongyutangben, was not included in Jin Shengtan's edition, but this expression is found in Jin Ping Mei cihua and occasionally in the later performance genres, such as Yangzhou storytelling, Yangzhou pinghua. The expression is found in Wang Shaotang 1959 (the book Wu Song) and in the oral version by Li Xintang 1986 (tape recording). It is, however, not found in Wang Xiaotang 1992 (tape recording), cf. Børdahl 1996: Chapter VIII.

12 The Stuttgart Fragment has 2082 characters, the Shuangfengtangben 2178 characters, and the Rongyutangben 6739 characters.

13 The variant expressions have the following form in the Jin Ping Mei cihua: 1) 阳谷縣人氏姓武名松排行第二, 4) 大步走上岗来, 7) 吊睛白额斑斕猛虎, 10) 是人也神也.

14 The first extant edition of Shuihu yezi is dated 1657, but already mentioned in the 16th century, Chen Hongshou (Ming) 1979: Postface. The inscriptions of the cards are available in Ma Tiji 2004: 374. According to Shi Changyu the artist of the earlier drinking cards, yezi, (1490s), did not know anything about a book by the name Shuihu zhuan, and his 20 heroes are all within the scope of the 36 men mentioned in the poems by Gong Shengyu, see Chapter 2, 2.3 and 2.20, cf. Shi Changyu 2002: 221–223.

15 Cangzhou is mentioned in Chapter 1 of Jin Ping Mei cihua and in the drumtale, dagushu, which is the piece that is most rich in proper names of all the versions in the core material.

5
The Storyteller’s Manner and the Novel

5.1. Imitating the storyteller in written genres

The tale about Wu Song and the tiger in the full edition, fanben, of Shuihu zhuan is typical of the style and narrative form of the novel as a Chinese genre. The Rongyutangben version exemplifies in every respect what has been termed ‘the storyteller’s manner’ or ‘the simulacrum of storytelling’ in popular fiction (Idema 1974: XXII, 70–72).1

In Chapter 2 the narrative form of the plain tale Xuanhe yishi, where the story of Song Jiang and his men is found in its earliest written form, was treated in some detail. This early text in semi-vernacular, exhibiting linguistic characteristics of written baihua from the late-Song/early-Yuan period, also features an impressive number of expressions that might be related to oral storytelling. Already in the tradition of the plain tales a convention of narrative structure and linguistic markers, possibly derived from oral practice, is discernible, while other features seem to point to decidedly literary models or printing technicalities. The sprouting conventions of the plain tale were analysed and discussed with a view to later developments, namely with the narrative structure of the novel in mind.

‘The storyteller’s manner’ and the ‘simulated context of storytelling’ (cf. Chapters 1, 1.5 and 2, 2.6), describing a convention for written vernacular fiction in the long and short formats of the novel, zhanghui xiaoshuo, and the short story, huaben, need some clarification. As a genre convention, the ‘manner’ or ‘simulacrum’ was exceedingly strong, shaping Chinese fiction writing from the Ming dynasty up to the 20th century. While this convention serves as a narrative framework, where the act of narrating is couched in the persona of a storyteller (the narrator) and his audience (the narratee), the narrative model does not in itself reproduce directly any actual performance or performance tradition, and the written work is not intended for performance, but only for reading.
The situation is different with written texts that do have a close connection to certain performance genres, such as the Ming Chenghua chantefables, mentioned in Chapter 2. These texts seem close to the oral performance with which they share the genre name, and the reading practice of the printed texts is likely to approach a performance-like vocalizing in the circles of the family (McLaren 1998: 67–76). In this case it would be misleading to talk about a 'simulated context of storytelling', because the text 'represents' an orally performable linguistic string of words, just like the hymns of a Christian hymn book correspond to the words as sung in the church. The text does not reflect the actual performance tradition of these pieces of 'telling and singing', shuochang, in an imprecise way. The words of chantefable in performance and the words of chantefable in print presumably correspond to each other as closely as anything written can represent anything spoken. The distinction between a text based on a 'simulacrum' of storytelling and one that 'represents' a storytelling performance is essential to the present study, but the delineation of the borderline between these two categories of texts is not always obvious or easy to establish on the evidence at hand (Ge Liangyan 2000: 162).

5.2. Stock phrases: Meta-narrative phrases

In Chapter 2 concepts, such as 'stock phrases', 'verse-introductory expressions', 'formulary expressions of narrative transition and progression', 'formulary phrases of simulated dialogue with the audience', were introduced. The same categories are applied to the novel, but it should be emphasized that the idea of 'stock phrase' becomes particularly relevant with the genre of the early novel and short story. Stock phrases, taoyu, are here understood as a subcategory of the fixed phrases. They are treated apart, because of their particular narrative functions, defined as words or phrases that serve as meta-narrative markers of the shifting of mode, time or focus of the tale (Børdahl 2010). This part of the formulary language seems often closely associated with conventions of genre.

The stock phrases in the three versions of Shuihu zhuan belong to the shared language or potentially shared language. The occurrence of stock phrases inside the genre of the novel is compared below in Tables 5.2.a, 5.2.b and 5.2.c.²

The category of stock phrases (meta-narrative phrases) comprises both single words and phrases of several words, sometimes constituting a full sentence. The stock phrases are divided into pre-verse markers, markers of narrative progression (introduction, connection and conclusion), and markers of appeal to the audience (reader) (cf. Chapter 2, 2.9–11). Many of the phrases do, however, have several of these functions, so that the categories cut across each other. Each phrase will be mainly commented upon in one of the three categories, but the overlapping will be noted.

It is a general characteristic of the pre-verse markers that they also often serve to introduce narrator’s comment insofar as a large proportion of the poems represents this kind of detached comment, providing some general truth or moral lesson to be drawn from the happenings or predicted (Porter 1989: 135–137). Another portion of the poems is descriptive rather than 'moral',
Table 5.2.a. Pre-verse markers in three editions of *Shuihu zhuan* and in *Jin Ping Mei cihua*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stuttgart fragment</th>
<th>Shuangfengtangben</th>
<th>Rongyutangben</th>
<th>Stuttgart fragment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 22</td>
<td>Chapter 22</td>
<td>Chapter 23</td>
<td>Chazeng jiaiben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Jin Ping Mei cihua</em></td>
<td>(late 16th century)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behold</td>
<td>Behold</td>
<td>Behold</td>
<td>Stuttgart fragment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>dan jian</em></td>
<td><em>dan jian</em></td>
<td><em>dan jian</em></td>
<td>Chazeng jiaiben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>但見 *</td>
<td>但見 *</td>
<td>但見 *</td>
<td>(late 16th century)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indeed</td>
<td>Indeed</td>
<td>Indeed</td>
<td>Stuttgart fragment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>zheng shi</em></td>
<td><em>zheng shi</em></td>
<td><em>zheng shi</em></td>
<td>Chazeng jiaiben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>正是 *</td>
<td>正是 *</td>
<td>正是 *</td>
<td>(late 16th century)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is an old ballad describing you pian gu feng dan dao</td>
<td>There is an old ballad describing you pian gu feng dan dao</td>
<td>There is an old ballad describing you yipian gu feng dan dao</td>
<td>Stuttgart fragment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>有篇古風單道</td>
<td>有篇古風單道</td>
<td>有一篇古風單道(*)</td>
<td>Chazeng jiaiben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The poem says</td>
<td>The poem says</td>
<td>The poem says</td>
<td>Stuttgart fragment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>shi yue</em></td>
<td><em>shi yue</em></td>
<td><em>shi yue</em></td>
<td>Chazeng jiaiben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>詩曰 *</td>
<td>詩曰 *</td>
<td>詩曰 *</td>
<td>(late 16th century)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stuttgart fragment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chazeng jiaiben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(late 16th century)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Colours are used as before, cf. Table 4.3. The list of stock phrases from the three editions of the novel are arranged so that the expressions that are shared are placed *vis à vis* each other. Most expressions only occur once in the chapter, some several times. The expressions do not necessarily occur at the same place in the respective texts. *X* signifies that the corresponding expression is found regularly in the edition, but not in the chapter of the tiger tale. Expressions shared with *Jin Ping Mei cihua* Chapter 1 are marked *;* the expression about the ‘old ballad’ is slightly differently phrased: 有古風一篇單道. A full list of stock phrases in this version is not provided here.
Table 5.2.b. Markers of narrative progression and emphasis in three editions of *Shuihu zhuan* and in *Jin Ping Mei cihua*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stuttgart fragment Chapter 22</th>
<th>Shuangfengtangben Chapter 22</th>
<th>Rongyutangben Chapter 23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Just look</strong></td>
<td><strong>Just look</strong></td>
<td><strong>Just look</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>zhī jiàn</em></td>
<td><em>zhī jiàn</em></td>
<td><em>zhī jiàn</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who it actually was explained in the next session</td>
<td>Who it actually was, please, listen to the explanation in the next session</td>
<td>Who it actually was [that called XX] please, listen to the explanation in the next session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>zhèng shì shén rén xià huí fèn jié</em></td>
<td><em>zhèng shì shén rén qǐ téng xià huí fèn jié</em></td>
<td><em>zhèng shì shén rén, qǐ téng xià huí fèn jié</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>正是甚人下回分解</td>
<td>正是甚人且聽下回分解</td>
<td>[毕竟叫喊武松都頭的]正是甚人且聽下回分解 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We shall not speak more of this</td>
<td>This does not belong to the story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>bù tì</em></td>
<td><em>bù zài huáxiá</em></td>
<td>不在話下 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let us resume our story</td>
<td>Let us resume our story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>quē shuō</em></td>
<td><em>quē shuō</em></td>
<td>卻說 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The story goes</td>
<td>The story goes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>huá shuō</em></td>
<td><em>huá shuō</em></td>
<td>話說 (*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The story divides in two</td>
<td>The story divides in two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>huá fēn liàng tóu</em></td>
<td><em>huá fēn liàng tóu</em></td>
<td>話分兩頭 X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now let’s tell</td>
<td>Now let’s tell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>zhī shuō</em></td>
<td><em>zhī shuō</em></td>
<td>只說</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is slow in the telling, but it happens in a flash</td>
<td>It is slow in the telling, but it happens in a flash</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>shuō shì chǐ, nà shí kuài</em></td>
<td><em>shuō shì chǐ, nà shí kuài</em></td>
<td>說時遲那時快 (*)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Colours are used as before, cf. Table 4.3. The list of stock phrases from the three editions of the novel are arranged so that the expressions that are shared are placed vis-à-vis each other. Most expressions only occur once in the chapter, some several times. The expressions do not necessarily occur at the same place in the respective texts. Expressions shared with *Jin Ping Mei cihua* Chapter 1 are marked * or (*) where the parentheses indicate that the expression is not completely identical. X signifies that the expression is not found in the Chapter 1 of *Jin Ping Mei cihua*, but is frequently used in other chapters.
but as poems, set off from the prose narrative, they acquire a special status as ‘pictures’ to contemplate, and these pictures also represent the narrator’s view of things, to a higher degree than the descriptive passages of the prose narrative.

The pre-verse markers that are shared, ‘behold’ dan jian, ‘indeed’ zheng shi, are both found among the current verse-introductory expressions in the plain tales of the 14th century, and in particular in Xuanhe yishi. This is also the case for ‘the poem says’ shi jue, which is found in Shuangfengtangben and Rongyutangben, but not in the Stuttgart fragment. Only ‘There is an old ballad describing’ you pian gu feng dan dao, which introduces the title of the ‘old ballad’, namely the long tiger poem ‘Wu Song fights a tiger on Jingyang Ridge’ Jingyanggang Wu Song da bu, is not found in the plain tale. While the Xuanhe yishi features a great number of different pre-verse expressions, with a fluent transition between the more formulaic and the more freely composed expressions, the three Shuihu zhuan editions only make use of a highly limited set of formulas in this position.

The Rongyutangben in Chapter 23, the tiger tale, has three further pre-verse formulas that are of high frequency throughout the novel, namely ‘There is a poem in proof’ you shi wei zheng, which is also current in the two jianben in other chapters, and ‘It was predestined’ you fen jiao, and ‘It was destined’ zhi jiao. While you shi wei zheng can be used throughout a chapter, whenever the narrator wants to comment on the action in the form of a poem, the two last formulas you fen jiao and zhi jiao are usually used towards the end of a chapter to give a general comment on the fate of the characters and predict some of the following happenings. They introduce metric couplets or sayings of folk wisdom, rather than rhymed poetry (Porter 1991: 151–156).

You shi wei zheng is in principle common to the three editions – only arbitrarily lacking in Chapter 22 of the two jianben. You fen jiao and zhi jiao are, however, not found in the two jianben. Their absence reflects the general impression that the jianben, and in particular the Stuttgart fragment, use stock phrases more sparingly and with less variation than the Rongyutangben. Compared to the Xuanhe yishi all three editions of the Shuihu zhuan tend to use only a restricted and highly formulaic set of verse-introductory phrases.3

However, the Jin Ping Mei cihua is closer to the style of Xuanhe yishi in this respect and has a number of more freely composed pre-verse expressions, some of them identical with those of Xuanhe yishi. You fen jiao and zhi jiao are in general not used in the Jin Ping Mei cihua, with one exception in Chapter 4, where you fen jiao appears at the end of the chapter.

The expression ‘just look’, zhi jian, shared by all novel versions, is here treated as a stock phrase on a par with the other phrases of Table 5.2.b (cf. Rolston 1993: 129). In Chapter 23 of Rongyutangben zhi jian occurs four times in positions where it simply means ‘then he/they saw’, where zhi functions as MSC ‘then’, jiu (Xu Shaofeng 1997: 1494). But in those three cases where both the Stuttgart fragment, the Shuangfengtangben and the Rongyutangben use this expression, it seems to function as a stock phrase reminiscent of the verse-introductory phrase dan jian. However, zhi jian is never placed at the end of a paragraph, before an indented set piece, such as is the case with dan jian.
But like *dan jian*, *zhì jian* introduces and emphasises visual situations, namely prose descriptions that are of a striking nature. Thus it occurs first when the innkeeper is described serving Wu Song three bowls of the strong wine. Next, when the wind, a warning sign of the tiger’s presence, is described. And finally, when the ‘two tigers’ appear from the brushwood, after Wu Song has killed the big beast on the mountain. In these cases, the expression seems to have acquired features of a stock phrase, insofar as it occurs repeatedly in a particular narrative function, as a marker of the narrator’s expressive emphasis of those situations as worth ‘looking at’, cf. Table 5.2.c.4

Also the chapter-concluding phrase *zheng shi shen ren xia hui fen jie* is shared between the novel editions, but not in identical form, cf. Table 5.2.b.5

In the Stuttgart fragment no further stock phrases of this category are found. The *Shuangfengtangben* only has two markers of transition, namely ‘Let’s tell, however’ *que shuo*, indicating a break in the storyline, and ‘We shall not speak more of this’ *bu ti*, indicating an ellipsis, i.e. that a part of the happenings is excluded from the tale. The lack of *que shuo* in the *Rongyutangben* chapter is obviously mere coincidence, since this stock phrase is otherwise used over and over again in this edition. The phrase also belongs among those currently used already in the *Xuanhe yishi* to structure the sequence of events (cf. Chapter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stuttgart fragment Chapter 22</th>
<th>Shuangfengtangben Chapter 22</th>
<th>Rongyutangben Chapter 23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>只見店主把三個碗并熟肉二斤放在武松面前</td>
<td>只見店主把三個碗并熟肉二斤放在武松面前</td>
<td>只見店主人把三隻碗一雙筋一碟熱菜放在武松面前</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>just look</em> how the innkeeper came with three bowls and two <em>jin</em> of cooked meat which he laid in front of Wu Song.</td>
<td><em>just look</em> how the innkeeper came with three bowls and two <em>jin</em> of cooked meat which he laid in front of Wu Song.</td>
<td><em>just look</em> how the innkeeper came with three bowls, chopsticks and a plate of cooked food, which he laid in front of Wu Song.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>番身要睡只見一陣狂風過樹後一声响跳出一隻金睛白額大虬</td>
<td>番身要睡只見一陣狂風過樹後一声响跳出一隻金睛白額大虬</td>
<td>翻身體却待要睡只見發起一陣狂風來</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As he turned round and was drifting off to sleep, <em>just look</em> how a fierce gust of wind passed through the forest, before a crash resounded and out sprang a big beast with golden eyes and white forehead.</td>
<td>As he turned round and was drifting off to sleep, <em>just look</em> how a fierce gust of wind passed through the forest, before a crash resounded and out sprang a big beast with golden eyes and white forehead.</td>
<td>As he turned round and was waiting to fall asleep, <em>just look</em> how there came a fierce gust of wind. [A poem about the wind is inserted here, before the tiger is introduced]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Colours are used as before, cf. Table 4.3.
The use of *bu ti* in *Shuangfengtangben*, but not in *Rongyutangben*, is, however, a significant feature, exemplifying a basic difference between the two editions. *Bu ti* is not among the phrases that are usually considered stock phrases of the storyteller’s manner in the Ming novel. The phrase is so short and ‘natural’, that it seems to have gone unnoticed as a stock phrase. However, it obviously serves the same function as the more elaborate expression ‘This does not belong to the story’ *bu zai huaxia* that is found in the *Rongyutangben* a little further on in the tale.6 This *fanben* as well as the *Jin Ping Mei cihua* make use of a set of phrases, belonging to the well worn stock phrases that came to signify the ‘storyteller’s manner’ in its fully developed form, while the *jianben* use an unadorned and inconspicuous style.

In the *Rongyutangben* we find further ‘the story goes’ *hua shuo*, indicating the beginning of a new section of the story, often at the beginning of a chapter, ‘the story divides in two’ *hua fen liang tou*, indicating an important point in the story where the narration will follow one line of events, and leave another line for later; and ‘Now let’s tell’ *zi shuo*, switching to a new topic, just like *que shuo*, mentioned above. These phrases are among the most widely used stock phrases in the full edition, as well as in the vernacular fiction at large.7 As mentioned, *que shuo* is found a couple of times in the *Xuanhe yishi*, but from among the other formulas of transition from the *Rongyutangben* only *hua shuo* and *zi shuo* are also used in the plain tale.

The novels share the chapter-concluding formula, [To know] who it actually was, [please, listen to the] explanation in the next session’ *zheng shi shen ren [qie ting] xia hui fen jie*. It is hardly a coincidence that the Stuttgart fragment has the shortest and least adorned form, while the *Rongyutangben* has the ‘full’ form, also found in *Jin Ping Mei cihua*, where it is further developed. This formula, apart from signalling the conclusion of the ‘session’ *hui*, i.e. the chapter, is at the same time one of the explicit formulas of ‘simulated dialogue’ between narrator and narratee, since it has the form of a question to the listening audience, followed by an invitation to listen to the explanation in the following ‘session’. In the *Rongyutangben* the formula is amplified into a longer formula that is currently used in the *fanben*, although not in every chapter ending, i.e. ‘[To know] who it actually was [that called XX], please, listen to the explanation in the next session’ *bijing [jiaohan Wu Song dutoude] zheng shi shen ren, qie ting xia hui fenjie*. The chapter-concluding formulas are not found in *Xuanhe yishi*, where the narrative is not divided into *hui*.

The phrase ‘it is slow in the telling, but it happens in a flash’ *shuo shi chi, na shi kuai*, is found only in the *Rongyutangben* and *Jin Ping Mei cihua*, not in the two *jianben*. It is a meta-narrative ‘aside’ to emphasize a moment of great suspense. Its status as a stock phrase relies on its frequency throughout the chapters of the *fanben* of the *Shuihu zhuan* and the vernacular fiction at large.

Table 5.2.d shows markers of appeal to the audience – also called stock phrases (or meta-narrative phrases) of simulated dialogue and narrator’s comment. Only ‘in fact’ *yuanlai* is shared by the three editions of *Shuihu zhuan*. In this group one might also count the chapter ending formula *zheng shi shen ren qie ting xia hui fenjie*, cf. Table 5.2.b above. *Jin Ping Mei cihua* Chapter 1 shares
all of these expressions, but not at the same places. The chapter features several more stock phrases belonging to this group (Børdahl 2010a: 121).

In the tiger tale as manifested in the full edition of *Rongyutangben*, we find one of the remarkable examples of ‘storyteller’s manner’, expressed by the explicit use of ‘simulated dialogue’. However, the way this ‘simulacrum’ is expressed in the simple and the full edition is essentially different. The phrase ‘Why was it?’ *yin he*, shared by the *Shuangfengtangben* and the *Rongyutangben*, has a question form that is also used in dialogue between the characters of the tale. In this function it occurs once in all three versions, namely when Song Jiang asks Wu Song *why* he has stayed in the manor of Chai Jin for so long. But the question *why* that we consider a stock phrase here, occurs as a rhetorical question on behalf of the narrator in the *Shuangfengtangben*:

**Example 5.2.a**
柴進因何不喜武松

*Why was it* that Chai Jin was displeased with Wu Song?

This kind of narrator’s simulated dialogue with the audience, formulated as a simple question, frequently answered with a couplet or poem, was already found in the plain tale of *Xuanhe yishi*, where it served also the function of introducing verse (cf. Chapter 2, 2.11). In the *Shuangfengtangben* there is no verse-introductory function involved, but the question is answered with the use of the stock phrase ‘in fact’ *yuanlai*, which most often is a marker of narrator’s comment (unless it is used in dialogue by the characters of the tale) (Porter 1991: 178–183). In the Stuttgart fragment the question is not found, but the explanation of the narrator, using *yuanlai*, occurs at this point.

In the corresponding passage in the *Rongyutangben* the full-fledged ‘storytellers’ manner’ appears with the phrase ‘Storyteller, why was it . . .’ *shuohuade, . . . yin he*. The question is put into the mouth of the audience (the narratee) and directed to the storyteller (the narrator).
Example 5.2.b

Storyteller, why was it that Chai Jin was displeased with Wu Song?

While this formula is apparently closer to an oral situation, as if reflecting a true interchange between audience and storyteller and emphasizing the tie between the novel and storytelling, it is noteworthy that this kind of pronounced reference to a storytelling situation is not found in the plain tales, even though many of the stock phrases of later usage were already present in these early vernacular texts. It seems no mere coincidence that the Stuttgart fragment has no particular audience appeal at this place or later in the chapter. Shuangfengtangben has only the simple rhetorical narrator’s question, while the Rongyutangben displays a much more sophisticated ‘simulating’ of an oral frame for the narration.9

5.3. Narrator’s comment

The high-frequent marker of narrator’s comment is the word ‘in fact’ yuanlai, which occurs for the first time in the three Shuihu zhuan editions at the point where Wu Song’s behaviour at Chai Jin’s manor is commented upon, introducing the explanation given by the omniscient narrator. Otherwise it is frequently found in the Rongyutangben, but not in the two jianben. Apart from one instance where the word is used by Wu Song in dialogue (not counted as stock phrase), it occurs in the Rongyutangben and in the Jin Ping Mei cihua in situations where the omniscient narrator wants to say something of general impact.10

Example 5.3.a

In fact, clouds as is well known originate with dragons, and wind is associated with tigers.

Example 5.3.b

In fact, when the big beast attacks a man, it generally has these three strategies: springing, pouncing and sweeping.

It is also used when the narrator is emphasizing a view of things that is perhaps not evident to the narratee, for example in the following two examples where Wu Song is told to have been in a panic and his power exhausted, characteristics that go against the general opinion of the hero.11

Example 5.3.c

In fact, in a fit of panic, he’d rushed his stroke and all he’d achieved was to hit on a dead tree.
Example 5.3.d

那里提得動原來使盡了氣力手脚都疎軟了

How on earth was he to move it? In fact, he was only exhausting himself

In the last example, yuanlai is again used in a narrator’s comment, following a rhetorical question ‘how on earth?’ nali.

5.4. Stock phrases and genre

The variation of stock phrases used in the equivalent passages of the tiger tale in the three editions of *Shuihu zhuan* is not accidental, insofar as the usage seems representative for the editions in general, not just the chapter where the tiger tale is found. Although part of the stock phrases used in the three editions are in common, the remaining stock phrases are not shared. With a view to the larger framework of the study, considering the various genres of novel, drama and storytelling, the use of a certain group of stock phrases is in general correlated to genre (Børdaahl 2010a: 129–130).

Although the phrases, called ‘stock phrases’, belong to the features that are generally considered the most obvious markers of the so-called ‘storyteller’s manner’ or ‘storytelling form’, *shuoshuti*, I prefer to discuss the origin and function of these expressions in oral and written vernacular literature, without labelling them as belonging to professional storytelling and therefore as automatically ‘oral’ at the outset. This kind of expression as found in the plain tales does not necessarily or in every single case refer to oral storytelling (cf. Chapter 2, 2.9). In the novel the stock phrases form a much shorter list of formulas than what was the case in the *Xuanhe yishi*, but how far this is evidence of oral or written usage, is a question I shall return to.

5.5. Stock phrases of the novel and the plain tale

The survey in 5.2 of the stock phrases of the *jianben* and *fanben* of the *Shuihu zhuan* as well as in *Jin Ping Mei cihua*, as represented in the chapters of the tiger tale, point to a more stable convention of such phrases, compared to the plain tale of *Xuanhe yishi*. However, in the chapter-divided fiction, the convention of the genre tends to limit the repetition of the same stock phrases inside the unit of the chapter. They occur according to a certain pattern of usage from chapter to chapter, and a larger number of such phrases are current than what would be apparent from only one chapter, such as the tiger tale. In the Stuttgart fragment their usage is stable, but highly restricted. In the *Shuangfengtangben* the usage is comparatively more frequent, but not by far as frequent and varied as in the full edition of the *Rongyutangben*, which is also reflected – with some interesting differences – in the *Jin Ping Mei cihua*.

The usage of this kind of expressions – their ‘stock phrase’ quality based on function and frequency, inter-textually as well as intra-textually – is here compared in order to enable a discussion of their oral and literary aspects, their
possible connection to oral storytelling. The findings from the *Xuanhe yishi* are compared with the usage of stock phrases in the novel in two steps: 1) a comparison with the usage in the tiger tale of the three *Shuihu zhuan* editions, and 2) a comparison with a larger portion of the novel, namely Chapters 22–24 of the *jianben* versions of the Wu Song saga and ten chapters (Chapters 23–32) of the *Rongyutangben*. In this way a representative extract from the *Shuihu zhuan* is examined, allowing a fuller picture of the patterns of usage.

### 5.6. Three categories of stock phrases

The stock phrases of *Shuihu zhuan* have been dealt with according to the similar groups of the plain tale, namely 1) phrases of verse-introduction, 2) phrases marking narrative transition and progression, and 3) phrases expressing simulated dialogue with the audience and narrator’s comment. The comparison and analysis below will follow the same categories, but a certain overlapping is inevitable.

The *Xuanhe yishi*, as already noted, demonstrates a wealth of pre-verse expressions. Not claiming exhaustiveness, more than forty different expressions are found in the position just before a set piece of rhymed or unrhymed verse (*Børdahl* 2010a: 136–137). But only less than one fourth of these expressions are used more than once in the text, namely ‘the poem says’, *shi yue* (27), ‘there is a poem that testifies to this’, *you shi wei zheng* (4), ‘that was truly’, *zhenge shi* (4), ‘it said’, *dao shi* (4), ‘truly’, *zhen shi* (3), ‘indeed’, *zheng shi* (2), ‘the poem as follows’, *shi yun* (2) and ‘there is a poem as follows’, *you shi yun* (2). ‘Behold’, *danjian*, is found only once, and not before a poem, but before a solemn declaration.12 The chapter of the tiger tale in the Stuttgart fragment has three, namely *dan jian*, *zheng shi* and ‘there is an old ballad saying’, *you pian gufeng dan dao*. The *Shuang fengtangben* has four: the same three and in addition *shi yue*. The *jianben* versions share respectively one and two pre-verse phrases with the plain tale. The *Rongyutangben* chapter has seven, *shi yue*, *zheng shi*, *dan jian* (3) *you shi wei zheng*, *you yi pian gu feng dan dao*, ‘it was predestined’, *you fen jiao*, ‘it was destined’, *zhi jiao*, sharing three phrases with *Xuanhe yishi*.

When we consider a larger portion of the novel editions, the picture only changes a little. In Chapter 22–24 of the Stuttgart fragment there are four pre-verse expressions, adding *you shi wei zheng* (5) to those found in the tiger tale. *Shuangfengtangben* has five pre-verse expressions, also adding the high-frequent *you shi wei zheng*, *zheng shi*. Three of these are shared with *Xuanhe yi shi*, i.e. *shi yue*, *you shi wei zheng*, *zheng shi*.

An examination of Chapters 23–32 of the *Rongyutangben*, yields an amount of 14 different pre-verse phrases, half of which are only used once. Eight phrases are, however, frequently used, namely *shi yue*, *dan jian*, *you shi wei zheng*, *zheng shi*, *you fen jiao*, *zhi jiao*, ‘how did it look’, *zen jiande*, and ‘how did he look’, *shengde ru he*. The last two phrases also belong to the simulated dialogue phrases, but are entered here, because they occur inevitably just before a metrical verse (indented). Among these eight phrases, four are in common with
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-verse phrases</th>
<th>Xuanhe yishi fragment</th>
<th>Stuttgart fragment Chapter 22</th>
<th>Shuangfeng-tangben Chapter 22</th>
<th>Rongyutangben Chapter 23</th>
<th>Jin Ping Mei cihua Chapter 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the poem says</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X (*)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shi yue 詩曰</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there is a poem that testifies to this</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>X *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you shi wei zheng 有詩為証</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that was truly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhenge shi 真個是</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it said</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dao shi 道是</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>truly</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhen shi 真是</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indeed</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zheng shi 正是</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the poem as follows</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shi yun 詩云</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there is a poem as follows</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you shi yun 詩云</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>behold</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>danjian 但見</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there is an old ballad saying</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you pian gufeng dan dao 有篇古風單道</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it was predestined</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you fen jiao 有分教</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it was destined</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhi jiao 直教</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: For the *Xuanhe yishi* the whole text is taken into consideration, but only pre-verse phrases that occur more than once. For the novel editions, X indicates that the pre-verse phrase is found in the chapter of the tiger tale. (X) indicates that the phrase is found, when a larger portion of the novel is taken into consideration. *Jin Ping Mei cihua* generally follows the *Rongyutangben*, marked with an asterisk *. (Instead of *shi yue*, *Jin Ping Mei cihua* has ‘the song says’, *ci yue 詞曰*).
### Table 5.6.b. Meta-narrative phrases of narrative progression in plain tale and novel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrases of narrative transition</th>
<th>Xuanhe yishi</th>
<th>Stuttgart fragment Chapter 22</th>
<th>Shuangfeng-tangben Chapter 22</th>
<th>Rongyutang-ben Chapter 23</th>
<th>Jin Ping Mei cihua Chapter 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>meanwhile, let’s tell</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qie shuo 且說</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>just look</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhijian 只見</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>let’s tell, however</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>que shuo 却說</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the story says</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hua shuo 話說</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>let us just tell</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhi shuo 只說</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>we shall not speak more of this</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bu ti 不題</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of this no more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bu zai hua xia 不在話下</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>this will be explained in the next session</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xia hui fenjie 下回分解</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who was it really? listen to the explanation in the next session</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhengshi shen ren qie ting xia hui fenjie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The marker X indicates that the expression is found in Xuanhe yishi and in Chapters 22 or 23 of the Shuihu zhuan editions. (X) indicates that the expression is found in the edition, but not in the chapter of the tiger story. Expressions shared with Jin Ping Mei cihua are marked with an asterisk *. Jin Ping Mei cihua Chapter 1 contains a number of further meta-narrative markers of transition (see Børdahl 2010a: 148–149). Some of these phrases are the same or reminiscent of phrases found in storytelling, written and oral (see Chapters 8, 10 and 11).
Table 5.6.c. Phrases of simulated dialogue with the audience and narrator’s comment in plain tale and novel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrases of simulated dialogue and narrator’s comment</th>
<th>Xuanhe yishi</th>
<th>Stuttgart fragment Chapter 22</th>
<th>Shuangfengtangben Chapter 22</th>
<th>Rongyutangben Chapter 23</th>
<th>Jin Ping Mei cihua Chapter 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>what did it say</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daooge shendi 道個甚底</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how did it look?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>. . . ruhe 如何</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how was the matter settled?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zensheng jieshu 怎生結束</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who was it?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhe ren shi shei 這人是誰</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do you know what happened to him?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bu zhi . . . xingming ruhe 不知 . . . 性命如何</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how did it look?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zen jian de 怎見得</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in fact</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yuanlai 原來</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>why?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yin he 因何</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>storyteller, . . . why was it . . .?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shuohuade . . . yin he 說話的 . . . 因何</td>
<td>X (*)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The marker X indicates that the expression is found in Xuanhe yishi and/or in Chapter 22 or 23 of the Shuihu zhuan editions. Expressions shared with Jin Ping Mei cihua are marked with an asterisk *. Jin Ping Mei cihua Chapter 1 contains some further meta-narrative markers of simulated dialogue with the audience (see Børdahl 2010a: 148–149).

In Jin Ping mei cihua Chapter 1 the storyteller’s dialogue with the audience as found in the Rongyutangben Chapter 23 is not found; the relevant passage is not retold. But a similar device is used a couple of times in the chapter, cf. Chapter 4, 4.13.
those of the Xuanhe yishi, the same three that we found when considering only
the tiger tale, plus zen jian de that happens to occur just once in Xuanhe yishi
(Xuanhe yishi deng liang zhong 1993: 59).

Of these pre-verse formulas shared with Shuihu zhu, two are coined in
wenyan, and only zheng shi and zen jian de are in vernacular form. Since the
verse portions are also mostly written in a wenyan-like style, there is nothing
strange in the fact that some of the formulas are also coined in high-style lan-
guage to ‘set the tone’.13

The Xuanhe yishi has eight expressions of narrative transition, that one
would consider formulas or stock phrases from an inter-textual point of view,
but these expressions are not – with only one exception – repeatedly used inside
the Xuanhe yishi. The only frequent expression of narrative transition in Xuan-
he yishi is ‘Meanwhile, let’s tell’ qie shuo (7), which is also the most frequently
occurring stock phrase of transition in the ten chapters of the Wu Song saga in
the Rongyutangben (2,4), but not found in the tiger tale (for more examples of
this category of meta-narrative phrases in Xuanhe yishi, see Børdahl 2010a:
137).

Chapter 22 of the Stuttgart fragment has two and Shuangfeng-tangben
four, while Chapter 23 of the Rongyutangben has seven stock phrases of this
category. The Stuttgart fragment shares the expression ‘just look’, zhi jian with
the Xuanhe yishi, and the Shuangfengtangben shares zhi jian and ‘let’s tell,
however’, que shuo. Rongyutangben in Chapter 23 shares zhi jian, que shuo, ‘the
story says’, hua shuo and ‘let us just tell’, zhi shuo with Xuanhe yishi, with the
additional high-frequent qie shuo added, when including all the ten chapters of
the Wu Song saga for the comparison.

In contrast to the pre-verse phrases, the phrases of narrative transition, both
in the Xuanhe yishi and the novel editions, are all coined in decidedly vernacu-
lar language, and add emphatically to the colloquial tone of the passages where
they are used.14 However, such markers are extremely rare in the Stuttgart frag-
ment, both in Chapter 22 of the tiger tale and in the following Chapters 23–2,4
(only zhi jian and a short form of the chapter ending formula are found, ‘this
will be explained in the next session’, xia hui fenjie). In the Shuangfeng-tangben
four markers are found in Chapter 22 (zhi jian, que shuo, ‘we shall not speak
more of this’, bu ti, and the chapter-closing formula ‘who was it really? listen to
the explanation in the next session’, zhengshi shen ren qie ting xia hui fenjie), but
only three in the following chapters (bu ti is lacking).15

Rhetorical questions of simulated dialogue with the audience and markers
of storyteller’s comment are in the Xuanhe yishi found in about a dozen cases.
These questions and comments are clearly not part of the dialogue between the
characters, but are raised by the narrator in order to emphasize suspense. The
questions typically occur shortly before a verse section, and the verse serves as
narrator’s comment to the question. Therefore these questions both indicate
‘simulated dialogue’ and serve as markers for the following ‘comment’ (see
Table 5.3.c). Only a few of these rhetorical questions are coined in phrases that
occur repetitively, and they do not appear to have a particularly formulaic form.
In Table 5.6.c only a selection of these phrases are adduced. Among these only the phrase ‘do you know what happened to him?’, bu zhi . . . xingming ruhe occurs several times in the plain tale.

In Chapters 22–2.4 of the Stuttgart fragment, there are no such questions of simulated dialogue, but a narrator’s comment introduced by ‘in fact’, yuanlai, is found.16 In the corresponding chapters of the Shuangfengtangben there is only one question of this kind, namely the narrator’s question ‘why did Chai Jin not like Wu Song’, using ‘why’, yin he.17 In Chapter 23 of the Rongyutangben there are two stock phrases in this category (see Chapter 4, Table 4.13.d.). But if the ten-chapter saga of Wu Song in Rongyutangben is examined, the picture changes and we find about twenty cases of simulated dialogue and markers of narrator’s comment, including a number of stock phrases that are comments in themselves. It is noteworthy that the Rongyutangben features a number of stock phrases that explicitly ‘simulate a storytelling situation’. In Chapter 23 we found ‘Storyteller, why did Chai Jin not like Wu Song?’, and when the ten-chapter saga is taken into account we further find phrases such as ‘Dear audience, as you may have heard’ kanguan ting shuo (2) and ‘if your storyteller had lived at this time . . .’ ru shi shuohuade tongshi sheng. The marker of comment, ‘in fact’ yuanlai, is frequent throughout, and the narration is further regularly interlarded with narrator’s interjections, such as ‘let’s concentrate on what’s important, and pass over the time when nothing happened’ you hua ji chang, wu hua ji duan, ‘it’s slow in the telling, but happens in a flash’ shuo shi chi, na shi kuai, etc., as well as markers for folk wisdom, ‘the saying is’ changyan dao, ‘an old saying is’ zi gu dao, ‘people of old say’ guren dao.

It is notable that none of the phrases from the novel indicating narrator’s simulated dialogue with the audience or narrator’s comment are shared with Xuanhe yishi.

In Chapters 3, 4 and 5 the genre conventions of chapter-divided fiction have been scrutinized with a view to the three earliest editions of Shuihu zhuan that contain the episode of Wu Song and the tiger. Also Chapter 1 of Jin Ping Mei cihua is taken into consideration. These editions exemplify essentially two varieties of narrative style: the two simple editions, jianben, the Stuttgart fragment and the Shuangfengtangben, are cast in a narrative form with comparatively sporadic use of markers that belong to the convention of the ‘manner’. The full edition version, fanben, exemplified by the Rongyutangben and the Jin Ping Mei cihua, has the full-fledged ‘classical’ form of the ‘storyteller’s rhetoric’ as a ‘simulacrum’.

A number of questions pertaining to this storytelling style will be discussed in the following chapters, in an attempt to clarify the ‘orality’ and ‘literacy’ of the convention. The basic and simple question is: How far does the Wu Song episode as found in the earliest editions of the novel reflect narrative and linguistic habits of professional storytellers, operating around the time when the novel was compiled? Since oral performances of those days are of course not extant, the question cannot be answered from direct evidence. But indirect evidence is available, not only by mutually comparing the novel editions, but also by drawing on evidence from the oral and oral-related
traditions that have contributed to the flora of Wu Song stories in drama and storytelling up to the present.

Notes

1 For background literature about the ‘storyteller’s manner’ in Chinese vernacular fiction, see notes to Chapter 1, 1.5. See in particular Idema 1974, the first serious attempt to trace the development of the ‘manner’ in Chinese fiction. For the ‘storyteller’s rhetoric’ in Shuihu zhuan, see Porter 1989.

2 In Chapters 6 and 8, the usage of stock phrases in drama and performance genres is also mapped out, in order to explore the question of the ‘orality’ and/or ‘literacy’ of the stock phrases and their ways of connection to storytelling of earlier and later periods.

3 As we shall see later, the number of expressions goes up only a little, when a larger portion of the novel is taken into account.

4 In Jin Ping Mei cihua Chapter 1 zhi jian is repeatedly used in the same way as in the two jianben and the fanben versions of Shuihu zhuan, but it is not found in the passages mentioned in Table 5.2.c. The first passage does not belong to Jin Ping Mei (the episode of the tavern is not told), but in the second passage the Jin Ping Mei has danjian, something that corroborates the understanding of zhi jian as a variation of danjian.

5 The form of the concluding phrase found in Jin Ping mei cihua is: bijing weizhi houlai heru qie ting xiahui fenjie 畢竟未知後來何如且聽下回分解.

6 Bu ti is close to some of the stock phrases described as currently used in the Ming Chenghua chantefables, that were printed a hundred years earlier than the Shuangfengtang edition, cf. McLaren 1998: 271–272.

7 Apparently by coincidence, Chapter 23 of the Rongyutang does not have the stock phrase ‘Meanwhile, let’s tell’ qie shuo 且說, which is otherwise found as the most frequent stock phrase throughout this edition, cf. Porter 1991: 280–281. The lack of this phrase in Chapter 22 of the Shuangfengtangben is consistent with its style, since this stock phrase is only rarely used.

8 This case of narratorial interjection is discussed in Porter 1989: 161–162, but with a different focus.

9 In the Jin Ping Mei cihua the simulacrum of the storyteller is fully displayed, but not in the same passages as in the Shuihu zhuan editions. In Chapter 1 there are two cases of presenting an overt storyteller in the text, i.e.: ‘Storyteller, why do you only care about telling of passion and beauty?’ shuohuade zhi ai shuo zhe qing se er zi zuo shen 说话的只愛說這情色二字做甚; and ‘Dear audience, as you may have heard …’ kanguan tingshuo 看官聽說.

10 The following two examples are also found in the Jin Ping Mei cihua as marked with an asterisk *. The second example is a little differently formulated, marked (*).

11 Cf. Porter 1991: 182. The first passage is differently phrased in Jing Ping Mei cihua; the second is identical.

12 The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of occurrences inside the text of analysis, here the full text of Xuanhe yishi, (Yuan) 1993: 1–114.
13 Jin Ping Mei cihua Chapter 1 is taken into account by adding an asterisk * to cases shared with the Rongyutangben. However, Jin Ping Mei cihua further has two verse expressions reminiscent of the Xuanhe yishi, namely ‘a historian made a poem bewailing the event’, shiguan you shi tan yue 史官有詩嘆曰, and ‘our forefathers had an admonition expressing this well’, guren you jiju geyan shuode hao 古人有幾句格言說的好, see Børdahl 2010a: 136, 148–149. The first expression (with yue as the tag word) is found in the so-called ‘prologue’ portion of Chapter 1, which is written in a more solemn style than the rest of the chapter. The last expression is found in the last part of the chapter, telling what happens after Wu Song has killed the tiger and met his elder brother.

14 These markers all contain the words to ‘tell’ shuo, ‘to listen’, ting, or ‘to see’, jian, modified by a number of adverbs, e.g. ‘we won’t tell about this, let’s rather tell about’ xiu shuo, qie shuo, etc. or combined with the noun ‘story’ hua, e.g. ‘the story tells’ hua shuo.

15 The chapter-concluding phrases of the Rongyutangben and Jin Ping Mei cihua also end in this way, but have a longer formulary beginning, respectively: ‘to know who it really was . . ., you must listen to the explanation in the next session’, bijing . . . zheng shi shen ren, qie ting xia hui fenjie 畢竟 . . . 正是甚人且聽下回分解; ‘if you really do not know what happened next, please listen to the explanation in the following session’, bijing weizhi houlai heru qie ting xia hui fenjie 畢竟未知後來何如且聽下回分解.

16 In a few cases we find in Xuanhe yishi the classical conjunctive or disjunctive particle ‘namely’, nai 乃, after a rhetorical question. But the usage is infrequent compared to the occurrences of ‘in fact’, yuanlai, in the novel editions.

17 Later in the text the rhetorical question ‘how on earth could he move the animal?’ nali tidedong 那裡提得動, occurs after the scene where Wu Song kills the big beast. But this expression serves simply as an emphatic way of stating the opposite (‘he could of course not move the animal’), and it is not counted among the questions of simulated dialogue.
Fighting the Tiger in Drama
6

Wu Song in Drama

6.1. Storytelling and Drama

In China storytelling in the wide sense of ‘telling and singing’ arts, shuochang, is grouped together with the other large category of performed arts – drama, xiqu.

In the modern period the two categories are then called ‘drama’, xiqu, and ‘narrative performed arts’, quyi, or ‘telling and singing arts’ shuochang (Zhongguo dabaike quan shu – Xiqu quyi 1983: 1–16; JIANG Kun and NI Zhongzhi 2005: 10–13). It is, however, not only the fact that both kinds of literature belong to the performance culture that links them together. The stories (or subject matter) (GENETTE 1980: 27) of the traditional Chinese theatre are usually derived from the pool of tradition common to oral storytelling, performance literature and fiction. The dramatic conventions of performance and the narrative structure show a number of specific features related to storytelling (SHIH Chung-wen 1976: 14–17). The line of division between the two categories of performed arts is often difficult to draw, particularly with the minor forms of local theatre. But also inside the major genres, features of dramatic technique, employed both in drama and shuochang, often become apparent through close analysis of the textual form.

Surviving traditional genres of Nuo drama in the Lower Yangzi area have been described as ‘fossilized’ forms, probably representing features of great age. This kind of drama is close to storytelling in the sense that the words of the play are declaimed solely by a ‘master of ceremonies’ in chantefable fashion, while the actors wearing masks only perform the gestures and movements of the roles without uttering a word (MCLAREN 1998: 82–83).

An immediate precursor of drama in Song (960–1279) and Yuan (1279–1368) was the performance genre of story-singing called the ‘medley’, zhugongdiao, where a single performer would narrate, impersonate and sing a long story.1 The comedy, zaju, of the Yuan period, usually considered the golden age of Chinese drama, has many features in common with the zhugongdiao. Also the early southern drama, nanxi or xiwen, includes passages strongly reminiscent of the zhugongdiao, and featuring a storyteller persona, who in the role of ‘secondary male’, fumo, introduces the play by alternatively singing arias and telling in the

1

Figure 6.1

Chinese theatre, detail from a scroll entitled Qingming shanghe tu, attributed to Qiu Ying (fl. 1500). Here reproduced from a copy, an 18th-century silk painting. Courtesy the Ethnographic Collection, National Museum, Denmark (gulløv, hornbY and Wæhle 2007: 190.)
third person about the contents of the play (the role types of Chinese drama are treated in 6.4). ‘When the mo performs zhugongdiao, he is a storyteller – an outsider rather than a character in this play – and his performance is actually ballad-singing and storytelling rather than acting per se’, as noted by Sun Mei.2

In the zaju there was only one singing role in each of the four acts, and in many plays all the singing roles of a play were supposed to be performed by the same actor, something that points toward the origin of drama in shuochang with only one singer (SHIH Chung-wen 1976: 28–29). That drama and story-singing were during the Ming period considered sister arts is apparent from the inclusion of a nanxi play together with several chantefable texts, shuochang cihua, in a casket of funeral gifts from the late 15th century (SUN Mei 2002: 45–46; McLaren 1998: 29).

Just like the storytelling genre of the `medley’, zhugongdiao, from the 11th to the 13th centuries, and the chantefable, shuochang cihua, from the 15th century, the Chinese drama genres nanxi and zaju were truly prosimetric genres where the prose of monologue and dialogue alternated with the metric form of the sung arias. The prosimetric format that is traced back to the `transformation’ performances, bianwen and bianxiang, of the Tang period (806–960) (MAIR 1983: 7. 14–15) is among the strong and durable characteristics of Chinese theatre until the introduction of Western `spoken drama’, huaju, early in the
6. Wu Song in Drama

20th century. The prosimetric form is also characteristic of a number of the *shuochang* genres that are still popular in China at the beginning of the 21st century, such as Suzhou story-singing, *Suzhou tanci*.

6.2. Yuan zaju and ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger with a Broken Shoulder Pole’

During the Song and Yuan period when the southern drama, *nanxi*, and the northern comedy, *zaju*, rose and prospered, plays about the adventures of the heroes from the marshes of Mount Liang were highly popular, particularly with the *zaju* genre.³ Forty *zaju* plays with titles associated with characters or episodes from this story material are listed in a drama catalogue from 1330 (Irwin 1953: 34–36), but only ten of the texts have survived. None of these extant dramas contain Wu Song stories, but among the plays that are only known by their titles, two have Wu Song as their title hero. Both are credited to the name of an actor and prolific playwright from Beijing, styled Hong Zi Li Er [Red Tattooed Li the Second] (Idema and West 1982: 128). The two titles are:

窄袖兒武松
*Wu Song with the Narrow Sleeves*

折擔兒武松打虎
*Wu Song Fights the Tiger with a Broken Shoulder Pole*

The meaning of the first title is not obvious and nothing further is known about the ‘narrow sleeves’ or what kind of episode might have been the background of the play. The episode is not related in the later novel. Many other titles of Yuan *zaju* where names of the heroes of Liangshan are mentioned are also without connection to the stories told in the novel, and this is equally true of some of the plays that are still extant. This is one indication among many about the diverse and rich flora of Liangshan legends that constituted the oral reservoir from which the playwrights might choose some popular plot for dramatic performance. It is also witness about a stage where the single heroes are more in focus than their common cause. (Xie Bixia 1981: 21–23). The individual episodes and characters are not attached to a larger collective unit and a common fate. Perhaps the genre of drama also allowed and even demanded a certain amount of freedom and experimentation on the part of the playwright and actors who were not supposed to stay strictly within a fixed tradition of *Shuihu* stories (Ge Liangyan 2001: 40–44).

The second title is obviously referring to the tale of Wu Song and the tiger. This is the first time that this tale constitutes an independent unit of literature – a play. Moreover, the title reveals that in this play Wu Song’s broken staff or ‘shoulder pole’ is an important ingredient in the story. In the novel, Wu Song’s staff also plays a prominent role, not only as his weapon that is crushed before the fighting at close quarters, but also as a feature that helps to characterize the hero and build up suspense.⁵ It should be noted, however, that the staff is not
### Table 6.3. Storyline of *Yixia ji*, Scene 4, compared to *jianben* and *fanben* editions of *Shuihu zhuan*, and to *Jin Ping Mei cihua*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1. <em>Yixia ji</em> Scene 4</th>
<th>2. Stuttgart Fragment and <em>Shuangfengtangben</em> Chapter 22</th>
<th>3. <em>Rongyutangben</em> Chapter 23</th>
<th>4. <em>Jin Ping Mei cihua</em> Chapter 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hunters on duty</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Travelling home</strong></td>
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<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The tavern</strong></td>
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<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Short of money</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The warning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The inscribed tree</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The proclamation</strong></td>
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<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The rock</strong></td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The wind</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The tiger appears</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Breaking the staff</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The fighting</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The killing</strong></td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Two tigers</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The hunters</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The reward</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>(Prologue)</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
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<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Song</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wu Song and Wu the Elder</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wounding a man</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The entries are placeholders for the actual content.*
part of all versions of the tiger tale in drama and storytelling, *shuochang*. In some versions of this tale Wu Song is barehanded from beginning to end.

### 6.3. The Saga of Wu Song in Ming *chuanqi*

The first extant drama version of Wu Song and the tiger is found as Scene 4 ‘Subduing the Beast’, *Di si chu: Chu xiong*, of the work *The Noble Knight-errant, Yixia ji* (1599, 1612) by Shen Jing (1553–1610), a famous playwright from Wujiang in the Lower Yangzi area.⁶ This drama of 36 scenes belongs to the southern type of Ming drama, called ‘plays of the marvellous’, *chuanqi*, that developed from the *nanxi* and differed from the northern *zaju* in musical and dramatic form.

The *Yixia ji* dramatizes the whole saga of Wu Song that had probably appeared before 1540 in printings of the *Shuihu zhuan* (cf. Chapter 3, 3.2).⁷ Even though the main happenings in Wu Song’s life, as told in the novel, are also partly related in the drama, the dramatic plot is quite differently structured. Among other things, it incorporates a love story for Wu Song with a ‘happy ending’ and marriage, a feature that seems to have been mandatory for the genre of *chuanqi* (Xie Bixia 1981: 88; Nienhauser ed. 1986: 676).

The first scene of the *chuanqi*, the ‘threshold’, *jiamen*, consists of an aria-monologue sung by a supporting male role, *mo*, who tells in the third person the whole story of Wu Song that will be performed in the play. The narrative device of a prologue, anticipating the events to come and/or the moral lesson to be drawn, has a certain affinity to the prologues that are regularly found with the genre of short fiction or stories, *huaben*, that are linked – however nebulously – to oral professional storytelling from the Song to the Ming periods (Shih Chung-wen 1976: 24–25; Hanan 1981: 20).

The storyline of Scene 4, ‘Subduing the beast’, is simpler than that of the corresponding chapter of the novel and the sequence of events is slightly different.⁸ In the drama the existence of a dangerous tiger is announced at the very beginning of the scene by the hunters who explain (to the audience) the difficult situation in which they find themselves, being pressed by the authorities to catch the tiger. They decide to dress up in tiger’s fur, set up traps with poisoned arrows for the tiger and hide. In the novel this information is only given after Wu Song has killed the tiger and met another ‘two tigers’, namely the hunters in disguise.

Comparing the storyline with that of the novel, it is obvious that the drama contains only a fraction of the incidents found in the *Shuihu zhuan*. The text is, however, not much shorter than that of the two *jianben* editions where the number of episodes equals that of the *fanben*, the *Rongyutangben*.⁹ What the text of the drama is lacking in the details of plot it gains, to a certain degree, by the lyrical intermezzos of the arias, but Scene 4 of the *chuanqi* remains an ultra-short version of the story, only surpassed in succinctness by the later scripts of Beijing opera, *Jingju*.
6.4. Dramatic language of ‘Subduing the Beast’

In *Yixia ji*, Scene 4, ‘Subduing the Beast’, the usual conventions of the *chuangqi* drama are exemplified (Nienhauser ed. 1986: 354): the drama has altogether 36 scenes, *chu*, with bisyllabic titles, in this case: *Chu xiong*. The scene presents a few characters in a specific location, namely two hunters (in role types *jing* and *mo*), Wu Song (*sheng*), the waiter in the inn (*chou*) and the tiger (no role category, but meant to be performed by an acrobat). The location alternates between the forest of Jingyang Ridge and the tavern at the foot of the Ridge. The shifting of place is indicated by the dialogue and theatrical movements of the actors. *Jing, mo* and *sheng* are all singing roles, only the *chou* does not sing. The opening aria is to be sung by the two hunters, *jing* and *mo*, but all the other arias in this scene are to be sung by Wu Song, the *sheng*. The singing of arias in poetic form alternates with spoken monologues or dialogues in prose.

The contents of the arias tend toward general statements about the situation and feelings of the characters, directed more towards the audience of the play than towards the other characters. These passages are therefore not really part of the dramatic dialogue, but the singing role communicates directly with the audience (Shih Chung-wen 1976: 25–29). An example of this is seen in the entering aria of the hunters, announcing the tiger and their own mission as hunters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.4.a. Yixia ji, Scene 4: Singing to the audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p. 1 (<em>Shui Hong Hua</em>) (Enter hunters <em>jing</em> and <em>mo</em>) The local authorities have placed a bounty on the head of the Lord of the Mountain. This is an urgent affair, and we hunters are hard up. We have suffered to no avail, hesitating how to go about this difficult task.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The names of the tunes are indicated in *pinyin* transcription in parentheses.

In some of the prose passages the same phenomenon is apparent: instead of talking only to the other characters, the speaker will from time to time give information directly to the audience – information that is superfluous for the characters of the play. After the first aria, the *mo* hunter continues in prose, recapitulating the information in the aria and explaining who the two characters on the stage are and why they are there:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.4.b. Yixia ji, Scene 4: Speaking to the audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p. 1 (<em>Mo</em>) We are hunters from Yanggu District. Since a tiger with slanting eyes and white forehead has turned up on Jingyang Ridge, killing a lot of people, the local magistrate has given us hunters a deadline and ordered us to catch it. But this tiger is ferocious, how can we capture it?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Note: The names of the tunes are indicated in *pinyin* transcription in parentheses.]
In the following example, Wu Song, *sheng*, has entered the stage and sung an aria after which he informs the audience about his whereabouts and the fact that he now arrives at a tavern. This is the way a change of location is marked:

| Table 6.4.c. *Yixia ji*, Scene 4: Telling the audience about a change of scene |
|---|---|
| **p. 2 (Sheng)** While talking, I already arrive at Jingyang Ridge. After the long journey, I am now thirsty and hungry. Here is a tavern, advertised by a wine-banner with the words ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge’. What does that mean? Let me go in and sit for a little while. |
| (生) 說話中間。早來到景陽崗下。行路飢渴。這里有個酒肆。酒望子上寫著三碗不過崗。這怎麼說。且進去少坐一回 |

Dramatic speech aimed at the audience to supply background knowledge, to indicate a shift of location or to express the inner feelings of the characters, as a kind of aside, is one of the most common dramatic modes of both *zaju* and *chuanqi*. In this mode the role characters intermittently take on the function of a kind of narrator or storyteller, albeit telling ‘in role’, i.e. in the first person.

The language of the arias to be sung is in a more literate and ornate style than that of the spoken passages. The speech of the *sheng* role, Wu Song, includes, however, metric passages in high style and prose passages in neutral style or low style, i.e.:

| Table 6.4.d. *Yixia ji*, Scene 4: High style and low style in prose speech |
|---|---|
| **p. 1 (Enter Sheng)** In daytime the road used to be full of horses and carriages. I have travelled a long way, that goes without saying. Still I do not know for whom I shall devote my life. This moment reminds me of Ping Yuan Jun. I, Wu Song, have stayed long at the residence of Lord Chai, a relative of the Emperor. I wanted to join Song Gongming. I expected him to arrive and waited for some more days. After I took leave with the Emperor’s relative, I had some news of Brother Song, and now I must travel to Yanggu District . . . |
| (生上) 道傍車馬日繽紛。行路悠悠何足云。未知肝膽向誰是。令人卻憶平原君。俺武松久住柴皇親莊上。慾投宋公明去。恐他到此。又等了幾日。如今只得別了皇親。打聽宋兄消息。就往陽穀縣尋。 |

Note: Metric passages are rendered in **purple** colour.

In monologue and dialogue alternation of spoken prose style (also called register) occurs according to the seriousness of the message (*SHIH* Chung-wen 1976: 177). While the waiter, *chou*, never speaks in *wenyan* coloured phrases, both the hunters and Wu Song at times speak with special emphasis in high-style, underlined by the addition of *wenyan* particles at the end of such sentences, i.e.:
After Wu Song's monologue about arriving at the tavern there follows a dialogue between him and the waiter. The language of this dialogue is in plain spoken style, with markers of baihua grammar all over the passage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.4.e. Yixia ji, Scene 4: Wenyan-particles in high-style utterances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>p. 1 (Jing, Mo) . . . We are surely risking our lives here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. 1 (Sheng) Now I must travel to visit my elder brother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p. 3 (Sheng) . . . There are two more tigers coming! I'm dead this time!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: Wenyan-particles are marked in purple colour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, the first utterance of the waiter is a jingle, made up of four phrases of repeated words, 'Wine, wine, wine . . . etc.', jiu, jiu, jiu . . . This sentence works as a fixed phrase in both the later Kunqu and Jingju versions of the drama, but is absent from local drama as well as the novel and the shuochang genres.

In the chuanqi, dialect expressions are not obvious, except for the first-person pronoun 'I, we, an, ammen, that functions as a marker of Shandong dialect. This pronoun is used by all the characters, both Wu Song, the hunters and the waiter. There seems to be no dialectal or stylistic difference between the sentences where the characters use an, ammen, and those where they use wo, women or (occasionally) the inclusive form zanmen. However, the alternation between sentences in high-style (arias and certain emphatic sentences of monologue and dialogue) and low-style (most of the dialogue, in particular the language of the waiter, chou) has parallels in many genres of shuochang, such as Suzhou tanci and
Yangzhou pinghua where the shifting of style implies a change between broad dialect and certain normative variants of the dialect, closer to North Chinese official’s language, guanhua (Børnææ 2004; Børnææ 2010c).

In contrast to early long and short fiction, the drama does not feature a comparable set of meta-narrative stock phrases (cf. Chapter 2, 2.10–2.14, Chapter 4, 4.13 and Chapter 5, 5.3–4). The printed drama texts, however, make use of a set of stage directions, indicating various movements, role types, names of tunes and the mode of performing (singing, chang, or speaking, bai). The stage directions are usually coined as short orders or titles and they often have their own linguistic conventions. They are, however, not meant to be spoken during performance or vocalized while reading aloud. They can only be understood as silent instructions of the written page. As such they form a subgroup of the meta-narrative markers in written genres.11

Table 6.4.g. Yixia ji, Scene 4: Stage directions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>上</th>
<th>shang</th>
<th>enter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>下</td>
<td>xia</td>
<td>exit, exeunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>淨</td>
<td>jing</td>
<td>jing-role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>末</td>
<td>mo</td>
<td>mo-role</td>
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<td>生</td>
<td>sheng</td>
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<td>丑</td>
<td>chou</td>
<td>chou-role</td>
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<tr>
<td>介</td>
<td>jie</td>
<td>pose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>内</td>
<td>nei</td>
<td>backstage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>住口</td>
<td>zhu kou</td>
<td>stop talking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the chuanqi drama text singing is indicated by printing the characters of the verse in a larger type. There are no explicit stage directions for singing versus speaking. The text only has the directions of ‘enter’ and ‘exit’ together with the role types that are inserted before each spoken or sung passage. Each special movement of the role types is described with a few words concluded with ‘pose’, jie. The directive ‘stop talking’, zhu kou, is treated as a kind of ‘pose’. ‘Backstage’, nei, indicates a sound coming from behind the stage. Meta-narrative markers for performance usage (to be vocalized) are not found.

6.5. Later drama versions

Scene 4 of Yixia ji is not only the earliest extant dramatic version of the tiger tale, but also the most influential version for the verbal development of this tale in later drama. The chuanqi version in Scene 4, ‘Subduing the Beast’, and the early extant editions of the novel, containing this chapter (cf. Chapter 3, 3.2) do not share textual passages, and the few fixed phrases they have in common are restricted to some of the most widespread bon mots of this story, formulas that would most probably have existed in oral memory and popular knowledge...
since early times. Shen Jing’s dramatic version of the tiger story therefore –
apart from sharing the barest outline of the plot – owes little, if anything to the
novel, which contains the only other written version that exists from the Ming
period.12

On the other hand, a comparison of later dramatic versions of the tiger
tale as found in the genres of chuanqi, Kun-drama, Kunqu, and Beijing opera,
Jingju, shows that the genre of drama was largely self-contained and drew only
sporadically on the novel or the narrative performed arts. The dramatic ver-
sions of this story in general are built on the plotline and recirculation of the
poetry of Shen Jing’s chuanqi version. An important exception to this rule is,
however, the local drama, exemplified here by a version of Huai-drama, Huaixi.

The later chuanqi version is from an anthology of Qing palace drama,
gongting xi, a facsimile reprint of an anonymous manuscript entitled The
Jade Chart of the Noble Knight-errant, Zhongyi xuantu, where the tiger tale
is dramatized in the first half of Scene 13, ‘Killing the Tiger and Meeting the People on Jingyang Ridge’.

One of the Kunqu versions is an anonymous manuscript version (late Qing), where the tiger tale functions as an independent unit for performance, entitled Complete Scenes of Fighting the Tiger, Da hu quan chuanguan. The other Kunqu text is a stencil script from the repertoire of the present-day Kunqu troupe of Nanjing (1982).

The two Jingju versions were published together in 1954 in an anthology of librettos of Beijing opera. One version Fighting the Tiger, Da bu, in four scenes, chang, with extremely short dialogue passages, is presented as the original script left by the elder generation of opera actors. Among the versions of the Wu Song and tiger story collected for this study, this is the most laconic textual representation (ca 500 characters), only about one fourth of the shortest versions found in drama, novel and performance literature. The other Jingju version Wu Song Fights the Tiger, Wu Song da bu, called a ‘performance script’, yanchuben, has two chang with a somewhat more detailed dialogue; this text is presented as a revision of the previous, with added arias and dialogue based on the Kunqu tradition.
14 Wu Song Fights the Tiger

The local drama in Huaixi is called Wu Song Fights the Tiger. Secret Script for Famous Actor, Tebie mingling milben Wu Song da bu, a lithographic print from late Qing. This drama is closely related to story-singing or chantefable, and its verbal form has closer ties to the narrative performed arts than to the dramatic forms just mentioned.

6.6. Shared Language in drama versions

The extant chuanqi and Kunqu versions of our focal tale are clearly related insofar as they share as uniform passages the poetry of the arias found in Shen Jing’s late-Ming work. They also share some details of storyline (plot), such as ‘Short of money’, that are absent in the early novel editions (both jianben and fanben). The dialogue portions are related as paraphrases, since they cover roughly the same contents, but they only sporadically contain a few uniform passages. In some later drama versions one finds a few minor incidents, such as a short mention of ‘the rock’ where Wu Song takes a nap before the arrival of the tiger. This
element is not found in the Ming chuanqi, but is in common with the novel. In general there is, however, little cross-fertilization between novel and drama.

From Table 6.6.a below it is apparent how the second chuanqi version from Qing has kept all the poetic lines of the arias taken over from Shen Jing’s work (bolded in the samples). The names of the tunes are also the same. The stage directions are given with the names or professions of the characters, instead of the role types, and poses are indicated at different places (not corresponding to the Ming work). The dialogue portions are expanded paraphrases, retaining only in a few places the original words from the Ming work.19

The Kunqu manuscript from late Qing, Complete scenes of Fighting the Tiger, again shares the poetic lines of the arias from Shen Jing’s Yixia ji together with the tunes, see Table 6.6.b below (lines of the arias are bolded). The stage directions of the Qing Kunqu are also closer to the Ming chuanqi, giving the role types and poses in a similar way. However, the dialogue portions are not only abundantly expanded, both vis à vis the Ming chuanqi (four times) and the Qing chuanqi, Zhongyi xuantu, (almost three times), but the language is in the Kunqu differentiated into a variety of linguistic styles related to the role types. There are many places where dialect characters and grammatical features from Suzhou dialect are clearly discernible in the spoken passages of the clown, chou, i.e. the waiter, in imitation of his lowly status. A thin thread of written relationship between this text and the Qing chuanqi, seems apparent from a few places in dialogue where the texts are uniform (passages that are not found in the Ming chuanqi), such as Wu Songs remark: ‘How come it’s already finished when I just began to drink?’ and the waiter saying: ‘Dear guest, this wine is very tasty and it’s hard to drop the bowl.’ These instances are, however, so few that they might be a result of oral rather than written transmission.

The fact that the poetic lines of the Ming arias are preserved in the later dramas does not necessarily indicate a written transmission in this tradition. Such lines could be transmitted in oral tradition from one generation of actors to the next. The dialogue would probably have been extemporized in theatrical performance as well as education (transmission). The versions that were written down are not necessarily to be taken as authoritative scripts for actors. Their status as scripts for performance or as reading matter for a drama-interested readership would be difficult to evaluate. But the fact that the dialogue portions are so relatively different in the three early versions might point to the practice of leaving dialogue to the actors for stage improvisation.

The modern Kunqu script from 1982, on the other hand, is definitely produced as a script for actors. The poetry and tunes of the arias are still the same as before (bolded), but the dialogue is completely new and does not contain any wordings from the three previous versions. There are a few traces of Suzhou dialect, reflected by special characters and sentence structure, indicating the low-style idiom used by the clown. (In the oral performance of this Kunqu play this feature is very strong, cf. Chapter 10). As we shall see, the script is actually closely followed by the actors of the performance published on VCD in 2005.

The Jingju version from late Qing/Republic, printed 1954 from a manuscript preserved by the elder generation of Beijing opera actors, presents itself
Table 6.6.a. A passage from ‘The tavern’ in the two chuanqi versions from late Ming and Qing

From Shen Jing, Yixiaji, Scene 4, Subduing the beast (1599/1612) (Ming)
From Zhongyi xuantu, Scene 13, Killing the Tiger and Meeting the People on Jingyang Ridge (Qing)

〔生〕〔折桂令〕又何須炙鳳烹龍。〔已下一句一碗〕鸚鵡盃浮。琥珀光濃。卻不道五斗消酲。三盃合道。自有神功。〔丑〕你喫過十二三碗了。就在此宿了罷。〔生醉唱〕何用你虛擔怕恐。俺偏要去。〔走介丑扯介〕還了俺酒錢。俺有話對你說。〔生背云〕前日柴大官人送的盤費。一路用來。剩不多了。酒保。連這包兒與你罷。好教人羞澀囊空。

(WuSong and the waiter sing together) (Zhe Gui Ling) No need to roast phoenix or cook dragons. (Wu Song, speaking) Bring the wine! (Waiter) No more! There’s only three bowls in the mug. (Wu Song) How come it’s already finished when I just began to drink? (Waiter) Dear guest, you really can drink. Let me bring this squat jar for you to drink until you get blushed all over. (Wu Song) None of your business, you just pour me the wine. (Waiter) Dear guest, look at this amber colour! (Wu Song singing) Wine is bubbling in the parrot cup, with a rich shine of amber. I didn’t realize that five gallons of wine will sober you up, and three cups after another will work wonders! (Chou) You already had twelve or thirteen bowls of wine, better stay here for the night. (Sheng drunken singing) Why do you need to worry? I am going no matter what. (Pose of leaving, pose of Chou grabbing) Pay me first, and I have something to tell you. (Sheng speaks with his back towards the waiter) After the long journey, there is not much left of the silver that Mr. Chai gave me the other day. Waiter, there is about four-five ounces of silver in the bundle. Take my bundle! (Waiter) You drunk a mug and a whole jar, four-five ounces silver is not enough! (Wu Song) If it is not enough, tut-tut, then I will leave my bundle here as a pawn, too. (Waiter) No one would come back to redeem that junk. (Wu Song) I will pick it up another day. (Singing) I feel ashamed to have so little money.

Note: Passages where the Qing version deviates from the Ming drama are rendered in purple. Poetic lines for singing are bolded.
Table 6.6.b. A passage from ‘The tavern’ in the two Kunqu versions from late Qing and People’s Republic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From Complete Scenes of Fighting the Tiger (Late Qing)</th>
<th>From Fighting the Tiger (1982)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>生白吓酒家丑白吓生唱折桂令 又何须炙凤烹龙又吃介丑白客人吃贯寡酒个生白斟丑白没有了生白㕥得个没有了丑白我里個壶呍只装得三碗一滴多 淹得个呍酒管仏白生白三碗四碗有酒只管拿来自既然或介阿去小々能個呍一呍得来梯白好你去拿来丑白呍唯一夥計呍一呍得来呀客人酒拉里生白打開丑白呍介生白呍白个々客人瞰睛裡着勿得唆唆个生白呍丑白客人个酒阿像琥珀生白妙哇唱鹦鹉杯浮琥珀光浓吃介丑白客人个酒前頭个如何生白酒比前差遠了丑白客人个酒一滴水呍得个々客人倒識貨个々勿比个尋貌入鬼客人个酒五斗米還做里勿出来呍生白酒家唱</td>
<td>生：酒家。（唱）‘折桂令’ 又何须炙凤烹龙？（白）干，再斟上。丑：没有了。生：才吃得三碗，怎么没有了？丑：客官有不可知，我这壶只装得三碗，多一点也装不下的。生：喛！有酒只管取来。丑：我那里向还有小小一罈。生：好，快去取来。丑：是啦，伙计，拿这罈好酒来呀！下，复上）生：打去泥头。丑：是，乒乓，朴朴，生：哎，蠢才！丑：好汉眼里着不下沙子。生：斟上。丑：是，（介）客官，你看我这酒，犹如琥珀一般。生：妙呀！（唱）鹦鹉杯浮，琥珀光浓。（吃介）(白)好酒！上。丑：客官，你方才吃了三碗，如今又是二碗，你真有五斗之量。生：酒家。（唱）却不道五斗消酲。</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Sheng speaking: Ha, host! Chou speaking: Ha? Sheng singing in Zhe Gui Ling: No need to roast phoenix or cook dragons. Pose of drinking again. Chou speaking: Dear guest, do you intend to drink only! Sheng speaking: Pour the wine! Chou speaking: No more! Sheng speaking: How come it’s already finished when I just began to drink? Chou speaking: I made the size of the jug exactly three bowls of the wine, not even one more drop! Sheng speaking: Don’t bother me with three or four bowls while I’m drinking, just bring me more wine as long as you have some! Chou speaking: If you say so then I’ll try to find a bottle and serve you. Sheng speaking: Okay, go get some. Chou speaking: Ah, waiter! Fetch a bottle of wine! Good guest, the wine is ready! Sheng speaking: Open it! Chou speaking: Oh! Pose of blowing. Sheng speaking: Ahem! Chou speaking: Good guest, please, take a good look at the wine! Sheng speaking: Pour the wine! Chou speaking: Ah, dear guest, this wine looks like amber! Sheng speaking: Amazing! Singing: Wine is bubbling in the parrot cup, with a rich shine of amber. Pose of drinking. Chou speaking: Dear guest, how is this wine compared to the earlier one? Sheng speaking: This wine is way better than the earlier one. Chou speaking: Dear guest, there is not a single drop of water in this wine. Not like other guests, you really know wines! Five gallons of rice is not enough for making this bottle of wine! Sheng speaking: Host! Singing: I didn’t realize that five gallons of wine will sober you up! |

Sheng: ‘Host!’ (Singing) ‘Zhe Gui Ling’ No need to roast phoenix or cook dragons. (Speaking) Bottom up! Pour the wine again!’ Chou: ‘No more.’ Sheng: ‘I only had three bowls, how come there’s no more?’ Chou: ‘Dear guest, of course you don’t know that this jug only holds three bowls of wine, not one drop more.’ Sheng: ‘Ah! If you have more wine, just bring me some!’ Chou: ‘I have only one small jar left.’ Sheng: ‘Good, hurry up and bring the wine.’ Chou: ‘Alright, waiter, bring this jar of wine!’ (Exit, then enters again.) Sheng: ‘Remove the clay sealing!’ Chou: ‘Yes, bang, bang, pooh, pooh!’ Sheng: ‘Goodness, how stupid!’ Chou: ‘Good fellows cannot stand sand in the eyes!’ Sheng: ‘Pour the wine.’ Chou: ‘Yes!’ (Pose) Dear guest, look at my wine here, it’s just like amber!’ Sheng: ‘Amazing!’ (Singing) Wine is bubbling in the parrot cup, with a rich shine of amber. (Pose of drinking) (Speaking) ‘Good wine! Pour the wine!’ Chou: ‘Dear guest, you had three bowls first, just now you have finished another two bowls, you really can drink five gallons of wine!’ Sheng: ‘Host! (Singing) I didn’t realize that five gallons of wine will sober you up!’
as a comic sketch with mainly acrobatic interest. In this version only a few lines of singing are found, and both the words of the arias and the tunes – belonging to the Xipi music of Beijing opera – are different from the chuanqi and Kunqu tradition. The short dialogues are again different from all the other versions we have seen so far, but the format might be closer to the tradition of zaju, for example featuring only one singing role and having this role narrate part of the story in monologue fashion, see Table 6.6.c.

In this respect narration of the Late Qing/Republic Jingju script approaches that of the narrator of oral storytelling as registered in the 20th century. The laconic form of the script is also reminiscent of storytellers’ scripts from the late Qing and Republic. (Børdahl 2005; Børdahl 2009). A script of such succinctness seemingly implicates that the actors had ample room for extra display of impromptu speech and action. But as we shall see in Chapter 10, the oral performances at hand do not corroborate this. Just the opposite: modern actors of Jingju and Kunqu do follow scripts strictly and perform the words according to their written text.

The storyline of the four extremely short scenes, chang, contains the ingredients of 1) ‘The Hunters on duty’; 2) ‘Travelling home’, ‘The Warning’; 3) ‘The tiger appears; and 4) ‘The fighting’, ‘Breaking the staff’, ‘The killing’, ‘Hunters meet Wu Song’. These ingredients are not elaborated into episodes, but only briefly narrated in the monologues of Wu Song. There are four hunters, but they must be imagined doing acrobatics, since they utter only a few exclamations. The scene in the tavern is not performed, but barely mentioned by Wu Song while he is ascending the Ridge as demonstrated in the quoted passage above. The tiger is only performed by pulling a costume over the scene. The only role character of this piece is therefore Wu Song and his main function is likewise to perform the acrobatic fighting with the tiger (the costume). This Jingju script does not show any special affinity to neither the novel nor the chuanqi-Kunqu tradition.20 The simple storyline that is in common cannot be taken as a sign of any literary relationship, since this would belong to common cultural knowledge probably since the Song and Yuan periods.

The other Jingju version, a performance script from the 1950s (also published in 1954), seems to be a modern conglomerate, where the Kunqu arias and tunes are partly taken over. Apart from Wu Song singing, there is also choral singing of the hunters, a feature in common with the Qing chuanqi. In this version, like
6. Wu Song in Drama

of all the versions compared, the dialogue is unique and shows no textual borrowing. The two Jingju versions both lack the episode of Wu Song being ‘short of money’, which was typical and exclusive of all the chuanqi and Kunqu versions.

6.7. Local drama and the interplay with shuochang

The local drama of Huaixi, entitled Wu Song Fights the Tiger. Secret Script for Famous Actor, Tebie mingling miben Wu Song da bu, a lithographic pamphlet from late Qing, is an example of a dramatic genre that is very close to the ‘telling and singing arts’, shuochang. With this type of drama we find not only that prose

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<th>Table 6.6.d. A passage from ‘The tavern’ in a Jingju version from People’s Republic (1954)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wu Song Fights the Tiger (1954), Jingju performance script</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Wu Song: Host! (Singing in Zhe Gui Ling) No need to roast phoenix or cook dragons. (Drinks the wine) |
| Waiter: (Talking to himself) This guest likes to just drink the wine. Wu Song: Pour the wine! Waiter: There’s no more! Wu Song: How come it’s already finished when I just began to drink? Waiter: Our wine mug contains only three bowls, not one drop more, and not one drop less. Wu Song: Bah! What three or four bowls are you talking about? Bring the wine, let me drink one jar of it. Waiter: Ah! Wu Song: Bring the wine. Waiter: Well, well, I’ll get the wine for you. —— A jar of good wine! (The waiter brings a wine jar to the table and opens the mud seal. While he blows the dust; Wu Song covers his face with his sleeve) Wu Song: Stupid fellow! Waiter: Please smell its fragrance arousing the nostrils. Let me pour it for you. (Pours the wine) Dear guest, look at this, it’s really the colour of amber. Wu Song: Great! (Continues singing) Wine is bubbling in the parrot cup, with a rich shine of amber. (Drinks the wine) Pour the wine! Waiter: Yes. (Pours the wine) Wu Song: This is indeed good wine. Pour the wine! Waiter: Yes. (Pours the wine) Dear guest, you already drank five bowls. Wu Song: Host! (Continues singing) I didn’t realize that five gallons of wine will sober you up, and three cups after another will work wonders. |

Note: Verse lines from the arias (sung) are bolded. The prose portions are different from all other drama versions.
and poetry alternate very much in the way of early and later ballad singing (or story-singing), but also that the plot of the drama is partly communicated by third-person narration, partly by dialogue, so that each actor plays a double role both as narrator and as impersonator. In most forms of Chinese storytelling the performer has the same double function. These devices are clearly different from the format of arias and dialogues constituting the text of the chuantou and Kunqu dramas analysed above.

Like the other drama versions of the tiger story, there is only a very sporadic relationship to the novel. The few shared aspects of plot are so general that no specific textual derivation can be based on this. Moreover, the Huaixi drama has no textual relationship to the other dramas under consideration here. As a matter of fact, its storyline diverges significantly from most other versions of the Wu Song story.

In the Huaixi drama the episode of fighting the tiger only takes up less than one tenth of the drama text. Even though we find the ingredients of ‘The wind’, ‘The tiger appears’, ‘The fighting’, ‘The killing’ and ‘The award’, these elements are treated only in a few lines. The incidents of the temple on Jingyang Ridge and the rock (where Wu Song rests) are mentioned in passing, but the circumstances are different, and these aspects are inessential for the development of the dramatic plot. On the contrary, in this drama we find Wu Song involved in a court-case for having murdered a salt-seller. Having been sentenced into exile he volunteers to fight the tiger while on his way to the military camp. He meets the hunters who are taking a rest on a rock before he confronts the tiger. In the drama his heavy drinking occurs before he kills the salt-seller, and not in connection with the fighting of the tiger. It is in fact the court scenes and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episodes and ingredients</th>
<th>Summary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wu Song and Wu the Elder</td>
<td>Wu Song is living with Wu the Elder and Pan Jinlian in Qinghe District. Wu Song drinks in a local tavern and kills a salt-seller. He pleads guilty to the court of Qinghe. The scene changes to the court of Yanggu where the magistrate announces a reward for killing a tiger on Jingyang Ridge. Meanwhile Wu Song is exiled to Yunnan by the Qinghe magistrate. Before setting out, Wu Song visits his home and takes leave with his sister-in-law and brother. On his trip to Yunnan, Wu Song drinks in several taverns, arrives at Jingyang Ridge and meets the hunters. Wu Song promises to kill the dangerous animal. A gust of wind announces the arrival of the tiger. In the barehanded fighting between man and beast the tiger is killed. The magistrate of Yanggu redeems Wu Song’s crime, because of his deed of killing the tiger. Wu Song returns to Qinghe in triumph and is received by his sister-in-law.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The salt-seller</td>
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<td>Qinghe court</td>
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<td>Yanggu court</td>
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<td>Exiled</td>
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<td>Taking leave with sister-in-law and brother</td>
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<td>Hunters on duty</td>
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<td>The wind</td>
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<td>Returning to Qinghe</td>
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6. Wu Song in Drama

the meetings between Wu Song and his sister-in-law, Pan Jinlian, that are the central happenings of this drama, just like the narration of the tiger tale in the first chapter of the novel Jin Ping Mei ci hua.

Another interesting aspect of the storyline of the Huai drama is the appearance of some persons and places that do not belong to neither the novel, nor the chuanqi or Kunqu drama, but which are found in performance literature. For example, in this drama a waiter, called Xiao’er, appears in the first scene where Wu Song drinks in a tavern, before killing the salt-seller. This name of Xiao’er [Little Second], which is sometimes the calling term for ‘waiter’ in general, sometimes a specific proper name, is found neither in the novel, nor in any of the drama versions above. But it occurs in some of the versions of storytelling and story-singing that we shall study in the following chapter. Xiao’er appears in the prose storytelling of Yangzhou pinghua, and the prosimetric story-singing of Fuzhou pinghua. The names of two taverns, Peach Blossom Tavern and Apricot Blossom Grove that Wu Song visits before coming to the tavern of Jingyang Town are mentioned shortly in the Huai xi drama, and these places are also part of the story-singing versions of drumtale, dagushu, fast tale, kuaishu, and Fuzhou pinghua.

6.8. Speaking and singing in the Huai xi drama

In the Huai xi drama metric passages of hepta-syllabic stanzas constitute by far the greater portion of the drama. They alternate at regular intervals with prose passages of some length meant to be spoken, bai, and inside the metric portions one finds occasionally a single sentence in prose, also meant to be spoken. There are two samples of shi-poeetry, one at the beginning of the drama and another at a major change of scene (from the court of Qinghe District to that of Yanggu District), which are both marked as ‘introductions’, yin. These poems are not specified as either spoken or sung. All the rest of the metric passages are meant to be sung, even though this is not always indicated by the tag ‘singing’, chang. In many genres of narrative performance arts in prosimetric form one finds that singing is simply indicated by indenting the verse portions and separating the stanzas with an empty space between each. Tags of ‘speaking’ and ‘singing’ are used in some printings, but lacking in others. In the present case it seems that we have an intermediary form where the tags are sometimes used, sometimes not, being redundant to some degree. The metric form of the verse, the lack of tunes, the tags of chang and bai, as well as the amount of verse that is used in this drama brings it much closer to the genres of shuo chang than to the other genres of drama that were investigated above.

6.9. Telling and singing roles

The introduction of the characters of the play is made in part by giving the role type, such as sheng, dan, chou, in part by giving the profession, such as ‘magistrate’, ‘runner’, ‘salt-seller’ or ‘people’. These two ways of introduction are mixed, since the sheng role is used for both Wu Song and the ‘magistrate’, while
Magistrate speaking: ‘Wu Song, because of your hot temper and your drunken state, you accidentally killed a salt-seller, for which you should be punished. But since you came here and reported yourself to us and did not put the blame on anybody else, I appreciate that and consider you a good fellow. I will pardon your death penalty and banish you to Yunnan Province.’ Sheng speaking: ‘I am most grateful!’

Magistrate speaking: ‘My men are equipped with an official document and they will serve as your guard. You must take good care of Wu Song on your journey, remember that!’ Runner speaking: ‘Yes!’

Wu Song looks disappointed, because he is sent to Yunnan to serve in the army. Turning round he leaves the court, and follows his guard striding forward.

Out in the street he opens his mouth, shouting: ‘Guard, please listen to me! Now I am leaving for Yunnan, but I have not given my family information.’

Can we go to the hut of my home first, to visit my elder true brother. First I want to take leave of my elder brother, and also ask my sister-in-law, the powdered beauty, to take good care.

The guard replied: ‘Well, well, well! Second Master, you can go where you want!’ Hearing this, Wu Song doesn’t delay one moment, fast as the wind he leaps forward like a tiger.

On his way he lifts his head and looks up: ‘My home is already right in front.’ He stops walking and comes to a halt, shouting: ‘Elder brother, open the screens!’

Standing in front of the gate he knocks and shouts three times. Dan continues: ‘Even my incense room is shaking!’ Pan Jinlian, just went upstairs to the incense room, when I heard somebody shouting outside.

Is it The Elder who is back home for a break? Or the neighbour looking in? I cannot stay in the incense room, I must go out and see who it is.

Moving along on her nimble lotus feet, she is soon there. In front of her is the main door. Coming to a halt she opens her mouth, asking: ‘Who is knocking at the door?’ Sheng speaking: ‘It’s your brother-in-law back home!’

Dan singing: ‘I hear it’s my brother-in-law who is back home.’ Lady Pan opens the door without delay. ‘Brother-in-law, please wait a short while.’

Your sister-in-law is opening the mandarin-duck door for you. She releases the two wings of the door, and her relative, her brother-in-law, steps inside. She lifts her head and stares at him.

Constables are following right behind him. Inviting only her brother-in-law to enter, the sister-in-law locks the two wings of the door. They walk over to the thatched hall.

Then they sit down on the chairs, and Lady Pan raises her eyes and takes a good look at him. Look how her brother-in-law is wearing iron chains! As soon as she notices this, she opens her mouth in haste,

saying reverently: ‘Dear brother-in-law, please, listen to me! The other day you went happily out in the streets to amuse yourself. But after you left, we didn’t hear from you for days. Today you are back in the hut of our home again.

But why are you cuffed? What is the reason and what is the cause? Please, tell me everything from the beginning, please, tell me the true circumstances.

Only then, your sister-in-law can feel reassured.’ She asks him in a calm and patient voice.
the *chou* role is used for both the ‘salt-seller’, ‘people’ and Wu the Elder. All of
the role types take part in the singing, and there are no special arias for the
main roles. The roles are not introduced by stage directions like those found
in *chuanqi*, Kunqu and Jingju, but only by giving the role type or profession,
sometimes followed by the tag *chang* or *bai*. If a role continues the singing of
another role, the tags ‘continue’, *jie*, or ‘continue singing’, *jiechang*, are used.

The way narration and dialogue are conducted in the *Huaxi* drama shows
close ties to storytelling, in particular to the subgenres of story-singing, *tanci*
and *xianci*. We have already seen that *chuanqi* and Kunqu might occasionally
have passages where a role character would introduce himself and his back-
ground to the audience or narrate the happenings of the play to the audience
rather than make conversation with the other actors on stage. But in general the
roles would be communicating the verbal message of the drama either through
lyrical arias or through spoken dialogue with the other roles. In the *Huaxi*
drama we find that the main roles of the play introduce themselves and their
background in a similar way to the other drama genres. We also find that the
prose sections mainly consist of dialogue between the characters.

In the metric sections, however, which constitute by far the larger portion
of the drama text, third-person narration is one of the main modes, while dia-

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Figure 6.9. *Huaxi* drama Wu Song Fights the Tiger, Secret Script for Famous Actor, pp. 3b–4a.
logue or first-person narration is much less frequent. This means that the role characters take turns in expressing themselves ‘in role’ and ‘out of role’. There is a tendency that each character tells in third person about the happenings that occur around him/her, but the narration includes other persons as well, and sometimes also the dialogue of other persons, inserted into the third-person narrative. In this way the role characters perform very much in the style of a storyteller or story-singer who sometimes relates the story, sometimes performs the dialogue of the characters in the story. The main difference between storytelling/story-singing and drama in the style of Huaixi is – from the point of view of the verbal form – that in Huaixi a number of performers take turns in telling and performing the story while there is usually only one or two performers in storytelling/story-singing. 22

In Table 6.9 above we notice how the prose passage (non-indented) consists of dialogue between the characters appearing in the scene where Wu Song is sentenced into exile. We should, however, be aware that in a few instances narrative portions are mixed with the dialogue even in the prose. As soon as the mode switches to verse (indented, stanza form) third-person narration becomes a major performing style, while dialogue and monologue are regularly inserted. The singing character can express personal thoughts (monologue), as well as dialogue with other characters. But the special feature of this style is that the actor can also narrate the events in third person as well as express dialogue of other minor characters. The switching between these various modes of expression is unmarked and often vague, but nevertheless implicit. This is due to the fact that pronouns are often optional in Chinese and verbal forms ambivalent with a view to person and time. In the English translation the different ‘persons speaking’ are necessarily specified more explicitly than in the original text.

6.10. Fixed Phrases in the Dramas about Wu Song and the Tiger

Apart from the poems of the arias created by Shen Jing in the 16th century for his chuanqi drama, there are practically no textual passages which are shared between the drama versions. The Huaixi drama does not even make use of the arias, and is verbally independent of the other dramatic traditions. All the dramas are likewise textually independent of the novel tradition. The fact that the storyline demonstrates a basic common conception of the tiger tale in both drama and novel could hardly be taken as proof of any literary (written) textual relationship, and the Huaixi has an altogether very different storyline with some affinity to traditions of shuochang, but with minimal connection to both novel and other dramas.

The distribution of fixed phrases inside the genre of drama and between drama and novel seems to reflect a certain common mutual background or influence, though hardly literary derivation in the sense of quotations or loan of larger portions from written precedents. The fixed phrases that are in common between the dramatic genres and the narrative performed genres (cf. Chapter 7–8) likewise give some indications for cultural contact, in particular when a systematic set of correspondences can be established.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed phrases</th>
<th>Seven drama versions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with slanting eyes and white forehead</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>吊睛白額</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are you a man or a ghost? 是人是鬼</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>big beast 大虫 (蟲)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>好漢</td>
<td>good fellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine! Wine! Wine! Here! Here! Here! Want to buy on credit? Leave! Leave! Leave! 酒酒酒﹐ 有有有</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>man-slaughtering tiger 虎有傷人意</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m holding a cudgel 手拿着棍一條</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blocking the road and killing people 攔路傷人</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flaunting its claws and baring its teeth/flaunting its claws 舞爪張牙/張牙舞爪</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of the Mountain 山君</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>it makes people tipsy three houses away 隔壁三家醉</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monster 嚴畜</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fierce tiger 猛虎</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mottled fierce tiger 斑斕猛虎</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do away with the evil 除害</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good, good, good! 好, 好, 好</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good wine! 好酒</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>three bowls 三碗</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>during the three watches from ten to four o’clock 巳午未三個時辰</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The drama versions are referred to by the following signatures:

C 1 = Ming chuanqi, C 2 = Qing chuanqi, K 1 = Qing Kunqu, K 2 = Modern Kunqu, J 1 = Republic Jingju, J 2 = Modern Jingju, H = Qing Huaxi.

N = Novel, 1 = Stuttgart fragment, 2 = Shuangfengtangben, 3 = Rongyutangben and 4 = Jin Ping Mei cihua

P = Perfomed narrative arts, the **bolded numbers** in this column indicate the amount of genres where the phrase is found.

* In version C1 ‘Good wine’ is used once as classification of the wine by the waiter, not as a repeated exclamation by Wu Song.
6.11. Fixed phrases of drama and novel

From the nineteen phrases under consideration (containing only fixed phrases from drama), the novel editions share altogether eleven with drama, but only four phrases are in common with the Ming chuanqi version, namely the epithet of the tiger ‘with slanting eyes and white forehead’, ‘fierce tiger’ and the hunter’s exclamation ‘are you a man or a ghost?’ (the last only shared with the Rongyutang edition). Interestingly, the Stuttgart fragment jianben has a few expressions in common which are otherwise lacking in the other novels: ‘monster’, ‘do away with the evil’. Wu Song’s exclamation ‘Good wine!’ is found in both of the Kunqu versions, Jingju (Republic) as well as in novel and performed narrative arts, but is absent from chuanqi (see * note to Table 6.10) and Huaixi. The fixed phrase indicating the time for crossing of the Ridge ‘during the three watches from ten to four o’clock’ is found only in Huaixi, novel and performed narrative arts.

The chuanqi, Kunqu and Jingju drama versions exhibit a tendency to operate with a special set of fixed phrases, not shared with the Ming novel, but with the later performed narrative arts. Some phrases are exclusive to the drama versions, namely the ‘man-slaughtering tiger’, ‘Wine, wine, wine . . . etc.’ and ‘I’m holding a cudgel’.

From the above analysis of the chuanqi and Kunqu versions it was obvious that a certain textual borrowing existed between them, namely the words of the arias (which had also been partly incorporated into the modern Jingju). But the dialogue portions in prose were not shared. From the investigation of the usage of fixed phrases it becomes, however, apparent that these genres have a special affinity to each other with a view to their vocabulary. Should this relationship be considered a result of literary ‘rewriting’ or ‘paraphrasing’ for the creation of the prose passages? Or should it rather be considered a result of the oral milieu of actors, who had to learn the arias by heart, but were free to improvise the dialogue on the basis of formerly witnessed performances?

It is obvious that the milieu of the Huaixi drama has had little connection to the traditions of chuanqi and Kunqu. In this drama the style of prose and verse is completely different and the fixed phrases are almost all at variance with those used in the other dramas. But this drama is tied to the performed narrative arts, also with a view to fixed phrases.

6.12. Fixed phrases of drama and performed narrative arts

The various genres of performed narrative arts and the individual versions of each exhibit a wide variation in the usage of fixed phrases. In Table 6.10 above, all of these genres and versions are summed up under P = Performed narrative arts. The genres that share fixed phrases with the drama are: 1) genres in prose with occasional poetry: Yangzhou pinghua, Sichuan pinghua; 2) prosimetric genres: Fuzhou pinghua, kuaishu, Shandong kuaishu and 3) metric genres: dagushu, Yangzhou qingqu.

While the present study is too restricted to allow a statistical survey, the distribution of fixed phrases of drama among the performed narrative genres
nevertheless may corroborate a special proximity between certain genres. It is obvious that the fixed phrases that the drama versions have in common with the novel are with one exception also widespread in the performed narrative genres, cf. the first four phrases in Table 6.10, something that one would find a natural consequence of the wide circulation of the novel during the Qing period.

A direct textual link between the versions of the novel, drama and performed narrative arts is, however, not a precondition for the spread of these phrases. Those phrases that are only found in drama, but not in the novel, are also less widespread in the performed narrative arts: three are exclusive to drama; five are shared between the chuanqi, Kunqu, Jingju group and the performed narrative arts; four are shared between the Huaxi and the performed narrative arts, and one is in common between both chuanqi, Kunqu, Huaxi and performed narrative arts.

The performed narrative genres that have fixed phrases in common with drama (but not with the novel) are fewer. The Huaxi version has a particular set of fixed phrases (that none of the other drama versions share) in common with performed narrative arts, mainly with Fuzhou pinghua and dagushu, genres that also manifest many formal features of similarity with the Huaxi (cf. Chapter 7 and 8).

Notes

1 For an introduction to pre-Yuan drama, see SHIH Chung-wen 1976: 3–19; IDEMA and WEST 1982: 4–6.

2 The early nanxi play where this kind of monologue in third-person narrative is found is First Place Scholar Zhang Xie, Zhang Xie zhuangyuan 張協狀元 (ca 1200), cf. SUN Mei 2002: 50.

3 In many zaju dramas the names of the Water Margin heroes are written in variant forms, some of them just phonetic homophones, some with larger discrepancies compared to the names in the Ming novel (HE Xin 1983: 174–178). There are also discrepancies vis à vis Xuanhe yishi and between the various dramas. As Liangyan Ge has observed this situation points to an oral milieu as the background for the creation of both drama and novel, cf. GE Liangyan 2001: 110–112. This phenomenon is not so obvious with a view to the dramas about the tiger tale. Wu Song’s name is rendered the same way in all texts and so is Song Jiang’s and Chai Jin’s, cf. Chapter 8, 8.8.

4 The titles are found in the Yuan catalogue Lügui bu 录鬼簿, compiled by Zhong Si-cheng 鍾嗣成, which is the earliest fairly complete list of Yuan zaju, cf. XU Diaofu 1975: 2. See also XIE Bixia 1981: 12, and the entry about Lügui bu in NIENHAUSER 1986: 606.

5 Jin Shengtan in his pingdian 評點 commentary to the novel emphasizes the role of the staff as a motif that occurs again and again, giving a certain rhythm and coherence to the tale, cf. WANG, John 1972: 75–80; ROLSTON 1997: 253.

6 See SOURCES, Appendix B, Written texts, Drama. See also FU Xihua and DU Ying-tao 1958, Vol. 2: 4–6, and frontispiece.

7 The extant editions of the novel, that contain the chapters about Wu Song, the Stuttgart Fragment (16th century), the Shuangfengtangben of 1594 and the Rongyu-
The storyline of *Jin Ping Mei cihua* does not show any influence from the *chuanqi*, but as we saw in Chapter 3, 3.10, some of the important episodes from the *jianben* and *fanben* versions, in particular the drinking bout in the tavern, are lacking in this version.

In drama, the tiger story as textual unit may be only a 'scene', *chu* 出, 齣 of a much larger complete play, or it may constitute a full play, *zhe* 折 or *ju* 剧. As a full play, it is sometimes divided into further subunits, *chang* 場 (*Jingju* 京劇) or *ji* 集 (*Huaixi* 淮 戏). It is a specific feature of the dramas that the textual unit occurs in the drama as written/printed, but it does not belong to the passages spoken by the *personae dramatis*. Therefore it does not really belong to the 'performable' part, but is purely a technical term for the written version.

The general view, it must be said, is that the Ming *chuanqi* represents a slight rewriting of the novel, see *Jin Menghua* 1969: 272–273. This view is based mainly on the fact that the plot is roughly similar to that of the novel, although with essential changes, such as providing Wu Song with a bride. In my opinion a similar plot line is not a convincing proof of written relationship, since the plot can easily exist as general cultural knowledge, independent of reading experience.

In *Yangzhou pinghua* 王小二 or *Wang Er* 王二 is the name of the waiter in the inn of Jingyang Town. It is also the name of a trickster role in the Yang-
Wu Song in Drama

Wang Er guo nian 王二過年 [Wang Er celebrates New Year], later changed to Pi Wu guo nian 皮五過年 [Pi the Fifth celebrates New Year], cf. Wei Ren 1999: 399. In the storyteller-novel Qingfengzha 清風閘 from the 19th century, where the gambler and rogue Pi Wu 皮五 is the central figure, there is also another gambler, Wang Er 王二, in a secondary role, see Wan 2014. Apart from the general term for ‘waiter’, Xiao’er 小二, prevalent in many parts of China, the name as used in the Lower Yangzi area might have connotations to tricksters and gamblers.

In many shuochang genres the narrative function of characters in the story is also sometimes confused with that of the narrator, while in other genres narration and dialogue are neatly kept apart, even though the whole piece is only performed by one single person, the storyteller. In the pinghua storytelling genres, such as Yangzhou pinghua, the speech of the characters of the story is impersonated by the storyteller who imitates the voice and gestures of every single character. In between the dialogue portions, the storyteller as narrator relates the happenings and describes the scenery as well as comments on the story, often with appeal to the audience. The feelings of the characters are mostly expressed as a monologue by the character concerned, cf. Børdahl 1996: 189–194; Børdahl (Yi Debo 易德波) 2006: 219–228. In some genres, however, such as Yangzhou ballad-singing, Yangzhou qingqu, the alternation between dialogue, monologue and storyteller’s narration has a tendency to glide into each other in a way reminiscent of the dramatic speech of chuangi, and in particular of the Huaixi, cf. Børdahl 2010c. See also Chapter 10, 10.7.
Fighting the Tiger in Storytelling
Chinese performance literature, called 'telling and singing literature', *shuochang wenxue*, or 'narrative performance literature', *quyi wenxue*, is closely related to orally performed genres, *shuochang* or *quyi*, and they usually share the same genre names.¹ Many of these genres have been orally transmitted through several hundred years, and some of them have a history of four hundred years or more. The 'telling and singing literature' points to written versions of performable texts that constitute the literary legacy of these verbal art forms. The tiger tale was and is a frequent theme for the performed narrative arts and their written counterparts.²

In this chapter seven genres of performance literature dating from late Qing to the 1980s will be discussed (see illustrations in Figures 7.1.a-g and bibliographical information in Table 7.1). These are examples of printed versions from the performance genres of 'Yangzhou ballad singing', *Yangzhou qingqu*, 'drum tale', *dagushu*, 'fast tale', *kuaisu*, 'Shandong clapper tale', *Shandong kuaishu*, 'Fuzhou storytelling', *Fuzhou pinghua*, 'Hangzhou storytelling', *Hangzhou pinghua*, and 'Yangzhou storytelling', *Yangzhou pinghua*.³

In the analysis of the seven items of written/printed performance literature taking Wu Song and the tiger as their theme, I do not intend to reconstruct the oral versions that may have inspired or been the result of the written pieces. Instead, I want to consider the written versions in their own right. However, while evidence from oral performance of the same genres will be discussed in Chapters 10 and 11, some aspects are already treated in this chapter, since familiarity with the oral form seems often to be a precondition for the 'reading' or understanding/appreciation of the written version. Many of the telling and singing arts are now available in videos on the internet, so that one can fairly easily get an impression of the characteristics of the oral performance.⁴
Figure 7.1.a. First page of the Yangzhou qingqu version of the tiger tale

Figure 7.1.b. First page of the dagu version of the tiger tale

Wu Song Fights the Tiger
Figures 7.1.a - 7.1.g should be inserted here one by one, not two at a time. Most of them can fit into the column of the main text. It is disturbing to have them spread out and sometimes two figures besides each other. They are a kind of enumerating of the seven texts that will be analysed. After the 7 figures we must have immediately Table 7.1. This table must not be placed inside section 7.2.

Figure 7.1.c. First page of the *kuaishu* version of the tiger tale

![First page of the *kuaishu* version of the tiger tale](image)

Figure 7.1.d. First page of the *Shandong* *kuaishu* version of the tiger tale

![First page of the *Shandong* *kuaishu* version of the tiger tale](image)
Figure 7.1.e. First page of the Fuzhou pinghua version of the tiger tale

Figure 7.1.f. Cover and first page of the Hangzhou pinghua version of the tiger tale
The first four versions do not only have in common the fact that verse dominates; they are also comparatively short – about 1,400 characters (the *kuaishu* version) to 4,000 characters (the *Shandong kuaishu* version). The *Fuzhou pinghua*, where prose and verse alternate in long sequences of approximately the same length,\(^6\) has a total length for the first collection of ten double-pages, *shangji*, of about 15,500 characters (part one of the first collection, where the tiger tale is told, four double-pages set off as a special section, has about 6,000 characters.) The prose genres (with a few lines of verse) have about 19,000 characters, divided into two chapters (*Hangzhou pinghua*), and about 16,000 characters, one chapter (*Yangzhou pinghua*).

The various kinds of rhyme and metre, as well as the corresponding tunes and musical accompaniment, are outside the scope of the present study.\(^7\) There is, however, little doubt that these features are fundamental in carrying many of the corresponding oral traditions from one generation to the next. The mode of performance and the memory of words and lines seem to be intimately connected. The metric genres (metric throughout) are shorter and have a comparatively more regulated and fixed textual form than the prose genres (prose with occasional verse), as is apparent from the cases where we have multiple written and oral versions of the 'same' story within the same genre or even from the same performer (Børdahl 1996: 175, 223. See also Schimmelpenninck 1997: 215–222).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yangzhou qingqu 揚州清曲</td>
<td>Jingyanggang Wu Song da hu 景陽岡武松打虎 [Wu Song Fights the Tiger on Jingyang Ridge], wood-cut, anonymous, printed by Baowentang, in: Academia Sinica Collection, Taipei, registration number: Ku 19–175, 9 pp. Late Qing/Republic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shandong clapper tale (Sk) Shandong kuaishu 山東快書</td>
<td>Jingyanggang 景陽岡 [Jingyang Ridge], First Collection, Shang ji 上集, of the pamphlet Wu Song da hu 武松打虎, lithography, anonymous, in: Academia Sinica Collection, Taipei, registration number: 7, Ce, 21–201, 74 pp. (Late Qing/Early Republic). The pamphlet contains two ‘collections’, ji, i.e. Shang ji Jingyanggang 上集景陽岡 [First collection, Jingyang Ridge], 10 double-pages, 1a-10b, and Xia ji Shi zi po 下集十字坡 [Second collection Cross-roads Rise]. The tale of Wu Song and the tiger is found in the first 4 double-pages, 1a-4b, of the First Collection, clearly demarcated with a break at the end of page 4b.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuzhou storytelling (Fp) Fuzhou pinghua 福州平話</td>
<td>‘Di yi hui: Toupingju Wen Kang mai jiu, Jingyanggang Wu Song da hu’ 第一回：透瓶居文康賣酒 景陽岡武松打虎 [Chapter One: Wen Kang Sells Wine in the Tavern of Flavour through the Bottle, Wu Song Fights a Tiger on Jingyang Ridge] ‘Di er hui: Chu menghu haohan li wei ming, ji changjue Dalang shou zhiru’ 第二回：除猛虎好漢立威名﹐擠長街大郎受恥辱 [Chapter Two: Subduing the fierce tiger a good fellow makes his name, In the crowded street Wu the Elder is insulted], modern print, in: Liu Caonan, Mao Saiyun 劉操南, 茅賽雲: Wu Song yanyi 武松演義 [The Romance of Wu Song], Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, no place, 1980: 1–32. The tale of Wu Song and the tiger is narrated over the first two chapters.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.2. Performance texts and their relation to oral performance

A written text purporting to represent an oral genre must always be handled with scepticism (cf. Mair 1983: 9). Apart from the fact that a written version can never truly represent all the facets of an oral performance, a one-to-one relationship between the verbal form of an oral performance and that of its ‘corresponding’ written genre would seldom be verifiable. In those cases where both forms are registered, the written version is usually significantly manipulated before appearing in manuscript or print. Oral performance genres that rely on written scripts also tend to stand in a certain regulated relationship to the written version (metric genres or metric portions of prosimetric genres in a comparatively close relationship; prose genres or prose portions of prosimetric genres in a more distant relationship).

Conditions of musical or rhythmical accompaniment, costume and other props that customarily are used during the oral performance of these genres are only taken into consideration insofar as they seem to affect our understanding of the verbal form of the written text. Here we are particularly concerned with the seven items of performance literature as written specimens. It is their form and usage as written literature that is analysed. But as we shall see, knowledge about the form of the corresponding oral performance traditions will sometimes influence the interpretation of narrative features in the written versions.
A twofold function for these written texts is often envisaged. On the one hand they may serve as entertainment reading (sometimes enjoyed as a kind of substitute for the oral art), serving on the other hand as scripts for performers to practise their repertoire (cf. HANAN 1981: 5). Some of the texts seem to have primarily the first function, while others may have or have had both functions. There is, however, also a third function for the purpose of which such texts have been collected and published: to serve as folklore research material. Among the selected texts only the *Yangzhou qingqu* and the *kuaishu* versions might primarily have served as scripts for professional performers, even if the transfer into print would actually imply a new function as ‘folklore material’ for connoisseurs and scholars.

The *Yangzhou qingqu* of the tiger tale was published in 1985 in a scholarly edition with the explicit purpose of preserving the textual heritage of old *qingqu* songbooks for historical research. This purpose does not per se prevent future performers from using the texts as scripts, but the editors of the anthology apparently consider the oral genre as obsolete or on the brink of extinction. It is, however, significant that there existed a rich fund of songbooks in this genre (about 500 preserved songbooks are mentioned), proving the necessity of written texts for this oral art.8

The printing history of the fast tale, *kuaishu*, version of the tiger tale does not allow speculations about the function of this text when it first appeared in a collection of performance texts from the old entertainment district of Beijing. It is well documented, however, that late Qing *kuaishu* performers created written scripts as a precondition for the oral performances of this genre, but were free to make improvisations during performance (CHAN Kam-Chiew 1982: 126). The present text could very well have been a Qing manuscript that had found its way into the Republican anthology.9

The format of the drum tale, *dagushu*, and the Fuzhou storysinging, *Fuzhou pinghua*, chapbooks on the tiger tale, printed in woodcut and lithography, both from late Qing or early Republic, apparently catered primarily to a readership among the general reading public (including the aficionados of the art). These cheap booklets of performance literature were published for commercial reasons at a time when the corresponding oral arts were flourishing (WAN 2009: 137–140; WAN 2010). One would not expect the pamphlets to have been regularly in use among the professional performers, but manuscript versions (not extant in the case of the tiger tale) might have had this function. Nevertheless the verbal form of these texts may have been relatively close to oral performance, even though dialect – a main feature of the oral arts – is not much in evidence.10

The anthologies of Shandong clapper tale, *Shandong kuaishu*, and the ‘new storyteller books’, *xin huaben*, of Yangzhou storytelling, *Yangzhou pinghua*, were created at a very different time and climate – the 1950s and 1980s, when the Chinese authorities were eager to ‘save’ the oral arts from extinction. This purpose was mainly implemented by publishing oral repertoires in thoroughly edited and ‘corrected’, *zhengli*, books. Erotic passages and politically sensitive remarks were dutifully eliminated during these two periods. The editors make
explicit in the prefaces or postscripts that the texts are designed for a double purpose, namely as entertainment reading for a national readership and as scripts for future performers (Gao Yuanjun 1980: 4; Gao Yuanjun 1987: 601; Wang Shaotang [1959] 1984: 1111).

It is remarkable that the editors of the Yangzhou pinghua version—in contrast to the Hangzhou pinghua version—sincerely tried to keep dialect grammar and vocabulary wherever such features were not considered impedimental for a national readership.

Finally, the Hangzhou storytelling version, Hangzhou pinghua, of 1980 represents a type of ‘oral-related’ text that has only vague ties to the oral performance genre from which it claims its origin. The title of the book indicates the genre ‘romance’, yanyi, which points to the literary genre of novelistic reading material. In this respect the book is clearly at variance with the other versions of performance literature, none of which are so strongly adapting to a genre different from their specific oral performance genre. Even if one of the two authors, Mao Saiyun, (cf. Table 7.1) is a performer of Hangzhou pinghua, the lengthy postscript makes it abundantly clear that the main author of this volume is professor Liu Caonan from Hangzhou University. Professor Liu views his own role in creating this work as a parallel to those men who—in his view—created the fanben version of the Shuihu zhuan as a refined literary work, basing themselves on contemporary storytellers’ rude oral versions and their simple scripts, reminding of the jianben versions. Liu Caonan wishes to bring the Shuihu tale onto a still higher level of art, basing himself on a manifold array of written sources, as well as on contemporary professional storytellers’ oral and printed editions. He mentions in particular his indebtedness to Wang Shaotang’s Wu Song (1959) (cf. Table 7.1, last item). He has no intention of keeping the specific storytelling form or dialect of his Hangzhou informant, the storyteller Mao Saiyun. Quite the opposite: with the novel of Shuihu zhuan as his model, the author openly declares his intention to take any freedom with his sources that he finds necessary for his vision of an ideologically purified narrative of Wu Song’s heroic character (Liu Caonan: Postscript in Liu Caonan and Mao Saiyun 1980: 379–389).

7.3. Performance literature and textual unit

The various performance texts have considerably different length counted in characters/ syllables, ranging from ca 1400 characters for the shortest version (kuaishu) to ca 19,000 characters for the longest (Hangzhou pinghua). Each sample must contain the essential episodes of the tiger tale, namely Wu Song’s travel to see his elder brother, his climbing of the mountain and his fight with the tiger. When this basic tale is embedded into a longer story, the textual unit where this tale occurs is counted as one version of the tiger tale, and the whole unit is analysed as an example of the range of manifestations of this tale. The basic events are in the large majority of texts clearly narrated in one unit of the written text. Sometimes this unit constitutes a separate text, published as a booklet or pamphlet; in other cases the unit is part of a book or pamphlet.
There are, however, two cases that need special comment. In the _Hangzhou pinghua_ book edition, the tiger tale is narrated over two textual units: Wu Song’s travel is narrated in Chapter One and his fighting of the tiger follows in Chapter Two. In the _Fuzhou pinghua_ pamphlet, consisting of two ‘collections’, _shangji_ and _xiaji_, the tiger tale is told in the first part of the first collection. This first part is a separate unit insofar as it is clearly marked with a space at the end of the fourth double-page. From the layout point of view, we may consider the unit of _ji_ as divided into two marked, but unnamed subunits; the tiger tale is told in the first subunit.

7.4. Oral and written connotations to textual units

The denomination of the textual unit to which each version of the tiger story belongs, brings up immediately the interplay of the ‘oral’ and ‘written’ aspects that are central to this study. The meaning ‘a round’, ‘a turn’ or ‘a session’ of oral performance, _hui_, is the earliest name for the textual unit of the tale as preserved in the novel of _Shuihu zhuan_, both in the _jianben_ editions and the _fanben_ editions (cf. Chapter 3, 3.2, 3.3). The early editions of _Shuihu zhuan_, with one exception, have both a ‘bookish’ textual unit, namely the ‘scroll’ _juan_ (printed into the margin of the text), and a unit connected with oral performance, _hui_. Sometimes the two units comprise the same amount of text, i.e. each _juan_ is also one _hui_, but in other editions one _juan_ will comprise a number of _hui_.

In the vernacular literary genres that stand as the closest forerunners to the novel, the plain tale, _pinghua_, and the chantefable, _shuochang cihua_ (cf. Chapter 2), we do not find the _hui_ as a textual unit, but ‘scroll’, _juan_, or ‘collection’, _ji_ (MCLAREN 1998: 112–113). These written texts are therefore not explicitly referred to oral performance settings in their naming of the textual units.

In the _Shuihu zhuan_ and _Jin Ping Mei cihua_ the ‘literary’ meaning of ‘book chapter’ is already embodied in the term as the way of numbering the textual units making up the whole printed work. But simultaneously the meaning of ‘a storyteller’s session or round’, _hui_, is imbedded in the word as found in the final stock phrase of each chapter, ‘in the next round (next turn, next time we meet, next chapter), I shall explain’ _xiahui fenjie_ (in some _jianben_ editions), or ‘please, listen to the explanation in the next round/turn/session/chapter’ _qie ting xiahui fenjie_ (in _jianben_ and _fanben_ editions and in _Jin Ping Mei cihua_). See also Chapter 3, 3.3.

The sense of ‘round’ or ‘session of oral performance’ for _hui_ has continued in active usage to the present time in some orally performed genres, such as drum song with octagonal drum, _danxian_, and Shandong clapper tale, _Shandong kuaishu_. In the orally performed ‘clapper tale’ the unit is intra-textually (inside the spoken text of performance) named both a ‘section’ _duan’er_, and a ‘round’, _hui_. The expression ‘next round’ or ‘next session’ _xia yi hui_, is part of the final stock phrase. In genres of performance literature, such as drum tale, _dagushu_, fast tale, _kuaisu_, and the Shandong clapper tale, _Shandong kuaishu_, (written editions), the meaning of _hui_ points to the ‘oral’ aspects of the word:

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**First Collection**

**Second Collection**

**Collection**

**Round, turn, session of oral performance; also: chapter**

**Scroll**

**Plain Tale**

**Chantefable**

**Jin Ping Mei in verse and prose**

**Jin Ping Mei cihua**

**(1617)**

**In the next round [I shall] explain**

**Please, listen to the explanation in the next round**

**Drum song with octagonal drum**

**Section**

**Next round, next time**

**下一回**
a unit of performance, not a unit of something written down. As in the oral performance of Shandong clapper tale (CD 1999), the version published in book form (1987) ends with the stock phrase: ‘In the next round . . . , xia yi hui.’

In the edited volume of Yangzhou qingqu, the format of the page layout clearly indicates that the piece ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’, Wu Song da hu, is

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance genres</th>
<th>Written intra-textual</th>
<th>Written extra-textual</th>
<th>Oral intra-textual</th>
<th>Oral extra-textual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yangzhou ballad singing</td>
<td>One unit</td>
<td>One small song suite</td>
<td>One unit</td>
<td>One small song suite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yangzhou qingqu</td>
<td></td>
<td>xiao taoqu</td>
<td></td>
<td>xiao taoqu</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>drum tale</td>
<td>One session</td>
<td>One session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dagushu 大鼓書</td>
<td>hui 回</td>
<td>hui 回</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>fast tale</td>
<td>One unit</td>
<td>One session</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuaishu 快書</td>
<td>hui 回</td>
<td>hui 回</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shandong clapper tale</td>
<td>One session</td>
<td>One session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shandong kuaishu</td>
<td>hui 回</td>
<td>hui 回</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fuzhou storytelling</td>
<td>One unit **</td>
<td>1/2 collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fuzhou pinghua</td>
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<td>ji 集</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hangzhou storytelling</td>
<td>Two chapters</td>
<td>One unit</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hangzhou pinghua</td>
<td>hui 回</td>
<td>1/4 hui 回</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yangzhou storytelling</td>
<td>One unit</td>
<td>One unit</td>
<td></td>
<td>One day (session)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yangzhou pinghua</td>
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<td>of storytelling</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>yitian shu</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yichang shu</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: For four of the written versions of performance literature there are corresponding oral performances available for the present study, cf. Chapter 10. ‘Intra-textual’ means that this kind of unit is mentioned in the written or oral text, either as part of the tale or as part of the format of the edition. ‘Extra-textual’ means that the unit in the given slot is not mentioned in the written or oral text, but that we have evidence from other sources about the unit. ‘One unit’ means that the written text does not specify the name of the unit, but by way of layout indicates that the tale constitutes one separate unit.

* Danxian drum singing performance of another Wu Song tale.

** The first part of the First Collection, shangji, contains the tiger tale; the following part, after a break in the text, is about Wu Song and Pan Jinlian; this part is not included in the present analysis.
one unit, but there is no naming of the unit, neither inside the performance text, nor in the editor’s arrangement of the text. The oral performance tape-recorded in May 2000 (cf. Chapter 10) is likewise devoid of any such information. In the introductory essay to the volume of Yangzhou qingqu the editors Wei Ren and Wei Minghua mention that ballads with up to five melodies in a row are called ‘small song suites’, xiao taogu, but whether this is also the name that the performers use for this kind of ballad is not clear (Wei Ren and Wei Minghua 1985: 25).

For the written versions of Fuzhou pinghua and Hangzhou pinghua corresponding oral performances are not available. In the case of the Fuzhou pinghua version from late Qing or early Republic, truly a prosimetric genre of story-singing or chantefable, it is interesting that the textual unit is an entity much used in literary written work, namely ‘collection’, ji. This was also, as mentioned, the entity found with the early Ming chantefables. This text, similarly to the early chantefables, is obviously an oral-related text, and likewise the person who committed the text to paper apparently found no reason to ‘imitate’ the oral setting which would have been obvious to his readership (McLaren 1998: 112–114, 267).

The tiger tale of the Hangzhou pinghua version is arranged into two chapters, hui. This deserves a special comment. As we have seen, the text is edited into the format of the novel, zhanghui xiaoshuo [chapter divided fiction] (also called ‘romance’, yanyi), where the textual unit of division is hui. In consequence of this choice of format, the text further imitates the novel by applying the usual chapter-initial and -final stock phrases, namely ‘the story says’, hua shuo, and ‘please, listen to the explanation in the next chapter’, qie ting xia hui fenjie (see Chapter 5, 5.2). These features are obviously not to be taken as evidence about Hangzhou pinghua as a contemporary oral genre. The textual unit, hui, with its hepta-syllabic title couplets and initial and final stock phrases all point to the novel of Shuihu zhuan and later novels as the literary model for this pseudo-storyteller book. The idea of a storytelling ‘round’ or ‘return’ was originally embedded in the usage of Shuihu zhuan, where the word can be said to bridge the oral and the written spheres. However, when the modern editor of Wu Song yanyi [Romance of Wu Song] adopts the unit of hui from the ‘storyteller’s manner’ of the novel, he is in fact pressing a contemporary oral tradition into the form of a literary convention.

In the Yangzhou pinghua version the editors are far more committed to the oral tradition, striving to preserve to a high degree the dialectal language as spoken by the storyteller. Nevertheless, the editing has involved a number of revisions of the original performance, as is evident from the arrangement of the textual units, among other things. In professional public performance in the storyteller’s house, the ‘tiger story’ is usually told as ‘one day of storytelling’, yitian shu, or ‘one session of storytelling, yichang shu’. These expressions belong to the storytellers’ daily vocabulary when talking about their art, but are usually not mentioned while performing. A shorter performance is called ‘part, section’, duanzi (or in earlier times: ‘round’, zhuan);15 the term, duanzi,
is not infrequently used in a concluding passage for a short performance. However, the story cycles of the main heroes which belong to the repertoire of the storytellers of SHUIHU are each called ‘ten chapters’, shi hui, e.g. Wu shi hui [Ten Chapters of Wu Song], Song shi hui [Ten Chapters of Song Jiang], etc. The ‘ten-chapter’ structure is in this case related to the particular cyclic structure of the first seventy chapters of Shuihu zhuan. The ten-chapter cycles might represent a feature already present in oral culture of pre-Ming date and continued, not only in the written tradition of the novel Shuihu zhuan (where the ten-chapter cycles are discernible, but unmentioned), but also in various oral and visual popular arts living alongside the written culture. The ‘ten chapters’ have pronounced existence, not only in the oral titles of the SHUIHU repertoire of Yangzhou pinghua and the edited book versions of the same repertoires, but also in titles of many other popular performance texts and popular prints (also called ‘new year pictures’), nianhua (Riftin 2007) (see Chapter 12, Figure 12.11). In the oral tradition of the Wang School of Water Margin as recorded in the last half of the 20th century, these ‘chapters’ exist exclusively as ingredients of the titles of the repertoire, titles which are only in exceptional cases mentioned during performance. Hui is in the oral setting never used as a name for the textual unit of one single performance. However, when the oral genre is transferred to the written as in the present case, the book is arranged into the ‘ten chapters’ that have given name to the repertoire. These hui of the edited book are much longer than a single ‘day’ of two-three hours in the storytellers’ house, and each of them contain the material that would usually be told during three to ten days. The tiger tale is here presented as one of the four subunits that make up the first hui. The subunit has a title Jingyanggang dahu, but no unit name, such as duan, is mentioned. In actual fact this subunit does not correspond to the repertoire of ‘one day’, but is somewhat longer.19

The terms used for the textual unit of the tiger tale in performance literature demonstrate how this category moves between the ‘oral event’ and the ‘written paper’. In written literature for reading, such as the novel, the unit is hui, both in the title and in stock phrases inside the narrative text, and there are no named subunits (even though the commentaries sometimes mention duan as a portion of a hui).21 The unit, hui, is also found both in some orally performed genres (oral performances on tape), such as Shandong kuai shu, and in some of the genres for reading and for performance, dagushu, kuai shu.22 Here we find the unit hui repeatedly used intra-textually. The usage of the oral performances where we find this phenomenon is evidence that when hui is found in similar usage in the written performance genres, it is probably also here truly reflecting oral usage. With Yangzhou pinghua we find that hui is not used as the unit of oral performance, but when the repertoires are edited into book form in the fashion of novels, called xin huaben, hui is adopted as the main unit of division for
the book edition. However, the unit does not correspond to one session of storytelling, but has a loose connection to the ‘ten chapters’ about Wu Song found in the Ming novel and elsewhere (popular prints).

Such editorial procedure, namely that the editors decide where the chapter division should be in the written version, and do not follow the storyteller’s habit, has also been suggested in the case of the Ming novel. (Ge Liangyan 2001: 12.4). The modern editors’ transfer of a storyteller’s repertoire into book form parallels this and supports the theory with a view to Shuihu zhuan.

7.5. Length of reading units and length of performance

The length of the written texts as units of reading are here compared with that of oral performances as sessions of entertainment for an audience. The background for this comparison is first-hand knowledge about oral performances of Yangzhou ballad, Yangzhou qingqu, and Yangzhou storytelling, Yangzhou pinghua (Børdaahl 2003).

The usual length of a ‘day of storytelling’ in Yangzhou pinghua has for the last twenty-five years been ca 100 minutes (two hours with a break), but the professional storytellers who have experienced the customs of the early 20th century, have left testimony that ‘a day’ of telling would formerly last about three hours. The length of a performance of 80 minutes (Wang Xiaotang performing Wu Song da hu in 1992) corresponds to ca 15,000 syllables (characters), which means that a ‘full day’ would be about 18,000 syllables.

The length of the hui of Chapter 23 of Shuihu zhuan in the Rongyutangben fanben edition is ca 6200 characters, i.e. one third of a ‘full day’ in Yangzhou pinghua (see also Chapter 3, 3.3). Chapter 1 of Jin Ping Mei cihua contains ca 10,000 characters, but the prologue part of the chapter, ca 1500 characters, is couched in a different style and seems to be added to the original hui. The following hui all have a length of ca 4000–8000 characters, about the same length as the hui of Rongyutangben. The length of the jianben editions, the Stuttgart fragment and the Shuangfengtang, Chapter 22, is respectively ca 2100 and ca 2200 characters, i.e. one third of the fanben edition.

While the hui of the Rongyutangben and Jin Ping Mei cihua might correspond fairly well by word-count to a ‘section’, duanzi, of telling after which the storyteller would demand payment before continuing (namely 30–40 minutes), this unit might also correspond to a somewhat condensed version of a full ‘round’ (a full session) in the oral language of performance. The editor’s sense of length might be based on considerations of how much a reader would like to consume in one portion, but a certain correspondence between the storytelling hui and the textual unit hui is not unlikely at this early stage.

As for the jianben editions the laconic (more wenyan coloured), telescopic, sometimes incoherent style, seems close to that of storyteller’s scripts as still extant among old storyteller’s families in Yangzhou; such scripts have a length that corresponds to ca one-fourth to one-eighth of the corresponding performance (Børdaahl 2005, 2009; see also Chapter 9). The contents of one hui of the jianben editions would thus correspond fairly well with a reasonable corresponding
length of a performance ‘round’ hui of the same contents in oral form, i.e. in a much expanded form.

Among the other texts of performance literature, the longest is the Fuzhou pinghua with 15,500 characters for one ‘collection’, ji. This length is within the scope of a performable textual unit, corresponding with the length of a day of Yangzhou storytelling (2 hours = 18,000 syllables), since the sung portions would usually demand longer time. The length of the tiger tale proper (6000 characters) would correspond fairly well to the first half of a full performance, the place where the performer would take a break. In Yangzhou qingyu, for example, it takes 35 minutes to perform ca 2600 syllables/characters (the written version is very close in length, 2550 characters). The danxian performances are about the same speed, ca 2500 characters in 30 minutes. Then at the other end we have the Shandong kuaishu where ca 4000 syllables/characters are performed in 14 minutes, which means about the double amount of words in half the time (the meaning of the term kuaishu [fast tale] is immediately evident). It is natural that a performance of this kind of tongue twister would be short.

In the recent traditions of drum-singing, performances would be performed as items of a longer list of performances to fill up a programme of one evening in the storyteller’s house, and they would not, like the Yangzhou storytelling performances, be expected to fill up a whole programme of one afternoon or evening. The performance texts of dagushu (2070 characters) and kuaishu (1400 characters) both have a length that corresponds well with this performance situation which reminds of the theatrical tradition of zhezi xi, where the programme of an evening consists in selected scenes from a number of dramas.

7.6. Verse and prose, singing and speaking

Verse and prose are obvious from the layout of the printed performance texts, just as was the case for the drama versions as well as for the Ming novel of Shuihu zhuang, both jianben and fanben editions, and the Jin Ping Mei cihua. Singing, reciting and speaking are sometimes indicated by ‘stage instructions’ such as ‘speaking’, bai, and ‘singing’, chang (cf. Ming chantefables in Chapter 2; drama in Chapter 6), or by inserting the names of melodies or rhythmic patterns into the text. In several of the performance texts only one of the modes is indicated by a marker, while the contrasting mode is implied. For example in Shandong clapper tale, Shandong kuaishu, the modes of ‘speaking’, bai, and ‘aside in prose’, pangbai, are indicated in the text, but the major mode of recitation in verse is not expressed by any such marker or stage direction, but is obvious from the layout of the text in rhymed verse-lines and from knowledge about the oral genre. If there was no background knowledge, this format might also have been used for singing as the major mode.

The kuaishu exposes the same kind of rhythmic hepta-syllabic verse, but the tale includes a number of different performance styles, marked in the printed text by stage instructions: shipian [(introductory) poem], zhutou [prose introduction], Qingyun ban [Qingyun rhymed verse], Liushui ban [Liushui mixed prose and verse], huabai [spoken prose] and Lianzhu diao [Lianzhu mixed
Table 7.6. Verse and prose, singing and speaking in seven genres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Verse and prose</th>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Metric &amp; prose</th>
<th>Metric &amp; prose</th>
<th>Prose &amp; metric</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yang-zhou</td>
<td>chang</td>
<td>song</td>
<td>recitation</td>
<td>song &amp; speech</td>
<td>song or recitation &amp; speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qingqu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>speech &amp; recitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagushu</td>
<td></td>
<td>song</td>
<td>recitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuaishu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>song &amp; bai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shan-dong</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>recitation &amp; bai, pangbai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kuaishu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fuzhou</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>song or recitation &amp; bai</td>
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<tr>
<td>pinghua</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>speech &amp; recitation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hang-zhou</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>speech &amp; recitation</td>
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<td>Yang-zhou</td>
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<tr>
<td>pinghua</td>
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Signatures:
- **Metric**, i.e. metric throughout
- **Metric & prose**, i.e. metric with occasional passages in prose
- **Metric & Prose**, i.e. prosimetric, that is balanced alternation of metric and prose passages
- **Prose & metric**, i.e. prose with occasional verse

**Mode:** Mode of performance as song, recitation or speech in any combination

- **Bolded**, i.e. major mode;
  - **Non-bolded**, i.e. secondary mode.
- **Bolded & bolded**, i.e. both of the modes are major, in balanced alternation

**Markers in pinyin**, i.e. this mode is marked in the text, e.g. chang (song)

**English translation**, i.e. this mode is unmarked, but implied by the textual layout

In some of the written performance texts the mode is indicated by ‘markers’ or stage directions. In Table 7.6 the marked modes are written in **pinyin**. Where no explicit textual markers of mode are found, the analysis of mode is dependent on the layout of the text and the occurrence of rhymes; the unmarked modes are indicated in English translation. With no universal definition of song, recitation and speech available, the designations are necessarily tentative and impressionistic, based on personal observation of oral performances, or on descriptions in works treating the oral performance traditions of each genre.
prose and verse]. The piece is performed in accelerating tempo which has given name to the genre (Chan Kam-chiew 1982: 65–77). In Beijing drumsinging, Jingyun dagu, a number of different performance styles are likewise used for various portions of one ‘session’ (Stevens 1973: 176–178), and it seems likely that the kuaishu and dagushu performance texts would in their oral existence have had a number of reminiscent features.

In oral performance, metric passages are meant to be sung or recited, and prose passages to be spoken, according to the rules of each genre. However, in many genres the modes of singing, reciting and speaking may shade off into each other. The category of mode is only vaguely related to the written performance literature, where the reading of the text may or may not imply acoustic vocalization – from singing or reading aloud to a faint humming or silent reading.26 It should be borne in mind that mental vocalization is just as natural for readers who are familiar with the oral genre as mental vocalization of music scores is for readers who know musical notation and are insiders of the musical tradition.

7.7. Implied context of musical accompaniment

The written texts of these seven samples, like the drama texts (Chapter 6), do not indicate anything about the use of instruments. But since one would expect the implied reader of the performance texts to be familiar with the oral performance tradition for each genre, the instrumental accompaniment or the lack of such must be considered an inherent part of the textual context, if not of the text as such.

In Yangzhou qingqu the ballad singing is performed by a solo singer (sometimes a duo) accompanied by a small ensemble of five or six musicians, playing both plucked and bowed string instruments, as well as clappers and small porcelain cups or a porcelain plate beaten by chopsticks as percussion.27 Dagushu is performed by a solo singer who uses a drum on a high stand and clappers; the singer is often accompanied by a player of a plucked string instrument (Stevens 1973: 137–146; Gui Jingwen 1989: illustrations 1–19). Kuaisbu – not in living tradition – belonged to the drum-song tradition called ‘gentry tales’, zidi shu, but the drum on a stand was in the later period sometimes exchanged with the hand-held octagonal drum, presently used in danxian drum singing (Chan Kam-chiew 1982: 1–4). Shandong kuaisbu is performed by a solo performer who uses a pair of metal clappers before and during recitation (Gao Yuanjun 1987: Portrait during performance; see also Chapter 10, 10.8). In Fuzhou pinghua – on the brink of extinction – singing, chanting and telling were prominent modes in most repertoires. A solo performer used a small cymbal, naobo, a ‘waking block’, xingmu, and a folding fan, zhesban, as props. The small cymbal functioned as an intricate percussion instrument. Sometimes a jade ring was also used to beat the rhythm.29 Hangzhou pinghua and Yangzhou pinghua are both storytelling genres mainly in prose, performed with props such as the ‘waking block’, xingmu, (in Yangzhou pinghua this item is called ‘talk stopper’, zhiyu), and the folding fan, but no musical or percussion instruments. The function of
the block is basically different from that of a percussion instrument (BØRDAHL 1996: 37–39).

As for the usage of verse and prose, it should be obvious that the Ming novel Shuihu zhuàn, both in jianben and in fanben versions, is closest to the format of the Hangzhou pinghua and Yangzhou pinghua versions.30 Jin Ping Mei cihua contains considerably more verse passages, often with indication of the melody to which the verse should be sung, and in this respect this novel is closer to story-singing, such as Fuzhou pinghua and Suzhou tanci.

7.8. Narrator and performer

The seven versions of performance literature under analysis all include both dramatic portions of dialogue between the characters of the tale as well as narrative portions of summary (telling of the action), description and narrator’s comment. Dialogue (including monologue or thought) is dominant in Yangzhou qingqu and Fuzhou pinghua. For this and other reasons the narrative form of these two versions is close to the dramatic genres, in particular the local drama Huaixi where the characters do not only communicate in dialogue, but also take turns in third-person narration of the action (cf. Chapter 6, 6.8–6.9). In the other performance texts summary, description and comment take up the better part, while the dialogue and monologue portions are given less space.

7.9. The narrator’s voice

The narrative portions are told from the perspective of an ‘omniscient’ third-person narrator who stands above the tale and plays no part in it.31 However, in some of the texts the narrator intermittently speaks in the first person, ‘I’, wǒ, and may even point to his own name as the performer of the tale. In such cases the narrator of the text changes from covert third-person narrator to overt first-person narrator, and as the latter type he is identified with the storyteller as a role or at times with the individual performer. In the Hangzhou pinghua version one finds early in the tale a meta-narrative stock phrase that explicitly declares the role of the storyteller as the narrating voice.

Example 7.9.a

待說書的略表幾句

Please wait and let [me,] the storyteller, give a brief explanation

(LIU Caonan and MAO Saiyun 1980: 2)

This remark on behalf of the narrator-storyteller is highly reminiscent of the reference to the storyteller persona in the fanben edition Rongyutangben of Shuihu zhuàn and in Jin Ping Mei cihua, but not in the jianben editions (Chapter 3, 3.5). From the materials at hand it is impossible to know if the model for a sentence like this was precisely the Ming novel, or if storytellers of Hangzhou storytelling do indeed apply such stock phrases in their oral performances.
of recent time (see 7.2). As for the six drama texts from chuanqi, Kunqu and Jingju, the narrating agent, as we have seen, is completely covered in all the texts (Chapter 6, 6.4–6.5). When a drama genre incorporates third-person narration into the dialogue or blurs the distinction between acting and telling, as seen in the Huaxi version (cf. Chapter 6, 6.9), there is nevertheless no overt reference to the narrator, such as we shall discuss with a view to a number of the performance texts.

In the Yangzhou pinghua text, at the beginning of the tale there is an explicit use of the first-person pronoun, wo, pointing to the storyteller.

Example 7.9.b

今日我講武松的英雄故事

Today I shall tell the story about the hero Wu Song . . .

(Wang Shaotang [1959] 1984: 1)

This kind of overt first-person narrator is generally not found at the beginning of oral performances of Yangzhou storytelling, but is not infrequent in the narrator’s comments inserted when the tale is well under way.32 The printed text has only one further example of the narrator speaking in the first person.

Example 7.9.c

'啊哈!我明白了!' 你問武松可是明白了嗎﹖他如明白﹐我能賭咒。

'Ah, ha! I understand!' Would you like to know whether Wu Song really had understood? I can swear that he didn’t understand at all!


From a comparison of the printed edition of Wang Shaotang’s performance with one of his oral performances (radio) and with performances by his disciples, one may suspect, not only that the first case of the overt narrator was fabricated by the editors, but further that the editors suppressed most other occasions of such a narrator type in the present text. Since the editors admittedly were eager to shorten the text and exclude everything that was thought superfluous, comments where the narrator would speak in the first person would probably mostly be deleted. As an edited text, the Yangzhou pinghua version therefore belongs with the performance texts where an overt narrator is highly infrequent, but a study of oral performances of this genre reveals another picture, namely that an overt narrator occurs intermittently throughout the performances, particularly in narrator’s comment.

In the Shandong kuaishu this kind of overt first-person narrator occurs in the middle of the text. On the printed page of this genre, narrator’s comment is regularly introduced by the stage instruction ‘aside in prose’, pangbai. In one of the longer ‘asides’ the narrator explicitly speaks in the first person (using the pronoun, wo), and even mentions his own name, Gao Yuanjun, in a humor-
ous digression where he compares Wu Song’s way of taking a nap after his heavy drinking to his own skills in ‘deliberate inattention’.

Example 7.9.d

(Aside in prose) What? How could he sleep in that way? He was a hero, you see! When he sat, he sat in such a way, and when he stood, he had such a way of standing. He could even – like me Mr Gao Yuanjun – fix his eyes and close his ears! . . .

(GAO Yuanjun 1987: 56)

In the other printed performance texts the pronoun ‘I’, wo, or the term ‘storyteller’, shuoshude, is not used with reference to the performer, and therefore the narrator as performer is less conspicuous in these texts.

In the dagushu, kuaishu, Fuzhou pinghua, and Hangzhou pinghua there is, however, a sprinkling of meta-narrative phrases of introduction, connection and conclusion, pointing to the implied performer (storyteller or story-singer) as the narrating voice. A ‘first person’ is the logical subject of several of the meta-narrative phrases, for example in the dagushu: ‘[Let me] tell in this session’, yan yi hui.

Example 7.9.e

Let me tell in this session about when the Emperor had his seat in Bianliang

All under Heaven was in a constant state of war

(Ku I 9–175: 1b, see Chapter 15, 15.1)

Likewise in Fuzhou pinghua: ‘The story [we are] performing is about . . .’, hua biao . . .

Example 7.9.f

The story [we are] performing is about hua biao

A little further: ‘[Let us] postpone this and take our time to perform the story. [Let me] now tell only about anxia man biao, dan shuo . . .

(Speaking) The story we are performing is about Qinghe District of Guangping Prefecture, Shandong Province. There was a hero named Wu Song, he was the second son in his family

(7, Ce, 21–201: 1b, see Chapter 15, 15.2)
Example 7.9.g

按下慢表。單說武松。一日酒醉。打死一人。

Let us postpone this and take our time to perform the story. Let us now tell only about Wu Song. One day he was drunk and killed a man.

(7, Ce, 21–201: 1b, see Chapter 15, 15.2)

Similar expressions are found in the kuaishu (‘[Our] performance is about’, biaode shi), the Shandong kuaishu (‘Let’s stop chatting and let me perform’, xianyan suiyu bu yao jiang, biao yi biao) and the Hangzhou pinghua (‘[Let’s] perform first what happened to a certain man’, zheli xian biao yi ren.34

Comparing the performance texts with novel and drama, this kind of reference to the narrator is part of the meta-narrative stock phrases of the Ming novel, widely used in the fanben and Jin Ping Mei cihua, but rarely in the jianben. In the samples of drama no such meta-narrative phrases were found, not even in the Huaixi, although this genre is very close to the performance genres.

7.10. Simulated dialogue with the audience

Apart from the above mentioned features of the narrating instance – pointing to the performer and the performance situation implied by the text – the narrator in some of the sample texts regularly surfaces in ‘simulated dialogue’ with the implied audience; in some other of these texts this feature is absent or rare. Simulated dialogue was already observed in the early ‘plain tale’, pinghua, and chantefable, shuochang cihua (cf. Chapter 2, 2.11), in the fanben editions of Shuihu zhuan and in Jin Ping Mei cihua; the feature was less pronounced in the jianben editions (Chapter 3, 3.5).

In Hangzhou pinghua and Yangzhou pinghua simulated dialogue with the implied audience is frequent. Narrator’s questions and answers, ziwen zida, are found throughout the text with regular intervals, underscoring the close ‘interaction’ between storyteller and audience which the performance text as printed literature is reproducing or ‘simulating’.

Example 7.10.a

再说冈上有没有老虎呢?自然有的。

Let’s go on with the story: Was there indeed a tiger on the ridge? Of course there was!

(LIU Caonan and MAO Saiyun 1980: 17)

Example 7.10.b

啊! 旁的東西有新的。人類又有新的。有。

Well! Other things can be new. But how can people be ‘new’? Sure, they can!

(WANG Shaotang [1959] 1984: 2)
The *Shandong kuaishu* as shown in the example above also applies ‘simulated dialogue’ with the audience in the ‘asides’. In the *dagushu* there are a couple of occurrences where the audience is addressed directly in the phrase ‘You may ask . . .’, *ruo wen* [if (you) ask] or [you (may) ask].

**Example 7.10.c**

若问逃荒侄何处
住在西門慶的西厢房

You may ask where they fled from the disaster?
They set up house in the west wing at Ximen Qing’s

(Ku I 9–175: 3a, see Chapter 15, 15.1)

In the *Yangzhou qingqu*, the *Fuzhou pinghua*, and the *kuaishu* simulated dialogue in the form of questions (to the audience) and answers from the narrator (the storyteller) are not found.

**7.11. NARRATOR’S COMMENT**

Narrator’s comment in the form of digressions, moral statements, proverbs and poems likewise characterize the narrator’s voice of each text. Also with respect to the form of narrator’s comment the seven sample texts show considerable variation.

In the *Yangzhou qingqu* and the *dagushu* we find only one occurrence of comment in each text, namely in the form of a four line hepta-syllabic poem expressing the morale. In the *Yangzhou qingqu* the poem ends the piece, expressing Wu Song’s fame after his heroic deed and his continued pious devotion to his elder brother. Even though this portion is meant to be sung by the role of Wu Song, his voice is here completely melted with the narrator’s voice.

**Example 7.11.a**

[京舵子]自从精拳打过虎，
武松英名天下扬！
唯有一事难放下——
还乡清河探兄长。

(*Jing Duozi*) Ever since he killed the tiger with his clever fist,
Wu Song’s fame spread throughout the world!
Only one thing was still on his mind –
to return to his hometown in Qinghe and visit his elder brother.

(Wei Ren and Wei Minghua 1985b: 69)

In the *dagushu* the poem occurs just after Wu Song has left the tavern.

**Example 7.11.b**

二卝听見假粧未听見吕順大道徃前逷
英雄好漢武松强景陽崗上把姦降
Second Master pretended not to hear it and marched forward along the highway.

So strong was the hero and good fellow Wu Song
He subdued the tiger at Jingyang Ridge
He dodged the tiger’s head and grabbed its tail
With his two hands he sent it up in the air

He hurried along at high speed, seeing in front of him the Jingyang Ridge

(Ku I 9–175: 7a, see Chapter 15, Figure 15.1b)

The prolepsis of the contents – a prediction of Wu Song’s ability to subdue the tiger with his bare hands – and the fact that those four lines are marked as serving as a poem (by indentation and the smaller size of the characters, probably intended for special recitation inside the metric performance) reveal this passage as a narrator’s comment. Otherwise there is little difference between the narrative form of this passage and that of the ordinary third-person narration of the dagushu.

Hepta-syllabic poems, shi, of general narrator’s comment are found also in three of the other five samples. The kuaishu begins with a shi-poem of praise for Wu Song and has another at the point where Wu Song decides to climb the mountain (like the dagushu). In the Yangzhou pinghua version there are several kinds of poetry: shi-poem, ci-song, fu-prose-poem and couplets of unrhymed verse. The shi-poem, the fu-prose-poem and the couplet are all used for narrator’s comment, praising the heroism and stamina of Wu Song (poem and couplet) as well as the majestic nature of his foe, the tiger (prose-poem) (BØRDAHL 1996: 140–145). With a view to poetry, the Hangzhou pinghua stands in a relationship of direct literary derivation from Wang Shaotang’s book version from the 1950s, and the various kinds of poetry are not only used in the same way, but most lines are borrowed (LIU Caonan and MAO Saiyun 1980: 388–389).

In Fuzhou pinghua the piece begins by quoting a classical shi-poem with no immediate connection to the tale of Wu Song that will follow. This way of beginning seems closely connected to earlier performance traditions where the storyteller would begin his/her session by reciting poems or cracking jokes with little relevance to the main story, just to give room for late-comers to find their seats.35 This use of poems is different from that of narrator’s comment that we have discussed so far, although the two functions may sometimes overlap. The Shandong kuaishu has no narrator’s comment in the form of a poem, but as we have seen there are other kinds of narrative comment in this version.

Storyteller’s comment in the form of digression, explanation, moral evaluation or humorous remarks is found mainly in the prose genres of Hangzhou pinghua and Yangzhou pinghua. Here is an example from Hangzhou pinghua of narrator’s comment in the form of an explanation.
Example 7.11.c

诸位，你道这小老板说的‘鸳鸯’、‘乾坤’是什么意思？这是酒家切口，意思是水和酒对开掺进。

Dear audience, do you understand the meaning of ‘mandarin duck’ and ‘Heaven and Earth’ mentioned by the young innkeeper? They are secret signals of the innkeeper, meaning mingling water with wine half-and-half.

(Liu Caonan and Mao Saiyun 1980: 9)

In the Yangzhou pinghua version we find the following narrator’s comment with a moral characterization of Wu Song.

Example 7.11.d

武松未曾進店，先問好酒何來？過去的人，酒、色、財、氣這四個字難免。唯有武松只好兩個字，好貪杯，好動不平氣。他看鎮市小，酒店小，恐其沒有好酒。

Why was it, that even before Wu Song entered the inn, he asked for good wine? People of former times were dependent on four things: 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, so he was afraid that they did not have good wine.


The Shandong kuaishu also features this kind of comment, explicitly named ‘aside in prose’, pangbai, in the edited version (cf. example 7.9.d above). As for storyteller’s comment and simulated dialogue with the audience, the dagushu only has a few short sentences of this kind. In the Shandong kuaishu a similar playing with rhetorical questions and answers is here attributed to the characters of the tale as inner monologue: instead of a narrator who engages in asking and answering his own questions, the characters talk to themselves. In Yangzhou pinghua, on the other hand, the narrator’s simulated dialogue is a very important narrative device, much more developed than in the Ming novel or any other of the versions under study here.

In the Yangzhou qingqu, dagushu, kuaishu and Fuzhou pinghua this kind of comment is rare or non-existant (dagushu, kuaishu and Fuzhou pinghua do have a sprinkling of poems with this function, but no other kinds of narrator’s comment). Therefore the textual relationship between third-person narrator and narrator-as-performer is less perspicuous in these versions.36

Narrator’s comment in the form of shi-poem and other verse, digression, explanation, moral statement, etc. is a typical feature of the fanben edition of Shuihu zhuan and also frequent in Jin Ping Mei cihua, but relatively rare in the jianben editions of Shuihu zhuan. In drama this device is not found.
7.12. The invisible narrator

The *Yangzhou qingqu* text uses no meta-narrative expressions and has no narrator’s comment. As mentioned, the narrative form of this text is highly reminiscent of the *Huaixi* drama version where the actors alternate between dialogue and narration. In the *Yangzhou qingqu* the entire text is divided between two singing roles, namely Wu Song and the host of the tavern. These two roles take turns in third-person narration of the action, dialogue and monologue. When the text indicates ‘Wu [Song] singing’, *Wu [Song] chang*, the third-person narrative is about his situation and actions, and the dialogue and monologue are put in the mouth of Wu Song as a character in the tale. When the host takes the stage, indicated by ‘the host singing’, *dianzhu chang*, it is his situation and actions that are treated in third-person narration and the dialogue and monologue emanates from him as a character.

The last portion of the tale where the fighting with the tiger takes place is sung by Wu Song, mainly in third-person narration, with intermittent monologue (thought). The tiger has no singing role and does not utter a sound. The shifting between third-person narration and first-person monologue is not always clear, since pronouns are often absent, and the utterances may have a general non-specified subject. In such cases the English translation will by necessity become more specific – reflecting third-person narration or first-person monologue – than is the case in the Chinese original, where the two are sometimes blurred. The textual layout of the printed *Yangzhou qingqu* seems to indicate that there would preferably be two singers taking turns in singing the roles as well as the third-person narration belonging to each role.

The third-person narrator, intertwined with the two singing roles, does not – as a textual constituent – ‘reveal’ his/her relationship to the performer as storyteller. (In the English translation below I have inserted single quotes for ‘monologue, thought and dialogue’; the portions without quotes are third-person narration.)

*Example 7.12*

(武松唱)

\[ \ldots \]
手提哨棒，身肩包裹银两；
这皆是，柴大官人赠给俺，
更有那，宋公明一片热心肠。
晓行夜宿，来至在阳谷县，
忽觉得，腹中空空饿得慌。
看 看 已 晌 午，武 松 抬 头 望，
遥见前方有一竿酒旗在飘扬；
走 到 店 前，举目朝上望，
旗上有五个字——‘三碗不过冈’！
(数板)倒教俺武松，好费猜详；
跨步进店，倚好哨棒，
放下包裹，取出银两——
大声叫酒保，侧酒与俺尝！
(店主唱)店主闻声，随即来到桌旁，
端上熟菜一盆，毛竹筷一双，
倒酒三大碗，一齐放在桌上。
（武唱）武松取碗在手，一口饮得精光，
赞一声‘好酒’，力道很强。
再取酒菜，充我饥肠——
（店唱）店主不怠慢，立时下厨房；
切牛肉二斤，放在桌上；
又倒酒一碗——
（武唱）二郎一口又饮光！
连声赞好酒，有力又有香。
（店唱）店主又筛一碗，走出店堂，
此客已饮三碗，我要招待别的客商。
（武唱）二郎将桌敲响——不来筛酒为哪桩？
（店唱）店主闻声赶到——客官你听端详：
添饭添菜可以，酒不能再添一两；
酒旗上明明写着——‘三碗不过冈’！
（武唱）敢问店家，何谓‘三碗不过冈’？

（Wu Song singing）[...]
I hold my cudgel and shoulder a bundle with silver. All this was given to me by Lord Chai and the warm-hearted Song Gongming. I travel during the day and sleep at night, now arriving at Yanggu District. Suddenly I feel my empty stomach and I am awfully hungry.' Noticing that it is already noon, Wu Song looks ahead, and from a distance he spots a wine-banner waving in the wind; he walks over to the tavern and looks up, there are five characters on the banner – Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge!

(Mixed Rhythm) ‘This leaves me, Wu Song, completely in the dark’; He steps into the tavern, lays his cudgel aside, puts his bundle down and takes out some silver – In a loud voice he calls the waiter: ‘Pour some wine for me to taste!’
(Host singing) Hearing his call, the host comes to his table right away, brings him a plate of cooked food and a pair of bamboo chopsticks. He pours him three big bowls of the wine and places everything on the table.
(Wu singing) Wu Song takes the bowl in his hand and drains the wine in one gulp, exclaiming ‘good wine’, and it is surely strong. ‘Bring more wine and dishes, to fill up my hungry stomach –’
(Host singing) The host does not neglect his guest, he goes to the kitchen right away; he cuts two catties of beef and places it on the table, then he pours another bowl of wine –
(Wu singing) Again Second Brother has drained the bowl in one gulp! He keeps praising: ‘Good wine, strong and tasty.’
(Host singing) The host pours another bowl of wine, and steps out of the dining room.
‘This guest already drank three bowls, now I must serve the other guests.’
7. Fighting the Tiger in Performance Literature

(Wu singing) Second Brother bangs the table – ‘Why don’t you come and pour the wine?’

(Host singing) Hearing his call, the host hurries over____ ‘Good guest, please, listen so very carefully:
I can bring you more rice and dishes, but not even one more ounce of the wine;
the wine-banner says – ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge!’

(Wei Ren and Wei Minghua 1985b: 66)

In oral performance of this piece (cf. Chapter 10, 10.7), there is, however, only one singer who sings the whole piece, including the third-person narration, dialogue and monologue by both Wu Song and by the host. The singer does not make any special changes in his voice quality when he performs the various characters, or when he takes the third-person narrator’s role. Therefore the shifting between the dialogue of the various characters and the narration is given no emphasis and the difference between dialogue and narration is blurred. It seems to be the music and singing qualities that are in the foreground, while acting out of the characters of the tale is not equally essential. This is strikingly different from the performance practice of other genres, in particular Yangzhou storytelling. Background knowledge about the performance practice for a piece of performance literature will thus, as in this case, provide a key to the reading and analysis of the text. In this case, I think that only knowledge about the oral performance context will allow an understanding of how to interpret the narrator’s function.

From the point of view of modern textual criticism, some of the versions are more ‘consistent’ and ‘perceptible’ in their usage of narrative agent, while others, in particular the Yangzhou qingqu, demonstrate a cloudy mixture. The ‘blurring’ of narrator and character role in this genre, however, apparently represents a genre-constituent pattern and is fully in agreement with the expectations and tastes of the audience.

7.13. Narrator and narratee

It is characteristic of the narrative style of some of the samples of performance literature that episodes and persons in Wu Song’s life, before and after the tiger tale, are hinted at without explanation.

In the Yangzhou qingqu the names of Chai Jin and Song Jiang are mentioned in passing, with no further explanation, and it is obvious that the audience is expected to know on beforehand who they are and the role they play in Wu Song’s life. In the kuaishu the name of Chai Jin is likewise taken for given and early in the tale Wu Song is called Wu the Pilgrim, Wu xingzhe, a nickname that he only acquires at a much later point in the Wu Song saga as known from the Shuihu zhuan.

In the dagushu and the Shandong kuaishu names and places are constantly introduced in a way that presupposes that they belong to common knowledge with the audience/readership. In the dagushu there are several occasions where

Chai Jin
柴進

Song Jiang
宋江

Wu the Pilgrim
武行者
the narrator refers to happenings that do not strictly belong to the tiger tale, in particular events taking place later (again according to the Ming novel). Thus Ximen Qing is mentioned during the episode of ‘Flight from home’, at a time when this person has not yet entered the universe of the fiction. In the Ming novel Shuihu zhuan and Jin Ping Mei cihua, as well as most other versions of the Wu Song saga, Ximen Qing only turns up after Wu Song has killed the tiger, found his elder brother and left his home again. But in the dagushu, after Wu Song has read the proclamation about the tiger, he falls asleep at the gateway to the Jingyang Ridge and ‘dreams about his sister-in-law, that woman née Pan’. Here he is dreaming about something he cannot possibly know anything about, since his brother’s marriage has taken place during Wu Song’s absence. His dream about Pan Jinlian just at the point when he is realizing the true danger of the tiger, seems to insinuate a connection between his tiger-fighting and his first explicitly erotic meeting with the seductive Jinlian, an even more formidable and potent opponent than the man-eating tiger (cf. Rolston 1997: 64; Yang Yi 2002: 41; Ge Liangyan 2006: 43; Børdahl 2007c: 157).

The mentioning of characters and events that belong to happenings earlier or later than the tiger episode indicates that the narrator as textual constituent ‘presupposes’ a certain common knowledge by the narratee of the text (the implied reader or the expected audience of a performance). It is therefore not only the narrator who is of the ‘omniscient’ type, but in the dagushu and the Shandong kuaishu even the narratee could be characterized as ‘omniscient’. The high frequency of personal names and place names about which the audience/readership hears little, but is supposed to be ‘reminded’ in passing, are markers of this kind of congenial narrator-narratee relationship.

The Yangzhou qingqu, the kuaishu and the Fuzhou pinghua texts also have a touch of this same ‘mutual understanding’ between narrator and narratee. The same is not the case with the Hangzhou pinghua and Yangzhou pinghua books. In these texts background information about characters and places is duly given, signifying editorial manipulation of the oral performances that have served as point of departure (cf. Chapters 10 and 11). However, for the edited texts at hand, this characteristic of the narrative style must be taken for granted as a characteristic of the ‘new storyteller books’, xin huaben. From the prefaces and postscripts to these modern editions it is clear that the editors were eager to create ‘logical’ stories from the oral materials they had, and they explicitly create their texts, not for the original audience of the storytellers’ house, but for a nationwide readership that is not supposed to have the same kind of inside knowledge as the storytellers would expect from their daily audiences.

The novel-like editions of the Hangzhou pinghua and Yangzhou pinghua sagas of Wu Song are restricted to the saga of one of the Liangshan heroes and both start with the tale of Wu Song and the tiger. They both provide sufficient background information about the hero and his immediate past, so that the narratee has the status of an ‘outsider’ to the fictional universe. In oral performances of Yangzhou storytelling this tale is likewise the ‘first’ of a long repertoire. Ten Chapters on Wu Song, and this is considered the ‘first’
repertoire among all the several oral sagas from Water Margin. However, when this ‘first tale’ is told orally in the Wang school tradition, it is – in contrast to the edited book version (1959) – told in such a way as to presuppose a certain knowledge about the heroes of the Liangshan moors, i.e. the narratee (or the expected audience) shares to a certain degree the ‘omniscience’ of the narrator, in the same way as was the case with the other samples of performance literature (Børdahl 1996: 184).

Comparing the narrator-narratee relationship with that found in the Shuihu zhuans editions and in drama, it is important to remember that in the novel editions of late 15th/early 16th centuries the tiger tale of Chapter 22 or 23 occurs after several other important stories have been narrated. The protagonists, apart from the innkeeper and the tiger, are in fact already known from previous chapters. The Jin Ping Meji cihua likewise provides sufficient background knowledge, before embarking on the tiger story in Chapter 1. The textual narratee of the novel is therefore less ‘omniscient’ or less of an ‘insider’ than the narratee of the late Qing dagushu or the People’s Republic Shandong kuaishu.

The Ming chuanqi drama of 1599, i.e. the earliest dramatization of the tiger tale that has survived, takes the entire Wu Song saga as its theme, but does not include the whole Water Margin complex. ‘Fighting the Tiger’, here called ‘Subduing the beast’, Chu xiong, is the first essential event, occurring early in the drama, in Scene 4. From the introductory monologue in the Act 1, it is however, obvious that basic knowledge about Wu Song and a certain number of events in his saga are taken for granted as ‘common knowledge’.

For the Qing/Republic Kunqu and Jingju drama this feature is even more prominent. The drama samples from these two traditions only take the tiger tale as their plot (not the whole Wu Song saga, or Water Margin complex). Each drama text is an independent unit, meant to be performed alone, as a short scene of a zhezi xi programme or at an occasion where only half an hour of performance is expected. The presentation of the protagonist and his background is clearly aimed at an audience who knows the story beforehand. Even though the samples of chuanqi, Kunqu and Jingju do not feature an explicit narrator (as third-person or first-person narrator), the textual category of narratee is nevertheless apparent from the kind of knowledge that the drama text as such presupposes. The narratee of these dramas seems closer to the narratee of those performance genres where this textual constituent can be analysed as an ‘insider’ who shares a common frame of reference with the narrator.

In the Huaixi drama version, where also only the tiger tale is dramatized, and where third-person narration is an important ingredient, albeit meant to be ‘told’ by the various protagonists (and not by any ‘storyteller’ character), we find on the contrary that neither narration nor dialogue presupposes any knowledge by the narratee (or audience of the play). This version of the tiger tale is therefore closer to the Ming novel in its handling of the textual narratee, but the textual constituent of the narrator is obviously completely different from that of the novel.
7.14. Narration and dialogue

The seven instances of the tiger tale in performance literature consist as discussed of alternating narration and dialogue (or monologue). Not one of these texts is entirely in dialogue (like drama) or entirely in narration, but the amount of each in the various samples is different. Moreover there are many other minor or major differences in the way narration and dialogue are conducted. In the following four of the performance texts are analysed more in detail according to 1) types of narration; 2) shifting between narration and dialogue; 3) marking or non-marking of dialogue. Some of the implications of these features for the texts as written/printed reading matter versus oral performance will be discussed already at this point. In Chapters 10 and 11 we shall return to these questions from the point of view of the oral performance situation and the vocal potential.

7.14.1 Yangzhou ballad, Yangzhou qingqu

The function of the narrator in the Yangzhou qingqu version has been analysed to show how narration and dialogue are blended in a special way. The narrative portions consist mainly of a summary, i.e. telling the string of actions which build up the plot. Description is not given special treatment, but is mixed with the narration of events. The version also lacks narrator’s comment. The narrative style is thus based on the interchange of plot narration and dramatic dialogue. The blurring of narrator and role character in this genre is due in part to the frequent lack of pronouns, in part to the lack of tag words for dialogue, like ‘he said’ or ‘he thought’. In oral performances tag words are often absent, since they are unnecessary when the performer changes his register or modulates his voice for the various protagonists of his tale. But in Yangzhou qingqu as oral performance such voice modulation is hardly perceptible, and the written sample reflects the way narration and dialogue almost seamlessly glide into each other. As a written piece reading is assisted by the insertion of the stage directions ‘Wu Song sings’ or ‘host sings’ which helps the understanding of who is acting and speaking at the moment, but for the oral performance one would imagine that the audience should be well acquainted with the story beforehand in order to make head and tail of the ballad. With the tiger tale this is of course the case, because this story is exceptionally well known. But in the case of other themes, the narrative form of Yangzhou qingqu seems to require an audience of ‘insiders’ who are familiar with the contents and are able to make sense of the opaque narration/dialogue alternations.

7.14.2 Drumtale, dagushu

The dagushu like the Yangzhou qingqu is meant to be sung in oral performance and is metric throughout. The narrative portions are also mainly in the mode of summary.
Example 7.14.2.a

Second Master opened his eyes in haste, and saw a fierce tiger beside him there

(Ku I 9–175: 7b; see Chapter 15, 15.1)

Descriptive passages are few, but as Wu Song enters the inn he is described from the point of view of the waiter in five couplets of inner monologue (thought), and likewise, the tiger is described in four couplets from the point of view of Wu Song on his first sight of it, right after the couplet quoted above.

Example 7.14.2.b

Its height was more than one staff’s length
Its tail was truly like a spear
One hundred and eight stripes covered its body
After a black one came a yellow
On its forehead a character stood out:
three horizontal and one vertical stroke makes ‘King’!
Its gaping mouth – a pail of blood – was big as a dustpan,
its two eyes staring at you like tea mugs.

(Ku I 9–175: 7b; see Chapter 15, 15.1)

A considerable part of the dagushu is dialogue and inner monologue (thought) where the pronouns ‘I’, wo, and ‘you’, ni, are prominent. Tags for introducing speech/thought are relatively frequent and sometimes even emphatic, but they are not obligatory. When there are no tags, it is the pronouns and the content of the sentences that indicate direct speech or thought, for example in the following passage, where Wu Song suddenly expresses his thought in monologue without any marker, apart from the use of the pronoun ‘I’, wo (the markers of direct speech ‘…’ are added by me, in order to render the English translation more readable, but there are no such markers in the Chinese original of the dagushu):

Example 7.14.2.c

You may ask where he fled?
He went off to Cangzhou to seek refuge with King of Liang
‘King of Liang thinks I have a good heart
I think King of Liang has a big heart, too’

(Ku I 9–175: 1b; see Chapter 15, 15.1)

The tag words in the dagushu are ‘shout’, *jiao sheng*, ‘inquire’, *xun sheng*, ‘ask’, *wendao*, *wen*, ‘answer’, *huida*, *dashang qiang*, ‘curse’, *ma*, ‘think’, *siliang*. ‘Say’, *shuo*, is used as the neutral form, much like colon, but it is relatively infrequent, since the above mentioned tags, among which the form *jiao sheng* is the most frequent, take over.38 A couple of times *shuo* is used in ‘hat’-like three-character forms, ‘XX *shuo* . . . ’, that seem to be spoken outside of the rhythmic beat.39

Example 7.14.2.d

酒保說我賣的是狀元紅與佛手露
老酒紹酒白干強

The waiter said: ‘I have ‘Champion Red’ and ‘Buddha Hand Dew’,
old vintages, Shaoxing wine and strong liquor.’

(Ku I 9–175: 4b; see Chapter 15, 15.1)

However, in the dagushu some other tag words also function prominently as filler words providing the right number of syllables in the line, and often the rhyme as well. Several of these expressions have a fixed form, adding to the formulary character of the piece.40

Example 7.14.2.e

開言就把二弟叫
叫聲二弟聽中常

Starting to talk, he called Second Brother,
shouting: ‘Second Brother, listen to my simple words!’

(Ku I 9–175: 3a; see Chapter 15, 15.1)

The fixed expression *ting zhong chang* [listen to my simple words] is not a tag word, but a marker of conversation occurring inside the dialogue (spoken by one of the characters). The formulary tag words of passages like this one seem redundant with a view to the meaning, but obviously serve to complete the verse lines. Their function in reinforcing the style of the genre and its formulary character is apparent from the way these expressions and variants of them are repeated throughout the piece. The use of tag words is often a sign of the literary mode, i.e. of pieces intended for reading, because oral performance in many genres allows the performer to differentiate speech and narration by imitating the specific voices of each character in the story, while reserving the ‘storyteller’s voice’ for the narrator. However, this may not be the case in the performance practice for the dagushu. If the singing – as seems to be the case with recent Beijing drum-singing, *Jingyun dagu*, as well as *Yangzhou qingqu* – tends to neutralize differences in voice quality
between narration and dialogue of individual characters, then the tags become just as important for understanding as in a written text for reading.

7.14.3 Fast tale, Kuaishu

In the kuaishu, narration mainly consists of summary of events combined with poetic description. Narrator’s comment is at three points inserted in the form of shi-poems or bon mot. The shi-poems are supposed to be recited rather than sung. Like in the Yangzhou qingqu there is in the kuaishu no comment in the form of ‘simulated dialogue’ or narrative digression. (The dagushu also had very little of this type of comment.) Both narration and dialogue are in metric form, mostly hepta-syllabic verses with an end-rhyme on every second line. The whole piece is coined in a number of different metres and melodies that follow a particular pattern (Chan Kam-chiu 1982: 65–77, 88). Sometimes tag words seem to function as fillers, such as the formula ‘said these words’, ba hua yun, supplying the last three syllables and the rhyme in the hepta-syllabic line.

Example 7.14.3.a

這位爺，算還酒賬扛起行囊將要走，酒保相攔把話云

This master paid for his wine, then picked up his bundle and cudgel. He was ready to go, but the waiter grabbed his arm and said these words:

(Chan Kam-chiu 1982: 255)

At other times sentences that introduce dialogue, seem to be outside of the metric stanza, and one would expect these portions to be spoken as a kind of ‘asides’. The following example comes directly after the last line in the above example.

Example 7.14.3.b

(流水板)酒保說：『客官要往那裡去？』武松說：『陽穀城裡去探親。』酒保說：『進城必從山中過，這時候，要遇猛虎必傷身。...』

(Liu shui rhythm) The waiter said: ‘Good guest, where are you going?’ Wu song said: ‘I am going to visit my family in Yanggu Town.’ The waiter said: ‘To get to the town you must cross the mountain. If you meet the fierce tiger at this time, you will be killed. . . .

(Chan Kam-chiew 1982: 255–256)

In the kuaishu, in contrast to the Yangzhou qingqu and the dagushu, dialogue is clearly introduced by tag words throughout.

7.14.4 Shandong clapper tale, Shandong Kuaishu

The Shandong kuaishu is meant to be recited in a hepta-syllabic metre with an end-rhyme on every second stanza. The rhythm, which is in oral performance
underscored by the use of metal clappers, is regularly interrupted by shorter passages in prose, meant to be spoken. The spoken passages are in the text marked by two different stage instructions, namely ‘speech’, \( bai \), before prose portions that contain dialogue or monologue, and ‘aside in prose’, \( pangbai \), before prose portions that contain narrator’s comment (see the example in 7.9). However, not all dialogue is rendered in prose speech and not all narrator’s comments are found in the ‘aside’ passages. For example the piece begins with a narrator’s comment, in hepta-syllabic rhythm, coined in meta-narrative stock phrases.

Example 7.14.4.a

Let’s stop chatting about wind and weather\(^{41}\)
let me perform a tale about the good fellow Second Brother Wu.

\[ \text{(Gao Yuanjun 1987: 43)} \]

Narration consists mainly of summary, but there are a few descriptive passages inserted at the same crucial points in the plot as in the \textit{dagushu}. Moreover there is strong similarity between the phrases of description in the \textit{dagushu} and those in the \textit{Shandong kuaisu}, something that we shall return to in the section about formulary usage (cf. Chapter 8, 8.2–8.3).

Example 7.14.4.b

Wu Song was startled and jumped up, looking carefully in the direction of the sound.

(Speech) What was going on?
Oh! Good heavens, this fierce tiger was strong,
this tiger was six and a half feet high,
and well over eight feet long.
If it jumps eight feet forward, people are scared out of their wits,
if it moves backwards the length of one staff, people are scurrying off.
The stripes on its body run one next to the other,
after a black one comes a yellow.
Its gaping mouth — a pail of blood — is big as a dustpan,
its two eyes stare at you like tea mugs.
On its forehead a character stands out:
three horizontal and one vertical stroke makes ‘King’!

(Gao Yuanjun 1987: 57)

The shifting between narration and dialogue in the Shandong kuaishu deserves special attention. After a longer passage of summary, recounting the events since Wu Song fled from his home until he arrives at the tavern in Yanggu District, the first occurrence of direct speech is told inside the rhymed metre. Wu Song is expressing his thoughts (monologue) and using the first-person pronoun of Shandong dialect, ‘I’, an, in emphatic position before his own name, while using the general first-person pronoun of North Mandarin, wo, in non-emphatic position.

Example 7.14.4.c
俺武松生來愛喝酒
我到裡邊兒把好酒賞
‘I, Wu Song, was born with the love for wine,
let me go inside to have a taste of the good wine’

(Gao Yuanjun 1987: 44)

Next time a passage of direct speech occurs, it is marked by the stage direction ‘speech’ and is meant to be spoken outside of the clapper rhythm, also indicated by indenting of the prose passage.

Example 7.14.4.d
(白)‘酒家，拿酒來。酒家，拿酒來。酒家，拿酒來!’
(Speaking) ‘Waiter, bring wine! Waiter, bring wine! Waiter, bring wine!’

(Gao Yuanjun 1987: 44)

These two types of direct speech, inside and outside of the metric form, are used throughout the piece, with longer passages of metric narration in between. Narrator’s comment in metric form is left unmarked. There are several short comments of this kind, some with overt narrator in the first person. Comment in prose, as we have seen, is marked with the tag ‘aside in prose’, pangbai. In general, direct speech is not marked with tag words, such as ‘X said’, ‘X thought’, but the speaker is recognizable from the contents of the utterance. In the printed text (modern print) the exchanges are marked with quote markers, so that the beginning and end of each utterance is obvious (in oral performance this effect would have to be obtained by other means). However, at certain points a tag is inserted before a stanza as a spoken intrusion, reminiscent of the so-called ‘hats’
of *dagushu*. This usage seems to have little to do with marking the dialogue, but seems to be a kind of 'flourish' or 'mannerism' that is characteristic of the style:

**Example 7.14.4.e**

武松說：‘噢﹖ 住到你店裡就不怕虎了嗎﹖’

Wu Song said: ‘Why? If I stay in your inn then I shouldn’t need to worry about the tiger?’

(GAO Yuanjun 1987: 54)

The most conspicuous example of this kind of usage for tag words is found towards the end of the piece in a dialogue in prose, marked as ‘speech’, *bai*, between Wu Song and the tiger.

**Example 7.14.4.f**

(白) . . .
老虎沒吃過這個虧啊,它不干啦! 把前爪一按地——
老虎說：我不干啊！
武松說：你不干可不行啊！
老虎說：我得起來呀！
武松說：你先將就一會兒吧！
老虎說：我不好受哇！
武松說：你好受我就完啦！

(Speech) . . .
The tiger hadn’t tasted this kind of misfortune before, it couldn’t take it! It planted its forepaws in the ground –
The tiger said: ‘I can’t take it!’
Wu Song said: ‘You can’t take it, but you have to!’
The tiger said: ‘I have to get up!’
Wu Song said: ‘Just you wait a bit!’
The tiger said: ‘It’s not comfortable!’
Wu Song said: ‘If you were comfortable, I would be finished!’

(GAO Yuanjun 1987: 61–62)

### 7.15. Narration and dialogue in performance literature versus novel and drama

The *Hangzhou pinghua* and *Yangzhou pinghua* written versions are closest to the Ming novel, in particular to the *fanben* editions and the *Jin Ping Mei cihua*: Narration in prose takes up the better part of all these texts, and includes summary, description and comment, with summary as the main form. Poetry is used mainly for description and comment, but is relatively sparse. Dialogue is also important, but not a major form. Tag words are regularly used to introduce dialogue (something that stands in clear opposition to the findings in oral performances of *Yangzhou pinghua*).
The other performance texts are generally closer to the drama, insofar as they use dialogue and verse as major forms. In addition singing is the major mode for oral performance of several of these genres (Yangzhou qingqu, dagushu, kuaishu) or singing has equal status with telling (Fuzhou pinghua). It is however, significant that all the versions of performance literature incorporate third-person narration, i.e. none of them is based exclusively on dialogue. The fact that the local drama of Huaiyin also applies third-person narration side by side with dialogue is symptomatic for the ‘untidiness’ of the division between drama and performance literature.

The details for how verse or prose, dialogue or narration, tag words or stage directions are applied are mostly genre-specific. Each sample text, as an example of its genre, has a special usage, and the similarities and dissimilarities with drama and novel form a complicated pattern.

In Chapter 8 the tale of Wu Song and the tiger from the seven genres of performance literature will be further scrutinized with a view to formulaic features of plot and language.

Notes
1 The general Chinese handbook for the orally performed arts contains both drama, xiqu, and performed narrative arts, quyi, see Zhongguo da baike quanshu: Xiqu, quyi 1983. There are no comparable Western handbooks, but Nienhauser 1986, Idema and Haft 1997, as well as Pimpaneau [1977] 1999 are helpful.

2 In the early 1980s the following genres of shuochang wenxue with contents from the Water Margin stories were mentioned by Zheng Gongdun: Jingyun dagu 京韻大鼓, Shandong qinshu 山東琴書, pinghuo 評書, kuaishu 快書, Yangzhou pinghua 揚州評話, Henan zhiyi 河南坠子, Liaoning dagu 遼寧大鼓, Shannan daqing 陝南道情, Qinghai pingxian 青海評弦, Fuzhou pinghua 福州評話, Dongbei errenzhuan 東北二人轉, and many local genres of tanci 織詞, cf. Zheng Gongdun 1983: 122. How many of these traditions included the tiger tale is not clear; the author devotes most of his attention to Yangzhou pinghua, as represented by Wang Shaotang, and mentions only a few examples of Wu Song da hu from pinghuo, Shandong kuaishu and Fuzhou pinghua, but this list is obviously not meant to be complete (cf. ibid. 124). In the bibliography collected by Ma Tiji we find more specific information about our focal story: ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’ is found in 2 versions of Yangzhou pinghua, 1 version of northern pinghuo, 1 version of meihua dagu 梅花大鼓, 1 version of Jingyun dagu 京韻大鼓, 3 versions of Dongbei dagu 東北大鼓, 1 version of Xiangyuan gushu 襄垣鼓書, 1 version of Changsha tanci 長沙織詞, 3 versions of Shandong kuaishu, 1 version of Henan zhiyi, 2 versions of bajiaogu 八角鼓, 2 versions of errenzhuan, and 1 version with unspecified genre, altogether 19 versions of shuochang wenxue from 12 different genres, cf. Ma Tiji 1986: 565–625.

3 Studies of these genres of performance literature are found in Wei Ren and Wei Minghua 1985b (Yangzhou qingqu); Stevens 1973, Zhou Dunyi 1989, Gui Jingwen 1989 (Jingyun dagu); Chan Kam-Chiew (Chen Jinzhao) 1982 (kuaishu); Shandong kuaishu Wu Song zhuan 1957, Gao Yuanjun 1980, 1987 (Shandong kuaishu); Chen Guanrong 1998 (Fuzhou pinghua); Børdahl 1996 (Yangzhou pinghua). For Hangzhou pinghua I have not been able to find substantial secondary sources.
4 See for example www.baidu.com.

5 Alternation between verse and prose is set off on the pages of performance literature, either through indentation of verse vis-à-vis prose (Fuzhou pinghua, Hangzhou pinghua, Yangzhou pinghua), or through line by line printing of rhyming stanzas (Yangzhou qingpu, dagushu, Shandong kuaishu). Verse and prose may also be distinguished by adding the name of melodies for the verse portions (kuaishu).

6 Fuzhou pinghua is treated under the category of ‘story-singing’, tanci 彈詞, in Zheng Zhenduo 1984: 381.

7 Western studies of the musical aspect of the performed narrative arts of China are few, cf. Lawson 2010. Kate Stevens’ early studies of text and music in Beijing drum-singing represent a pioneering effort, cf. Stevens 1973. For a recent study of the interplay of music and language in the performed narrative arts of Tianjin, see Lawson 2011.

8 In Wei Ren and Wei Minghua 1985b the sources for the single items of the collection are not given, but the editors only state that most of the pieces were lifted from late Qing manuscripts. Live performances are not mentioned as one of the sources of these texts.

9 The Chewangfu collection of zidi shu 子弟書 [Manchu gentry tales], a genre closely connected to or overlapping with the kuaishu, does not contain the story of Wu Song and the tiger, but has a number of other stories from the Wu Song saga, cf. Qing Menggu Chewangfu zang zidishu 1994, vol. 1: 116, 118, 705.

10 In the Fuzhou pinghua text there are some faint traces of Fuzhou dialect (Min dialect), such as rendering the second person pronoun with the Min dialect character 汝.

11 The earliest extant editions of Shuihu zhuan are divided into hui, except the Wenxingtang piping Shuihu zhuan 文杏堂批評水滸傳, which is divided into 30 juan with subdivision into duanluo 段落 with single line titles, cf. Sun Kaidi 1982: 215.

12 This feature is in common with the earliest edition of the novel Romance of Three Kingdoms, San guo yanyi. The Ye Fengchun 葉逢春 edition of Sangguo yanyi, 1548, entitled San guo zhi shi zhuan 三國志史傳, does not use hui as textual unit, but ‘scroll’, juan. Every juan is subdivided into 24 duan with a title of 6–8 characters. In later editions two duan were put together as one hui, and the titles were standardized and combined into double titles as couplets. The concluding formula qie ting xiawen fenjie 旗亭下文分界 was entered into the later editions, but in the 1548 edition each duan ends with a rhetorical question, like what is found in the Xuanhe yishi. Cf. Andrew West: website BabelStone > Sanguo Yanyi Banben Kao; see also Riftin 1997: 222–223.

13 The introductory and concluding phrases of two danxian 單弦 performances from the Wu Song saga (but not the tiger story) both name the textual unit a hui. However, one of the versions uses both hui and ben as a name for the unit of performance. So the performance is understood as both a performance of a ‘round’ and of a ‘booklet, volume’.

14 In the oral performance of Shandong clapper tale the tape recording ends with: ‘When we have sung this far, that is reckoned as one performance, but the next round, Avenging His Brother, follows right after’, changdao ci chu juan yiduan'er, dao xiahui, Ti xiong bao chou jin jieshang 唱到此處算一段 兒,到下回,替兄報仇 緊接上. In the case of the clapper tale, the version for analysis is an oral performance, and when it is named a duan'er and hui at the end of the performance, we find here an example of
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how the naming of a storytelling session as a hui is still in use in the living language of performance. But the meaning of hui in these cases tends towards the weaker sense of simply ‘one time’, yihui, ‘next time’, xiahui.

15 In the early 20th century ‘round’ zhuàn 轉 was a regular term for an episode or section of Yangzhou storytelling, and people would ask for extra additions to the day’s repertoire by shouting: ‘Encore!’ da zhuàn 打轉 (Børdahl 2003: 79–80; Børdahl 1996: 25)

16 For the difference in setting between the daily performances in the storyteller’s house and that of short, occasional performances, see Børdahl 1996: 23–31.

17 The division of one month in China was formerly into three ten-day periods, shangxun 上旬, zhongxun 中旬, xiaxun 下旬. Ten days was a common period of engagement for shuochang performers in the Lower Yangzi area, cf. Pingtan wenhua cidian 1996: 19, pai 排.

18 For Wu shi hui as a title of the Wu Song saga in other written performance genres, see also Liu Fu and Li Jiarui [1932] 1993, Vol. I: 152.

19 It is perhaps no coincidence that the editors have chosen to end the first subunit at the point where most drama versions end, namely at the point when Wu Song has received an award for killing the tiger.

20 In some performance genres that have been published as chapbooks, such as Fuzhou storytelling, Fuzhou pinghua 福州平話 (a prosimetric genre of story-singing), the textual unit reflects only the printed unit: a booklet in lithography, called ji 集 [volume]. The tiger story is in the shang ji 上集 [first collection], and a xia ji 下集 [next collection] follows. Ji seems to belong to the ‘literary’ aspect of performance literature, namely the episode as printed pamphlet. The final sentence of the booklet is: ‘Please, read the following volume of Crossways Rise’, qing kan xiaji Shizipo 請看下集十字坡. One would expect the unit to have a different name in performance context. Cf. Chen Guanrong 1998: 201.

21 In his commentary, meipi 眉批, to chapter 22 of his 70-chapter edition Jin Shengtan mentions the episode in the tavern as yiduan and the killing of the tiger as the following duan, cf. Jin Shengtan [1641] 1975: 1197. This corresponds to the way this tale is often told in Yangzhou pinghua when the story has to be served in smaller portions than a ‘full day of storytelling’. Jin Shengtan uses several other expressions that are found among storytellers’ terminology up to the present day. In commenting on Wu Song’s shouting for wine, Jin Shengtan calls the description ‘like hearing his voice and seeing him in person’, ru wen qi sheng ru jian qi ren 如聞其聲，如見其人, and in his ‘How to read’, dufa 讀法, he calls the author’s style ‘brocade heart and embroidered mouth’ jin xin xiu kou. 錦心繡口, cf. translation by John C.Y. Wang in Rolston 1990: 151. Both expressions are common as descriptive phrases about exquisite storytellers in the insider’s terminology of Yangzhou pinghua, see Chapter 9, 9.10. See also Wang Shaotang 1979. We cannot make any conclusions on the basis of such slight evidence, but we could keep eyes open for the idea that Jin Shengtan was close to the oral storytelling milieu of his time and was influenced by the terminology of those circles. That the Yangzhou storytellers have been influenced by the literary terminology of Jin Shengtan is another possibility, that cannot be excluded, since the origin of the Yangzhou storytellers’ terms has not been studied.

22 In Suzhou story-singing, Suzhou tanci, a performance of two hours is divided into two sessions. The ending of the first session is called ‘the little end of session’, xiao
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luohui 小落回, and the second and final ending of that performance is called 'the big end of session', da luohui 大落回, cf. BENDER 2003: 105. It is not clear if these expressions belong to artists’ jargon, or if they are also part of the performed oral text.

23 In the written literature of 'new storyteller books', xin huaben, the habit of adapting oral performance literature to the conventions of corresponding written genres, such as the novel, is very strong. Editions of this kind are therefore not fully reliable with a view to features of textual unit, stock phrases, dialect, tag words, etc. This kind of edited and adapted 'storytelling', pingshu 評書, is found f. ex. in the four volume collection Zhongguo pingshu jinghua 1991. Cf. also BØRDAHL 2003.

24 In Yangzhou pinghua, the word hui is not in active use during performance, or as a name of performance session in professional jargon, but it has survived only as a remnant in the title of the story cycles of SHUIHU, such as Wu shi hui, Song shi hui, etc.

25 The chapters hui of the published version of Wang Shaotang’s Wu Song are between 40,000 characters and 135,000 characters, and obviously such length has nothing to do with the length of performance, since this would correspond to between 5 and 14 hours for one hui or 3 to 7 full days of storytelling in the storyteller’s house.

26 Pamphlets of drum tales, guci, used to be very popular in North China, and the reading of these texts is described by Zheng Zhenduo as a 'humming to oneself', ziji nala niannian 自己拿來念念(唸唸), that would satisfy the aficionado almost as well as a true performance, ZHENG Zhenduo 1984: 397.

27 The description is based on personal observation in Yangzhou. See also DABAIKE quanshu – Xiqu, quyi 1983: 529.

28 Written and/or printed drumtales from the Qing period could be performed in a number of subgenres of drum-singing and it was not possible to see from the text which genre was intended, see ZHOU Dunyi 1989: 13–14.


30 As for the amount of verse included in each text, the other instances of performance literature, both as literature for reading and as aids in practising the oral art, stand closer to drama, albeit in varying degree.


30 In this case there is strong evidence that the first portion of the text was added by the editors and was not, like the better part of the tale, based on recorded speech by the storyteller Wang Shaotang. A case like this reminds us about the intermittent role of the editor, manipulating his source text in ways that we can only rarely identify. For the samples of performance literature we must take this editorial interference for granted and analyse the texts as the final products of a textualization process, that is for the most part unknown to us. In Yangzhou pinghua as oral performance one does occasionally find expressions where the narrator talks about himself in the first person. Usually the overt narrator does not occur at the beginning of a performance, but in narrator’s comments when the tale is well under way, cf. BØRDAHL 1996: 189–194.

34 The narrator types of the *dagushu*, *Shandong kuaishu* and *kuaishu* are closer to each other. We find the same kind of stock phrases which introduce the narrator as almost overt first person, while at the same time keeping the characteristics of the omniscient narrator common to all the narrative genres tested here (excluding the drama).

35 Cf. Børdahl 1996: 184; Hanan 1981: 20. This beginning was traditionally called a 'prologue', *rubua* 人話, or in *Fuzhou pinghua*, *xutou* 序頭, and its function was to make the audience calm down to concentrate on the story to follow, cf. entry about *Fuzhou pinghua* on http://baike.baidu.com/view/298088.htm.

36 In the drama versions a similar kind of comment is expressed at times by the role characters. However, in drama, such as *Huaxi*, where third-person narration is part of the performance text, this kind of comment is not found.

37 The narrative of the *dagushu* version presupposes an audience or readership with prior knowledge of the characters and events. In Chinese society of the Late Qing period we cannot exclude reading of the Ming novel as the source for this general knowledge, but it seems to me more plausible that the knowledge is part of the milieu of oral art shared by the performers and their audience, see also Sigurdsson 2004: 305–306. Chinese folklorists are generally convinced about the strong influence of the printed novel, which they mostly see as a 'blueprint' for all the later drama versions and *shuochang* versions, cf. Ni Zhongzhi 2007. See also Chapter 12, 12.15.

38 In this text 'he said', *dao* 道 or *yue* 曰, are not found, with the exception of the form 'he asked and said', *wendao* 問道, used once.

39 The expression 'hat', *maozi* 帽子, points to a three syllable phrase that is sometimes inserted at the head of the regular stanzas of Beijing drum-singing, *Jingyun dagu*, cf. Stevens 1973: 114–116; Børdahl 2007b: 84.

40 The use of formulary tag words in the *dagushu* to indicate the shifting modes of narration and dialogue (as well as to fill the hepta-syllabic line and provide a rhyme) is found also in the *Shandong kuaishu*, but less frequently.

41 The first two stanzas both have the end-rhyme –*ang*. Thereafter only every second stanza rhymes.

42 The waiter also occasionally uses the pronoun 'I', *an* 我, i.e. 'in our town', *anmen zhenshang* 我們 鎮上.
### 8

**Performance Literature and Formulaic Usage**

#### 8.1. Episodes and storyline

In contrast to the novel and drama versions of the tiger tale (cf. Chapters 4, 5 and 6), the various versions of the tale found in performance literature do not share longer passages. What they do share is a certain amount of narrative contents (episodes and ingredients) and key-vocabulary, such as proper names and fixed phrases.

The narrative content of the different versions is compared by arranging them in a table showing the sequence of episodes and ingredients for each. The number of episodes and their basic contents are based on an overall examination of the entire corpus of versions of ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’. There is no fixed length of an ‘episode’, but it should have a relative length comparable to other episodes of the given piece. The episode is purely an entity of contents, defined by its label, i.e. ‘The tavern’ found in the large majority of versions, and by the explanation of the happenings covered by that label, i.e. ‘Wu Song rests in a tavern, drinking a strong wine’. What is here called an ‘episode’ contrasts with an ‘ingredient’, because what covers in some versions of the tale several paragraphs or pages (an episode), may in other versions just be mentioned in passing with a few words (an ingredient). In Table 8.1 episodes are marked X, and ingredients are marked x. Some ‘episodes’ are quite long, e.g. ‘The tiger parade’ from the *Hangzhou pinghua* version, but they are not subdivided, if they do not have content used as episodes or ingredients in other versions of the corpus.

The sequence of episodes and ingredients follows a general storyline that is homogeneous within the major genres of novel, drama and performance literature. A few episodes are unique to certain versions. The main difference is not in the sequence of episodes, but in the number and variation of initial and final episodes. Only in a few cases do we find a markedly different way of handling the development of the plot.
Most of the drama versions follow the Ming chuanqi in introducing the tiger tale by an episode with the hunters of Yanggu District. This is not the case in either novel or performance literature (and not in Huaixi drama). Among the versions of performance literature one finds that minor episodes, such as “The wind” and “Breaking the staff” may occur at slightly different points in the tale. Sometimes the motif of the wind occurs when Wu Song has fallen asleep on the rock and is alerted to the impending danger, sometimes it comes just after the tiger has already appeared; the breaking of the staff is sometimes a prelude to the fighting, sometimes happens in the middle of the action.¹

While the presence or absence of episodes and ingredients may give a rough picture of the composition of each version, there is in principle no end to the number of subdivisions that can be made for the purpose of analysis. Even the smallest incident can be divided into still smaller sub-episodes. Depending on the number of different versions taken into account, as well as on the degree of fineness of the analysis, episodes, sub-episodes and sub-sub-episodes, et cetera, can be established down to the level of sentence analysis.

For example, the dagushu version treats the ‘The fighting’ in an emphatic passage, but short, compared to the space given to other happenings in the tale, and particularly when compared with the detailed description of this confrontation found in other versions. However, in the dagushu we notice a detail of the plot that is unique in the present material. At the beginning of the passage we hear how Wu Song’s staff is broken.

Example 8.1

齊眉大棍拿手上
照定猛丐打下去
老丐一跺棍磕傷

He grabbed his quarterstaff in his hand
He aimed straight for the fierce tiger
But as the tiger dodged, his cudgel was broken

(Ku I 9–175: 8a)

The tiger dodged! This is something that we only find in the dagushu. Elsewhere, the tiger never dodges; on the contrary, Wu Song is continually dodging the tiger. From the point of view of storyline, the dagushu is in agreement with the main plot development which is found in all the versions – Wu Song travelling home, drinking in the tavern, and fighting the tiger. But in addition the dagushu has many details of plot and description which are special. The number of ‘events’ seems larger and more tightly interwoven than in other versions, in particular since this performance text is among the shortest counted by number of written characters.

‘Breaking the staff’ is, indeed, among the most stable episodes of the tale as found in novel, drama and performance literature. However, the way of breaking the staff is not specified in the storyline, and in the details the versions vary.
Table 8.1. Episodes of seven versions of ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’ in performance literature compared with novel and drama

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episodes / ingredients</th>
<th>Performance literature</th>
<th>Novel</th>
<th>Drama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yq</td>
<td>Dg</td>
<td>Ks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Song</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heroes of Mount Liang</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praising Wu Song</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu Song and Wu the Elder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wounding a man</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting the Five Tigers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight from home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying with Chai Jin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight (Departure)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The letter from home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Hunters on duty)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelling home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jingyang Town in distress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunters in dire straits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusing a prostitute</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tavern</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The quarrel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The warning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The inscribed tree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The proclamation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rock</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The wind</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tiger appears</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The prey of the tiger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three ways</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking the staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fighting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The killing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two tigers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hunters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The victim</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reward</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tiger parade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Wu the Elder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Wu the Elder, Pan Jinxian and Wu Song)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each genre is indicated by the abbreviations: Yq = Yangzhou qingqu, Dg = dagushu, Ks = kuaishu, Sk = Shandong kuaishu, Fp = Fuzhou pinghua, Hp = Hangzhou pinghua, Yp = Yangzhou pinghua. N = Novel; D = Drama. Episodes etc. that are essential to respectively the novel and drama, but not found in performance literature, are added (in parentheses) to the table.

The signature indicates that the given episode X or ingredient x is present in the item of performance literature under study. X or x with N and D indicates the presence of the episode or ingredient in the three versions tested for the novel Shuihu zhuan (Stuttgart fragment, Shuangfengtangben and Rongyutangben) and the seven episodes of drama (with a few variations indicated in notes to the table). Episodes found in the novel Jin Ping Mei cihua are indicated by an asterisk *.

a Only in the Huaixi. b Only in chuanqi (Qing), Kunqu (Qing) and Jingju 1954 c Only in the Kunqu (Qing), the Jingju 1954 and the Huaixi.
The *Yangzhou pinghua* printed version is no exception: the staff is broken— but it is the tiger that crushes it. In this case, the existence of the episode in the book version of Wang Shaotang’s repertoire is probably the result of editors’ interference and striving for ‘literary’ correctness, i.e. conformity to the novel. Interestingly, when Wang Xiaotang, the adopted son and successor of Wang Shaotang,2 in his high age performed this tale (1992, 1996, cf. Chapter 11, 11.3), Wu Song has no staff—he is barehanded throughout the tale, a feature that represents a clear deviation from the way the tale is told in the three Ming editions of *Shuihu zhuan* as well as in drama.3 In performances by some of his disciples Wu Song does have a staff which the tiger grasps with its mouth and breaks, in the same way as described in the edited storyteller book, which was by later generations considered as more authoritative than the oral transmission.4

In the Ming novel the staff is an important element in the story, and the breaking of the staff happens at the climax of the tale. Wu Song cannot see clearly and hits an old tree instead of the tiger, thereby making his only weapon useless.5 This adds emphasis to his following barehanded fight with the beast. The *Yangzhou pinghua* oral versions where Wu Song is unarmed from beginning to end, however, not less impressive, and the deviation from the storyline of the novel on this and other points is among the indications of the independence of traditional Yangzhou storytelling from the written vernacular culture.

8.2. The tiger story as part of a larger work and as an independent work

In general the tiger tale as manifested in novel, drama and the various performance texts is characterized by a largely uniform plot. The drama versions that are meant to be independent performances are most rigorous in containing only the main ingredients of the core story, with no ‘extra’ story material added at the beginning or end. In this sense Act 4 of the *chuanqi* seems to have had a stabilizing authority. But it is not possible to say if this model was already part of oral convention of the time. The title of the Yuan *zaju* version seems in agreement with such a view (cf. Chapter 6, 6.2).

In the novel version, where Chapter 22 or 23 is the unit that carries the focal tale, we find a structure that is typical of many *hui*, namely that the chapter is started with a section that leads from the previous *hui* to the main theme of the present *hui*, i.e. the episodes of ‘Staying with Chai Jin’ and ‘Departure’ (the episodes before these are mere ‘ingredients’); then follows the core tale; at the end of the chapter a new point of suspense is created after Wu Song has received his reward, and the reader is left with a question: who is it that has called the hero in the street? (See Chapter 13, the end of 13.1, 13.2 and 13.3). This is a typical chapter structure of the novel, and it is also a typical principle of oral storytelling as known from Yangzhou, called to ‘bargain the crisis’, *mai guanzi* (Børdahl 1996: 212–213).

In the *Yangzhou pinghua* version, as edited into a book, this form is, however, not applied. Here we find that the unit of the tiger tale ends at the point...
where Wu Song follows the hunters down the mountain, the same point that is the end of most drama versions, but is surely not a point where Yangzhou storytellers from the Wang school would end under normal circumstances, because no ‘crisis’ is involved here. It seems not unlikely that the editors of the book version were inspired by drama when they chose to end the first unit of the book at this point. That the editors did not try to follow the storytellers’ habits for beginning and ending a daily session is obvious from many details known from the material of oral performances of this tale by Wang Shaotang and his close disciples.

What differentiates the storylines of performance literature from each other and from the novel and drama is mainly how far each of them as textual units comprises happenings preceding and following the core story. In those genres where the tiger tale is just one portion (bui, chu, ji, or marked subunit of these) of a much longer work, as in the novel, chuanqi drama, Shandong kuaishu, Fuzhou pinghua, episodes or ingredients that link the core story to previous and subsequent events are naturally found at the beginning and end. But it is perhaps more significant that there are no obvious episodes in the central part of the core story that point to happenings earlier or later in these works. The tiger tale is also inside these larger works a kind of ‘digression’, a story that can be told alone and does not per se imply any connections to other parts of the plot.

In those versions of performance literature where the tiger tale has status as an independent work, constituting the main contents of the tangible unit (pamphlet, booklet) or an independent unit inside a collection (series of pamphlets or booklets), we find, however, repeatedly a situation where the story is told in such a way that it implies background knowledge about the whole context of the Wu Song saga (dagushu, kuaishu). On the one hand the dagushu and Shandong kuaishu versions stand as independent units, ‘sessions’, bui, that are performable any time and anywhere. On the other hand both of these genres comprise a whole string of ‘sessions’, bui, or ‘sections’, duan, about the hero Wu Song, published as a series of booklets of one bui each (dagushu) (cf. BØRDAHL 2007b) or as a collection in a book (Shandong kuaishu). In this way the single independent version is at the same time part of a Wu Song universe, that is manifested inside the genre, as well as in the general social consciousness.

8.3. Storyline and intertextual correspondences

The storyline of the seven performance texts all include the main episodes known from the Shuihu zhuan, namely Wu Song’s absence from his hometown and his stay with Chai Jin, followed by his journey back to his brother, his drinking in the tavern, the innkeeper’s warning about the tiger, Wu Song’s stubborn refusal to stay in the tavern, his discovery of the official proclamation about the tiger, the confrontation with the tiger and the killing, and finally meeting the two hunters in tiger’s fur.
However, in performance literature this basic story is on the one hand embedded in more or less detailed background material, and on the other hand the main episodes of the core story are put together from a wealth of minor building blocks which differ from the contents of the novel and drama to an amazing degree. Each of the performance texts has a particular profile of connections to and differences from the other versions.

If we take for example the dagushu version as point of departure, we find that Shuihu zhuan, the drama versions and five of the performance texts lack the introductory passage of Northern Song (shared with Hangzhou pinghua) and Heroes of Mount Liang; the passage about fighting the ‘five tigers’ of Dong Family Temple is found only in the dagushu and the Shandong kuaishu; the fate of Wu the Elder after Wu Song’s escape is unique to the dagushu; the episode about the ‘letter from home’ has a certain correspondence to an ingredient of the Yangzhou pinghua, but is otherwise also a unique episode. There are several other incidents in the dagushu that have no corresponding counterparts in the other performance texts or the novel and drama versions. These are not shown in particular in Table 8.1. (for details, see Børdahl 2007b: 70–74). In respect to storyline, the dagushu is decidedly closer to the Shandong kuaishu and kuaishu than to novel or drama, and it also shares some interesting ingredients with the Fuzhou pinghua.

The correlation of episodes and ingredients between the versions, together with formulaic usage, points to channels of diffusion – other than written derivation from novel and drama – in the transmission of oral-related materials such as the seven versions of performance literature.

8.4. Formulaic usage

The Hangzhou pinghua version exhibits passages of paraphrasing from the Yangzhou pinghua version as a result of written adaptation. Shared language, which is obviously based on such literary copying or adaptation, is not found between the other versions of performance literature under study, but is occasionally found in other texts.

Besides the basic storyline of the tiger tale, the most important characteristic giving the feeling of a ‘common storehouse of convention’ (cf. Hanan 1973: 197; Ge Liangyan 2010: 31) is the formulaic usage of certain expressions in the performance texts: the fixed phrases, proper names and to a lesser degree, the meta-narrative stock phrases.

8.5. Fixed phrases

Among the seven versions of performance literature, fixed phrases repeated inside one version of the tiger tale, i.e. intra-textual repetition, occur primarily in the drumtale, dagushu. Fixed phrases that are shared between several versions, i.e. inter-textual repetition, form the largest group of such expressions, and for each version a particular ‘set’ of these fixed phrases is found. There are not two versions that share the same ‘set’. Sometimes an inter-textual fixed phrase is also repeated twice or more inside the same version, serving both as intra-textual and inter-textual formula.
8.6. Intra-textual repetition of fixed phrases

In the *dagushu* intra-textual repetition of fixed phrases is sufficiently widespread to give the impression that it is an explicit characteristic of the style of this genre. Some couplets or half-couplets are word by word identical, apart from the slots XX where names or terms of address are inserted.

**Example 8.6.a**

言就把XX叫
call XX
call声XX听中常

Starting to talk, he called XX,
shouting: ‘XX, listen to my simple words!’

(Ku I 9–175: 2b, 3a)

Variants of the sentences above are found throughout the piece. The last three syllables are intermittently exchanged with other expressions that carry the same rhyme (-ang).

**THREE OTHER PHRASES AND SENTENCES ARE REPEATED VERBATIM TWICE EACH:**

**Example 8.6.b**

XX越說心越惱

The more XX scolded, the angrier he was

(Ku I 9–175: 6a, 8a)

**Example 8.6.c**

讓過虎頭抓虎尾

He dodged the tiger’s head and grabbed its tail

(Ku I 9–175: 6b, 8a)

**Example 8.6.d**

不在高山為王位

下山就把人來傷

‘Instead of staying high up in the mountain in royal dignity,
you dare come down from the mountain and do people harm!’

(Ku I 9–175: 7a, 7b)

The repeated phrases and sentences seem to point to the importance of the oral performance situation envisaged for the piece. An author of a written piece for reading might easily avoid this kind of repetition, if he wanted to. But in the format of the drum tale repetition adds to the humorous flavour and obvi-
ously belongs to the genre-immanent features. The Yangzhou qingqu likewise a couple of times uses this kind of repetition which is part of the verse-making (rhyme -ang), but in this piece the feature is weak.

Example 8.6.e

(店唱)店主闻声赶到
客官你听端详

(Host singing) Hearing his call, the host hurries over –
‘Good guest, please, listen so very carefully . . .’

(Wei Ren and Wei Minghua 1985: 66, 67)

8.7. INTER-TEXTUAL SHARING OF FIXED PHRASES

Concerning inter-textual distribution of fixed phrases, we find that some of the versions of performance literature have a special relationship to each other. The dagushu, for example, shares a comparatively large number of such expressions with the Shandong kuaisbu, where they are found with minimal variation. The following phrases are only found in dagushu and in Shandong kuaisbu.

Example 8.7.a

Dagushu

你走你走你就走
我管你喂虎是喂狼

‘Leave, leave, please, just leave!
Why should I care if you are eaten up by a tiger or a wolf?’

(Ku I 9–175: 6b)

Example 8.7.b

Shandong kuaisbu

你要走你就走
我管你喂虎你喂狼

‘If you want to leave, please, just leave!
Why should I care if you are eaten up by a tiger or a wolf?’

(Gao Yuanjun 1987: 54)

Example 8.7.c

Dagushu

三横—竖念個王

‘Three lines and one stroke reads as ‘king’

(Ku I 9–175: 7b)
Example 8.7.d

*Shandong kuaishu*

三横一竖念‘王’

Three lines and one stroke, that reads as ‘king’

(GAO Yuanjun 1987: 57)

Intra-textual repetition of fixed phrases that belong to the reservoir of intertextually shared expressions adds emphasis to these wordings that appear to have an especially important place in the tale.

In Chapter 6 fixed phrases of drama and novel were compared and it was found that about half of the phrases were shared, but only three phrases were in common between the three Ming novel editions and the Ming *chuanqi*. On the whole, drama and novel have two different sets. When the performance texts are compared vis-à-vis the novel and drama, we find that each performance text shares some expressions with the novel, some with drama and a portion of such phrases are shared only with other performance texts. In some cases there seems to be a closer affiliation between certain texts (or genres) which is expressed among other things in the vocabulary of fixed phrases.

Thus, the *Hangzhou pinghua* version only incorporates fixed phrases that are also found in the *Yangzhou pinghua* version and/or in the *Shuihu zhuan*. This would seem to be a result of the written creation of this work, which is explicitly based on Wang Shaotang’s book edition and the Ming novel. On the other hand we have a performance text like the *dagushu* which shares fixed phrases mainly with *Shandong kuaishu*. In this case the relationship between the two texts would probably be based on a common ‘storehouse of convention’ for the oral genres behind the written texts.

Sometimes we find interesting cases where a special phrase turns up in a number of genres. For example, the *Fuzhou pinghua* shares the ‘quarterstaff’, *qimeigu* with the *dagushu* and the *kuaishu*. The expression ‘wine, sex, wealth and vigour’, *jiu se cai qi*, is shared between some of the performance genres (*Fuzhou pinghua, Yangzhou pinghua*) and the *Jin Ping Mei cihua*, but not with the other novel editions or with drama.\(^{11}\)
### Table 8.7 Fixed phrases with inter-textual occurrence among the seven versions of performance literature, with occurrences in novel (N) and drama (D) adduced

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed phrases</th>
<th>Performance literature</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English translation</strong></td>
<td><strong>中文</strong></td>
<td>Yq</td>
<td>Dg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>are you a ghost or a man? ~</strong></td>
<td>給石還是人/</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bared its teeth and flaunted its claws ~</strong></td>
<td>張牙舞爪/舞爪張牙</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>big beast</strong></td>
<td>大虫(蟲)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>black rock/ black-coated rock</strong></td>
<td>青石/青皮石</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>blocking the road and killing people</strong></td>
<td>攔路傷人</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>do away with the evil</strong></td>
<td>除害</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>fame spread through out the world</strong></td>
<td>英(美)名天下揚</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>fierce tiger</strong></td>
<td>猛虎</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>from Qinghe District, my name is Wu (Song), I’m the second son</strong></td>
<td>清河(縣)人(氏)姓武(名松)排行第二</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>good fellow</strong></td>
<td>好漢</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>good wine</strong></td>
<td>好酒</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good, good, good!</strong></td>
<td>好好</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>his height is more than one staff’s length /</strong></td>
<td>身高也有一丈二</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>his palms are as big as dustpans</strong></td>
<td>巴掌足有(一)抻簸箕大</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>his two shoulders are full of power</strong></td>
<td>兩膀一幌(挾開)有力量</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>o</td>
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<td>中文</td>
<td>Yq</td>
<td>Dg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
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<td>----</td>
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<tr>
<td>people get tipsy three houses away</td>
<td>隔壁三家醉</td>
<td>X o</td>
<td>K 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>monster</td>
<td>孽畜</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>morning, noon and afternoon</td>
<td>巳午未三(時辰)</td>
<td>X o</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>mottled fierce tiger</td>
<td>斑斕猛虎</td>
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<td>quarter staff</td>
<td>齊眉棍</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>staggering and stumbling</td>
<td>跌跌陯陯</td>
<td>X o</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>rivers and lakes fraternity</td>
<td>江湖</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three lines and one stroke reads as ‘king’</td>
<td>三横一豎念個(就念)王</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>travellers and merchants</td>
<td>來往客商/過往客商/過來客人</td>
<td>X o</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why should I care if you are eaten by a tiger or a wolf?</td>
<td>我管你喂虎是喂狼</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wine, sex, wealth and vigour(b)</td>
<td>酒色財氣</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X o</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with slanting eyes and white forehead</td>
<td>吊睛白額</td>
<td>X o</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with golden eyes and white forehead</td>
<td>金睛白額</td>
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Note: Each genre is indicated by the following abbreviation: Yq = Yangzhou qingqu, Dg = dagushu, Ks = kuaishu, Sk = Shandong kuaishu, Fp = Fuzhou pinghua, Hp = Hangzhou pinghua, Yp = Yangzhou pinghua. N = Novel; D = Drama. The four tested versions of the novel are: 1 = Stuttgart Fragment, 2 = Shuangfengtangben, 3 = Rongyutangben and 4 = Jin Ping Mei cihua. The seven tested versions of the drama are: C 1 = Ming chuanqi, C 2 = Qing chuanqi, K 1 = Qing Kunqu, K 2 = Modern Kunqu, J 1 = Republic Jingju, J 2 = Modern Jingju and H = Huaixi.

The sign ~ indicates that an expression is circumflexed in some versions, but otherwise identical; / indicates that an expression has several slightly modified forms; the possible forms are given in Chinese characters, but only one form in English translation. o refers to oral versions of the same performance genre (cf. Chapters 10-11).

\(a\) Jin Ping Mei cihua (4) has this expression, but with Yanggu District 阳谷縣 instead of Qinghe District 清河縣.

\(b\) This expression is also found in Ming huaben, cf. WU Xiaoling et al. 1984: 248.
8.8. Proper names

Proper names of persons, places and of special things are among the most stable inter-textually distributed vocabulary. Still there are big differences in the amount of this kind of vocabulary used in each performance text, and the usage of names forms patterns that show interesting affinities between some texts. Names, alternative names, nicknames and name-like appellations of the same character are all entered into the Table 8.8.

The table is complete for each version of the performance texts. For novel and drama, the database item numbers are given for those versions where a certain name is found. Several of the performance texts contain a number of names with no occurrence in other performance texts, i.e. their occurrences are unique for the performance text where they appear. In such cases the names are only included into the table, if they occur in a novel or drama version as well, and therefore exemplify inter-textual sharing with versions from the other main genres. In a few cases, however, names that stand in a certain correlation to each other are kept in the table, even though there is no inter-textual occurrence for exactly these particular forms in the group. These cases will receive special comments below.

The distribution of proper names over the seven versions of performance literature vis à vis their distribution in novel (four versions) and drama (seven versions) defies statistical investigation, because the number of texts is too small. The factors behind the uneven distribution of names are manifold, and therefore one must be prudent in drawing fast and ready conclusions from this restricted material. Still, the occurrence of proper names, just like that of fixed phrases, reveals interesting lines and patterns of the inter-textual relationships between the texts.

8.9. The man and the mountain

The only proper names that are found in all versions of the tiger tale, not only in performance literature, but also all tested versions of the novel and drama, are WU SONG and JINGYANG RIDGE. These two names enter into the fixed phrase that is most frequently adopted as the title of the story ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger on Jingyang Ridge’, Jingyanggang Wu Song dahu (the second couplet of the title of Chapter 22 or 23 in Shuihu zhuan). But also in cases where the title of a version does not mention these names at all, as in some dramas, or mentions only Wu Song or only the Ridge, as in many performance genres, we still find both names as part of the tale. Whenever a tiger killer Wu Song is told about, the mountain where he fights the beast is always Jingyang Ridge. And the other way round: whenever the mountain Jingyang Ridge is the setting, the tiger’s bane is Wu Song.

8.10. The tiger and the wine

By contrast: The animal that Wu Song fights is always a tiger, but it is called by different epithets in different versions, such as Lord of the Mountain, shanjun (in the kuaishu and both chuanqi dramas); King of Beasts, shou zhong wang/ bai shou zhi wang (in the dagushu, Shandong kuaishu, Hangzhou pinghua, and
Table 8.8. Proper names in the seven versions of performance literature, with occurrences in novel (N) and drama (D) adduced

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<tr>
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English translation

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### Table 8.8, continued

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<td>梁山</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Guang Prefecture</td>
<td>廣府</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guangping Prefecture</td>
<td>廣平府</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dongping Prefecture</td>
<td>東平府</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dongchang Prefecture</td>
<td>東昌府</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dong Family Temple</td>
<td>董家廟</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Hill Temple</td>
<td>東岳廟</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peach Blossom Tavern</td>
<td>桃花店</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apricot Flower Village</td>
<td>杏花庄 / 村 / 築</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Wine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English translation</th>
<th>中文</th>
<th>Yq</th>
<th>Dg</th>
<th>Ks</th>
<th>Sk</th>
<th>Fp</th>
<th>Hp</th>
<th>Yp</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three Bowls and You Cannot Cross the Ridge</td>
<td>三碗不過崗</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>1,2,3</td>
<td>C1,2,3</td>
<td>K1,2/K2,J1,J2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falling at the Door</td>
<td>出門倒</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,2,3</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavor Through the Bottle</td>
<td>透瓶香</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champion Red</td>
<td>狀元紅</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turtledoves Turn into Phoenices</td>
<td>野雞吃酒變鳳凰</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddha Hand Dew</td>
<td>佛手露</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grape Dew</td>
<td>葡萄露</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaohuang</td>
<td>燒黃</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: For explanation of signatures and tested versions of novel and drama, cf. Table 8.7. X = one or more occurrences in the given version of a genre of performance literature, or one or more occurrences in all the four tested versions of the novel (including *Jin Ping Mei chhua*) or in all the seven tested versions of drama. When numbers are inserted, they indicate that the expression is found in the version numbered, but not in other versions of the genre (novel or drama).

For notes in this table, see endnotes to the chapter.
in all versions of the novel, including the *Jin Ping Mei cihua*. It is called by the fixed expression ‘mottled fierce tiger’, *banlan menghu* (in the *kuai-shu*, in *Jin Ping Mei cihua* and the *Huaixi* drama). There is no epithet/name for the tiger that occurs in all versions, comprising performance literature, novel and drama.

Even the nouns for the animal are different in the different versions, comprising a variety of disyllabic composite nouns that border on the concept of fixed phrases, such as ‘big beast’, *da chong*, ‘damned monster’ *niechu*, ‘fierce tiger’, *menghu*. The only word for ‘tiger’ that is present in all versions is the semi-free morpheme *hu* [tiger] that enters into semi-bound V-O, A-N and D-N combinations (cf. Børdahl 2007c). The prefixed word for tiger, *laohu* (old-tiger) which is definitely the most common word in modern time is absent from the late Ming *Shuihu zhuan* versions and the *Jin Ping Mei cihua* and, with a rare exception, also from Ming and Qing drama. In the seven performance texts the word *laohu* is absent from the *kuai-shu* and the *Fuzhou pinghua*, but fairly frequent in the other texts (cf. Børdahl 2007b).

Apart from the man, the mountain and the animal, there is another highly important ingredient in this tale: the wine. The wine that Wu Song drinks before ascending the mountain has in most cases one or more catching wine names, or several different wines are mentioned by their names. The most frequent name is the famous ‘Three Bowls and You Cannot Cross the Ridge’, *sanwan bu guo gang*, also prominent in all the tested versions of the novel *Shuihu zhuan*, but even this name is not found in all the versions of the corpus.

The drumtale, *dagushu*, is particularly rich in proper names (well over fifty). The artful enumeration of places and persons, with only little if any description, seems, as noticed above (see Chapter 7, 7.13) aimed at evoking the joy of a shared knowledge, supposedly existing between the performer and his audience (or on the textual level: the narrator and his narratee). No other version of performance literature has so many names of persons, places and things. The *dagushu* also features far more names than the versions of Chapter 22 or 23 of the novel *Shuihu zhuan* or of the various drama versions. Only Chapter 1 of the novel *Jin Ping Mei cihua* has an equally rich accumulation of proper names. It is noteworthy that the *dagushu*, in spite of its profusion of names, lacks some of the most widespread proper names, such as the name of the strong wine ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge’. Wu Song always drinks heavily before his feat on the mountain ridge. Only in the *dagushu* and the fast tale, *kuai-shu*, is the name of the wine different or left unmentioned, something that is also the case in the novel *Jin Ping Mei cihua* and in some drama versions, notably the *Huaixi*. The *dagushu*, on the other hand, applies a wine name that is much more erotically tinged: ‘Turtledoves Turn into Phoenixes’, *Yeji chi jiu bian fenghuang*.

### 8.1.1. Fixed phrases and textual relationships

The fact that none of the fixed phrases and only two of the proper names are found in all the written versions of the tiger tale in novel, drama and performance literature, is a strong witness about the relationship between these texts. While
written derivation is likely between the various editions of the *Shuihu zhuan*, such relationship is far less plausible between the drama versions (where only arias are copied/transmitted from one drama to another). In the case of performance literature written derivation between the genres and items seems rare. The *Hangzhou pinghua* version is an exceptional case, since this text is explicitly based on adaptation of materials from the novel *Shuihu zhuan* and from the *Yangzhou pinghua* written edition. In this case written derivation is, however, not based on copying of larger sections (as with prose and verse of the novel editions and verse of the drama), but the close relationship is based on paraphrasing and through the application of a large amount of fixed phrases and proper names.26 The other six performance texts stand in a very different relationship to each other and to the novel and drama – a relationship that would most likely have developed from the oral milieus of professional performance where these texts have their root.27

8.12. Stock phrases: meta-narrative phrases

Some of the performance genres as found in written texts show an inventory of meta-narrative markers that is quite elaborate, including a few expressions shared with the novel versions. Other genres have few such markers and those shared with the novel are rare, even exceptional.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8.12.a. Meta-narrative phrases: <em>Yangzhou qingqu</em> – ‘Wu Song da hu’ 1985. One ballad (no name for the unit)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* 唱</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* 數板</td>
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<tr>
<td>但只見</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The *Yangzhou qingqu*, apart from stage directions like *chang* and *shuban* (marked *), only includes one meta-narrative phrase, the exclamation *dan zhi jian*, before a striking ‘poem-like’ description. Since the whole piece is in metre, one cannot speak of a ‘pre-verse phrase’ in this case.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8.12.b. Meta-narrative phrases: <em>Dagushu</em> – <em>Jingyanggang Wu Song da hu</em>. Late Qing/Early Republic, One session, yi hui</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>言一回</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>押下...且不表在表</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>若問</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>這是x x 一個段</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>下一回...在敘上</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the *dagushu*, meta-narrative stock phrases clearly serve to introduce, segment and conclude the piece.28 The phrase *yan yi hui* not only introduces this item of drum tale, but is characteristic of the genre. The phrase *yaxia . . . qie bu biao, zai biao* is used several times in the drum tale, serving to cut off one thread of the story and take up another and thus marking the main sections of the piece.29 The phrases *zhe shi XX yige duan* and *xia yi hui . . . zai xushang* conclude the piece and lead onto the following 'round', *hui*, or – as written text – onto the next booklet which will contain the following *hui*.30 There is also a weak form of audience appeal or simulated dialogue, *ruo wen*, used twice. All of these phrases are closely connected with oral performance as the setting for this performance text, none of them are in common with those used in the novel, but *yaxia . . . qie bu biao, zai biao* is similar to formulas of the Ming *chantefables*, the Chenghua *shuochang cihua* and the Fuzhou *pinghua*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>兩言碎語不要講</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>表—表</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>白</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>旁白</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>下一回</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Shandong clapper tale, *Shandong kuaishu*, has, apart from the stage directions *bai* and *pangbai* (marked *), three meta-narrative phrases of narrative transition in the metrical portions, that is, two of introduction *xianyan suiyu bu yao jiang, biao yi biao*, and one of conclusion, *xia yi hui*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8.12.d. Meta-narrative phrases: <em>Kuaishu</em> – ‘Wu Song da hu’ Late Qing/Early Republic, One session, <em>yi hui</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>詩篇</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>注頭</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>表得是</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>XX 板</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>你看</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>話白</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>話表</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>XX調</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>真乃是</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The fast tale, *kuaishu*, contains a number of stage directions (marked *), not belonging to the performed text, but indicating the various modes (sung or spoken), melodies, rhythm and other special sections of the text. Only four meta-narrative phrases belong to the performance text, meant to be vocalized (*biaode shi* introduction, *hua biao* transition, *zhen nai shi* tag for *bon mot*, *ni kan* appeal to the audience).

| Table 8.12.e. Meta-narrative phrases: *Fuzhou pinghua* – *Jingyanggang* Wu Song da hu Late Qing/Early Republic, First collection, shang ji |
|---|---|---|
| *白* | bai | speak |
| 話表 | hua biao | The story we are performing is . . . |
| 書歸正傳說分明 | shu gui zhengzhuan shuo lenning | Now our saga returns to the true story and we shall tell it clearly |
| 按下漫表 . . . 轉說 | anxia man biao . . . dan shuo | Let us postpone . . . let us now tell only |
| 這且不表 | zhe qie bu biao | Let’s not perform this now . . . |
| 只聽 | zhi ting | Just listen |
| 不表 . . . 再說 | bu biao . . . zai shuo | I will not perform . . . but I will tell |
| 道其詳 | dao qi xiang | . . . tell the details |
| 且說 | qie shuo | Meanwhile let us tell |
| 這章事情按一筆, 且說 | zhezhang shiqing an yibi, qie shuo | Let’s postpone the chapter about these events and tell instead . . . |
| 一時之人說不盡, 且說 | yi shi zhi ren shuobujin, qie shuo | I cannot mention all these persons here and now, but let me tell |
| 慢言 . . . 且表 | manyan . . . qie biao | Let’s postpone . . . let’s now perform |
| 不談 . . . 且表 | bu tan . . . qie biao | Let’s not talk of . . . let’s now perform |
| 如今且説 | rujin qie shuo | Let’s now tell about |
| 請看下集 . . . | qing kan xiaji . . . | Please, read the next volume about . . . |

The *Fuzhou pinghua* version has affinities to *chantefable* genres such as the Ming Chenghua *shuo chang cihua* and modern *Suzhou tanci*.31 Based on Fuzhou dialect, *Min*, the printed text occasionally retains dialectal traces, but it is far from being a transcription of performance in dialect.16 Before prose sections the stage instruction ‘speak’, *bai*, (marked *), is inserted in cartouche, pointing clearly to a situation of oral performance. Two of the meta-narrative formulas, on the other hand, reflect the written format of the text (*zhezhang shiqing an yibi* [as for this chapter of events, let us hold the brush], *qing kan xiaji* . . . [please, read the following volume . . . ]). The formula *hua biao* occurs at the beginning.
of each prose section (just after the stage direction \textit{bai}), but most of the meta-narrative expressions are found in the metric sections, a feature reminiscent of the early \textit{chantefables} (only \textit{anxia man biao}, \textit{dan shuo} and \textit{zhe qie bu biao} are in the prose sections). A couple of phrases are in common with those of \textit{Jin Ping Mei cihua} (\textit{qie shuo}, \textit{dan shuo} and \textit{anxia man (dan) biao}). Verse sections have no stage direction, but are only marked by indentation and an empty space between the verse lines.

### Table 8.12.f. Meta-narrative phrases: \textit{Hangzhou pinghua} – \textit{Wu Song yanyi} 1980, Chapter 1, \textit{di yi hui}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hua shuo</td>
<td>The story says</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zheli xian biao</td>
<td>Let's perform first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shuoshude</td>
<td>Storyteller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dai shuoshude lue biao jiju</td>
<td>Please, wait and let me, the storyteller, give a brief explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhuwei</td>
<td>Dear listeners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qie shuo</td>
<td>Meanwhile let us tell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zheng shi</td>
<td>Indeed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bu zhi \ldots qie ting xia hui fenjie</td>
<td>As for how \ldots please listen to the explanation of the next session/chapter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Albeit ‘oral-related’, this version has a relatively distant relationship to the supposed dialectal idiom of the Hangzhou storyteller who is the main informant. The author-editors’ ‘re-creation’, \textit{zai chuangzuo}, in modern standard Chinese is admittedly based on both oral and written sources, including the book version of Wang Shaotang’s performances (1959). The usage of meta-narrative phrases in this type of ‘new storyteller book’, \textit{xin huaben}, could be very different from the linguistic habits of the Hangzhou storytellers in performance. The text features a set of meta-narrative phrases identical with those of the full editions, \textit{fanben}, of the \textit{Shuihu zhuang}, such as \textit{hua shuo} (used not only in this chapter, but as standard opening phrase for every chapter), \textit{qie shuo} (highly frequent throughout the whole book), \textit{bu zhi} \ldots \textit{qie ting xia hui fenjie} (standard closing phrase for each chapter). The text further features the pre-verse exclamation \textit{zheng shi}, an overt storyteller-narrator, \textit{shuoshude}, and an appeal to the audience, \textit{zhuwei}. Meta-narrative phrases which are \textit{not} in common with the novel (such as \textit{zheli xian biao}, \textit{dai shuoshude lue biao jiju}) might be the more authentic expressions reflecting the speech of Hangzhou storytellers. However, they show no apparent dialectal features, and there is just as much chance that they – like the standard stock phrases reminiscent of the novel – reflect the editorial vision of storytellers’ language in modern Chinese aimed at a nationwide readership and with no special veneration for the authentic oral form.
The Yangzhou pinghua version, also in prose with occasional verse, is the first section of Chapter One of a xin huaben. This book was published as a two-volume work, Wu Song (1959), by a team of editors with a background in oral performance by the famous storyteller Wang Shaotang (1889–1968). The editors of this work are, to a certain degree, faithful to the dialectal spoken style of Wang Shaotang, while also editing according to their own sense of the required format for the book (cf. BØRDAHL 2003, 2004). This chapter has very few expressions belonging to the category of meta-narrative phrases, and only the exclamation zheng shi before a bon mot is reminiscent of the novel, but a few other candidates are listed (bu . . . bian ba, mo mang) which can be considered truly storytellers’ stock phrases of this genre, since they are also frequent in oral performances. If the whole book is scrutinized a number of other meta-narrative phrases are found to be sprinkled around, but it is difficult to know if they are added by the editors or belong to Wang Shaotang’s own performance language. None of them are similar to those of Shuihu zhuan or other novels, but quite a few of them remind of those found in the Wu Song yanyi introduced above, and since my own recorded material of Yangzhou storytellers contains no such formulas, I am inclined to interpret them as ‘editors’ storytelling mannerisms’.

A glance at Tables 8.12.a-g shows a convention of using (sometimes) pre-verse meta-narrative phrases in the genres of prose with occasional verse. But it is only for the novel that a ‘set’ of such phrases could be established. As for the transitional phrases, we have the same situation. Basically it is only the fanben version of the novel and the version in Jin Ping Mei cihua that display a ‘set’ of such phrases (and the editor of the Hangzhou pinghua version follows this convention to a certain degree), cf. Chapter 5, 5.2 and 5.6. But apart from that, it is only the fact of the occurrence of this type of expression that links the performance genres, not the actual formulaic phrases as such. While some of the phrases may be related in function, meaning and words that enter into the expressions, they are rarely exactly alike and do not form a list of clichés common to all the storytelling genres.

The investigation reveals that there is no firm and stable common convention of meta-narrative phrases across the performance-related genres. The ‘simulacrum of storytelling’ found in the Ming novel has no hard and fast correspond-

| Table 8.12.g. Meta-narrative phrases: Yangzhou pinghua – Wang Shaotang: Wu Song 1959, Chapter 1, di yi hui |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 不...便罷... | *bu . . . bian ba,...* | If not... that’s the end of the story |
| 正是 | *zheng shi* | Indeed |
| 莫忙 | *mo mang* | No hurry! |
| 前人有幾句... | *qianren you jiju...* | Our forefathers had some lines... |
| 有人要問 | *you ren yao wen* | Somebody might ask |
ence with conventions of storytelling in performance-related literature from Qing and later as evidenced by the versions of the tiger tale. What is in common is the use of this type of expression – to a varying degree – in the storytelling genres as preserved in performance literature.

Notes

1 The various versions of performance literature presented in Table 8.1 may differ slightly in the sequence of episodes, i.e. the storyline. These minor differences in storyline can be seen in the Research Database on Chinese Storytelling.

2 Wang Xiaotang was the son of Wang Shaotang’s brother, but was as a child adopted by Wang Shaotang and later educated as a storyteller in the full repertoire of Wang Shaotang, cf. Bordahl and Ross 2002: Life stories.

3 In the printed version of Yangzhou pinghua under study, i.e. Wang Shaotang’s Wu Song (1959), Chapter 1, part 1, Wu Song has a staff, and the tiger grasps it and breaks it into three pieces. However, his son Wang Xiaotang, performed the tiger tale without a staff (1992), cf. Bordahl 1996: 247–286; see also Fei Li 1993, where the question was treated for the first time, after Fei Li heard my recording of Wang Xiaotang’s performance. The version without the staff apparently follows the original tradition of the Wang school, previous to the publication of the repertoire of Wang Shaotang. The clearest evidence of this is that in the pre-1949 stencil version of Wang Shaotang’s Wu Song shi hui, Wu Song in this oldest recorded version of the tiger tale carries no staff with him. This stencil was not generally known among the Yangzhou storytellers in the 1980s and 90s. Recently the young Wang School storyteller Ma Wei 马伟 (b. 1980) talks about this example of deviation from the Ming novel which he, too, considers the more authentic representation of the original Wang School tradition (see interview for the magazine Shenghuo 生活 [Life], Oct 2011).

4 Cf. performances of Wu Song and the tiger by the Wang School storytellers Li Xintang 李信堂 1986, Ren Jitang 任繼堂 1989, 1992 and Chen Yintang 陈蔭堂 1989 in Bordahl 1996: 287–364. These storytellers who had all studied with both Wang Shaotang and Wang Xiaotang nevertheless have chosen to incorporate the feature of Wu Song’s staff from the book edition Wu Song (1959), instead of continuing the oral transmission of their masters. See also Chapter 11, 11.3.

5 Cf. Shi Nai’an and Luo Guanzhong [1988] 1997: 321. The description of the crushing of the cudgel against a tree is found both in the jianben and the fanben versions of the novel. However, the illustration of the episode in the Rongyutang edition seems to suggest that the artist is visualizing that the cudgel is broken against the rock, cf. Shi Nai’an and Luo Guanzhong [1988] 1997: 314. In the Fuzhou pinghua version the staff is broken against the rock.

6 Audio-recorded versions of the tiger tale in Yangzhou storytelling, corresponding to ‘one day of storytelling’ stop either after ‘The killing’ with a praise poem, or just at the moment of ‘Two tigers’. The latter ending is of course an example of ‘bargaining the crisis’. Wang Xiaotang chose to end his performances in 1992 and in 1996 in this way, which also seems to be the traditional way. The younger storytellers of the Wang school had a tendency to see the tiger tale as an independent story for performance in ad hoc situations, where no continuation would be expected. So they made a pompous

7 In the Fuzhou pinghua sample the First Collection continues with Wu Song’s meeting with his sister-in-law Pan Jinlian. The Second collection contains the story of his confrontation with another potent woman, the wife of the innkeeper at Crossways Rise.

8 The stuff material for the introduction is found in the earlier part of the novel, but not repeated in Chapter 22/23 containing the tiger episode. In Jin Ping Mei cihua the tiger tale is, however, told in Chapter 1 and in this chapter we also find a standard introduction about Northern Song.


10 The collection of ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’ comprises several versions of the tiger tale in dagushu that show this kind of textual relationship. There is also a version of the genre erren zhuan that stands in close textual relation to the dagushu, cf. Børnåhl 2007b. Another text of performance literature from late Qing stands in close textual relationship to the Fuzhou pinghua version, an illustrated booklet called Xiujiang Jingyanggang Wu Song da hu 髹像景陽岡武松打虎 [Wu Song Fights the Tiger on Jingyang Ridge, Illustrated], Shanghai shuju 1908, genre unspecified, cf. Research Database on Chinese Storytelling.

11 The kuaishu text actually shares one fixed phrase with drama, e.g. ‘go, go, go’, zou, zou, zou 走走走.

12 In the Wang School of Yangzhou pinghua Wu Song is called ‘Guankou erlangshen’ in the very first sentence of the tiger story. Later this name is not mentioned again, and no explanation is given. In Chinese folklore Guankou Erlangshen is a god of multiple functions, able to tame the flood, capable of fighting the wild animals in the mountains etc., cf. TAN Zhengbi and TAN Xun 1985: 304–305.

13 In modern Chinese Xiao’er [little number two] is a general term for a ‘waiter’, and this meaning is found in several of the performance texts and oral performances, but in Yangzhou pinghua the name is used in a double sense, both as the calling name of the waiter in the inn, where Wu Song drinks, but also as a ‘real’ name of the young fellow, whose family name is mentioned in particular in several performances as Wang. His name is therefore Wang Xiao’er. Wang Xiao’er also happens to be a trickster figure in Yangzhou drama, Yangju 楊劇. That might be the reason for giving the waiter this name in the Wu Song tale. It is interesting that Xiao’er as a calling name for a waiter is found already in early buaben, cf. Wu Xiaoling et al. 1984: 72.

14 Gao Qiu and the following names in this group point to famous commanders and ministers of the Northern Song. The names are also written 蔡京, 童贯, 高俅, 杨戬 (in Hangzhou pinghua)

15 Leader of revolting forces during the Northern Song

16 A gang of bullies living in a place called Dong Family Temple or similar names. In some texts their leader is called Li Gui. In the Yangzhou pinghua version the expression ‘road-blocking tiger’ is used about the tiger, cf. names of the tiger, not about the rascals in Dong Family Temple (this episode is not part of Yangzhou storytelling).

The Shandong kuaishu mentions the Li family, Li jia 李家, of despots, not the Dong family, see also Dong Family Temple, below. Li Gui, nicknamed Yaksha of Shandong,
Shandong yecha 山東夜叉, is a champion warrior also in the Jin Ping Mei cihua. This figure is perhaps related to the warrior of the same name found in the early huaben 話本 Yang Wen lanluhu zhan 楊溫攔路虎傳, cf. HANAN 1963: 37. In the drumtale and the Shandong kuaishu the nickname ‘road-blocking tigers’, lanluhu, is used about Li Gui and his four brothers, while in the huaben tale it is the nickname of the main protagonist Yang Wen who manages to win one fight with Li Gui. It seems probable that both huaben, Jin Ping Mei, Shandong kuaishu tradition and the drumtale are drawing on some common tradition (oral and written) about a champion staff-fighter from Shandong Li Gui with the nickname ‘road-blocking tiger’, but the attribution of this nickname and other names of the legend varies in each case.

17 Famous drunkard
18 Famous for brewing wine
19 Former famous tiger killer
20 Hunter

Interestingly, the epithet ‘Road-blocking Tiger’, lanlu hu 攔路虎, is used in dagushu as a name of the gang in Shandong that Wu Song fights before he flees to Chai Jin’s manor. In oral performance of Yangzhou pinghua the expression is however used as a designation for the tiger.

There is a single occurrence of laohu in Shen Jing’s Chuangi drama of 1599 C 1 (that could be a later editor’s addition). In the Kunqu versions K 1 and K 2 and the Qing version of Jingju J 1 this word is absent, but in the Qing chuangi C 2 and the Jingju version from the 1950 J 2 the word is frequent.

Only forty of the names are entered into Table 5.11, because a dozen of the names have no inter-textual spread, but are unique to the dagushu. Some names that are unique to the dagushu are still entered into the table, because they have some special connection to names in other texts, even though the same form does not occur.

Most of these names do not stand in an inter-textual relationship to names in the versions of the tiger tale that are tested here.

Instead, in the kuaishu the tavern has a signboard with couplets, mentioning Apricot Blossom Village, Xinghuacun 杏花村, which is traditionally a place in Shandong famous for strong wine.

The Hangzhou pinghua text has 16 (of 29) proper names in common with the Yangzhou pinghua text, and 16 in common with the Rongyutangben version of the novel, and additional 7 in common with Jin Ping Mei cihua. The Hangzhou pinghua text has only one proper name (in common with dagushu) which is not found in either the Yangzhou pinghua text or in the two novels.

The view that drama and storytelling genres with Water Margin themes were essentially based on rewriting and adaptation of the written text of the Ming novel and/or the Ming chuangi is often taken for granted, see for example ZHENG Gongdun 1983: 113, 125.

The stock phrases of the dagushu are analysed in detail in BØRDAHL 2007b.

‘Meanwhile let’s wait performing . . . let’s rather perform’, qie bu biao, zai biao, is used three times in the piece.

This usage is obviously parallel to the concluding stock phrases found in the novel after each hui in the sense of ‘chapter’.

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31 Certain structural features and voice registers of Fuzhou pinghua seem to have amazingly close parallels to descriptions of Tang transformations, bianwen 变文, and Song storytelling, shuohua 說話, cf. Chen Guanrong 1998: 54. For voice registers of performed Suzhou tanci, see Bender 2003: 55–59.

32 The use of ru, rumen 汝, 汝們 for the second person pronoun singular and plural reflects for example an attempt to render dialect, Chen Guanrong 1998: 103.

33 In oral tradition this repertoire, shu 書, is called Ten chapters of Wu (Song), Wu shi hui 武十回.

34 Zheng shi, you pian gufeng dan dao, dan jian; with an additional shi yue/ci yue, you shi wei zheng for the fanben and Jin Ping Mei cihua.
Storytellers’ Scripts
9

An Excursion from The Tiger Tale

9.1. Traditional scripts

Some of the earliest vernacular short stories, huaben, and plain tales, pinghua, dating from late Song to early Ming, are sometimes claimed to be printed versions copied or adapted from storytellers’ ‘prompt-books’ or scripts.1 The question of the relationship between early huaben literature and storytelling has been thoroughly treated from many aspects, but the handed-down storytellers’ own scripts that are accessible in our time have so far received but little scholarly interest.2

In the previous chapters we have analysed a number of versions of the tiger tale in performance literature, shuochang wenxue. The function of the various items has been discussed on the background of their literary form and printed appearance. All of the seven items seem to serve primarily as entertainment literature for a readership. Some of the texts might, however, be close in form to true performance scripts, i.e. notebooks that are sometimes used by performers of oral genres for creating, studying and/or rehearsing their repertoire.

In the present chapter, based on two previous articles (Børdahl 2005; Børdahl 2009), I shall make a digression from the main theme of the book. Since I have not found or seen a true performance script for the tiger tale, I cannot in this case base my discussion on a sample text taken from the collection of Wu Song texts. However, the form and usage of storytellers’ scripts is highly important for many of the arguments of this book. Therefore I shall discuss some storytellers’ scripts in Yangzhou storytelling, Yangzhou pinghua. The scripts under study – from late Qing and early Republic – were handed down and used by the generation of masters who were born in the first decades of the 20th century.

Until recently scripts, jiaoben, as aides-mémoire were seldom mentioned by the storytellers of Yangzhou, who often claimed pure oral transmission for their art (Chen Wulou (Si Su) 1962: 44–45) and in fact only a minority of the storyteller families owned handed-down scripts for their performances. The focus is here on the currency and nature of scripts, their usage, linguistic form and relationship to the oral sagas as performed.
Several categories of texts can be subsumed under the idea of ‘script’. Chinese terms for ‘storytellers’ script’, *huaben, jiaoben, diben*, were earlier regularly translated into English as ‘prompt book’, a term taken from Western drama, where a prompter sits below the stage in a so-called prompt box, whispering to the performers in case they forget their next line. But a script, in the sense of a prompt book used by a prompter who has no role in the performance apart from this assisting function, is foreign to traditional Chinese theatre, and even more so in the setting of Chinese storytelling.

The stage of traditional Chinese theatre has no prompt box or similar equipment, and prompting, if ever it existed, is left unmentioned. In the *nuo* drama tradition, *nuoxi*, which survived in Anhui province into the last decades of the 20th century, reading aloud from a play script during performance is recorded as a probably ancient tradition of performance (cf. Chapter 6, 6.1; see also McLaren 1998: 87). In Chinese shadow theatre from the recent period, a script is sometimes used as libretto *during* performance. Because the puppeteers are invisible behind the screen, they can glance at the script while handling the figures and doing their parts. Even though no prompter is involved, this seems to be the closest in function to a prompt-book in the Western sense. However, most performances in this genre are based on memorized and improvised acting, like the other dramatic genres (Chen Fan Pen 2004: 15). Lindy Li Mark informs us that among amateur performers of *Kunqu* drama in the 1930s and 1940s scripts were sometimes used during performances in private gatherings (Mark 1990: 100). Mark is describing a special case where amateur performers gathered informally. We can see from her reminiscences that scripts were not supposed to be ready at hand for professional artists during a performance.

Among Chinese storytellers the general attitude has been to treat such documents, when they did exist, as a professional secret, and research on this aspect of storytelling has accordingly been scant. A first-hand investigation of storytellers’ scripts was conducted by Chen Wulou during the early 1950s (Chen Wulou (Si Su) 1962, 1994, 1999). The question of the existence, usage and form of storytellers’ scripts was again treated in detail by Věna Hrdličková, who found that written scripts of continuous text ‘were unnecessary and actually undesirable’ for the genres that she was personally able to investigate in North China during the 1950s and early 1960s (Hrdličková 1965: 227, 234).

However, Kate Stevens in her study of Beijing drum singing, *Jingyun dagu*, mentions the importance of written scripts for the creation of new pieces (whereas the transmission from master to student as well as preparations for performances seemed primarily based on oral/aural imitation and practice, Stevens 1973: 77–78, 104, 123).

For the recent period, Mark Bender describes Suzhou story-singing, *Suzhou tanci*, as heavily dependent on scripts for the preparation of performances, the teaching of new generations and the creation of new stories (Bender 2003: 34, 71, 75, 80). Other genres, such as Laoting drum-singing, *Laoting dagu*, from
9. An Excursion from The Tiger Tale

rural areas in Hebei province, described by Junko Iguchi, seem far less dependent on written sources and scripts (IUCHI 2003: 69–94; 2007).4

9.3. Habits and rules of public performances

The storytellers of Yangzhou pinghua traditionally tell long sagas, shu [text, repertoire, ‘book’], divided into sessions of two to three hours at a time, called ‘a day of storytelling’, yi tian shu, or ‘a session of storytelling’, yi chang shu. A saga is performed during engagements of two to three months of daily performance.

There is normally only one performer, and in contrast to other genres of storytelling in Yangzhou, such as Yangzhou xianci [Yangzhou string tales or story-singing] and Yangzhou qingqu [Yangzhou pure song or ballad singing], Yangzhou pinghua has no musical accompaniment. Even though a certain amount of metric verse, both rhymed and non-rhymed, occurs at irregular intervals, the genre is not prosimetric in the sense of featuring a balanced shifting between prose and verse (MAIR 1997: 367; ØRDAHL 2003: 68, 70–71, 83). Some performances are entirely in prose, and all performances are predominantly in prose. Passages learnt by heart, whether in verse or in prose, alternate with passages of improvisation and re-creation in a more free style.

The usual circumstances of Yangzhou pinghua as performed in the storytellers’ house, shuchang, are well defined and the storytellers have a rich technical vocabulary describing the habits and demands of performance on stage, as well as the pedagogical principles for transmission of the art from generation to generation. It is significant that written materials or scripts are not mentioned as a requirement for performance or teaching.

In fact, the storyteller often performs scenes where he as the narrator is ‘reading from a document’ to the audience. However, in such cases he always recites the text of the document by heart and uses his requisites, the fan and the handkerchief, to allude to the document mentioned, such as a letter, book, proclamation, etc. He is never reading aloud from a text where the words of the performance are written, and he never consults such texts during public performances in the traditional setting.

9.4. Transmitting by mouth

Young disciples of Yangzhou pinghua had to learn a repertoire by listening to and imitating their masters, a practice called ‘transmitting by mouth and teaching from the heart’, kou chuan xin shou. Some storytellers were illiterate or semi-illiterate. Others had some school education. But such differences were not important when it came to learning the art of storytelling. The art was transmitted solely by oral–aural and visual methods. Gesture and mime were essential ingredients and probably important for memory. Blind children were not infrequently trained as storytellers, and their inability to read was never mentioned as a setback.

The youngster – up to the 1940s always a male, since the 1960s gradually more and more female storytellers of Yangzhou pinghua – would study with
his father/master every day, being taught at first only one or two sentences a day. The disciple would imitate the master's words, tone, gestures and facial expressions, and then spend time alone trying to remember and act out the day's instruction. The disciple was also supposed to follow his master to the storytelling house every day to observe the performance and wait on his master. The following day he would rehearse in front of his master; this was called 'to return the story', *huan shu*. Much of the teaching was 'reinforced' by spanking. Little by little the passages to be remembered would be extended until the student was expected to be able to 'return' a whole 'day of storytelling' – two-three hours of performance (Wang Shaotang 1979: 289; Wang Xiaotang 1992: 30–34).

Remembering by heart was only the first step in learning storytelling. The novice was soon taught to recreate in a living language, which would reflect the style and narrative technique of his master. Only certain passages were supposed to be memorized by rote, such as poems and set pieces.

The education of storytellers by the method of 'transmitting by mouth and teaching from the heart' prevailed until the 1960s, and the storytellers who belonged to the mature and older generation in the late 1990s had learned their trade that way. A sceptical and almost hostile attitude to writing and reading, considered dangerous to memory, was widespread (Børdahl 2005: 235–242). Some 'fake' storytellers, who had apparently learnt their repertoires by heart from books and had not received education from a professional master, were looked down upon (Børdahl 1996: 460–461).

New repertoires were in many cases created by applying the skills acquired as a storyteller to oral 'embroidering' on themes from popular literature. Such activity did not primarily involve the writing of a script or any other writing, and how far it required the active reading of the work used as a model is an open question, since knowledge of the themes, plots and protagonists of the popular written culture was so widely disseminated in the population through many other channels than book reading.

Scripts had a function as ritual objects, as revered inheritance, and they were conceived as a family property that needed protection against 'stealing' (copying). Silence about scripts was inborn in the milieu, and several of the storytellers whom I have interviewed said that they wouldn't as novices have dared to ask their master if there was a script for their repertoire, so they do not know to this day if he might have had a script. They were never taught with the aid of scripts (Børdahl and Ross 2002: 138, 149, 161–162).

The publication of storytellers' repertoires in notational versions, taken down from oral performances, abbreviated, rearranged and polished, resulted in a new genre, so-called 'new storytelling books', *xin huaben*. The repertoires of the most famous Yangzhou masters were published from the late 1950s in anthologies and novel-size editions, with a break during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). Besides the appeal of these books as entertainment for a general readership the editors also envisaged that the works could serve as scripts (Wang Shaotang [1959] 1984: 1111 [editors' postscript]).
Although there is a general consensus that oral education was the basic training, some storytellers are now open about the fact that their forefathers wrote scripts, kept them as a kind of guarantee and bequeathed them to later generations. Since, however, Yangzhou storytellers generally were not particularly concerned about scripts and seldom had them in their possession, why would a minority of the storytellers own scripts, and what kind of function would they serve? In the following, two scripts that have both been in active use for storytelling during the first half of the 20th century are investigated. One of them can roughly be dated to late Qing, ca 1880–1910; the other is from 1923, the early Republic.

9.5. A script in the tradition of Western Han

The script from late Qing belonged – when I had occasion to study it – to Dai Buzhang (1925–2003), a highly esteemed master and the most prominent performer of Journey to the West of the Dai school, Daimen Xiyou ji. Dai Buzhang’s father and most of his uncles and brothers were all storytellers, and they specialized in several of the large traditional repertoires. The script contained the handwritten version of the repertoire of Western Han, Xi Han, one of the semi-historical repertoires with a long history of oral transmission. The manuscript is attributed variously to Dai Buzhang’s father’s teacher and to the teacher of this teacher, who belonged to the second generation after Hu Zhaozhang (fl. 1850), recognized as the founder of this repertoire.7

In his childhood Dai Buzhang often listened to his father’s performances of this saga. After his father’s death in 1938, Dai Buzhang studied Western Han with another master, Jiang Shoushan (1888–1961), and at the time read through the script as preparation. He used the script for memorization of the poems, he said; otherwise he had little use for it. He only performed this saga periodically in the 1940s and early 1950s. Performing episodes from the Western Han repertoire in more recent times, he was no longer able to remember the poems. On 24 October 2003, a month before Dai Buzhang passed away, he gave a performance for me to tape-record from the part of the repertoire that corresponds to the passage selected from the script for analysis.9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9.5. School of Western Han8</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hu Zhaozhang—Xu Hongzhang*?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu Chunshan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jiang Shoushan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ren Yongzhang* — Dai Shanzhang*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun Ganzhang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhang Shan' an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Shanhe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dai Shanshan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu Xiaoshan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dai Buzhang*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dai Buzhang
戴步章
(1925–2003)

Journey to the West of the Dai school
Daimen Xiyou ji
戴門西游記

Western Han
Xi Han
西漢

Hu Zhaozhang
胡兆章
(fl. 1850)

Jiang Shoushan
江壽山
(1888–1961)
9.6. Narrative and linguistic structure of the Western Han script

The worn pages of the script were covered with characters in handsome calligraphy. The passage under study is written in a style reminiscent of the Shi ji [Records of the Historian], as seen in the biography of Han Xin. It is not copied from this work, however; no full sentences are exactly the same, only a few expressions. The particular episode is not mentioned in Shi ji, but there are very similar episodes.10

Transcription of a prose passage from the script:

When the King of Han had read the memorial, he was greatly pleased and said: ‘My Lord, a glance at your memorial is sufficient proof of your deep loyalty towards our country, indeed!’

Figure 9.5. A page from the script of Western Han, including the analysed passage. Photo by Jette Ross.

Records of the Historian
Shi ji
Han Xin
(d. a.c. 196)
Then a banquet with wine was served, and the King of Han said: ‘When do you suggest that we should undertake the eastern expedition?’ (Han) Xin said: ‘Xiang Yu has settled in the town of Peng. For a long time he has not cared about the western lands. The feudal lords are dispersed in all directions. The various states are totally unprepared for war. This is the right opportunity for launching a punitive expedition. However, our whole army is untrained and our commanders need practice. If Your Majesty plans to return to the east, your servant is surely willing to take on the duty of training and drilling the army.’

They were all, sovereign and subjects, happy with this answer, and thus the banquet was finished and they left the court. On the following day, the sixth of the first month, canons were fired, the gate was opened and lanterns were carried at the head of the procession. General after general marched forward until they arrived at the place in front of the martial arts mansion, where they flourished their flags, fired cannons and showed their military prowess. When the flag of the commander-in-chief was hoisted, he took his seat. Only then did all the generals take up their position with their troops. What a spectacle, this military ceremony:

[Here follows a long poem in rhymed verses of unequal lengths]

Analysis of the extract:

From the narrative aspect, the passage contains short third-person summaries of action and description (covert narrator) and dialogue in direct speech. The dialogue passages take up more than half of the space. The passage ends with a poem (not translated here), describing the scenery of the military ceremony. The poem is longer than the previous prose section. Poems and other set pieces such as memorandums, letters, etc., are indented in the manuscript, taking up about half the space of the whole script. The narrative prose sections (with dialogue) are generally shorter than the sections of poems and set pieces.

The fact that prose and poetry alternate, as well as the stock phrase before the poem, ‘what a spectacle’, zen jian, are features reminiscent of the ‘storyteller’s manner’ as seen in vernacular fiction since the Ming period, but otherwise the passage is devoid of any such explicit features.12

The language of this passage is characterized by a terse literary style, including a number of grammatical markers, pronouns and other vocabulary typical of literary Chinese, wényán (zhi, yi, bi, wei, he, wu, nai). The language imitates the style of early historical works, not only in the selection of tag word for ‘he said’, yue, and in pronouns of address between the king and his generals (qing, bixia, jun, chen), but also in the monosyllabic staccato rhythm of most phrases and sentences. Four- and six-syllable expressions are dominant. Even if some of the sentences are also possible in Modern Standard Chinese and some compounds (zhunbei, duiwu) are from modern usage, there are exceedingly few features of modern vernacular, and there is no trace whatsoever of Yangzhou dialect grammar.

The handwriting features a number of characters differing from the authorized dictionary forms, so-called ‘vulgar characters’, i.e. ‘fire a cannon’, what a spectacle

zhen jian
怎见
wényán markers:
zhì 之, yì 矣, bi 較, wei 未, he 何, wú 無, nái 奈
wényán tag word for dialogue:
(ye) said
yue 曰
wényán pronouns of address:
qīng 卿, bìxìa 陛下, jun 君, chén 臣
modern compounds:
zhunbei 准备 troops
duiwu 部队
vulgar characters:
fire a cannon
fapao 炮火
troops
duiwu 部队/对伍
general
shuai 将
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fapao, written with an alternative element in the character fa.\footnote{13} In a few cases a homonym character is used instead of the usual character for the word, i.e. ‘troops’, duiwu, written with the common character for ‘correct, facing’, dui, instead of ‘team’, dui, and ‘general’, shuai, written with an alternative character (two occurrences).

The unauthorized forms of characters in the script passage are indicators of the general habit of simplification of characters in handwriting at the time. These forms were acceptable, but not completely standardized. Only a few of the characters in the script could be considered ‘errors’, because they reflect only the sound of the word correctly, but not the content, i.e. a different morpheme is used to represent a homonym morpheme. Such cases represent modern loan characters, and they are symptoms of writing based on oral performance rather than on written works (Ge Liangyan 2001: 112).

9.7. Script and performance: Western Han

Next, we consider the narrative and linguistic form of a version of the same passage performed by Dai Buzhang in 2003. The most conspicuous difference between the script version and the performance is length: the performance covers the same stretch of ‘storyline’, shuluzi, and the same space of ‘story time’ as the script version, but it is about twelve times as long by counting the number of syllables/characters.

Dai Buzhang starts this performance with a couplet, not found in the script. Prologue poems were sometimes, particularly in earlier times, used to begin the day’s performance, called ‘head of performance’, shutouzi. Dai Buzhang may choose to begin this way because he knows that he will not be reciting any of the poems that traditionally belong to this performance, and therefore he is substituting with a more general poem.

The story proper opens with a relatively terse sentence in wenyan-coloured style, giving some background information to the episode. Already in the second period the language switches into the sentence structure of modern Chinese vernacular: there is a constant shifting of style, with wenyan-like structures imitating the awesome style of the king and his generals, occurring mainly in the dialogue.

Example 9.7.a

‘觀卿家之表，足見卿家之忠心為國，於民有利，於國有利，於朕躬有利，於文武官員有利，卿家是一大功勞！’

‘My Lordship, a glance at your memorial is sufficient proof of My Lordship’s loyalty towards our country! This is good for the people! Good for the country! Good for us, the King! And good for the civil and military officials! Your Lordship has made a great contribution!’\footnote{14}

This wenyan-like style is characterized by the use of certain grammatical markers, most of them the same as those in the script (zhi, bi, wu, wei) and the frequent sentence-final marker, ye. Also certain old-fashioned pronouns and other
vocabulary (why, he, I, my, wu, speak, yan) is used, including terms of address, the same as those of the script or very similar (qingjia instead of qing). Four- and six-syllable expressions are frequent in these passages.

Most of the performance is, however, in modern Chinese, as clearly marked by pronouns, measures, suffixes and sentence markers (wo, ni, ta, women, shenme, zhege, nage, ge, naxie, de, le, ne, ma, a).

Example 9.7.b

什麼地方於我們漢有利 , 什麼地方於楚有害 , 什麼地方楚國有優先的地方 , 有特長的地方 , 什麼地方是我們的缺陷 、缺點的地方 , 把這個形勢呃完全都寫到了。

Where were conditions favourable to our state of Han? Where were conditions harmful to the state of Chu? Where were the advantages and strong points of the state of Chu, and where were our own disadvantages and defects? All of this was treated in the memorial.

These portions are characterized as ordinary spoken language, with more repetitions and rewordings of phrases than is normal in a written/printed text of MSC. Observing the oral text as transcribed into Chinese characters, without regard for the pronunciation, one will find that the better part of the text is unmarked for dialect features on the level of morphology, syntax and lexicon. On the phonological level of analysis this is completely different, since every syllable of the performance is clearly pronounced in Yangzhou dialect, also the portions with wenyan-like structure. The storyteller does, however, shift between so-called ‘square mouth’, fangkou, and ‘round mouth’, yuankou, pronunciation, corresponding to stylistic registers. While the pronunciation is dialectal throughout, there is a shifting between different sub-dialectal pronunciation variants, some of which are closer to standard pronunciation. The grammatical usage also changes according to these stylistic registers (Børdahl 1996: 83–85; Børdahl 2010b).

Phrases and expressions, specific for Yangzhou dialect, become more and more frequent as the performance proceeds and the storyteller gets ‘into the story’ and avails himself more freely of the ‘round-mouth’ register, used primarily for narration (informal), storyteller’s comment and inner monologue (thoughts of characters), i.e. the non-dialogue portions, in the storytellers’ terminology called ‘private talk’, sibai.¹⁵ In this register the flavour of daily colloquial Yangzhou dialect is particularly strong.¹⁶

In direct speech (and occasionally also in some portions of formal narrative) we find sentences and phrases from the script incorporated, as indicated by italics. These wenyan-coloured phrases, most of them coined in four- and six-syllable expressions, are explained at great length in the performance, often with a humorous touch. The explanations are part of the informal narration, storyteller’s comment, or the many passages of inner monologue that we find in this fragment.

9.8. Script and performance – discussion

The present owners of the Western Han-script are convinced that it is written by one of the old masters from the School of Western Han, i.e. by a
storyteller who was able to perform the repertoire. Apart from the poems that were undoubtedly meant to be quoted by heart as written in the script, was the language of the script close to the language of performance that the storyteller had in mind? Certain dialogue and narrative passages are performed in phrases identical (or near identical) with the script version. When prose sentences in the stern and terse style of the script are spoken intermittently during performance, commentary and explanation in ordinary daily language are added profusely.

Bits and pieces of 'historical chronicle' are thus framed by 'translations' into colloquial language.

The old-fashioned and laconic utterances, identical with those of the script, may function, in this case, not only as a reminder of the plot development, but also as a reservoir of a special language, lending the performance the style and 'air' of Han dynasty military conversation. This ingredient adds colour and atmosphere to the performance, otherwise conducted in present-day Yangzhou dialect. Square-mouth pronunciation is typically found in the passages of quoted military conversation and in the more concise narrative passages.

The storyteller who wrote the script might have copied from some former history book for the prose passages, just as the poems might quite possibly have been copied from verse books. However, being able to bring a text such as this script into written form, the 'scripter' might also have been able to create a 'bookish', shumian, condensed text from oral performance. Dai Buzhang said: 'In my lifetime there has never been any storyteller who would perform the text in this way. And I do not think it would have been performed like this in former times, either.' It seems likely that the storyteller-scripter wrote in a far more concentrated style than the performance he had in mind, and that he applied a style of written language that he found appropriate – not a word-by-word notation of the language of performance. Were his words taken over directly from other sources or were they only created in the style of earlier histories and novels? From these alternatives I cannot so far eliminate any. Further, I do not think that we can rule out the possibility that the storyteller-scripter actually wrote down the essential wording of the performance as he knew it from oral tradition. When we observe how Dai Buzhang in 2003 during his performance actualized the important utterances in their old-fashioned garb but enveloped them in 'storyteller’s comment' of the modern storytelling style, it is tempting to see this as a demonstration of the meaning of the genre-name: 'commented tale', pinghua.

Was the style of the script part of the oral tradition, a striving to preserve essential and memorable sentences to pass on, utterances to be incorporated into future performances to give a stamp of place and time to the contemporary dialectal prose? Or were the sentences of the script coined in a literary idiom with little connection to the actual oral style of the performers, purely as a resumé of the plot? In the present case, the comparison between script and performance seems rather to suggest the first alternative, but both usages are plausible.

9.9. A script in the tradition of Three Kingdoms

The second example is from a script written by Fei Junliang (1891–1952), the father of Fei Li (artist name: Fei Zhengliang) (b. 1931), the present owner of the script. Fei Junliang was a disciple of Wu Guoliang (1872–1944) from the Wu School of Three Kingdoms, Wupai San guo.17

Fei Junliang had better education than most storytellers of his time, and he organized and ran a private school for many years, besides his activities as a professional storyteller. He was an aficionado of storytelling who at 32 was
accepted as a disciple of Wu Guoliang. During his apprenticeship in 1923 he listened every day, as was the custom, to his master’s performance and – something that was rare – developed the habit of writing every night a summary of the day’s episode as he remembered it.

According to Fei Li, his father wrote as fast as possible, with no concern for anything but his own ability to learn and remember. He used a kind of stenographic writing with lots of simple substituting characters, since his notebook was only meant for his private use.19

9.10. Narrative and linguistic structure of the Three Kingdoms script

A passage from the script, written in a notebook with the title ‘Brocade heart and embroidered mouth’, Jin xin xiu kou,20 ‘Former Volume’, Qian ce, i.e. Former Three Kingdoms, is rendered below:21

**Transcription of a prose passage:**

分付摆酒，武帝入席，曹操陪坐。当在巡酒上肴，手下飽楽旗飯，有人上來稟丞相，問下顏良索戰，知道退，又來了，顏良正場詈戰，知道了，退，接連五六次，曹操不動色，武帝一望，奇怪，敵人正場索戰，理所当然。点将開兵，不能在埐陪我闲谈，不在我只一刻，等到——既把我请得来，何方老实些同我说明，再一想，明白，我才到的。他请我去，未免不能近人情，他不好意思開口，我何不体贴他，再一想不能，（五）关某亦復早已闻名。——虽闻其名，未見其人。22

![Figure 9.9. Fei Junliang (1891–1952). Photo anonymous, Yangzhou quyi zhi 1993.](image-url)
9. An Excursion from The Tiger Tale

[He] ordered:
‘Feasting!’

God of War (Guan Yu)23 took his seat. Cao Cao entertained him. The orderlies sent round the wine and served the dishes. The soldiers ate to their heart’s content. Somebody came up to report to the Prime Minister:
‘Yan Liang stands at the foot of the hill and challenges us!’

‘[I] know! Withdraw!’

[He] came again:
‘Yan Liang stands in the middle of the ring and swears at us!’

‘[I] know! Withdraw!’

[This happened] five or six times. Cao Cao did not change his mien. When God of War saw it, [he thought]: ‘Strange! His enemy stands in the ring and swears [at him.] As a matter of course [he should] order [one of his] generals [to get] into battle. [He] cannot sit here and chat with me! Chatting is not suitable at this moment! Let’s wait and see. – Since he has invited me over, why doesn’t he behave more sincerely and explain [the situation] to me? [He] thought again.
‘Oh, I see! I have just arrived. He wants to ask me to go into battle. [Therefore he] must rely on friendship, and so he is embarrassed to [take the initiative and] open his mouth. Why should I not show him consideration? [I can] ask him for the order to go down the hill and meet Yan Liang.’ [But then he] thought about it again: ‘No, it does not work! Probably he will not ask me to get into action, but he will just answer me: ’[I do] not dare to oblige [you]!’ And then [I] cannot go down. [I] know! Let me try to lure him a bit!:

‘Prime Minister! [Since you] came here, how many times have you gone into battle?’

‘There was a time, when Yan Liang beheaded two of my lower generals, Song Xian and Wei Xu. Later [I] entrusted the four generals, Zhang, Xu, Xu and Xia, to go down the hill and engage Yan Liang. Again and again they have failed to come out victorious! That fellow is too valiant for any to face.’

‘[I], a certain person called Guan, have heard of his fame again and again. –Although [I] have heard his name, [I] have never seen him in person.’

The passage contains mainly dialogue and monologue (with inserted dialogue), with a few phrases of third-person summaries of action (covert narrator). Dialogue and monologue are not marked in any way; there are no tags or punctua-
tion markers for this purpose. The speaker/thinker can only be deduced from the use of pronouns and the content of each sentence.

Only prose passages are taken down in the notebook, while poems are kept in another notebook. There are no stock phrases, *taoyu*, to indicate the places where poems should be inserted, but at certain points of division of the tale, couplets, *duilian*, are inserted. This latter feature seems to be the only reminiscence of a ‘storyteller’s manner’, otherwise the script is devoid of any of the usual components of the ‘manner’.

Apart from a few words of decidedly *wenyan* flavour, and a number of four- or six-character expressions, the passage is entirely in vernacular Chinese. A few phrases are formed according to markedly Yangzhou dialect patterns. The compressed nature of most sentences may reflect the wish to condense the notation of the performance, furnishing only the barest linguistic message by which to aid recall for a future performance of the same episode. However, this way of writing also furnishes the passage with a certain old-fashioned and imposing style, natural to a tale about the wars of old.

The handwriting uses predominantly vulgar forms of the characters, *su zi*, similar to the later simplified forms, *jianti zi*, but also many ‘authorized’
forms, corresponding to the \textit{fanti zi}, apparently without any precise system. A large number of characters are written with homonym (or almost homonym) characters instead of the usual characters for the word.\textsuperscript{28} Many of the loan characters are obviously based on pronunciation in Yangzhou dialect, where they are true homonyms or at least close in sound, while this is sometimes not the case in MSC.

The scripter wrote rapidly, for personal use. The loan characters can hardly be considered ‘errors’, because this type of shorthand was used throughout the passage. They obviously came from listening, because they are based on Yangzhou pronunciation. It is improbable that the storyteller did not know the correct characters, since he was a school teacher of considerable education. He was rather saving himself time and trouble by writing substitute characters, which were used solely to assist his memory of what had been said.

\textbf{9.11. Script and performance: Former Three Kingdoms}

In this example, the relationship between script and performance is the opposite to that of the first script, where the storyteller was asked to perform the passage which had been selected from the script. In the case of the \textit{Three Kingdoms}, I had recorded a performance by Fei Zhengliang (Fei Li) in 1996, and only much later did I see the corresponding passage in his father’s script. Not unexpectedly, the performance is considerably longer than the version in the script, in this case four times longer.

The performance as well as the script are devoid of stock-phrases, and poems or other set pieces are lacking. In my collection of Fei Zhengliang’s performances, poems are comparatively rare, and as we have noticed there are no poems inserted in the script.

The part of the performance that we are considering, just like the script, consists mainly of dialogue and inner monologue linked by a few sentences of summary and storyteller’s comment. ‘Square-mouth’ register is used only sparingly, namely in the most formal parts of the conversation between the two high-status characters, Cao Cao and Guan Yu, as well as in their inner reproduction of former conversations. Otherwise the performance is conducted in the ‘round-mouth’ register of modern Yangzhou vernacular, and this is also the mode of speech used for rendering the inner thought of the protagonists.

At the beginning of the passage Cao Cao’s attendant repeatedly reports the actions of the great general Yan Liang, while Cao Cao only utters the shortest possible orders.

\textbf{Example 9.11.a}

\begin{quote}
這時候兩個人在大帳上正在飲酒，只聽見崗前‘啊……！……！’一陣嘈嚷。
有個報事的當差的‘的篤的篤的篤’大帳口單落膝朝下一跪：‘報……！
稟丞相，顏良在崗下要戰哪’‘知道了，退。’
\end{quote}

Now the two of them were sitting in the big tent and drinking, when they heard a great noise in front of the mountain: ‘A-a-a-a-a-a-h!’ An attendant rushed into the big tent: ‘Diddleli-diddleli-diddleli . . . ’ and knelt down on one knee:
Dialogue is indicated by modulation of voice, by use of pronouns and sentence particles, as well as the contents of the utterance, not by tags such as ‘he said’, ‘he thought’, etc. Here we notice that the script is similar to the oral tradition in providing no explicit frame for dialogue or monologue versus narration.

The conversation between Cao Cao and Guan Yu is sometimes coloured by markedly wenyan style, spoken in ‘square-mouth’ register.

**Example 9.11.b**

`請問丞相，大兵到此，開兵幾次？`

`將軍若問，開兵一次。`

`勝負如何？`

`將軍勿用提起，先是宋憲，魏續二將下崗雙雙陣亡，後來如此如此，令他四將下崗也未能取勝，至今還令止罷戰。`

`I should like to ask the Prime Minister, after your men arrived here, how many times have they engaged in combat?`

`Since you ask this question, my general, they have engaged in combat once.`

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*Figure 9.11.* Fei Zhenglai (b. 1931) (artist name of Fei Li) performs the episode ‘Beheading Yan Liang’ from *Three Kingdoms*. Copenhagen 1996. Photo by Jette Ross.
'How was the outcome?'

'Don’t mention it, my general. First my two generals Song Xian and Wei Xu went down the mountain and both of them fell in battle. After that things have been only so-so. Now four other generals have gone down, but none of them have been able to win a battle. Up to now we are in a cease-fire.'

In such passages we find a few typical grammatical markers of wenyan style, such as: zhi, wei, wu, qi.

Sentences containing grammatical features specific to the Yangzhou dialect occur throughout the performance in the ‘round-mouth’ passages. Some of these same dialectal structures were found in the script.


The analysis accords well with the information we have about the script: that it was written in stenographic fashion in an attempt to grasp as much of the recent performance as would be necessary for the scriptwriter (novice storyteller) to reproduce/recreate the episode in his following rehearsal (or for his own future public performance).

In the novel, the entire episode of Guan Yu and Yan Liang is told in less than 400 characters, while it is more than ten times longer as told by Fei Zhengliang in 1996. In Romance of Three Kingdoms, San guo yanyi, there is no passage with the same content as that found in the extract from the script or the performance. In the script there is, however, a single phrase, i.e. ‘too valiant for any to face’, which is identical with the text in the novel. This expression is not used in the performance. Both script and performance testify to the high degree of textual independence of the Yangzhou pinghua tradition vis à vis the written heritage of the novel.

The telegraphic style of the script, where subjects and objects are mostly implicit, seldom explicit, is not a general characteristic of the spoken performance, which is far more explicit in this regard. But in the dialogue of the two main characters we find a tendency towards the same short and abrupt utterances as in the script. Therefore this feature of the script is not necessarily only a kind of shorthand; it may also function as a marker of spoken style in imitation of the military leaders. Some of the short commands and concise exchanges of Cao Cao and Guan Yu are precisely those that are identical in script and performance.

Significantly, dialect features peep through here and there, a strong indication of the closeness between the script and the oral tradition from which it was drawn. It is also a sign of the scriptwriter’s willingness to write ‘from the ear’, instead of basing himself on the norms of written expression. His use of substitute characters, reflecting the homonyms of his dialect rather than those of MSC, is further evidence about the dialectal percolation. The text of the script does not necessarily depend only on what was said by his master on the
day of performance. It may just as well represent what Fei Junliang, the disciple and scriptwriter, had incorporated into his memory along with his acquired competence in the art. What is found in the script may be more re-creation than reproduction, which is also true of the traces of dialect grammar: whether they came from the original performer (the master) or from the writer of the script (the disciple) cannot be verified. All we can say is that the same dialect features were found in the performance given more than seventy years later by the son of the scriptwriter.

The linguistic flexibility of prose narration in Yangzhou pinghua is demonstrated once again in this small sample of script and performance. Apart from poetry and set pieces, memorization by heart is foreign to this tradition, where prose constitutes by far the larger portion of each performance. The Three Kingdoms script obviously does not invite learning by rote. Written as a personal aide-mémoire, it appears as a truly transient genre, elusively mediating the oral and written modes of language.

9.13. THE FORM AND USAGE OF STORYTELLER’S SCRIPTS

The two scripts examined above are both narrative texts, not mere lists of topics. Both are extremely brief, not only with a view to the corresponding performances, but also considered as independent texts. The Western Han script is written in a succinct, almost telescopic style, offering so little ‘filling’ that it would seem indigestible for any uninitiated reader. It would be difficult to imagine a person who would enjoy reading the script for its own sake. The same holds true in the case of the Three Kingdoms script, but for different reasons. Its abrupt jottings of performed words may have served their purpose as memory triggers for the scripter–performer. But for a person who was not orally trained in the repertoire, the text would give little help. In sum, both scripts seem only suited for recall of their corresponding oral versions by persons who were already well schooled.

In their linguistic form the two scripts are clearly different from each other. The older script was written in a wenyan-like style, with no dialectal features. The more recent one was written in a much more vernacular style, including structures of typical Yangzhou dialect grammar, in spite of the fact that it mirrors military conversations conducted in imposing and commanding high style. The difference in written style might be an early testimony to the growing influence of vernacular Chinese, baihua, resulting in the language reform of the early decades of 20th century China, where literary Chinese, wenyan, was superseded by the vernacular as the new normative written medium. The new norm did not, however, encourage the writing of dialect. It seems plausible that the two scripts were conceived through different mechanisms: the scriptwriter of the older script condenses into literary style the main contents of the repertoire, while the scripter of the younger one reflects his immediate recollections of spoken words and sentences in rapid succession.

The use of ‘vulgar characters’, suzi (non-authoritative forms or ‘loans’), is often explained as a sign of the ‘lack of culture’, meiyou wenhua, (low education)
of the storytellers who made such 'errors' based on the sound of the words they tried to commit to paper. From the sample texts under study, the loan characters (homonyms or close homonyms) can be plausibly explained as intentional shorthand, rather than misunderstanding or unintentional miswriting of the oral performance they reflect. At the same time, such writing habit attests to the close connection between the written specimen and an oral source, in particular when the homonyms reflect dialectal pronunciation.

We saw how the text of the script from Western Han was to a certain degree preserved in the performance and how the latter functioned as a kind of exposition and exegesis of fixed phrases handed down from 'history'. The Three Kingdoms script, on the other hand, represents a drastically shortened summary of spoken/heard words. It records in writing not the exact memorable words of former times, but rather bits and pieces of the master's actually performed words as remembered, with memorable and less memorable utterances both jotted down.

None of the two samples can be envisaged as 'notational scripts' in the sense of careful and complete registrations (notations) of oral performances as spoken (Hanan 1981: 5). The written versions were not intended to be published for a reading audience, but to help stabilize the oral tradition and prevent extinction. This kind of script was not actually used for educating the next generation of storytellers, but might occasionally be consulted by storytellers who already had the basic training, or as handbooks where the mature storyteller could look up passages and lines of plot when his memory failed him. However, we must emphasize that such usage is little talked about by the storytellers and they have no terms for it, though they have a rich technical vocabulary for their art. They do not regularly use scripts when preparing the day's performance, but rely on mental concentration and meditation, for which they do have a special term, 'to warm up the story', wushu (Yangzhou quyi zhi 1993: 249; Børdahl 1996: 229).

As mentioned at the outset, both the existence and the use of storyteller's scripts offer a way to gain a deeper understanding of the role of writing and written influence in the oral traditions of storytelling, from a contemporary as well as a historical perspective. Written scripts play a different and much more extensive role in some other present-day orally performed genres. Apparently the reliance on written scripts is growing as the general educational level is raised. Yangzhou storytellers, as we have seen, are sceptical about this development. 'Oral transmission and teaching from the heart' is still seen as the backbone of the art, the absolute precondition for its continuation.

The narrative forms of both extracts from the scripts are almost completely devoid of the characteristics of the 'storyteller's manner'. Apart from the expression 'what a spectacle' zen jian, introducing a poem in the Western Han script, and the fact that this script contains both prose and poetry in alternation, the prominent features of the 'manner' are missing. Neither of the two scriptwriters apparently had any interest in meeting a reader's requirements or in writing more than the absolute minimum deemed necessary for the preservation of the repertoire, not for future readers, but for future performers. Comparing these extracts from scripts with their corresponding performances,
their function as a precarious lifeline for the oral tradition, a true aide-mémoire, emerges in high relief.

Notes

1 In this study the word ‘script’ is used in the sense of a text that may serve as aide-mémoire, libretto, or other related purposes vis-à-vis oral performance. In order to avoid confusion, ‘writing system’ or ‘calligraphic style’ is called ‘writing’ or ‘transcription’, not ‘script’.

2 Throughout the 20th century the understanding of the storytelling style in vernacular fiction, and its origin, development and function, have been continuously debated and the theories refined, see the scholarship mentioned in note to ‘storytelling form’ in Chapter 1, 1.5. See also CHENG Yizhong [1964] 1980; ZHOU Zhaoxin 1994. The issue has previously been discussed in BØRDAHL 2003, 2005 and 2009. See also the relevant discussion about the Tang transformation texts, bianwen 变文, and their relationship to oral tradition, in MAIR 1983: 7–9.


4 The form of the verse in story-singing, tanci, and drum-singing, dagu, is similar. The most obvious difference between the tanci genres and the dagu genres is the instrument of accompaniment, namely that story-singing is performed with strings only, while drum-singing is performed with a drum in addition to strings.

5 In contrast, Yangzhou xianci 揚州弦詞, just like Suzhou tanci 蘇州彈詞, features a regular prosimetric shifting, called ‘seven parts telling and three parts singing’, qifen shuo, sanfen chang 七分說, 三分唱.

6 In 2003 Dai Buzhang performed this oral repertoire in one hundred days, telling for one hour every day. These performances are preserved on videotapes belonging to the project Four Masters of Chinese Storytelling, see BØRDAHL, FEI Li and HUANG Ying 2004: 55–93. The videotapes are accessible for research at the Library of Congress, Washington D.C. and other major libraries.

7 Details of the transmission are found in BØRDAHL 2005: 245–246.

8 Storytellers who according to the memory of the Dai Family have owned the script on Western Han are marked with an asterisk. The table is according to Yangzhou quyi zhi 1993: 350. Information about the storytellers, ibid.: 283, 292, 288, 321; cf. also BØRDAHL and ROSS 2002, Life stories.

9 The whole script was photographed in 2000 by Jette Ross. A passage of prose text was chosen at random for study, primarily based on the clarity and readability of the photo of that page.


11 The transcription into computer characters strives to render the characters in the form of the manuscript, i.e. jianti and fanti forms alternate as they do in the handwritten version. However, some characters are written in non-standard forms that do not
exist in computer writing. In these cases I have chosen the form that seems closest to the manuscript form.

12 The script in a few rare places uses the standard stock phrase before poems, ‘there is a poem to testify to this’, *you shi wei zheng* 有詩為證, but otherwise there are none of the usual sets of fixed phrases of introduction, connection and conclusion, and no modern equivalents. In *Yangzhou pinghua* these stock phrases (as well as modern equivalents) are likewise absent, with only rare exceptions, cf. BØRDAHL 1996: 239–241.

13 The non-authorized forms were at the time called ‘vulgar characters’, *su zi* 俗字, and ‘wrong characters’, *cuo zi* 錯字; some of the *su zi cuo zi* correspond to the modern ‘simplified characters’; in some cases a part of the character – radical or phonetic – is written with an alternative element, which is not among the current dictionary forms of this character.

14 Passages in the performance that correspond word by word (or nearly word by word) to passages in the script are underlined in the character version and written in *italics* in the English translation.

15 Dialogue of ordinary characters, *xiao renwu* 小人物 [small persons], is also in round-mouth register, but in the present passage the speaking characters all belong to the high status group, *da renwu* 大人物 [great persons], who speak in square-mouth register.

16 The following expressions of this performance are typical of daily Yangzhou dialect: Y. /me’ de’/ 沒得 or /be’ de’/ 不得 (MSC: *meiyou* 沒有 or *bu neng* 不能); Y. /zw/ 走 (MSC: *cong* 從); Y. suffixation with /zr/ 子 and /tw/ 頭 in certain nouns, i.e. /so’-fa’-zr/ 說法子, /uo-ne’-tw/ 玩意頭, (MSC: no suffixation with *zi* or *tou,* or this suffixation marginal); Y. /kw/ 可 as marker of alternative question (MSC: alternative question form *V bu V?’); Y. /ha-zr/ 下子 as verbal measure (MSC: verbal measure *xia* or no verbal measure, *xiazi* highly infrequent); Y. special usage of co-verbal sentences with /ba/ 把 and double /ba/; i.e. /ba/ N V /ba/ N V (MSC: co-verbal sentences with *ba* are used in a more restricted way and sentences with double *ba* constructions are marginal); Y. /guae-guae/ 乖乖 (MSC: infrequent interjection, highly frequent in Y.)

17 In 2002 Fei Zhengliang (Fei Li) performed this oral repertoire in fifty days, telling for one hour every day. His performances are preserved on videotapes belonging to the project *Four Masters of Chinese Storytelling,* see BØRDAHL, FEI LI and HUANG YING 2004: 93–101, cf. note 6.

18 Storytellers who have owned or used the script of *Three Kingdoms* are marked with an asterisk. The table is according to *Yangzhou quyi zhi* 1993: 345. Information about the storytellers, cf. ibid. pp. 273, 276, 279, 281, 333; cf. also BØRDAHL and ROSS 2002, Life stories.

19 After the death of his father, Fei Li became engaged in the work that has been undertaken in China on a large scale since the 1950s to preserve the storytellers’ traditions in book form. Fei Li used on the one hand his father’s scripts, on the other hand his own education as an oral storyteller, to create book versions of the oral repertoire. The purpose was neither to preserve the original form of the scripts, nor to preserve the authentic form of the oral performance, but to rewrite the material into romances for a readership. The published work was intended to retain as much of the oral style as was considered artistically successful for a written work. Dialectal phrases that were not easily understood elsewhere in the country were to be left out or changed into MSC.
The work was expected to be adapted to the genre conventions of the *xin huaben* and organized according to principles of logic, coherence and modern stylistics, as well as to the political and moral climate of the time (Fei Junliang and Fei Li 1986, Preface: 4–5).

20 The expression *jin xin xiu kou* is still used by the 20th-century Yangzhou storytellers in describing an excellent storyteller, cf. *Yangzhou quyi zhi* 1993: 247. In Jin Shengtan’s ‘How to read’, *dufa* 读法, his reading guide to his famous and popular edition of *Shuihu zhuàn* (1644), this expression is used to describe his imagined author of the novel, cf. the translation by John C.Y. Wang in Rolston 1990: 131. See also Chapter 7, 7.5.

21 In the Yangzhou storytellers’ insider jargon, the Three Kingdoms repertoire, consisting of the ‘former’, ‘middle’ and ‘later’ Three Kingdoms, is called: ‘Former Volume’, *Qian ce*, ‘Fire Volume’, *Yan ce* 焱冊 (great fires play a major role in this part of Three Kingdoms), and ‘Later Volume’, *Hou ce* 後冊, private communication from Fei Li, November 2003.

22 The passage is rendered in jianti and fanti forms according to the usage of the manuscript. Irregular forms are given in the form closest to the manuscript form. The symbol ∞ reflects the habit of Fei Junliang to write double circles in the margin to emphasize the important passages. Private communication from Fei Li, October 2003.

23 According to Fei Li, storytellers of his father’s generation had a taboo against speaking the name of Guan Yu, because he was a god. So they called him God of War.


25 Four- and six-character expressions: *chengxiang dao ci*, *kai bing ji ci* 丞相到此, ‘commander-in-chief arrived’; *yifu wei neng qu sheng* 亦復未能取聖, ‘could not win a victory’; *yong bu ke dang* 勇不可當, ‘is unconquerable’; *sui wen qi ming* 虽 闻 其 名,未 見 其 人, ‘have heard of his name but have not seen him’.

26 Vernacular style is marked by the use of the pronouns *wo* 我, *ta* 他, the determinatives *zhe* 这 (written 只), *na* 那, the measures *ju* 旬, *yuan* 员 (written 元), the verbal suffix *le* 了, as well as modern phrase structure and lexicon.

27 Yangzhou dialect structures: */zae kuae/ 在塊*, */ze' ie' ke'/ 只一刻*, */haze/ 下子*.

28 Short-hand characters: *fenfu* 嘱咐 ‘order’, written *fenfu* 分付; *dangchai* 当差 ‘orderly’, written *当在*; *tian* 餐 ‘meal’, written *tian* 允; *zhengchang* 征場 ‘battle ring’, written *正场*; *bu dong shengse* 不動聲色 ‘without changing his mien’, written *bu dong shense* 不動身色; *zheyike* 這 這一刻 ‘this moment’, written *只一刻*, *be fang* 何妨 ‘why not’, written *何妨*; *yuan* 员 ‘measure word for general’, written 元; proper names Song Xian 宋现, written 宋现, Wei Xu 未续, written 未续; *qu sheng* 取勝 ‘win a victory’, written 取圣; interjection *wu* 唔 ‘Ahem’, written 五.

29 Yangzhou dialect structures: */me' de/ 沒得* or */be' de/ 不得*; */kw/ 可 as marker of alternative question; */haze/ 下子* as verbal measure; */caa/ 朝 as high frequency preposition; */ze'kuae/ 這塊* and */la-kuae/ 那塊*; */zo sr/ 做事* ‘why’; */te'/ 掉* as high-frequency resultative complement; */i-ue/ 咦喂* as high-frequency exclamation; */la-ie'-gw/ 哪一個* as pronoun in the form of DM compound. The underlined forms are found in the script of Fei Junliang.
The Tiger Tale in Oral Performance
10
Drama and Storytelling on Stage

10.1 Drama and storytelling in the modern period

Chinese drama (opera), *xiqu*, besides the national genres of Beijing opera, *Jingju*, and Kun-drama, *Kunqu*, numbered hundreds of local subgenres until recently. The orally performed narrative arts, i.e. storytelling in the wide sense, called *shuochang* [telling and singing] or *quyi* [melodic arts] likewise had rich traditions in China. During the late 20th century there were about three to four hundred different local genres of *quyi* within the Han-Chinese population that were registered and described. More recently the diversity of drama and performed narrative arts in China can be estimated from the impressive list of genres suggested for nomination as ‘intangible cultural heritage’.1

Here we shall discuss some examples of our focal tale in oral performance, recorded mainly during the 1960s-1990s. The *Wu Song Collection* includes a few drama versions in oral form: audio cassettes, DVD and VCD publications of Beijing opera, *Jingju*, Kun-drama, *Kunqu*, Qin opera, *Qinju*, and Yangzhou opera, *Yangju*. Some of these dramatic performances have a close relationship to the drama scripts that were analysed in Chapter 6.

Among the seven genres of performance literature, *shuochang wenxue*, that were discussed in Chapters 7 and 8, three are represented in oral performance on audio tapes of the focal tale, namely Yangzhou ballad singing, *Yangzhou qingqu*, Shandong clapper tale, *Shandong kuaishu*, and Yangzhou storytelling, *Yangzhou pinghua* (treated in Chapter 11). Therefore we have occasion to observe in detail differences, similarities and mutual relationships between these oral and written versions.

In this chapter we shall also pay special attention to a rare oral version of Sichuan storytelling, *Sichuan pinghua* (also called *Sichuan pingshu*).

Other genres of ‘telling and singing arts’, *shuochang*, in the *Wu Song Collection*, including the genres of *danxian*-drum tale, *danxian*, and clapper tale, *kuaibanshu*, are also taken into account, albeit more sporadically.

As elsewhere in this study, it is the words of the performances that are essential for the analysis, while the extra-linguistic features of both drama and storytelling, such as mime, music, acrobatics, costumes, scene arrangements, etc. are only mentioned cursorily as a context to the words.
10.2. Wu Song episodes in drama on stage


10.3. Beijing opera

The *Jingju* performance (1963) is a version in the format of a film (cf. *Sources, Appendix B: Oral performances, Drama on stage*). It includes most of the highlights from the Wu Song saga. The episode of ‘Fighting the Tiger on Jingyang Ridge’, *Jingyanggang da hu*, is the opening episode and is treated as a separate ‘scene’, *chang*, of *Jingju*. The following episodes are to a greater extent adapted to film conventions. The main actor performing the martial male role, *wusheng*, of Wu Song is Gai Jiaotian (1888–1970) from Hebei, a famous *Jingju* actor, connected to ensembles in Shanghai and Hangzhou (*Zhongguo dabaike quanshu – Xiqu, quyi* 1983: 80–81). He was 75 years at the time of filming which must be seen as a homage to the great actor, who was known as ‘the living Wu Song’ (*Zheng Gongdun* 1983: 114). The other *Jingju* version (2009), with the

Figure 10.3.a. Commercial VCD of a *Jingju* performance of ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’, featuring Gai Jiaotian as Wu Song (filmed 1963, published on VCD 1997).
well-reputed Li Buchun in the role as Wu Song, is performed on stage as one play in four scenes.

In Chapter 6 two Jingju scripts were analysed, both published in 1954: one of them was based on an actor’s private manuscript from Late Qing/Republic; the other version from the early 1950s, called a ‘performance script’, was adapted to Kunqu traditions. The oral Jingju version of 1963 follows, however, closely the text of the older version (Late Qing/Republic). In this version the first and the last scene from the script (featuring the hunters) are left out, but apart from that the words that are spoken and sung by the actor follow the text from the script exactly. The differences in storyline and the division into scenes can be seen from Table 10.3.a.

The oral performance of ‘Fighting the Tiger on Jingyang Ridge’ in Jingju (1963) is not only the most simple in terms of storyline and performing roles (only one actor performing the speaking/singing role of Wu Song and one actor

| Table 10.3.a. ‘Fighting the tiger’. Storyline and scenes of Jingju script (Late Qing/Republic) and oral performance (1963). |
|---|---|---|---|
| Play | Jingju script Late Qing/Republic | Textual units | Jingju oral 1963 | Textual units |
| Storyline | Hunters on duty Scene 1 | Travelling home Scene 1 | The tiger appears Breaking the staff Scene 4 |
| | Travelling home Scene 2 | The tiger appears Breaking the staff Scene 4 |
| | The fighting | The fighting |
| | The killing | The killing |
| | The hunters | |

| Table 10.3.b. ‘Fighting the tiger’. Storyline and scenes of Ming chuanqi drama text and Jingju in oral performance (2009) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Play | Ming chuanqi (1599) Di si chu: Chu xiong | Textual units | Jingju oral (2009) Da hu | Textual units |
| Storyline | Hunters on duty Scene 4 | Travelling home Scene 1 | The tavern Scene 2 |
| | Travelling home Scene 1 | The tavern Scene 2 |
| | The warning | The tiger appears Scene 3 |
| | The warning | The tiger appears Scene 3 |
| | Breaking the staff | Breaking the staff |
| | The fighting | The fighting |
| | The killing | The killing |
| | Two tigers | |
| | The hunters | The hunters |
| | The hunters | The hunters |
| | Scene 4 | Scene 4 | |

Li Buchun 李卜春

Scene 4: Subduing the Beast Di si chu: Chu xiong 第四齣除兇

Fighting the Tiger Da hu 打虎
performing the tiger as a purely acrobatic role), but the text of this piece is the shortest of all texts found among the Wu Song and tiger tales collected for this study (altogether 120 syllables/characters). The role of Wu Song is spoken in high-style operatic language, pronounced in what is traditionally called ‘rhymes of the Central Region’, Zhongzhouyun. Since there are no other speaking roles, there is no contrast to other styles in this scene. The language of both the arias and the spoken passages of Wu Song is coined in a high-strung, old-fashioned vernacular, baihua, corresponding to the written form found in the script.

Figure 10.3.b. Commercial DVD of two Jingju performances, one of them ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’ with Li Buchun as Wu Song, (lower part of the cover). Published in Beijing, 2009.
The oral *Jingju* version of 2009 does not conform to any of the *Jingju* scripts that we have mentioned. This version seems to follow in part the storyline of the Ming *chuangqi*, see Chapter 6, Table 6.3, including the scene in the tavern and the final scene with the hunters. This *Jingju* version has a plotline that is closer to that of the Ming novel: in contrast to the *chuangqi* and *Kunqu* dramas, this version does not incorporate the first scene with the hunters or the ingredient of Wu Song being short of money which is typical for the *Kunqu* tradition (based on the *chuangqi*, not on the novel).

The words are, however, almost completely different from all written versions of the present study. Only a few verses from the arias are taken from Shen Jing’s *chuangqi*, but elsewhere the sung passages have alternative words. The play features both the *wusheng* singing role of Wu Song and not-singing role of the *chou*, i.e. the innkeeper, as well as four acrobats as the hunters (singing a few lines in chorus) and one silent acrobat as the tiger. In this performance different speech registers are used. Wu Song and the hunters speak and sing in high-style *Zhongzhouyun* (or *yunbai*), while the innkeeper speaks in low-style vernacular Beijing dialect, *Jingbai*. The fact that the words of this performance do not comply with any of the scripts at hand does not, however, point to improvised performance. From the manners of the actors, it seems more likely that the play was acted according to a written libretto which is, however, not at hand for the present study.

### 10.4. *Kun*-drama

The *Kunqu* performance from 2005 combines what is traditionally considered two plays into one, namely ‘Fighting the Tiger’ and ‘The Triumphal Procession’, *Da hu, you jie*. The first part features three actors: a martial male role, *wusheng*, as Wu Song, a clown, *chou*, as the innkeeper, and an acrobat (no role category) as the tiger. In the second part a second *chou* enters the scene as Wu the Elder, this time the kind of clown that performs in squatting position, with his legs covered by a skirt, in order to simulate the dwarfish elder brother of Wu Song. Only the first part is considered here.

With the written *Kunqu* version from 1982 at hand, cf. Chapter 6, it is clear that the actors of the version from 2005 follow the text of this script closely. One or another unimportant word may be missing or added, but basically the text of the oral performance follows the text of the written script word by word. The role of Wu Song is performed in high-style operatic language, *Zhongzhouyun*, reminding very much of that used for important characters in Beijing opera. The innkeeper (the clown), however, uses the low-style idiom of Suzhou speech, *Subai*. While this feature is only sporadically apparent from the wordings of the script, it is abundantly clear from the oral version on VCD.

The words of the arias that Wu Song sings are copied or transmitted from the Ming *chuangqi*, cf. Chapter 6, 6.6. The modern *Kunqu* script (1982) begins with a *shi*-poem that is not found elsewhere among the drama versions, but this *shi* is also found in the oral performance of 2005, where Wu Song enters the scene while reciting (not singing) this poem. The script of 1982 is obviously not serving only as a ‘scenario’, *mubiao*, (a rough guide for performance with verbal
Table 10.4. ‘Fighting the tiger’. Storyline and textual unit of Kunqu script (1982) and oral performance (2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Kunqu script (1982)</th>
<th>Textual unit</th>
<th>Kunqu oral 2005</th>
<th>Textual unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Storyline</td>
<td>Travelling home</td>
<td>One play</td>
<td>Travelling home</td>
<td>Half a play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The tavern</td>
<td></td>
<td>The tavern</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Short of money</td>
<td></td>
<td>Short of money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The warning</td>
<td></td>
<td>The warning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The tiger appears</td>
<td></td>
<td>The tiger appears</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Breaking the staff</td>
<td></td>
<td>Breaking the staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The fighting</td>
<td></td>
<td>The fighting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The killing</td>
<td></td>
<td>The killing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two tigers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The hunters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued by ‘The triumphal procession’)

Figure 10.4. The Kunqu actor Li Hongliang performs Wu the Elder in the ‘Triumphal procession’. Photo anonymous. From advertisement materials, published by the Jiangsu Drama Artists’ Association (n.d., ca 2009).
improvisations), but quite the opposite: from the verbal aspect, the written text, both verse and prose, is strictly learned by heart and performed accordingly. Creativity does not come into play in the verbal exchanges, but belongs exclusively to the art of singing, miming and acrobatics.

10.5. Local opera

The local drama versions at hand, a North Chinese Qin opera, *Qinju*, and several Yangzhou operas, *Yangju*, are not about the focal story, but about some other episodes from the Wu Song saga. Lacking examples of the tiger story, the available samples of pieces from the Wu Song saga in local opera are shortly treated below.

The theme of ‘Wu Song kills his sister-in-law’, *Wu Song sha sao*, is well known from both the Ming novel, *Shuihu zhuan*, and the Ming drama, *Yixia ji* by Shen Jing (1599), as well as from Qing drama. It is also a prominent theme from numerous genres of storytelling. The *Qinju* version of *Wu Song sha sao* (1999) consists of one scene (ca 20 minutes) and is performed by only two actors, Wu Song and Pan Jinlian. Wu Song meets Pan Jinlian in her home after his brother has died. They confront each other and defend their different stands: he his duty to take revenge over his elder brother; she her right to true love and her love for Wu Song. He convinces himself that he must kill her, but cannot bring himself to do so; she kills herself in the end and thus proves that she is a true match for the male hero. The plot and the characterization of the two protagonists is quite independent of both *Shuihu zhuan* and *Yixia ji*. As for the dramatic technique, the play has no spoken passages, *bai*, but the entire piece is performed in singing in high-style operatic voice. The two actors conduct both monologues and dialogues by singing arias.

The *Yangju* version of *Wu Song sha sao* (2003) is more than twice as long (ca 50 minutes), compared to the *Qinju*, and has several scenes as well as a larger cast of roles. In this drama we find, besides Wu Song and Pan Jinlian, also Madam Wang, Brother Yun and He the Ninth, the coroner, with his assistant. The happenings – after Wu Song returns to his brother’s home and finds that he has died until the moment when Wu Song decapitates Pan Jinlian – are dramatized in a highly condensed form, but follow the plot and intention of *Shuihu zhuan* closely. The language of the play is Yangzhou dialect, with different registers according to the status of the characters. Madam Wang and Brother Yun have humorous repartees in daily Yangzhou dialect, but generally the language of the arias, used both for monologues and for dialogue, is coloured by operatic style and high style ‘Yangzhou officials’ language’, *Yangzhou guanhua*.

The theme of the *Yangju* play ‘Wu the Elder pursues his wife’, *Wu Dalang zhui qi* (1991) has a unique plot, describing how Wu the Elder is taking Pan Jinlian with him to Yanggu District in order to get rid of her shameless suitors in Qinghe, where they used to stay; she, however, immediately starts to flirt with a donkey driver along the road. This episode is not found in the novel, nor in earlier drama, and so far we have not encountered it in the storytelling genres. The style of the performance language is the same as that found in the *Yangju Wu Song sha sao* (2003).
Comparing the oral version of this drama (1991, adapted by Wei Ren) with a printed version based on several sources (also edited by Wei Ren, 1999: 345–368), it is obvious that the words spoken are the same as those found in the printed version, but many passages are left out, and the performed version has only about one third of the text of the written version. The stage speech of this drama is Yangzhou dialect, high-style and low-style, using more or less the same registers as those found in Yangzhou storytelling, Yangzhou pinghua, cf. Chapter 11, 11.4 and 11.6 (see also Børdahl 1996: 83–98; Børdahl 2010b). Therefore we find the traditional Yangzhou 'local officials’ language', difang guanhua (Yangzhou guanhua), as the normative register for the powerful male roles (in this play exemplified by Song Jiang who enters as a deus ex machina at the end of the piece), while the clowns speak in Yangzhou vernacular, Yangzhou jiaxianghua (Wei Ren 1999: 141). The female role, dan, speaks, however, in an affected voice, with a sound-spectrum much resembling the female roles of Jingju and Kunqu, i.e. the yunbái or Zhongzhouyuan.

As was the case with the Jingju and Kunqu performances described above, the words of dialogue and arias are performed exactly according to written text.

Figure 10.5. Commercial VCD of a Yangju performance of ‘Wu Song kills his sister-in-law’ with voice of Wu Song by Shi Yufang and acting by Li Zhengcheng. Published in Yangzhou, 2003.
with no improvisation of dialogue. But according to Wei Ren, the specialist of Yangzhou drama, this was not typical of local drama in former times. Before the 1920s drama in the Lower Yangzi area was to a large degree performed extempore. Improvisation was a necessity, since there were generally no written texts to rely on, only so-called ‘scenarios’, mubiao, including a description of the number of scenes, the actors in each scene, a summary of the plot, words for the arias; but no words for the dialogue which must be improvised by the actors (Wei Ren 1999: 91). The librettos created by Wei Ren are based on former scenarios and cooperation between old actors and drama specialists.

10.6. Wu Song episodes in storytelling

The tiger story in oral storytelling is represented in the *Wu Song Collection* by quite a number of genres belonging to the performed narrative arts, *shuochang*: Yangzhou ballad singing, *Yangzhou qinggu* (1986, 2000), clapper tale, *kuabianshu* (1993), Shandong clapper tale, *Shandong kuaishu* (1999), Beijing storytelling, *Beijing pingshu* (no date, ca 2005), Sichuan storytelling, *Sichuan pinghua* (1974), Yangzhou storytelling, *Yangzhou pinghua* (1961 and more than 15 performances 1986–2010), and Beijing crosstalk, *Beijing xiangsheng* (1992, 2002). Other orally performed Wu Song stories, both from the above genres and from other genres, are also included in the collection, such as *danxian-drumtales*.

In the following, selected examples of *Yangzhou qinggu*, *Shandong kuaishu*, and *Sichuan pinghua* are treated. Chapter 11 will be devoted to the genre of *Yangzhou pinghua*.

10.7. Yangzhou ballad singing

Yangzhou ballad singing, as witnessed by myself during the last twenty years, is performed at times of leisure in the parks, on the gaily decorated pleasure boats, in open halls in the town. In the parks people come by while taking a stroll and may listen for some time, then walk away as they please. The audience does not pay; the ballad singing group performs for free, but is funded to some degree by local administration. On boats, the ballad singing is arranged as entertainment for a group of people (tourists, business people) who spend an afternoon on the Slender West Lake, listening to the music and having snacks, while floating gently along and enjoying the views of the lake. One ballad will follow another, but not as a continued story. For this kind of service the group will receive some reward. In the open halls of the town, one will occasionally find cultural activities with a variety of entertainment, such as singing of opera arias, playing of instruments (solo or group), storytelling highlights (short), and ballad singing. The audience is not supposed to pay, not even to sit and listen to the whole programme, but there is a constant coming and going. Sponsorships for such activities are of various kinds.

The singers and musicians of this genre have a status as semi-professionals or amateurs. They have learned singing and playing from family members or from other musicians, but not in a formal master-disciple relationship.
Figure 10.7. Yangzhou ballad singing troupe performs 'Wu Song fights the tiger' in Yangzhou, 2000. Photo Jette Ross. (See also Chapter 16.4)
The *Yangzhou qingqu* version of ‘Wu Song fights the tiger’ under study was performed by the *Yangzhou ballad singing troupe, Yangzhou qingqu tuan,* on 24 May 2000 in the park of the Slender West Lake, Shouxihu, in the northern part of Yangzhou. The circumstances of the recording were as close to the usual performing situation as one can wish for. My photographer friend Jette Ross (1938–2002) and I were taking a casual stroll in the park, when we noticed a small troupe sitting in one of the pavilions and performing ballads. Soon after we went up to them to listen, they had a pause and we chatted, since we were already – as it turned out – well acquainted with this group of performers and their leader, Nie Feng, (1944–2010), an esteemed ballad singer from Yangzhou. On my request the group was willing to perform the ballad about Wu Song and the tiger, which I could then record on the spot, while my friend took photos. Besides the singer, there were five musicians accompanying on strings and percussion. Here we concentrate on the words of the performance.

As mentioned in Chapter 7, a *Yangzhou qingqu* version of ‘Wu Song fights the tiger’ exists in print in a scholarly work on this genre, published in 1985. The source for this text is not clear, but apparently it was based on former songbooks, not on oral sources. The individual ballads of this collection are treated as anonymous. A comparison of the oral performance of 2000 with the published version shows that the texts are closely related, but they are far from uniform: less than two thirds are shared text.

10.7.1. Textual unit and storyline.
The oral performance and the written text both constitute ‘one unit’, i.e. the written text is defined as a unit in the book by having a separate title and entry in the list of contents, as well as by the layout of the text. The ‘unit’ has no specific name. The same is the case for the oral performance: the piece is performed as one session of ballad singing (see Chapter 7, 7.3). The storylines of both texts are completely the same (see Chapter 8, Table 8.1).

10.7.2. Prose/verse and narrative technique.
Just like the layout of the written version shows an uninterrupted sequence of rhymed verse lines with no indication of prose passages, the oral version is performed exclusively in versified song in Yangzhou dialect, with no prose intermezzos. In the printed version a number of different tunes are indicated as ‘stage directions’. In the oral performance the words are sung to these various tunes. While the musical accompaniment must be considered virtual context for the printed text (nothing is mentioned in the text about the small orchestra), it is a reality in the oral performance.

In the written text two singing roles are indicated by stage directions, namely Wu Song and the innkeeper (*dianzhu*), but in the performance there is only one singer for everything. As noted in Chapter 7, 7.5, different characters are not discernible in *Yangzhou qingqu* by various speech registers or modulation, only by the contents of their words. The oral version is manifested as a monotonous singing style, where all words – no matter who the speaker is, a role-character or the narrator – are sung very much in the same way. Monologue, dialogue...
and third-person narration (indicated by single quotes, double quotes and no quotes in the written version translated into English) glide over into each other without any differentiation of the singing style.

The ‘invisible’ or ‘blurred’ narrator of this genre as manifested in the written version is even more indistinct in the oral performance. The singer seems to concentrate on the voice as an instrument serving the melody, sounding in harmony with the small orchestra. The words seem important primarily as carrying the metre and rhyme of the song, creating euphony. The meaning of the song is of secondary importance or taken for granted. The audience is supposed to grasp the contents of the so-well-known story with minimal help from the performer, and what matters to the listeners is the musical aspect.

10.7.3. Shared passages and formulaic usage.

The Yangzhou qingqu version of the tiger story, in both written and oral form, does not share any passages with novel, drama, other items of performance literature or oral performances of other genres. However, the written and the oral versions do share a large amount of text between them. But the shared portions are mostly short, because they are constantly interrupted by sentences or words that are different. In the example below, the written and the oral versions are placed side by side.

The language of the passages in the oral version that deviate from the written apply a more vernacular and slightly more loquacious style, contrasting with the more terse and conservative style of the written version. The divergent sentences have the following linguistic characteristics:

With a view to fixed phrases, including proper names and stock phrases, the written and the oral versions are similar. The ‘stage directions’ of the written version are, as expected, non-spoken in the oral version. The only textual stock phrase of the written version, dan zhi jian (used only once) is, however, used repeatedly in the oral version, where it has both the slightly ‘irregular’ form of the written version as well as the usual form of vernacular fiction, dan jian.9

With the drama versions studied above (cf. 10.6), the textual relationship of the oral and written versions pointed to a situation where the written librettos were primary with respect to the oral versions. The oral versions were not only ‘based’ on the written, but they were performed by learning the written version strictly by heart.

In the case of the Yangzhou qingqu version, the situation might, however, be different. The written version at hand is from 1985, while the oral performance is fifteen years later (2000). The performer Nie Feng was in his mid-fifties when his ballad singing was recorded, and he would have been in his early forties at the time when the Yangzhou ballads were published in print. Therefore his singing may be based on the book version, but it may just as well be based on manuscript versions circulating among the singers in his youth. A third and not less probable scenario is that he learned the ballad from his elders (who again might have based themselves on former manuscripts and/or on their masters’ oral transmission). The printed ballad (1985) belongs to

Table 10.7.a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yangzhou qingqu in written and oral form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 10.7.b Language of Yangzhou qingqu in written and oral form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>beholddan zhi jian</th>
<th>但只見</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dan jian</td>
<td>但見</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9 With the drama versions studied above (cf. 10.6), the textual relationship of the oral and written versions pointed to a situation where the written librettos were primary with respect to the oral versions. The oral versions were not only ‘based’ on the written, but they were performed by learning the written version strictly by heart.

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a scholarly edition, collected by connoisseurs of the genre (but not singers themselves). As mentioned, the sources for this (and other) ballads are not given, and it is impossible to know how far the modern editors chose to keep the text of their material, or wanted to polish it, something that was usually the case in those years (cf. WÉI Ren and WÉI Minghua 1985: 174). The more succinct and wenyan-like style of the written version could therefore very well be the result of editorial taste, and the more free and vernacular style of the oral performance could be more true to the actual oral tradition of Yangzhou ballad singing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 10.7.a. Yangzhou qingqu in written and oral form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Wu Song fights the tiger’, Wu Song da hu, Yangzhou qingqu, in: WÉI Ren and WÉI Minghua 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>再取酒菜，充我饥肠——</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(店唱)店主不怠慢，立时下厨房；</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>切牛肉二斤，放在桌上，</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>又倒酒一碗——</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(武唱) 二郎一口又饮光！</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>连声赞好酒，有力又有香。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(店唱)店主又筛一碗，走出店堂，</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>此客已饮三碗，我要招待别的客商。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(武唱) 二郎将桌敲响——不來篩酒為哪桩？</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Bring more wine and dishes, to fill up my hungry stomach——’

(Host singing) The host does not neglect his guest, he goes to the kitchen right away;
he cuts two catties of beef and places it on the table,
then he pours another bowl of wine –
(Wu singing) Again Second Brother has drained the bowl in one gulp!
He keeps praising: ‘Good wine, strong and tasty.’

(Host singing) The host pours another bowl of wine, and steps out of the dining room.
‘This guest already drank three bowls, now I must serve the other guests.’

(Wu singing) Second Brother bangs the table –
‘Why don’t you come and pour the wine?’

He calls the host: ‘Bring more wine and dishes, to fill up my hungry stomach!’
The host does not dare to neglect his guest, he goes to the kitchen right away;
he cuts two catties of beef and prepares five plates of sausage,
then he pours another bowl of wine –
Again Wu Song drains the bowl in one gulp
He keeps praising: ‘Good wine, what a good wine, strong and tasty!’
The host pours another bowl of wine, turns round and steps out of the dining room.
‘This guest already drank three bowls, now I must take care of the other guests.’

Wu Song bangs the table and shouts out –
‘Why don’t you come and pour the wine?’
### Table 10.7.b. Language of *Yangzhou qingqu* in written and oral form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written version</th>
<th>Oral version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pronouns often understood, e.g.</td>
<td>pronouns more often expressed, e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>自幼爱习拳棒·使刀耍枪</td>
<td>我自幼愛好使耍刀棒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since childhood (I) loved fighting with fist and cudgel, sword and spear</td>
<td>Since childhood I loved fighting with sword and cudgel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monosyllabic words more common, e.g.</td>
<td>bisyllabic words more common, e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>遥见前方有一竿酒旗在飘扬</td>
<td>遙望見前方有一酒旗在飄蕩</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from a distance (he) spots a wine-banner waving in the wind</td>
<td>From a distance (I) see a wine-banner waving in the wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conservative vocabulary prevails, e.g.</td>
<td>daily speech prevails, e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>兄长逼我离家乡</td>
<td>哥哥逼我離家鄉</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My senior brother insisted on my leaving our hometown</td>
<td>Elder Brother insisted on my leaving our hometown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wenyan grammar applied, e.g.</td>
<td>baihua grammar applied, e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>端上熟菜一盆</td>
<td>端上一盆熟啊菜</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brings a plate of cooked food</td>
<td>brings a plate of cooked food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fewer exclamations, e.g.</td>
<td>more exclamations, e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>端上熟菜一盆·毛竹筷一双</td>
<td>端上一盆熟啊菜·毛竹筷啊一雙</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brings him a plate of cooked food and a pair of bamboo chopsticks</td>
<td>brings a plate of cooked food and a pair of bamboo chopsticks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dialectal expressions occur, e.g.</td>
<td>dialectal expressions occur slightly more often, e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>请把阳谷县告示望一望</td>
<td>請你回來·把告示望</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>please look at the government <em>proclamation</em> of Yanggu District</td>
<td>please come back and have a look at this <em>proclamation</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>———</td>
<td>武松說罷把路上</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more succinct rhythm, e.g.</td>
<td>slightly more free rhythm, e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>逃难在外已年余时光</td>
<td>避難在外有一年多時光</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a year and more I have been on the run.</td>
<td>for more than a year I have been hiding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shorter sentences, e.g.</td>
<td>more talkative sentences, e.g.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>再取酒菜·充我饥肠</td>
<td>叫店家·‘快取酒和菜·給俺充饑腸’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Bring more wine and dishes, to fill up my hungry stomach’</td>
<td>He calls the host: ‘Bring more wine and dishes, to fill up my hungry stomach!’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The examples are only suggestive of each feature, not exhaustive. The passages under discussion are coloured in blue in the written version, in red in the oral version. The oral version is translated in full in Part Two, Chapter 15.4. The written version is available in translation in the Research Database, cf. item 42. The translations are only ancillary and do not presume to give an impression of the stylistic, grammatical or dialectal features of the two versions.
10.8. Shandong clapper tale

Shandong clapper tale, *Shandong kuaishu*, is performed by highly professional artists, who since the early Qing dynasty have formed ‘schools’ and ‘hereditary lines’ of master-disciple relationships. Historically the genre began with telling tales of Wu Song, called Wu the Second, Wu Lao’er. The most famous long saga of the genre is *The story of Wu Song, Wu Song zhuan*, which exists in several written versions, based on different artists. Both during the Qing dynasty, the Republic and the People’s Republic the famous performers have been able to make a living from this art, and during the Anti-Japanese war the genre was popular in the army. Nowadays performances of Shandong clapper tale will usually be part of a larger programme of *quyi* performances for enjoyment in a big theatre. The performance is a one-time occasion and is not continued in daily sessions like storytelling, *pinghua* or *pingshu*.


![Figure 10.8. Commercial CD of *Shandong kuaishu*, featuring among others Gao Yuanjun (upper left) and his disciple Sun Zhenye (lower right) (1999).](image)

\(^{10}\)Gao Yuanjun

高元鈞

(1916–1993)

Sun Zhenye

孫鎮業

(1944–2010)
this section the written version is compared to an oral performance of the same
episode, called ‘Wu Song fights the tiger’, by Gao’s foremost disciple, Sun Zhene-
ye (1944–2010), published as a commercial CD (1999) (Sources, Appendix B: Oral
performances, Orally performed narrative arts).

10.8.1. Textual unit and storyline.
The written version by Gao Yuanjun (cf. Chapter 7) is a section, called duanzi
or hui, from a series of Wu Song episodes from the clapper tale saga of Wu
Song, Wu Song zhuan [The story of Wu Song], published as a book. The oral
version by Sun Zhenye, on the other hand, is published as a separate perfor-
mance on CD, selected together with three other non-related performances
from this genre by other artists. The oral version apparently reflects the usual
performance circumstances of the genre, namely that only one duanzi or hui
is performed at a time. The storylines of the two versions are the same (see
Chapter 8, Table 8.1).11

10.8.2. Verse/prose and narrative technique.
The piece is prosimetric, performed as rhythmic and rhymed recitation to the
accompaniment of metal clappers, with interludes of prose speech. The whole
performance is in Shandong dialect, featuring a clearly different pronunciation
of the tones, but otherwise quite close to MSC pronunciation. Different regis-
ters, such as found in the performance language of Yangzhou storytelling, see
Chapter 11, 11.4 and 11.6, are not obtrusive in this performance, but a tendency
to shift between more dialectal and less dialectal language can be observed, see
below, Dialogue.12

The performer begins with the phrase: ‘Let [us] stop chatting
and get down to the
weighty story
hua shao shuo,
lun gangqiang
話少說論剛強
tell
shuo
說
Now [I’ll] perform
zai biaobiao
再表表
Now that [our] song
has come this far, that
is what is counted as
one section
chang dao ci chu
suan yi duanr
唱到此處算一段兒
perform
biao
表
singing
chang
唱

Let [us] stop chatting and get down to the weighty story
hua shao shuo, lun gangqiang, indicating that this
is telling, shuo. It also contains stockphrases, reminiscent of those found in the
drum tale: ‘Now [I’ll] perform’, zai biaobiao. However, towards the end
we find the expression: ‘Now that [our] song has come this far, that is what
is counted as one section’, chang dao ci chu suan yi duanr. So this kind of
recitation is called ‘telling’, shuo, ‘performing’, biao and ‘singing’, chang. The
fact that these words are used interchangeably, in a muddled sense, when
applied ‘inside’ the genre text itself (intra-textually), serves as a warning to
be careful about drawing conclusions about the performance medium on the
background of this kind of written evidence alone. Since this piece is available
as an oral performance on CD, information about the oral medium, namely
rhythmical recitation (but no singing) with passages of more normal speech in
between, is directly observable.

The performance begins with two lines of solo metal clapper in eight-beat
rhythm, and then vocal recitation begins in the same metre. The metal clappers
function as a rather quiet and inconspicuous accompaniment throughout
the performance. During the speech passages the clappers sometimes stop. The
basic metre of recitation is the eight-beat (hepta-syllabic) form with end-rhyme
–ang for every second line. Many lines are, however, highly irregular, and tend
towards prose. Therefore verse and prose are not always clearly marked as dif-
ferent modes, but flow into each other. Some prose passages are only a few syllables, spoken as ‘asides’, while others are fairly long interpolations into the verse recitation.

As discussed in detail in Chapter 7, 7.5–6, the Shandong kuashu in the written version is mostly told by a covert, extra-diegetic, hetero-diegetic narrator. In the written version according to Gao Yuanjun (1987), the narrator in one of the ‘asides’, pangbai, is fully overt and even the name of the performer (I, Mr. Gao Yuanjun) is mentioned with a tint of humour. In my material this kind of self-reference seems to be reserved for artists of the elder generation that enjoy particularly high status. In the oral version (1999) this device is absent. However, just like the case with the written version, the oral version through stock phrases of introduction and conclusion applies a narrator type who is on the point of being overt: the pronoun ‘I’, wo, is not used, but it is the logical subject of these stock phrases, i.e. the introduction ‘Let [us] stop chatting and get down to the weighty story’, hua shao shuo, lun gangqiang; and the ending ‘Now that [our] song has come this far, that is what is counted as one section, in the next round [I] shall continue with how he took revenge on behalf of his elder brother’ chang dao ci chu suan yi duanr, dao xia hui, ti xiong bao chou jinjie shang. A few times, questions are posed as if to the audience, rather than being inner monologue of the protagonists, e.g. ‘What was written?’, Shenme zi’er a?; ‘Ai, ai, ai, ai! Why was it pressed down so hard?’, Ai, ai, ai, ai! Zenme hai wangxia ya ya?. In both cases, the questions can also be understood as the thought of respectively Wu Song and the tiger, but the sound of the audio-recording seems to indicate that it is the narrator speaking to the audience. This is the closest that this performance comes to ‘simulated dialogue’ with the audience, which is a feature of an overt [first person] narrator’s presence in the text. The audible voice quality on the recording adds material to the textual analysis which cannot be extracted from a written version where only the words are rendered.

10.8.3. Dialogue and monologue.
While the written version in modern print clearly indicates the speaker by stage directions and by double quotes, the oral version naturally cannot use such devices. Tags are used to a certain degree in both versions, but they seem to function mainly as ‘fillers’ of the rhythmical pattern; their function as indicators of speech seems largely redundant. When there are no tags, it is the pronouns and the content of the sentences that indicate direct speech or thought. In the oral performance the artist differentiates the voice of Wu Song from that of the innkeeper and the tiger by varying his voice quality. ‘Tags, such as ‘XX says’, XX shuo, or ‘XX thinks’, XX xiang, are, however, used rather frequently, sometimes many times in a row, and often such tags break up the hepta-syllabic rhythm. This usage is reminiscent of the narrative style of the drum tale, the so-called ‘hats’, serving as a type of ‘aside’, (cf. Stevens 1973: 114; see also Chapter 7, 7.7). Many of the tags use the rhyme –ang and are obviously used to fill the rhyming verse lines, and this seems to be their essential function in the Shandong kuashu oral text.
Even if different speech registers are not conspicuous, dialectal flavour is nevertheless more notable in the dialogue portions – in contrast to the narrative portions. In dialogue dialectal forms of pronouns and question words occur occasionally, but the dialectal forms are not used exclusively, only a few times. For the first-person pronoun, ‘I’ as used by Wu Song and the waiter (who are apparently both from Shandong), we find both ‘I’, an (Shandong dialect) and wo (MSC). An is found only twice, e.g. the first time Wu Song conducts an inner monologue.

Example 10.8.a

俺武松生來愛喝酒

‘I, Wu Song, have always loved to drink wine’

Next time in the mouth of the waiter, when he feels wronged by Wu Song.

Example 10.8.b

你怎麼惡言冷語把俺傷啊

‘Why do you hurt me with such evil and cold remarks?’

For plural ‘we’ the waiter uses both, zan (with a slightly dialectal flavour) and women (MSC). The tiger uses only wo, both in inner monologue and in ‘dialogue’ (the animal actually speaks to Wu Song at a certain point). Instead of MSC shenme for ‘what’, dialectal sha occurs a single time; and MSC zenme ‘why’ is exchanged with dialectal za. Both occurrences are in the mouth of the waiter, probably a sign of his lowly local status. Otherwise divergence from MSC grammar seems due to the restrictions of the metre rather than dialect, even though the frequent use of constructions with the preposition ‘take’, ba, may also be a dialectal feature.

10.8.4. Shared passages and formulaic usage.

The written and the oral versions of the Shandong clapper-tale share about three quarters of the text. The textual relationship between the two versions is, however, different in many respects from that found between the oral and the written form of the Yangzhou qingqu, 10.8, where there is also a large proportion of shared text. There we find a stylistic shift in the portions that are verbally different (i.e. not shared). But that is not the case with the Shandong kuaisu: here the style of the shared portions and that of the rest are the same. However, the general style has some minor differences. The written text sometimes uses the Shandong dialect pronoun ‘I’, an, both for Wu Song and the innkeeper in emphatic position (elsewhere ‘I’, wo). But in the oral version this dialect usage, which has an old-fashioned ring, is found only once spoken by Wu Song and once spoken by the innkeeper (elsewhere wo).

We know that Sun Zhenye, the performer of the oral version, was a close disciple of Gao Yuanjun. It is not possible to decide if the text of the oral version was learned from the lips of his master, from the published versions of 1980 or 1987, or from both oral and written usage. But since the identical portions cover
such a large proportion of the oral text, one would tend to consider the oral version to be based not only on oral transmission, but also on learning by heart from the modern printed books where the written versions were published.

One of the passages, not shared with the 1987 written version, but found in the 1980 written version, has a strong resemblance with the written drum tale, dagushu, cf. Chapter 7, 7.7).

There is nothing strange in the fact that some portions of the clapper tale are lacking in some versions, but present in other versions.¹⁶ The performer Sun Zhenye would most naturally know both the various written editions and the oral performances of his master, and he could then choose to keep this and leave out that according to his feeling during performance, or according to preparations on beforehand. The resemblance between the drum tale version and the oral Shandong clapper tale is perhaps an example of how the metric genres of a larger area share a reservoir of formulas suitable for these genres.

As for the use of fixed phrases, including proper names, the written and the oral versions are quite close to each other, but both versions add a couple of new names for the strong wine, names that are unique to the Shandong kuaishu, and these names are not the same in the written and the oral versions. Each version also has a place name that is not found in the other version, i.e. the written version at the very beginning mentions a temple where Wu Song was trained in his youth, namely Shaolin Temple; on the other hand the oral version mentions a special name for the town where Wu Song drinks the strong wine,

Note: The portions in red colour are shared phrases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drumtale, dagushu, written, late Qing</th>
<th>Shandong clapper tale, Shandong kuaishu, oral, 1999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>His height is more than one staff’s length</td>
<td>His height is more than one staff’s length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His two shoulders brim with power</td>
<td>His two shoulders are full of power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His head is the size of a bushel</td>
<td>His head is bigger than a bushel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His two eyes stare like the moon</td>
<td>His two eyes stare like bulging bells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His arms look like two ridgepoles</td>
<td>His arms stretch out like ploughshares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His body matches a roof beam</td>
<td>His fists are like iron hammers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His palms are as big as dustpans</td>
<td>His palms are like dustpans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His fingers all as long as wooden sticks</td>
<td>His fingers stretch out like wooden sticks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Drum tale dagushu
大鼓書

Special names in the Shandong clapper tale by Gao Yuanjun, written version (1987):
- Flavour makes you three parts tipsy
  - Wen jiu san fen zui
  - 聞酒三分醉
- Flavour escapes the jug in a distance of ten li
  - Kai tan shi li xiang
  - 開罈十里香

Sun Zhenye, oral version (1999):
- House of intoxication
  - Zai jia zui
  - 在家醉
- Flavour escapes the jug
  - Kai tan xiang
  - 開罈香

Shaolin Temple
Shaolin Si
少林寺

Note: The portions in red colour are shared phrases.
276 Wu Song Fights the Tiger

Table 10.8.b Meta-narrative phrases of the written and oral version of Shandong clapper tale (stage instructions not included)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning:</td>
<td>Beginning:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No need for empty conversation</td>
<td>Let [us] stop chatting and get down to the weighty story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xianyan suiyu bu yao jiang</td>
<td>hua shao shuo, lun gangqiang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>閒言碎語不要講</td>
<td>話少說，論剛強</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let [me] perform</td>
<td>Now [I’l] perform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>biao yi biao</td>
<td>zai biaobiao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>表一表</td>
<td>再表表</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending:</td>
<td>Ending:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the next round</td>
<td>Now that [our] song has come this far, that is counted as one section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xia yi hui</td>
<td>changdao cichu suan yi duan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>下一回</td>
<td>唱到此處算一段兒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the next round [I’l] continue with</td>
<td>dao xia hui... jin jieshang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>到下回...緊接上</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Zhangqiu Town
張丘鎮

i.e. Zhangqiu Town. These names are unique for the Shandong kuaishu, not attested in any other version of the focal story in our material. Both in the drum tale and in Shandong clapper tale one can notice a predilection for enumeration of proper names for persons, places and things, but many of these names have no inter-textual counterparts with other genres. They appear to be a feature of a genre style, a type of rhetoric that is powerfully connected to the fast rhythmic beat of the performance, cf. Chapter 7, 7.6.

In both the written and the oral versions of Shandong kuaishu, stock phrases in the form of meta-narrative markers of introduction and conclusion are applied. The meta-narrative phrases of the two versions have similar elements in their form, but the phrases are not identical.17 The phrases are close to those found in the written drum tale, dagushu, cf. Chapter 8, Table 8.6.b, and in other drum tales.18

The Shandong clapper tale with its relatively fixed hepta-syllabic metre is heavily formulaic all the way through. As mentioned, the written and the oral versions share a large portion of text, which runs in fixed verse lines. In the modern period the artists can rely on printed versions of their master’s performance, but Shandong kuaishu did not in earlier periods have written records or scripts; the performers were trained by their masters purely by oral transmission, so it is said.19 This differs from the other metric genres of fast tales, kuaishu (also called Manchu gentry tales, zidishu), and drum tales, dagushu, where the performers were dependent on written scripts.20 In the background of these genres one can perceive a pool of traditional formulas, ready for use by the writer of scripts.
10. Drama and Storytelling on Stage

as well as by the performer. The stock phrases of meta-narrative function, too, are formed so that they fit neatly into the metric pattern. The Shandong kuaishu oral version is one of the cases where such phrases, that may ultimately have their origin in former oral genres such as the Ming chantefables, are still attested in actual usage (Børdahl 2010a: 117, 121–122, 127–128).

A clapper tale, just like a drum tale, would apparently have to be learnt by heart to a large degree, based on the rhymed stanzas in roughly hepta-syllabic metre with occasional irregularity (extra syllables). However, in contrast to the drum tale under study in Chapters 7 and 8, the present clapper tale has quite a number of prose passages interpolated into the verse (marked by stage directions: ‘speech’, bai, and ‘aside in prose’, pangbai, in the written version). Only a few words are shared between the written and the oral versions in such passages, and these prose passages seem to be left largely to individual improvisation.

10.9. Sichuan storytelling

Sichuan storytelling, Sichuan pinghua, is among the storytelling traditions that have a long history, going back more than four hundred years. The storytellers have been educated strictly by their masters and formed schools with different repertoires and styles. Three Kingdoms, San guo, Water Margin, Shuihu, and many other of the great themes of storytelling in China were also part of Sichuan pinghua. This genre, like most storytelling genres, is conducted mainly in prose with occasional verse being recited (not sung), but there have been some schools of Sichuan storytelling where the telling was done in rhymed verse lines throughout (Zhongguo dabaike quanshu: Xiqu, quyi 1983: 362).

The oral version of our focal tale was performed by the famous storyteller Luo Shizhong (b. 1943-) from Chengdu in 1974 and recorded on audiotape by the Swedish sinologist and expert of Sichuan dialect, Göran Malmqvist. In internet sources from 2005 this storyteller is called the last transmitter of Sichuan pinghua. His repertoire is first and foremost the Three Kingdoms, san guo. He relates how he has been true to the art of his masters and did not switch to modernized forms and settings. He strives to preserve the original style and way, performing in daily sessions in the teahouse where he is seated at the traditional storyteller’s table. He studied from early youth with several renowned masters of Sichuan pinghua, but has no students. To all appearances this local storytelling genre that half a century ago could was the livelihood of several hundred master tellers is now on the brink of extinction.

The recording reveals that the ‘storyteller’s stick’, called ‘scaring-the-audience board’, jingtangmu, is used with special vigour and frequency during performance. Fan and handkerchief are also important props. Pictures of the artist in action show him wielding a big folding fan and dressed in traditional Chinese silken jacket.

In the introductory remarks, recorded on the tape before the actual performance begins, the storyteller lets us understand that this is an informal perfor-
mance for the benefit of the researcher (Malmqvist), not a public performance in the storytellers’ house.24

For this oral performance no immediately related written counterpart exists in the *Wu Song Collection*. Some characteristics of the performance lead us to think that the Ming novel *Shuihu zhuan* might have been used as a script and adapted to the form of Sichuan storytelling.

10.9.1. Textual unit and storyline

Luo Shizhong’s performance of ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’ is about 25 minutes.25 The story is told from beginning to end, i.e. from Wu Song’s departure, travelling to visit his brother, to his killing of the tiger and the appearance of not only two, but in this case *three* new tigers! Since Sichuan storytelling apparently was traditionally performed under conditions very much like those applying to Yangzhou storytelling, a full performance in the storytellers’ house would have to be much longer, about two hours. A full performance of this story would mean that the following events – after Wu Song has killed the tiger – must be included into the programme of one session in the teahouse. Since Water Margin and the saga of Wu Song do not really belong to the repertoire of the artist, the highlight tale of ‘Wu Song fights the tiger’ might be a piece that he has ready for special occasions where relatively short performances are in demand.

The storyline of the Sichuan pinghua version includes the most common episodes that are shared by all the novel editions and most of the versions in performance literature under study, cf. Chapter 8, Table 8.1. The Sichuan pinghua version lacks the first and the last episodes of the storyline of *Shuihu zhuan*, as well as ‘the inscribed tree’ (also lacking in many other performance texts), but is otherwise the same.26

The ending of the Sichuan pinghua performance is the same as that found in Yangzhou pinghua oral versions, cf. Chapter 11, stopping abruptly at the critical point where Wu Song after killing the tiger suddenly is confronted by

Figure 10.9 Luo Shizhong performing Sichuan pinghua in 2005. Photo anonymous. From internet advertisement.
more tigers – in this case *three tigers*. This way of ending the performance is not found in other oral or written versions.

### 10.9.2. Prose/verse and narrative technique.

The performance includes only one short rhymed poem about the tiger, inserted at the point where Wu Song confronts the beast and the fighting begins. Otherwise the whole piece is told in prose, in a clear and energetic voice, markedly different from the voice of the performer during the short introduction which precedes the performance on the tape-recording. At the outset, the storyteller repeatedly taps his ‘scaring-the-audience board’ forcefully against the table. In sharp contrast to the use of the storyteller’s stick in Yangzhou storytelling, the stick is here used to create an effect like that of a percussion instrument. All through the performance the artist taps his stick at every moment of the tale, sometimes giving only one rap, at other times giving two or a series of raps, obviously to spirit up the performance. In this way the prose of his telling acquires a certain rhythmic quality that arises from the regular shifting between telling and rapping the stick.

Both narrative passages and dialogue are strongly coloured by Sichuan dialect pronunciation, grammar and lexicon. The voices of the narrator and the two protagonists, Wu Song and Xiao’er, the waiter, are not distinguished by phonologically different registers, but mainly by the force of their voices: both the narrator and the two persons talk in a strong and lively way, but Wu Song distinguishes himself by shouting and by using intermittently the self-important old-fashioned first-person pronoun *sajia*. Tags are rarely used and seem unnecessary, since the speakers and the narrator are sufficiently marked by different

![Table 10.9.a. Storyline of ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’ in Shuihu zhuan and in Sichuan pinghua](attachment:image.png)
voice quality. The narrator belongs to the covert, extra-diegetic, hetero-diegetic type. Not a single time does the narrator point to himself in the first person, but there are a few small narrator’s comments, where the meaning of some obsolete expressions is explained to the audience. Among the meta-narrative phrases in this performance, none of them point to the narrator as storyteller, such as we have seen with the Shandong clapper tale (cf. Chapter 7, 7.9.d).

10.9.3. Formulaic usage.

While this oral text does not share any longer passages with other versions of the focal tale in novel, drama and performance literature, it is noteworthy that the fixed phrases sprinkled around are all shared with Shuihu zhuan, both jianben and fanben. Apart from these, there are no fixed phrases shared with drama or other performance genres, either in written or oral form.

In this performance the tiger is from the beginning (when the waiter points out the proclamation to Wu Song) called ‘big beast’, da chong, which is the word used in the notice of the administration (imitating the wording of the novel very closely). The narrator explains, that people in Shandong say ‘fierce tiger’, meng hu, instead of da chong. The expression da chong is not current in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 10.9.b. Fixed phrases in Shuihu zhuan and in Sichuan pinghua</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shuihu zhuan, Rongyutangben, 1610</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>出門倒 Chu men dao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>大步自過景陽岡 dabu zi guo jingyanggang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>大虫 da chong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>大虫傷人 da chong shang ren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>吊睛白額 diao jing bai e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>過往客商 guowang keshang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>好漢 hao han</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>好酒 hao jiu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>江湖 jianghu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>猛虎 meng hu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>青石 qing shi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>三碗 san wan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>三碗酒 san wan jiu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>三碗不過崗 san wan bu guo gang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>已午未三個時辰 si, wu, wei sange shichen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>透瓶香 tou ping xiang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>行了幾日來到陽谷縣 xingle ji ri laidao Yangguxian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>一撲一掀一剪 yi pu yi xian yi jian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Only fixed phrases of the episodes that are in common are listed here. The Rongyutangben contains a few more fixed phrases at the beginning and the end of Chapter 23, i.e. those episodes that are lacking in the Sichuan pinghua performance. One variant phrase is marked * and one lacking phrase is marked ——.
MSC any more, but is marked as a dialectal form. The current word is *laohu*. *Laohu* is actually by far the most frequent word for tiger in this performance, too; so the chance that *da chong* is still in daily use in Sichuan dialect is unlikely. Probably *da chong* is used in imitation of the novel or drama, where it is, indeed, the most frequent expression for the tiger, building on daily language of the Ming period. In most versions of performed narrative arts, the word is either lacking or used only in a few cases, more or less as a literary ‘flourish’. In the *Sichuan pinghua* the frequency of this word gives the impression of literary ‘loan’ from the novel, something that is likewise the case with the written version of *Hangzhou pinghua*, as we have discussed, cf. Chapter 8, 8.7.27

Right from the beginning of the tale, Wu Song is described in traditional way from head to foot, in storytellers’ terminology called ‘revealing the looks’, *kaixiang*. What is special about the description in the *Sichuan pinghua* is that Wu Song is seen as ‘tiger-like’ in both body and clothes. This characteristic is rare among the versions of the *Wu Song Collection* (only one unobtrusive case is found, i.e. ‘tigers’ eyes’, *humu*, about Wu Song in the fast tale, *kuaishu*, cf. Chapter 7), and the tiger-expressions do not belong to the fixed phrases of this study. The foreboding about the hero’s coming fight with a tiger by describing him with a number of tiger-epithets is an interesting feature of this version:

The proper names found in the *Sichuan pinghua* are the same as those in the novel, with one important exception: the name of the waiter in the inn is *Xiao’er* [Little Number Two], a name that is not found in *Shuihu zhuan*, but in some drama and performance genres, such as Huai-drama, *Huaixi*, Fuzhou storytelling, *Fuzhou pinghua*, Hangzhou storytelling, *Hangzhou pinghua*, and Yangzhou storytelling, *Yangzhou pinghua* (both oral and written).

**There are three meta-narrative stock phrases in this performance,** identical with those of the *Rongyutangben* of the *Shuihu zhuan* and of *Jin Ping Mei cihua*. These phrases are highly rare outside of the novel editions and *Jin Ping Mei cihua*, but a few cases are found in the material, cf. Table 10.10.b. The performance ends in the middle of a sentence, without adding any final stock phrase or other concluding words.

The *Sichuan pinghua* performance among all the versions of drama and performed narrative arts, oral and written, of this study has a peculiarly close connection to the novel. While there is no written script or published version related to the performance available in the collection of Wu Song materials, in this case the performance appears to be related to the text of *Shuihu zhuan*, *Rongyutangben*, more closely than any other version of the tale.

From the performer Luo Shizhong’s background we know that he is a transmitter of the *San guo* repertoire that used to be one of the great traditions of *Sichuan pinghua*. He is, however, not mentioned among masters of *SHUIHU*, also a traditional theme in *Sichuan pinghua*. The textual evidence from the present oral performance could not in itself allow any ready conclusions about the basis for the oral text. But there are some indications of a close connection to the Ming novel.
Table 10.9.c. Wu Song as a tiger-like hero in Sichuan pinghua

Sichuan pinghua revealing the looks, kai xiang, and other descriptions of Wu Song

. . . This good fellow was more than eight feet tall, broad-shouldered and slim around the waist – the back of a tiger and the belly of a bear. His hair was tied in a ‘tiger coil’, held together by a silver clasp. Hanging askant from his neck, he wore a broad-brimmed felt hat and a pink shoulder bag. His heavy brows were as black as the night; his handsome eyes sparkled with life. He had a fleshy nose and a big mouth. His black dress was buttoned all the way from top to bottom with plum-blossom buttons. Under his dress he wore a pair of wide black trousers and big Shandong boots with patchwork leggings. Over his dress a black cloak was draped in hero-style, embroidered with the pattern ‘mice stealing grapes’. In his hand he held a staff – and that’s the way he marched into the tavern . . .

. . . The innkeeper had no way out but to pour the last six bowls of wine for Wu Song. Wu Song gobbled them up like a tiger or wolf, and soon he had finished off all these eighteen bowls of wine! Tap! . . .

. . . Wu Song was astonished on hearing this. He turned his head and opened his ‘tiger eyes’ wide . . .

. . . The innkeeper had no way out but to pour the last six bowls of wine for Wu Song. Wu Song gobbled them up like a tiger or wolf, and soon he had finished off all these eighteen bowls of wine! Tap! . . .

The Wu Song tale is, according to the interview of 2005, not part of the artist’s inherited repertoire, learned by way of mouth from his masters. It seems not unlikely that he has ‘re-created’ gaibian, this version directly from the novel.

First, it is noteworthy that the length of this performance (ca 5600 syllables/characters) is very close to the length of Chapter 23 of the Rongyutangben edition of Shuihu zhuan (ca 6200 characters). The storyline reflects the essential episodes of the novel chapter, lacking only the beginning, the ending and the detail of the inscribed tree. Only the abrupt ending of the performance at the critical point of the new tigers arrival on the scene distinguishes it clearly from the novel versions; this feature is also in contrast to most other versions, both in drama and narrative performed arts. In the fast tale, kuaishu, and Shandong clapper tale, Shandong kuaishu, the performance ends when the tiger is killed (cf. Chapter 8, Table 8.1). Only in Yangzhou pinghua, where this tale is usually performed during the first day (session) in a long series of episodes, will the storyteller stop at this point, which is called to ‘sell the crisis’, mai guanzi (cf. Chapter 11, 11.3).

Second, fixed phrases, proper names and meta-narrative stock phrases are taken over from the novel as a set of expressions. It is remarkable, compared to the
other performed narrative arts, that the Sichuan pinghua is devoid of other fixed phrases and proper names that are found among the performed genres in irregular patterns. There is only one proper name, Xiao’er, that is not shared with the novel, but with some of the performed narrative arts, among which Yangzhou pinghua.

The Sichuan pinghua oral version cannot be described as a paraphrase of the novel version. The ‘re-creation’, gaibian, involves a much more thorough and creative process. The storyteller’s experience and verbal ability allows him – so it seems – to embroider freely on the materials from the novel and thus deliver a tale in unmistakable Sichuan dialect. This ability can be observed especially in his handling of ‘revealing the character’, kaixiang, a narrative technique that is well known from storytellers of San guo in the Yangzhou tradition. This detail could well have been a loan from the artist’s inherited repertoire of San guo in the Sichuan tradition. Nevertheless the episodes and all the formulary language of the five hundred years old novel have been taken over ‘raw’ and re-circulated.

Another likely source for the Sichuan pinghua version is the Yangzhou storytelling tradition, both in book form and in live performance. Since Wang Shaotang was the most famous storyteller in China during the 20th century, it would not be strange if Luo Shizhong had studied Wang’s printed texts and heard him on radio.

### 10.10. OTHER GENRES

Apart from the genres treated in some detail above, the *Wu Song Collection* contains oral performances of the focal tale in the following genres: clapper tale, kuaibanshu (performed by Zhang Zhikuan 1993)28, Beijing storytelling.

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28. Zhang Zhikuan. 張志寬
Beijing pingshu (performed by Tian Lianyuan, no date, ca 2005), Beijing crosstalk, Beijing xiangsheng (by Hou Baolin 1992; and by Pan Changjiang and Pan Shujun 2002). Other Wu Song stories, both from the above genres and from other genres, are also included in the collection, for example several danxian drum tales (performed by Liu Hongyuan 1997).

By far the better part of all versions of our focal story stick to the main storyline, adding some ingredients or episodes here and there, beginning or ending at different points of the hero’s journey to see his brother. But the genre of ‘crosstalk’, xiangsheng, has a basically different layout. The performances in this genre do not tell the story: they only take the story for given as a background to the humorous exchanges between the two performers.

One of the Shandong clapper tale versions of the Wu Song Collection (only available in written form) is modelled according to Hou Baolin’s xiangsheng version. In this piece the tiger tale is also functioning as a pretext for another ‘story’, namely that of two competitive actors who perform the tiger story on stage and are both eager to win the sympathy of the audience. In a text of this kind, a completely new storyline is presented and only the episode of ‘the fighting’ proper is incorporated into the performance. No formulaic entities of the tiger tale corpus are found. It has become a different narrative where only the name of Wu Song and the figure of the tiger are shared with the other versions of this study.

10.11. Written and oral forms of drama and storytelling

Comparing the oral drama performances of ‘Wu Song Fights the tiger’ with written scripts (librettos) of the same drama genres, it is obvious that the modern actors base their performance on written materials that are memorized and performed according to the written model. The cases from the Wu Song Collection under study bear out this phenomenon with little doubt.

Textual units and storylines of written scripts and oral performances mostly correspond to each other, but some plays have been shortened (plot ingredients or episodes deleted) or expanded with extra material (not belonging to the Wu Song and tiger story), combining what used to be two plays into one. The division into scenes is not always strictly the same as in the corresponding script, but as we have noticed above, the words of the performed dramas are strictly the same as those of the script that can be identified as the model for the performance. The distribution of prose and verse is also the same in written script and oral performance. The great difference obviously lies in the ‘silence of the paper’ versus the totality of the ‘orality’ that is manifested in oral performance, where both prose and verse are realized in living speech registers and musical tunes with orchestra. However, with a view to the linguistic building blocks of the plays – the strings of words spoken or sung – the differences are negligible.

In Chapter 6 the narrating instance of the written genres of chuanqi, Kunqu and jingju was discussed. The shifting between dialogue (in prose) and mono-
logue (in prose or verse, i.e. arias) pointed to different functions of the actors. Sometimes they are impersonating their role vis-à-vis the other actors, sometimes they act as first-person narrators, telling the background of the story or transmitting their inner feelings to the audience. However, while they are first-person narrators (intra-diegetic, homo-diegetic, overt narrators), they are at the same time ‘in role’, playing their character. They are not extra-diegetic narrators such as is the case with the performers of the storytelling genres (Børdahl 1996: 189; Børdahl 2010 c). This feature, also well known from classical Western drama and opera, is clearly observable in the oral performances described in the present chapter. When the actors are engaged in narration, they confront the audience, not the fellow actors. The local drama discussed in Chapter 6, Huaixi, has a very different structure in respect to narrating agent, but unfortunately the Wu Song Collection does not contain an oral performance of this or a similar dramatic genre.

As for fixed phrases (including proper names and stock phrases), the question has been treated in Chapter 6, and for the oral performances there is little to add. We have already discussed the fact that there are merely a few points of inter-textual correspondence between ‘Wu Song fights the tiger’ in drama and in novel. The Ming chuanqi by Shen Jing has no longer passages and only a few fixed phrases in common with the Ming novel of Shuihu zhuan, whether in jianben versions or in fanben versions. The fixed phrases shared with the novel are – besides the proper names of Wu Song and Jingyang Ridge – the following: ‘Three Bowls and You Cannot Cross the Ridge, san wan bu guo gang, ‘good wine’, hao jiu, ‘with slanting eyes and a white forehead’, diaojing bai'e, ‘are you a man or a ghost?’, shiren shi gui. These expressions are so common that they could well have belonged to oral traditions that existed both before and after the novel, and they could have been picked up from either by Shen Jing. The ingredient of ‘the rock’ where Wu Song takes a nap was added to a later chuanqi version, a feature that might point to the novel as origin. The Kunqu tradition continued the textual line of the chuanqi, but added a few further features found in the novel, such as mentioning ‘the wind’ blowing up before the tiger approaches. But whether such features were picked up from the novel or from contemporary storytelling or folklore would be impossible to say, unless extra evidence can be adduced. The oldest Jingju script (Late Qing/Republic) has no verbal utterance in common with either novel, chuanqi or Kunqu. Only the barest outline of the story is in common, but that cannot be referred to any specific source, written or oral, since the story is widely diffused in oral and written culture for seven hundred years. The later Jingju script (1954) is a modern version expanded with arias and prose from the Kunqu tradition, obviously based on written adaptation.

The inter-textual relationship between the drama versions and the storytelling versions is likewise sporadic. While there are no shared passages between these main genres, shared wordings belonging to the fixed phrases occur ever so often, but a systematic distribution is hardly discernible. The fixed phrases are distributed all over the genres and individual versions, but drama has relatively few of these expressions. The poems of the arias constitute the main ‘formulaic’
portion of the dramas, since these have been re-circulated from Ming to the present, but these poems were clearly ‘created’ by an author with brush in hand, and they were not to become part of the performed narrative arts, shuochang.

As for the oral drama versions at hand, they follow the text of written versions to an extreme degree. In respect to the verbal language of drama the expression ‘semi-oral’ that has often been applied to drama seems relevant, since the performance reminds of ‘reading’ from a written text, even though the parts are learned by heart and performed without a script in hand.

The storytelling genres of shuochang discussed in this chapter, Yangzhou qingqu and Shandong kuaishu, are witness about different relations between written and oral versions. Here we do not – as with the drama – find a one-to-one relationship between the texts of written/published versions and the wordings of the corresponding oral performances.

As for the Yangzhou qingqu, we must state the ambivalence of the case: 1) The oral version could have come about by the singer learning the written text by heart and afterwards during performance allowing himself to render the text in a freer and more relaxed way, something that is often called ‘reworking’ or ‘re-creation’, gaibian, by Chinese academics in the field of oral performing arts. 2) The oral version could be performed according to the way the singer had learnt from his master, where a portion is shared with the present printed version, another portion is different and generally has a more vernacular form. The portion that is not shared with the printed version does not per se have to be ‘changed’ or ‘reworked’; it could be the more succinct passages of the book that have been ‘edited’ and ‘corrected’, zhengli, into a more literary form from a more vernacular basis text, whether manuscript or oral. 3) Or both versions, as well as many more versions probably, can be viewed as simply different ‘instances’ deriving ultimately more or less directly from the oral tradition.

Just like authorship was an ephemeral concept in connection with the tradition of Yangzhou qingqu, it seems inadequate to speak about any individual author in connection with the Shandong kuaishu tradition of the Wu Song saga. The oral performance tradition from which the famous performers of recent time would draw, not only with a view to the genre conventions and plot, but also with a view to ready-made formulas and longer passages, would be a strong factor, besides the direct training from master to disciple. The publication of some versions in book-form may result in a more ‘tidy’ and uniform performance tradition, where the book becomes the authoritative text, instead of the oral version handed down by the master. Such a development may already be visible in the present case, where a couple of versions by a great master (Gao Yuanjun) are available in print (1980, 1987) and perhaps serve as script for his disciple (Sun Zhenye) (1999). The close similarity between the oral and written versions might point to such a relationship. It is also notable that no other clapper tale versions (oral or written) of the focal tale stand in such a close relationship to each other. But without further research, it is not possible to know if the relationship is due to the usual close ties between master and disciple, so that the similarity is the ‘normal’ situation after oral
training. Or, on the other hand, if the similarity is due to influence from the printed texts.

To pick up an old novel, such as the Shuihu zhuan, and rework it into performable language of one’s own time and locality is essentially different from what we have found in most of the versions of the Wu Song and tiger tale. In the performances that have risen mainly from oral tradition – whether or not the individual genre is dependent on scripts or not, and whether it exists as performance literature, shuochang wenxue, or only as performance, shuochang – the patterns of shared text and formulary language are generally independent of both the Ming novel and the Ming drama. The versions that we have studied from the Wu Song Collection, except for the Hangzhou pinghua version, show how little these versions rely on the novel and to what degree they are created from a common pool of tradition.

In the case of the Sichuan pinghua version, no written script is at hand for this study. But this performance seems to be a counter-example to our findings elsewhere, namely insofar as quite a number of details in the text might point to a direct borrowing from Shuihu zhuan. Our observations on the Sichuan pinghua performance cannot lead to conclusive proof of the textual affiliation of this version. Too many factors are uncertain. But at least, the example may turn our attention towards the different possibilities of the flow of direction between written and oral versions, different kinds of interplay.

Notes


3 One cannot escape the feeling that the areas where this actor would be at his best – acrobatics (martial fighting), singing and mime – cannot perhaps be fully appreciated in a performance so late in life. But for our study of the textual aspects of the play this is of minor consequence.

4 The phonetic system of Zhongzhouyun as used in Beijing opera is described in Yang Zhenqi 1991. In Beijing opera the low-style stage speech, used foremost by the clown role, chou, is called Jingbai 京白 and reflects Beijing dialect, but since ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’ has only one speaking role, Wu Song, there is no contrast to low-style Beijing dialect speech in this piece.

5 The high-style stage speech of the Kunqu drama is also called Zhongzhouyun 中州韻 or yunbai 韻白. The phonetics of the high-style stage speech of each regional variety of opera seems, however, influenced by the local dialect, cf. Mark 2009: 237.

6 Low-style stage speech of Kunqu is predominantly performed in Suzhou vernacular, Subai 蘇白, which is also the case here (in the role of the innkeeper). However, in some
plays the humble characters are distinguished from each other by having some of them speak in Subai, some in Yangzhou dialect, Yangzhoubai, cf. Mark 2009: 237–242.

7 The members of a ballad singing troupe cannot usually make a living as performers, such as is the case with the Yangzhou storytellers and story-singers, who work full-time in their professions. Many story-singers, who are professionals, also perform ballad singing. The semi-professional ballad singers can have some extra income from their occasional performances, and a few of them are accepted into the organisation of 'Yangzhou performed narrative arts troupe', Yangzhou quyi tuan, and will thus have a more secure income.

8 Among the Late Qing performers of Yangzhou ballads, Wei Ren and Wei Minghua mention a number of well-educated male singers and musicians, who also engaged in 'editing', gaibian, of ballads. In a few cases their activity is called 'creating', chuangzuo, but 'Wu Song fights the tiger' is not among those mentioned. Yangzhou ballad was not, like other poetic genres in China, a field for individual authorship, but a genre that grew and persisted in anonymous collective folk art. Most of the performers did not engage in gaibian, but were known for their singing capacity. Cf. Wei Ren and Wei Minghua 1985b: 11–14.

9 The form, zhi jian, also used in the written version, is probably a variant of dan zhi jian, and dan jian.


11 Both the book from 1987 and the CD from 1999 are of course primarily intended as entertainment for readers and listeners among the population at large. However, both formats, book and audio-recording, also play a secondary role as 'scripts' for future performers. Especially since the 1990s audio-recordings were much used for rehearsal by the younger generation of quyi performers in China.

12 We cannot exclude that the performance is mainly conducted in a high style register, a kind of local guanhua, that might be different from the dialect of daily usage in various areas of Shandong. This question would need further research.

13 For a similar example of overt narrator in a performance by Wang Xiaotang, see Børdahl 1996: 190–194.

14 Note that this was not the case in the singing style of the Yangzhou qingqu version, cf. section 10.8.

15 In oral performance of Shandong kuaishu tags are in principle superfluous as indicators of who is speaking. There are many passages of direct speech without tags. Direct speech is acted out, so that the various persons are clearly indicated by the tone of the voice. It is noteworthy that none of the tags, apart from the most frequent 'said', shuo, are identical with those of the drumtale, dagushu, even though the two versions use the same rhyme -ang and might be 'in need' of the same tags as fillers.

16 In the written and oral versions of the Shandong clapper tale, there is little description, but in the oral version Wu Song is described from the point of view of the waiter, cf. Table 10.9. Later there is a description of the tiger when Wu Song sees it for the first time. This description is found both in the written and oral version of the Shandong clapper tale, as well as in the drumtale, cf. Chapter 7, 7.7.
In other collections of Shandong clapper tale, the same or similar stock phrases are found, see Gao Yuanjun Shandong kuaishu xuan (1980) and Zhang Tianyu: Shandong tiehan kuaishu (no date [before 1960]), Taiwan, but in some collections they are totally absent, such as in the heavily edited collaborative work Shandong kuaishu Wu Song zhuang 1957 and Huang Feng 1980. Two of the oral pieces on the CD 1999 begin with stock phrases, but the other two do not; the performer seems free to start his performance with or without stock phrases of meta-narrative function.

Cf. Stevens 1973: 190–191. See also Liu Fu and Li Jiarui [1932] 1993: 157, 168, 293, 493, 508, 547, 571, 609, 624, 639, 864 (yan yi hui 言一回, yan yi hui 演一回, qie bu biao 且不表, yande shi 演得是, changde shi 唱得是, qie bu yan ... zai biao 且不言 ... 再表 and other stock phrases)


Written scripts seem to have been indispensable in the oral drum tale tradition, cf. Stevens 1973: 22–27, and likewise for fast tales, cf. Chan Kam-chiew 1982: 126. For the genre of Laojing dagu in a rural area of North China Iguchi Junko has given a detailed picture where improvisation plays a major role in performance and fixation of textual passages is rarely based on written scripts, but on learning by heart, cf. Iguchi 2003: Chapters 4–5.

Drum tale script writers used to be aficionados or collaborators of the performing artists, cf. Stevens 1973: 77–78. With Shandong clapper tale the oral transmission of performances seems to have had a stronger basis, and the written versions to have been the result of modern folklore preservation. The collection, recording, writing and editing of performances was in the 1950s undertaken by educated folklorists, not performers, cf. Shandong kuaishu Wu Song zhuang 1957.

Some modern editions of Shandong kuaishu do not contain meta-narrative stock phrases, and the reason is not clear, but it could be that the modern editors found such phrases superfluous and old-fashioned, particularly for a book edition, and simply deleted them in order to improve the works, gaizheng 改正, cf. Shandong kuaishu Wu Song zhuang 1957: 339–347.

Cf. www.sc.xinhuanet.com/content/2005–02/05/content_3692696.htm

I received the original tape as a gift from Göran Malmqvist in 2007.

The performance is divided into two sections with a pause after the first ca 10 minutes, probably due to the recording situation. The first tape runs out at this point, and the performer then takes up the thread again on the next tape.

In the Sichuan pinghua, three tigers (instead of two) attack Wu Song after he has killed the beast on the mountain; these tigers are of course the hunters in disguise, but we never hear about that, since the performance stops at that point, just like Yangzhou pinghua usually does.

The expression dacong is obsolete both in modern Yangzhou dialect and in MSC, but is still found in some dialects. At the time of the Ming novel and chuanqi drama it was, however, obviously the normal expression for tiger. In some later performance texts (kuaishu, Fuzhou pinghua) it seems to live on as a fossilized fixed phrase. But for the printed versions from the People’s Republic one should not be blind to the influence of the novel on written versions by modern editors, such as the printed Yangzhou qinggu (1985), Hangzhou pinghua a (1980) and Yangzhou pinghua (1959). In the oral versions of Shandong kuaishu (1999) and Yangzhou pinghua (1992), the da
chong phrase does not occur. The editors of the 'new storyteller books', *xin huaben*, and other folklore collections from the People’s Republic are often explicit about the fact that they want to ‘improve’ the performers versions and that they strive to adapt the oral versions more closely to the novel, if possible. The expression *da chong* that used to be the normal word for tiger during Ming adds in later periods a certain pompous atmosphere of former times to the text. Quite possibly *da chong* was inserted into the written versions of these genres by the modern editors as a ‘literary’ flourish referring to the so-called ‘original text’ *yuanzuo* 原作, i.e. the Ming novel, but did not necessarily belong to the oral traditions that they recorded.

28 This genre and the performer Zhang Zhikuan are treated in Lawson 2011: 97–111.

29 Apart from the two versions of Shandong clapper tale studied in Chapters 7, 8 and 10, the tale of Wu Song and the tiger is found under the titles of *Jingyanggang, Wu Song da hu*, and *Wu Song be laohu* in the following editions *Shandong kuaishu Wu Song zhuan* 1957: 45–64; Gao Yuanjun Shandong kuaishu xuan 1980: 245–260; Huang Feng: *Wu Song nao dangpu* 1980: 75–79. Further the *Wu Song Collection* includes a ‘Chinese clapper tale’, *Zhongguo kuaibanshu* 中國快版書, entitled *Wu Song da hu*, performed in MSC by Zhang Zhikuan (Audio-cassette 1993).
11

The Oral and the Written in Oral Performance

11.1. Oral performance and features of oral and written language

In one sense an oral performance can be considered ‘totally oral’, since the entire performance is conducted by oral utterances and body language, with or without music, which can be registered as audio- and videotapes. The oral performance is a matter of sound and gesture, not of paper and print. In another sense the oral performance can be analysed into oral and written features, i.e. features of oral characteristics and features of literary or written characteristics inside the performance. A written text likewise may be considered ‘totally written’, but can also be divided into features of literary or written characteristics versus features of oral characteristics.

In the previous chapters we have touched upon this question time and again. In the present chapter I want to probe deeper into the various aspects of oral and written features in Chinese performance art. For this purpose two oral performances of our focal tale from Yangzhou storytelling, Yangzhou pinghua will serve as main examples.

11.2. ‘Wu Song fights the tiger’ in the Wang School of Yangzhou storytelling

In Chapters 7 and 8 we already analysed a written/edited version of ‘Fighting the tiger on Jingyang Ridge’, based on performances by the famous Yangzhou master, Wang Shaotang (1889–1968), and published as the first unit of the first chapter in the book Wu Song 1959, cf. Chapter 7, Table 7.1.

Here we are concerned with a radiobroadcast from Nanjing Radio 1961, where Wang Shaotang tells the first episode of the Wu Song saga, namely the tale of Wu Song and the tiger (BørdaHL 2004). However, the radio version is comparatively short (30 minutes), only a fraction of a full day of storytelling in Yangzhou storytelling Yangzhou pinghua 扬州评话

Fighting the Tiger on Jingyang Ridge Jingyanggang da hu 景陽岡打虎
Wu Song 武松
Wang Shaotang 王少堂 (1889–1968)
the storyteller’s house (2 hours). Therefore the sound recording only brings the first part of the story, ending at the point where Wu Song has left the tavern in order to climb the mountain, while the innkeeper and the waiter are quarrelling about Wu Song’s tip, cf. Table 11.3.1

Wang Shaotang was honoured as the founder of a special school of Yangzhou storytelling, the Wang School of Water Margin, Wangpai Shuihu. Performances by his disciples, both from the family and from outside the family, give important background for the analysis. In order to complement the short broadcast section, duanzi, by the old master, we shall in particular study an oral version from 1992, a full day of storytelling, yitian shu, told by Wang Xiaotang (1918–2000), the adopted son and acknowledged successor of Wang Shaotang. Performances by other Wang School storytellers are also referred to when relevant.

Recently, a rare sound recording, probably from the late 1950s, of the same story told by Wang Shaotang has been detected.² This recording is about 80 minutes long and contains the same episodes as the broadcast from 1961, but continues with the following episodes until the point where Wu Song is in the middle of the fighting, kicking the tiger’s eyes blind, one after another. Basically

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Figure 11.2.a. Wang Shaotang performs ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’. 1950s. Photo anonymous.
11.3. Storyline and fluctuation of oral and written elements

Comparing the storylines of the oral performances (1950s, 1961 and 1992) with those of the written book version (1959) and *Shuihu zhuan, Rongyutangben* (1610) we find that some of the divergences are symptoms of how the oral tradition has been manipulated to conform to the so-called ‘original work’, *yuanzuo*, of *Shuihu zhuan*, during the transformation into book form.

The oral versions (Wang Shaotang late 1950s, 1961 and Wang Xiaotang 1992) all begin the tale in the same way and basically follow the same storyline. Wang Shaotang – in contrast to the version of his son Wang Xiaotang in 1992 – has excluded the ‘love story’ from his performance of the late 1950s and elaborated on the element of the staff. Further, the written and edited version in *Wu Song* (1959) has a very different beginning and ending.

A close reading of the book edition shows that the beginning of the chapter is written in pure Modern Standard Chinese (MSC), *putonghua*. Only with the episode of ‘Staying with Chai Jin’ does the language begin to carry grammatical traces of Yangzhou dialect. Moreover, the book begins with a poem, ‘Praising Wu Song’, something that the Wang School storytellers never do (Bördahl 2003: 80). Obviously the first part of the chapter is written – not according to Wang Shaotang’s oral performance – but according to the editors’ ideas of a ‘new storyteller book’, *xin huaben*. The editors have chosen to introduce the book with background knowledge of a general character. Further they aim to
follow the Ming novel closely, and also to conform to a convention of vernacular literature, namely to begin with a poem. This kind of beginning is very much in contrast to the traditional atmosphere of Yangzhou storytelling, where the performer will begin ‘in medias res’ and will presuppose that his audience is well informed about the background of the story. The storyteller will definitely not begin with explanatory passages like those of the book. At the end of the chapter in the book version, we find a number of episodes that do not belong
to the first day of telling this story according to the Wang School habits, but again follow the storyline of the novel.

Another highly interesting point concerns Wu Song's staff, i.e., the staff that he has in the novel. In the performance by Wang Xiaotang (1992) Wu Song does not have a staff. From beginning to end he has no weapon, and therefore the episode 'Breaking the staff' is lacking. The *Wu Song Collection* contains several performances of this story by Wang Xiaotang (1989, 1992, 1996) and the fact that Wu Song is unarmed is a constant feature of his performances (Fei Li 1993). In the book version (1959), however, Wu Song carries his staff and it is broken during the fight with the tiger. The element of the staff has been imported into Wang Shaotang's book by the editors who were eager to correct 'mistakes' in the oral tradition. That Wang Shaotang originally did not incorporate a staff into his tale of Wu Song is further proved by a stencil version of his performance, recorded and written before 1949. In this oldest extant recorded version, Wang Shaotang never mentions that Wu Song should be carrying a staff; only his bundle with clothes and money is constantly referred to as a fixed element in the description of the hero. In the version from the late 1950s and that for the radio (1961) Wang Shaotang must have accepted the book version as authoritative on this point. Here Wu Song's staff is duly mentioned a couple of times.

Later disciples of the Wang School, many of whom had studied with both Wang Shaotang and Wang Xiaotang, nevertheless keep the staff, something

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**Figure 11.3.b.** Ren Jitang, disciple of Wang Shaotang and Wang Xiaotang, performs ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’ in Copenhagen in 1998. Here the tiger is about to swallow Wu Song’s staff (the fan). **Ren Jitang** 任繼堂  (b. 1942)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written</th>
<th>Oral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Shuihu zhuan</em></td>
<td><em>Yangzhou pinghua</em>, written and oral versions of the Wang School.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rongyutangben 1610</strong></td>
<td><strong>Wang Shaotang</strong> Nanjing Radio 1961 (A) and a recording from 1950s (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wang Xiaotang</strong> Performance 1992</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written</th>
<th>Oral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Praising Wu Song</strong></td>
<td><strong>Praising Wu Song</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu Song and Wu the Elder</td>
<td>Wu Song and Wu the Elder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wounding a man</strong></td>
<td><strong>Wounding a man</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flight from home</strong></td>
<td><strong>Flight from home</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staying with Chai Jin</strong></td>
<td><strong>Staying with Chai Jin</strong> (A+B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter from home</td>
<td>Staying with Chai Jin (A+B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Departure</strong></td>
<td><strong>Departure</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travelling home</strong></td>
<td><strong>Travelling home</strong> (A+B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tavern</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tavern</strong> (A+B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Warning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Warning</strong> (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inscribed tree</strong></td>
<td><strong>Inscribed tree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proclamation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Proclamation</strong> (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The rock</strong></td>
<td><strong>The rock</strong> (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The wind</strong></td>
<td><strong>The wind</strong> (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tiger appears</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tiger appears</strong> (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prey of the tiger</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prey of the tiger</strong> (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Three ways</strong></td>
<td><strong>Three ways</strong> (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breaking the staff</strong></td>
<td><strong>Breaking the staff</strong> (B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The fighting</strong></td>
<td><strong>The fighting</strong> (B) (end of tape, but not of performance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The killing</strong></td>
<td><strong>The killing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Two tigers</strong></td>
<td><strong>Two tigers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The hunters</strong></td>
<td><strong>The hunters</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The reward</strong></td>
<td><strong>The reward</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Episodes are written in bold, while short ingredients are written in normal print. Wang Shaotang’s oral recordings from late 1950s and 1961 share the same episodes in the first portion (A + B); the following portion is only found in the recording from the 1950s (B).
that shows that – at least on this point – they consider the book version (1959) as more authoritative than the oral transmission of their masters. Obviously the staff is very important in the Ming novel as is evident from the commentary by the famous editor, Jin Shengtan (1608–1661). The handling of this detail in the performances of Wang Shaotang, Wang Xiaotang and later disciples tells something about the complicated fluctuation of narrative material from and to the written and the oral traditions.

Another episode, the ‘Tiger’s love story’ (performance by Wang Xiaotang 1992), is absent from the book version, probably because it was considered immoral. In Wang Xiaotang’s version it is at most slightly risqué, but in the stencil version (pre-1949) this episode is truly elaborate and sexually explicit. No wonder that it was deleted by the editors of the 1950s who were extremely eager to clean Chinese folklore of anything deemed inappropriate. In the recording of Wang Shaotang from the 1950s the episode is lacking, something that corroborates the theory that the recording was made for the editors of the book. Later storytellers of the Wang School all lack this episode, or has changed it into a completely insipid ingredient (cf. Børdahl 1996: Part Two, Chapter VIII; Wang Litang 1989: 13).

From our analysis of the storylines of these performances and the book edition it appears that the book version contains elements from the written tradition of the novel and vernacular literature that are not part of the Yangzhou storytellers’ oral tradition. The editors have also deleted episodes that are considered superfluous or offensive, and in this way the traditionally more talkative, relaxed and at times frivolous atmosphere of the oral tradition is basically changed in the written form.

In other words, the storylines of the oral performances show a high degree of independence from the written tradition of the Ming novel, while the edited book version has a tendency to conform to the novel. Moreover, the book version reflects standard conceptions of morality, typical of late 20th century
Puritanism in China, but this revision of the oral materials is evidently at variance with the original character of Yangzhou pinghua. In this respect, the influence of the book version on later generations of storytellers is, however, more than obvious. Sticking to the text, rather than the oral tradition, seems also to be a consequence of the ideological climate of the 1950s–1960s that not only created the text, but also shaped the outlook of the young storytellers who were educated in those years.

11.4. Storytelling and linguistic registers

The audio-recordings of the Yangzhou storytellers’ performances demonstrate their subtle handling of various linguistic registers for the impersonation of characters and for the change of atmosphere in the narrative passages (BørdaH 2010b). In the storytellers’ terminology, hanghua shuyu, we find an elaborate system of speaking styles, so-called ‘speaking mouths’ shuokou, (BørdaH 1999b). Performance alternates between two main registers ‘square mouth’ fangkou [measured speech] and ‘round mouth’, yuankou [smooth speech] (Yi Debo [BørdaH] 1994; BørdaH 1996: 94–98).

During performance the local dialect is modified according to the special demands of the acting and telling technique. The speaking styles of ‘square mouth’ and ‘round mouth’ constitute the major registers of the performer who usually switches between the two according to the individual status of the characters he impersonates and the mood of the narrative passage.

The categories of square and round are intersected by the categories of dialogue and narration, called ‘public talk’, guanbai, and ‘private talk’, sibai.10

‘Private talk’, comprises narrative passages, descriptions, comment and inner monologue of the characters.11

‘Square mouth’ – a slow, distinct, solemn and portentous manner of speaking – is used in dialogue of high status characters, in recitation of poems, in narration of more serious portions of the plot and in some storyteller’s comments (especially when they take the form of proverbial sayings). ‘Round mouth’ – a fast and smooth, plain and unpretentious style – is used for dialogue of low status characters/ordinary persons, for narration of less serious, humorous portions and in most of the storyteller’s comments.

The two speaking styles of square and round exhibit a number of features that we may characterize as literary flavoured versus orally flavoured. Let us first study an example from Wang Shaotang’s radio broadcast of 1961 (translated in Part Two, Chapter 16, 16.1).

11.5. An example: the tavern of Jingyang Town

Wang Shaotang starts with a cursory description of Wu Song’s stay at Chai Jin’s manor, his wish to travel home to see his elder brother and his arrival at the tavern of Jingyang Town in Shandong. At first Wang Shaotang’s diction and intonation follow the slow and dignified pace which characterizes the register of square mouth. The ‘sound-scape’ displays clearly the phonological differences.
from ordinary Yangzhou dialect pronunciation that are found generally in the square mouth style of the Wang School disciples, cf. Table 11.5.12

In square-mouth narration Wang Shaotang and his disciples have the distinction of /l/n/r/ latent and bring it out ever so often. In ordinary Yangzhou dialect this distinction is not phonemic, and the /l/n/r/ sounds are blurred or allophonic (Børdahl 2010b: 102–103). However, in square mouth /l/, /n/ and /r/ are distinguishable. Another prominent feature is the actual or latent diphthongization of syllables that are diphthongs in MSC, but monophthongs in ordinary Yangzhou dialect. Example: ‘good’, hao, ordinary Yangzhou dialect: /hhaa/ [χå:], ‘come’, lai, ordinary Yangzhou dialect: /laei/ [læ:]. In square mouth the vowels are drawn out into diphthongs more in the direction of Beijing pronunciation, though not completely similar (cf. Børdahl 1996: 73).

After a few minutes of square-mouth narration Wang Shaotang changes into a more relaxed and humorous style, round mouth. Except for a few features, such as the use of final -/r/ (not found in Yangzhou dialect), round mouth corresponds to ordinary daily Yangzhou dialect. After a little while Wu Song meets the young waiter at the tavern and they engage in conversation. Here we meet the registers of ‘square’ and ‘round’ in dialogue. In Yangzhou pinghua the heroes and high-ups, so-called ‘persons’ or ‘personages’, renwu, speak in square mouth, while ordinary people, called ‘small persons’, xiao renwu, usually talk in round mouth. Wu Song’s language represents a special variety of square mouth, namely an imitation of ‘northern speech’, Beifanghua, or ‘Beijing speech’, Jinghua. In Wang Shaotang’s impersonation of Wu Song’s way of speaking he differentiates /l/, /n/ and /r/ and diphthongizes very clearly. But in contrast to square-mouth pronunciation of narrative passages, he further drops the so-called 5th tone of the Yangzhou dialect, rusheng, and changes his tone system in the direction of Beijing pronunciation. This is in contrast to the square-mouth pronunciation of square-mouth narration and of dialogue by other heroes of my material who keep their Yangzhou rusheng. As these figures are not from the North, they speak ‘local official’s speech’, difang guanhua, (see 11.6).14

The young waiter, Xiao’er, is clearly a ‘small person’, a category that usually speaks in round-mouth style. But when Xiao’er engages in conversation with Wu Song, he begins in a kind of square-mouth style, because he tries to speak a language that is foreign to him. The narrator comments at length on this ‘strange way of talking’: in order to make contact with the travellers on the road and invite them to his tavern, the bright young fellow has learned by heart a few sentences of greeting in ‘so-so Beijing accent’, erba Jingqiang, or ‘officials’ speech’, guanhua. But a moment later Xiao’er switches to usual round mouth in ‘daily home dialect of Yangzhou’, Yangzhou jiaxianghua, or ‘speech from the north of the River’, Jiangbeihua.

As for morphology and grammar, square mouth has low density of dialectal grammatical structures, and most dialectal expressions and grammatical features are exclusively found in round mouth,15 for example the colloquial pronunciation variants of certain morphemes with double pronunciation.16 Examples from Wang Shaotang’s performance 1961:

good
MSC: hao
Y: /haa/
好

come
MSC: lai
Y: /laei/
來

persons
renwu
人物

small persons
xiao renwu
小人物

northern speech
Beifanghua
北方話

Beijing speech
Jinghua
京話

5th tone
rusheng
人聲

Xiao’er
小二

so-so Beijing accent
erba Jingqiang
二八京腔

officials’ speech
guanhua
官話

daily home dialect of
Yangzhou
Yangzhou jiaxianghua
揚州家鄉話

speech from the
north of the River
Jiangbeihua
江北話
Table 11.5. Specific phonological features in storytellers’ usage of the Wang school of Water Margin (Bør Dahl 2004: 21).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storyteller</th>
<th>Mouth/talk</th>
<th>1) n/l/r</th>
<th>2) diphth</th>
<th>3) /er/</th>
<th>4) –ru</th>
<th>5) col</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wang Shaotang 1961</td>
<td>square/public</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>square/private</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>round/private</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>(O)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>round/public</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Xiaotang 1992</td>
<td>square/public</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>square/private</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>round</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Xintang 1986</td>
<td>square/public</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>square/private</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>round</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ren Jitang 1989, 1992</td>
<td>square/public</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>square/private</td>
<td>(O)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>round</td>
<td>(O)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen Yintang 1989</td>
<td>square/public</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>square/private</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>round</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>(X)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Litang 1986, 1998</td>
<td>square/public</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>square/private</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>round</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hui Zhaolong 1992</td>
<td>square/public</td>
<td>(X)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>square/private</td>
<td>(O)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>round</td>
<td>(O)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>(O)</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yangzhou dialect</td>
<td>daily conversation</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>(X)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mouth/talk:
square = square mouth, fangkou
square/public = fangkou style in public talk passages, guanbai
square/private = fangkou style in private talk passages, sibai
round = round mouth, yuankou, including both guanbai and sibai passages

Phonological criteria:
1) /n/l/r/ = differentiation of the initials /n/l/r/
2) diphth = diphthongization of certain finals
3) /er/ = retroflex rolled ending of certain morphemes
4) –ru = loss of rusheng tone, 入聲
5) col = use of the colloquial forms of certain morphemes that have two different pronunciations: colloquial bai 白, and literary wen 文

Signatures: X = regularly; (X) = intermittently; (O) = rarely; O = never

² In the performance by Hui Zhaolong, there are two ‘major characters’ speaking in square/public, Zhou Tong 周侗 and Wu Song. Only Wu Song has the loss of rusheng. Cf. note 14 in the endnotes.
Examples 11.5.a Morphemes with ‘colloquial’ (col.) and ‘literary’ (lit.) pronunciations.

(1) 他家
\[ \text{Y: col. /ta-ga/ , lit. /ta-zia/} \]
‘his home’ or ‘that person’

(2) 人家
\[ \text{Y: col. /len-ga/ , lit. /len-zia/} \]
‘another person’

(3) 下子
\[ \text{Y: col. /ha-zr/ , lit. /sia-zr/} \]
‘one time’

(4) 下下来
\[ \text{Y: col. /xia-ha-lae/} \]
‘put down’

(5) 家去
\[ \text{Y: col. /ga-ke/ , lit. /zia-cy/} \]
‘go home’

In a few cases we do find dialectal grammatical forms in the square-mouth dialogue of heroes, e.g. when Wu Song asks Xiao’er about the wine of his tavern, he says:

Example 11.5.b Yangzhou dialect question form

\[ \text{你店中可有好酒?} \]
‘Do you have good wine in your tavern?’

This is a dialectal question form with \textit{ke}, equivalent to MSC alternative question form: \textit{you meiyou hao jiu}？In the Yangzhou dialect we find both forms. Why the \textit{ke}-form is not suppressed in the speech of heroes, but seems to be accepted as a form worthy of ‘high-ups’ is a question that still awaits further research.

11.6. Dialect strata and the question of oral versus written features

In Chapter 1, 1.2 and 1.4, we have already mentioned some of the dilemmas inherent in classifying popular Chinese literature and oral performance arts according to the criteria of ‘oral’ and ‘written’. Presently our main example is an ‘oral’ text in the sense that it is a sound recording, not a manuscript or printed version. It is also an ‘oral’ text in another sense, perhaps even more important: it belongs to an oral tradition with several hundred years of transmission by oral methods (\textit{Yangzhou quyi zhi} 1993: 267–270; \textit{Børdahl 1996: 217–243}). The art
of the Yangzhou storytellers is definitely not comparable to reading aloud from a book, which is a totally different situation, well known from Western radio entertainment and, of course, developed by many actors into high art as well. The quality of various kinds of oral performance is not the question here, only the understanding of what ‘oral’ implies for different art forms.

The fact that the performance is conducted in dialect, Yangzhou dialect, also adds to the ‘orality’ of the text, because dialects are only rarely used in written literature or other written communication in China. However, this dialectal aspect, even though it strengthens the oral side of the text, is not unambiguous with a view to the oral and the written. The published edition of Wang Shaotang’s oral repertoire *Wu Song* (1959), from which the first chapter was scrutinized in Chapters 7 and 8, is precisely an example of dialect literature, belonging to the ‘new storytellers’ books’, *xin huaben*, that were collected and edited in the 1950s-90s. In this written version Wang Shaotang’s dialectal spoken style is kept to a certain degree, but the editors have corrected and rearranged the spoken version considerably. We have discussed this version as an example of written performance literature. Obviously, in the written version the ‘oral’ aspect of the text is very pronounced. This is because the editors have been concerned about keeping the oral style of the performance in the written book. However, as soon as the editors decide to change the original spoken text, they mostly act according to some ‘literary’ model, see also 11.3.

The shifting between the registers of ‘square’ and ‘round’, implies a shifting between sub-strata within the dialect. The whole performance is perceived as being told in Yangzhou dialect. The different registers are not pure imitations of other dialects, but they represent dialectal adaptations to certain normative languages. These sub-strata are connected with geographical differences, *North* versus *South*, i.e Beijing and North China versus Yangzhou and Lower Yangzi area – Capital speech, *Jinghua*, and North Chinese, *Beifanghua*, versus ‘speech from north of the Yangzi, *Jiangbeihua*, and Yangzhou dialect, *Yang-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialectal sub-strata in Yangzhou storytelling</th>
<th>Low-style/‘oral’</th>
<th>High-style/‘literary’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yangzhou dialect, <em>Yangzhouhua</em></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yangzhou home speech, <em>Yangzhou jiaxianghua</em></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech from north of the Yangzi <em>Jiangbeihua</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local officials’ speech, <em>difang guanhua</em></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beijing speech, <em>Jinghua</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern speech, <em>Beifanghua</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials’ speech, <em>guanhua</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More important is the connection to standard normative language versus non-standard dialect, but also the connection to class language – ‘officials’ speech’, guanhua, (in English usually called Mandarin) versus ordinary people’s ‘home speech’, jiaxianghua. The storytellers use ‘local officials’ speech’, difang guanhua, as well as Northern officials’ speech, guanhua, also called Jinghua or Beifanghua.

All of these expressions point to ‘speech’, oral utterances or oral ways of expressing oneself. Nevertheless, the concepts of oral and written (or literary) also play a role here. In Table 11.6 the different concepts of speech are arranged according to the criteria of ‘oral’ and ‘written’, which should be understood as ‘having predominantly associations to low-style oral speech’, versus ‘having predominantly associations to high-style educated (literary) speech’. These associations are implied by the Yangzhou storytellers’ vision as analysed from their performance texts. The associations would most certainly turn out differently, if the point of departure were a Northern performance art.

In his reminiscences Wang Shaotang stresses the importance for the storytellers to learn the pronunciation of the rhymes of the Central Region, Zhongzhouyun, which used to represent the normative pronunciation for the dramatic arts and was apparently based – if ever so loosely – on the pronunciation of the Zhongyuan yinyun [Rhymes of the Central Plains], a rhyme dictionary of the 14th century, reflecting the northern koiné, sometimes called ‘Old Mandarin’, of the Yuan period (cf. NORMAN 1988: 48–52; COBLIN 2000b: 537–538; see also YANG Zhenqi 1991: 34–47). Wang Shaotang was an outspoken upholder of the norm of Zhongzhouyun, to which his slow aristocratic diction in portions of his performance bears witness (Wang Shaotang 1979: 301; see also BØRDAHL 2004). It is, however, obvious from his recorded performance that he plays on the two registers of square mouth and round mouth in a deliberate artistic way, mixing local dialect with more conservative upper-class speaking habits, so that the phonetic and grammatical/stylistic forms fit the speech of different characters and the atmosphere of various descriptive and narrative portions. He does not use a uniform speech register throughout his performance. In fact, he operates basically with three phonologically different styles: square mouth in narration, square mouth in Northern speech (Wu Song throughout and the waiter Xiao’er during the introductory exchanges) and round mouth (in narration by the storyteller and speech by small persons such as Xiao’er). These styles reflect different varieties of speech. While round mouth reflects (with a few exceptions) daily Yangzhou dialect phonology, the two other registers imitate status language. Northern speech, Beifanghua or Jinghua, is adapted to Northern Mandarin which is seen as Wu Song’s natural language in dialogue. However, when Wu Song is thinking (inner monologue) he speaks in round mouth, i.e. Yangzhou home speech, which is felt as more ‘intimate’, lacking the boasting tone of square-mouth talking.

Square-mouth narration is the most interesting idiom with a view to the usage of local officials’ speech, difang guanhua, in Yangzhou. In this style we find a tendency to differentiate /l/, /n/, and /r/ and pronounce diphthongish finals rather than monophthongs, both according to the system of Northern rhymes of the Central Region Zhongzhouyun
中央韻
Rhymes of the Central Plains Zhongyuan yinyun
中原音韻
local officials’ speech difang guanhua
地方官話
Mandarin. But the tone system of Yangzhou, including the rusheng, is intact in this style.

Grammatical and stylistic features of the registers of square and round correlate to a certain degree with written versus oral communication. Square mouth is for example correlated with reading of documents, recitation of poems, more planned and serious portions of the narrative and comment, as well as the poised and well-deliberated diction of the major characters. This kind of speech can therefore be characterized as ‘educated’ or ‘literary’ style – a style that has written features although it is used in spoken communication. This ‘bookish’ speech has a strong element of literary Chinese (also called classical Chinese), wenyan, which enhances the literary or written flavour of such speech behaviour. F. e. four-syllable expressions, typical of wenyan-influenced language, are preponderant in square mouth, e.g.:

Example 11.6.a A passage in square-mouth register, with a number of four- and six-syllable expressions, Wang Shaotang (1961, from the beginning). Literary flavoured passages are marked in blue. Dialectal grammatical structures are in red.

灌口二郎武松在橫海郡柴莊得著哥哥消息，辭別柴進，趕奔山東陽谷縣尋兄。在路非止一日，走了二十餘天，今日已抵山東陽谷縣地界，離城二十餘里。其時十月中旬天氣，太陽大偏西。英雄腹中飢餒，意欲打尖。

Round mouth is correlated to daily conversation in dialogue of ordinary persons, inner monologue (thought) of both categories of characters (also of the heroes), and narrator’s comment, when this tends to be more intimate and talkative. The shifting of register, just like a ‘change of gear’,24 is sometimes abrupt, as when Wu Song and Xiao’er take turns in speaking to each other, sometimes more smooth, as when narration in a detached and serious mode (square mouth) slowly grows more chatting and humorous (round mouth).

Example 11.6.b A passage in round-mouth register with high density of dialectal grammatical structures, Wang Shaotang (1961, from the ending). Dialectal structures are marked in red.

Second Brother from Guankou, Wu Song, was in Henghai County at the estate of Lord Chai when he received news from his elder brother. He bade farewell to Chai Jin, and went off to Yanggu District in Shandong to find his brother. He was not just 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, more than twenty li from the city. 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.

Round mouth is correlated to daily conversation in dialogue of ordinary persons, inner monologue (thought) of both categories of characters (also of the heroes), and narrator’s comment, when this tends to be more intimate and talkative. The shifting of register, just like a ‘change of gear’, is sometimes abrupt, as when Wu Song and Xiao’er take turns in speaking to each other, sometimes more smooth, as when narration in a detached and serious mode (square mouth) slowly grows more chatting and humorous (round mouth).
'Let’s solve the question right now, all right?'
'We make up this evening, please give it to me first!'
'Why do you want that piece of silver?'
'Why do you want that piece of silver, pray?'
'I have my reason why I want this piece of silver. It’s because some days ago your sister-in-law asked me to have a hairpin made for her. But the silversmith of our town doesn’t have good-looking silver, and to take the trip to the city seems a bit far. So my plan was to have a hairpin made for your sister-in-law . . .'
'Take it easy! My sister-in-law is a widow. Why do you make a hairpin for her?'
'Please, don’t suggest that kind of suspicion! It’s not the sister-in-law of the family on your side, it’s a female relative on my side!'
'A female relative on your side! How could that be my sister-in-law?'
'We call each other brothers, I’m older than you, so my wife is of course your sister-in-law, isn’t she?'
'Aha! Not bad, not bad, not bad at all!'
Just as the two of them were standing there and debating, the old innkeeper stepped into the inn . . .

To sum up: The two main registers of Yangzhou storytelling are characterized by different phonological and grammatical systems: Round mouth reflects local daily Yangzhou dialect, Yangzhou jiaxianghua. Square mouth as rendered in the speech of Wu Song reflects Northern Mandarin, in the sense of Northern officials’ speech, Beifang guanhua. However, square-mouth style mostly represents the Yangzhou variety of local Mandarin, difang guanhua, as in the speech of other major figures, and – more importantly – in the narrative passages of square mouth that generally are used for a considerable portion of the performance. The shifting of registers implies an alternating of a more oral, vernacular, low-style idiom with a more literary flavoured, educated, high-style idiom. Therefore what appears on one level as a totally oral and dialectal performance, such as a version of Yangzhou storytelling for the radio, will on another level of analysis turn out to be an intricate web of the oral and the written, reflecting more down-to-earth and more elevated layers of the dialect.

11.7. Storyteller’s dialogue with the audience

Some portions of oral performance appear to be particularly coloured by the oral situation: the storyteller performing face to face with his audience. If the storyteller talks directly to his audience and the audience gives answer or perhaps interrupts his performance with questions, we would indeed have a typical situation of oral communication.
We have already seen in Chapter 2, 2.11 and Chapter 5, 5.2. how storyteller’s ‘simulated dialogue’ with the audience is part of the ‘storyteller’s manner’ adopted for the Ming novel as a written convention, supposedly in imitation of the oral habits of storytellers. How is the storyteller’s interchange with the audience handled in our examples from *Yangzhou pinghua* in oral performance?

After some minutes of narration Wang Shaotang enters into ‘simulated dialogue’ with the audience. He poses a question as if it comes from the audience to himself, the storyteller:

**Example 11.7.a** Simulated dialogue with the audience, question.

你說笑話了·旁的東西有新的·人哪裡會有新的呢?

You must be joking! Other things can be ‘new’, but how can people be ‘new’?

And then he answers his own question:

**Example 11.7.b** Simulated dialogue with the audience, answer.

何嘗不得? 櫃檯裡頭坐了個小老板，二十外歲， 櫃檯外頭站了個跑堂的，十八九歲，大概青年人就謂之新人。

Why not?

Behind the counter sat a young innkeeper, just in his twenties. In front of the counter stood a young waiter, eighteen or nineteen. Probably young people could be called ‘new’ people.

The fact that Wang Shaotang, the storyteller, is the one who puts the question (on behalf of the audience) and then answers his own question is no coincidence. It is a characteristic of the genre: nobody ever really puts questions to the storyteller during a performance of *Yangzhou pinghua*, and the storyteller never expects the audience to answer his questions. The interchange with the audience is truly ‘simulated dialogue’, not real dialogue. This component comes close to the Western idea of ‘rhetorical question’, in Chinese terminology called ‘self-posed and self-answered question’, *ziwen zida*. Maybe one could say that on a scale of more or less ‘oral’ features, true dialogue with the audience would rank as ‘more oral’ than simulated dialogue. 25

The flavour of oral communication which is nevertheless inherent in the storyteller’s simulated dialogue is emphasized by his shifting from serious square-mouth style to more talkative and humorous round mouth at this point.

Storyteller’s comment is often introduced by simulated dialogue with the audience. Thus the storyteller – after the above simulated interchange – continues by adding a comment, ending with a *bon mot* in unrhymed verse:

**Example 11.7.c** Storyteller’s comment.

果然年老的人當然就稱舊人了·俗語說得好：
‘長江後浪催前浪·世上新人趕舊人。’
這也要算得一新。“
Figure 11.7. Storytelling in Yangzhou, 1997. Photo by Jette Ross.
And then it follows that old people might be called ‘worn’ people. The proverb is right:

‘Wave upon wave the Yangzi River flows,

New people overtake the elder generation.’

So people can also be counted as ‘new’.

Even though simulated dialogue and storyteller’s comment apparently belong to the more orally flavoured portions of the performance, imitating a true conversation, these sequences are nevertheless often fixed ingredients of the performance and transmitted from generation to generation. Examples 11.7.a, b, c are thus found both in Wang Shaotang’s performance from the 1950s and from 1961. Moreover the same sequence is found with little variation also in Wang Xiaotang 1992 and in all the versions by later disciples (see 11.8). Later in the story there is much more freedom in the various versions. However, many of the sequences involving simulated dialogue and comment belong to the passages that are more or less fixed ingredients of the performance. The orality of such passages can be discussed. They seem to represent a more talkative and ‘natural’ discourse, adding to the impression of lively oral communication; on the other hand, they are clearly ‘studied’ and well memorized parts, exemplifying the oral transmission of certain ‘formulaic’ entities, but not free and improvised oral communication.

The simulated dialogue with the audience that was a feature of the written novel of Shuihu zhuan (in the Rongyutangben, cf. Chapter 5, 5.2), is here found in present-day storytelling in very much the same form: the narrator (the storyteller) simulating that a person from the audience puts a question to the storyteller and the storyteller answers the question. The fixed character of such ingredients seems to detract from their weight as indicators of ‘oral’ language.

In the following sections we shall discuss the oral and written characteristics of formulaic language of various kinds.

11.8. Uniform passages and set pieces

In Chapter 4 we analysed various kinds of shared language, such as uniform passages, paraphrased passages and formulaic expressions from the tiger tale as written/printed in the jianben and fanben editions of the Ming novel Shuihu zhuan. The phenomenon has been discussed further with a view to drama (Chapter 6), performance literature (Chapter 8) and oral traditions that have been recorded electronically in the 20th century (Chapter 10). Here shared language and formulaic expressions from the two oral versions of Yangzhou pinghua are given special attention in order to investigate further the question of oral and written elements of oral performance.

Among the oral versions of the tiger tale in Yangzhou pinghua, uniform passages of prose narration, such as the almost completely similar passages shared by the jianben editions of Shuihu zhuan, are not found. However, at the beginning of the spoken versions we find passages that are close to being uniform,
i.e. passages of normal prose (not poetry or set pieces) that are shared between several performances with minimal discrepancies. The passages from the oral tradition do, however, deviate considerably more from each other than the uniform passages of the written tradition. They stand somewhere between the uniform and the paraphrased passages (cf. Chapter 4, 4.1–3). The reason why the beginning of the performance shows a number of almost uniform passages is that this ‘first day’ of the saga of Wu Song, called Ten chapters on Wu Song, Wu shi hui, traditionally served as the very first piece taught to the young novice. All disciples of the Wang school would have to learn this beginning strictly according to the master’s words, sentence by sentence. Having the

### Table 11.8. First prose passage from ‘Wu Song fights the tiger’, performed by Wang Shaotang 1961 and Wang Xiaotang 1992:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wang Shaotang 1961</th>
<th>Wang Xiaotang 1992</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>灌口二郎武松在横海郡柴庄得著哥哥消息，辞别柴进，赶奔山東陽谷縣尋兄。在路非止一日，走了二十餘日，今日已抵山東陽谷縣地界，離城二十餘里。其時已近十月，太陽偏西。英雄腹中飢餒，意欲打尖。抬頭一望，只見遠遠的烏酣酣一座鎮市。英雄背著包裹，右手提著一根哨棒，大踏步前進，走去鎮門口。抬頭再望，只見扁磚直砌到頂，圓圈鎮門，上有一塊白礬石、三個紅字：‘景陽鎮’。</td>
<td>灌口二郎武松在横海郡得著哥哥消息，辭别駕，趕奔山東陽谷縣尋兄。在路非止一日，走了二十餘日，今日已抵山東陽谷縣地界，離城二十餘里。其時在十月中旬，太陽大偏西。英雄腹中飢餒，意欲打尖。抬頭一望，一看見迎面是烏酣酣的一座鎮市。他背著包裹，右手提著一根哨棒，踏踏踏踏，大踏步前進。走到鎮門口。抬頭再望，只見扁磚直砌到頂，圓圈鎮門，上有一塊白礬石，三個凹字：‘景陽鎮’。</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Words and phrases from Wang Shaotang’s performance that are not found in Wang Xiaotang’s performance, are marked in blue. Words and phrases where Wang Xiaotang deviates from Wang Shaotang are marked in red.
function of an ABC for the young storytellers, this part of the performance is usually very much the same with every performer (cf. Boërdahl 1996: 221–223).

The mutual uniformity between different versions of the beginning of the tiger tale as told by the Wang School storytellers is a special phenomenon. In the better part of the performance of Wang Shaotang from 1961 almost uniform prose passages with such a high percentage of shared wordings are rare, when the spoken text from 1961 is compared with other performances by the old master himself as well as by his son and other disciples. This kind of uniformity is highly reminiscent of the similarity between written texts that stand in a relationship of mutual derivation (copying from one manuscript or printed version to another). In that sense such passages might be said to tend more towards ‘written’ transmission than oral transmission. To learn a string of sentences completely by heart implicates a fixing of the text that is reminiscent of fixing it in writing. But the oral transmission of Yangzhou storytelling is generally not based on remembrance (fixing) of long passages by heart.

There are, however, certain passages that are meant to be learnt by heart and performed exactly like the master’s word, namely poems and set pieces. As mentioned in Chapter 9, these passages were sometimes noted down in scripts as aide-mémoire for the mature storyteller. But the young disciples had to learn them directly from the lips of their master. In Wang Shaotang’s performance of 1961 there is one such poem.

Example 11.8.a Poem about the good wine in Jingyang Town:

‘造 成 玉 液 流 霞,  
香 甜 美 味 堪 誇, 
開 壇 隔 壁 醉 三 家, 
過 客 停 車 駐 馬。’

洞 賓 曾 留 寶 剣,  
太 白 當 過 烏 紗, 
神仙 他 愛 酒 都 不 歸 家。’

‘他上那裡去了?’
‘醉倒西江月下!’

‘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 makes people tipsy three houses away.  
Guests passing by will pull up their carts and rein in their horses.  
Lü Dongbin once paid with his famous sword,  
Li Bai 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!’
This poem is delivered in the same form with only minimal differences by all the disciples of the Wang School. The language of the rhymed stanzas is elegant and terse in the style of literary Chinese, wenyan, but with one vernacular pronoun, he, ta, inserted (marked in red), a small detail that nevertheless adds considerably to the oral flavour of the declamation. Wu Song’s interruption: ‘Where did he go then?’ is clearly in vernacular language (also marked in red), but in northern official’s idiom, not in Yangzhou dialect where the pronoun for ‘where’ is different, cf. margin note.

In the radio broadcast of 1961 there is no example of a set piece. Therefore we turn to the longer performance by Wang Xiaotang of 1992. Here we find a typical set piece, namely a passage in fixed prose, inserted into the living language of the performance. The example here is the text of the proclamation about the tiger which the authorities have pasted up on the temple wall at Jingyang Ridge:

**Example 11.8.b** Set piece with the official proclamation at the temple on Jingyang Ridge:

特授山東東昌府陽谷縣正堂加十級，記敘十次史為出示曉諭事：照得城東景陽崗地方，乃系通衢要道，來往客商必由之地。不幸今秋突出猛虎，攔路傷人，受害甚苦。地保無論如何要阻攔。每日只許巳，午，未三個時辰，行人結伴，地保鳴鑼，多帶木棒，護送過崗。要如果說店東不攔，地保不阻，行人遇虎所傷，本縣察出，一並重究，決不寬貸。無違特示！

宣和年月日發景陽崗東土地祠實貼。

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.

Note to Example 11.8.b: The set piece is also found in Shuihu zhuan, Rongyutangben 1610, but not in the jianben versions. The set piece in Rongyutangben has almost the same contents as the one above, but the words are all different. Only the expression marked in blue is in common. This phrase also occcurs in the jianben as the innkeeper warns Wu Song.
This set piece is found in the longer versions of the tiger tale from the Wang School, i.e. the versions that correspond to ‘a day of storytelling’, yitian shu. The better part of the sentences are identical, but the versions deviate from each other in about one third of the sentences. The above version by Wang Xiaotang 1992 is somewhat shorter than the other oral versions and also shorter than the version in the book Wu Song 1959. The piece is obviously learned by heart, but some variation is tolerated or inescapable. The style is documentary language in wenyan, with very few traces of vernacular language (inserted by the individual performer). The set piece demonstrates how written language can be used with special effect in the middle of an oral narrative.

This set piece is also found in Shuihu zhuang with more or less the same content, but obviously the oral tradition is not reproducing the set piece of the novel. Only one expression is shared with Shuihu zhuang, belonging to the reservoir of formulary expressions handed down in many oral arts. The independence of the Yangzhou pinghua tradition from the written tradition of the novel is demonstrated among other things by the fact that the text of the proclamation about the tiger has definitely not been lifted from the novel, although the linguistic style of the two documents is very close.

11.9 Formulaic language

In Chapter 4 different kinds of formulaic language as found in the novel were discussed and defined. In Chapters 6, 8 and 10 formulaic language in drama, performance literature and on-stage performance of the focal tale has been treated. Here I want to take a closer look at the fixed phrases (including names of wine brands) used in Wang Shaotang’s oral performance 1961 in order to explore further the inter-textuality of these forms and the question of oral and written features of such forms.

We must keep in mind that this oral version only covers the first part of the tiger tale, ca 30 minutes, i.e. the happenings in the tavern where Wu Song drinks the strong wine. The following events, after Wu Song leaves the tavern and meets the tiger on the mountain ridge, are not covered in this piece.

Among the 11 fixed phrases found in the version of Wang Shaotang, four are shared with several genres (including other versions of Yangzhou pinghua), two with only one other genre besides Yangzhou pinghua, and five are shared only with other versions of Yangzhou pinghua, cf. Table 11.9.a.

If we consider the whole story as told by Wang Xiaotang in 1992, 80 minutes, we get a more thorough picture of the fixed phrases of the focal tale, cf. Table 11.9.b.

The list of fixed phrases in Wang Xiaotang 1992 is about double length of that found in Wang Shaotang 1961, something that seems quite natural since Wang Xiaotang’s performance is almost three times as long. It is noteworthy that there is only one more fixed phrase with a certain currency in other genres, namely 3a) ‘blocking the road and killing people’, lanlu shangren. But on the other hand, expression 3) from the list of Wang Shaotang is lacking here. Most of the extra fixed phrases have no inter-textuality with other genres, but they
Table 11.9.a. Fixed phrases (including names of wine brands) in ‘Wu Song fights the tiger’ by Wang Shaotang 1961, 30 minutes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed phrases in Wang Shaotang 1961</th>
<th>Shared with several other genres</th>
<th>Shared with one other genre</th>
<th>Shared with other versions of Yangzhou pinghua</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge&lt;br&gt;San wan bu guo gang</td>
<td>novel: Shuihu zhuan&lt;br&gt;drama: chuanqi, Kunqu, Jingju&lt;br&gt;storytelling: Yangzhou qingqu, dagushu, Shandong kuaishu, Fuzhou pinghua, Hangzhou pinghua</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) three bowls&lt;br&gt;san wan</td>
<td>novel: Shuihu zhuan&lt;br&gt;drama: chuanqi, Kunqu, Jingju&lt;br&gt;storytelling: Yangzhou qingqu, dagushu, kuaishu, Shandong kuaishu, Fuzhou pinghua, Hangzhou pinghua</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Flavour through the bottle&lt;br&gt;Tou ping xiang</td>
<td>novel: Shuihu zhuan, storytelling: Yangzhou qingqu, Shandong kuaishu, Hangzhou pinghua</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) wine, sex, wealth and vigour&lt;br&gt;jiu se cai qi</td>
<td>novel: Jin Ping Mei&lt;br&gt;storytelling: Fuzhou pinghua</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) makes people tipsy three houses away&lt;br&gt;gebi sanjia zui</td>
<td></td>
<td>drama: Kunqu</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) Collapse before paying&lt;br&gt;Dao suan zhang</td>
<td></td>
<td>storytelling: Hangzhou pinghua</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) the sun was slanting steeply&lt;br&gt;taiyang dapian xi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) not just one day&lt;br&gt;fei zhi yi ri</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) he headed straight to the west&lt;br&gt;xiang xi er qu</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) I can drink thirty bowls and still go straight across the ridge&lt;br&gt;ye chi sanshi wan, tingshen guo gang</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) using his strength on behalf of innocent people&lt;br&gt;wu gu zhi qi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11.9.b. Fixed phrases (including names of wines) in ‘Wu Song fights the tiger’ by Wang Xiaotang 1992

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed phrases in Wang Xiaotang 1992</th>
<th>Shared with several other genres</th>
<th>Shared with one other genre</th>
<th>Shared with other versions of Yangzhou pinghua</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1) Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge  
_San wan bu guo gang_  
三碗不過崗 | novel: _Shuihu zhuan_  
drama: _chuanqi, Kunqu, Jingju_  
storytelling: _Yangzhou qingqu, dagushu, Shandong kuaisu, Fuzhou pinghua, Hangzhou pinghua_ | X | |
| 2) three bowls  
_san wan_  
三碗 | novel: _Shuihu zhuan_  
drama: _chuanqi, Kunqu, Jingju_  
storytelling: _Yangzhou qingqu, dagushu, kuaisu, Shandong kuaisu, Fuzhou pinghua, Hangzhou pinghua_ | X | |
| 3) Cf. Table 11.9.a | drama: _Jingju, Kunqu_  
storytelling: _Hangzhou pinghua_ | X | |
| 3a) blocking the road and killing people  
_lanlu shangren_  
攔路傷人 | drama: _Jingju, Kunqu_  
storytelling: _Hangzhou pinghua_ | X | |
| 4) wine, sex, wealth and vigour  
_jiu se cai qi_  
酒色財氣 | novel: _Jin Ping Mei_  
storytelling: _Fuzhou pinghua_ | X | |
| 5) makes people tipsy three houses away  
_gebi sanjia zui_  
隔壁三家醉 | drama: _Kunqu_ | X | |
| 6) Cf. Table 11.9.a | | | |
| 7) the sun was slanting steeply  
_taiyang dapian xi_  
太陽大偏西 | | X | |
| 8) not just one day  
_fei zhi yi ri_  
非只一日 | | X | |
| 9) he headed straight to the west  
_xiang xi er qu_  
向西而去 | | X | |
| 10) I can drink thirty bowls and still go straight across the ridge  
_ye chi sanshi wan, tingshen guo gang_  
爺吃三十碗挺身過崗 | | X | |
Table 11.9.b, continued

| 11) using his strength on behalf of innocent people | X |
| wu gu zhi qi 無辜之氣 |
| 12) bade farewell to his lord | X |
| ci wang bie jia 辞王別駕 |
| 13) a mottled fierce beast | X |
| banlan mengshou 斑斕猛獸 |
| 14) clearly knowing there was a tiger, he obstinately climbed that tiger mountain | X |
| ming zhi shan you hu, pian xiang hushan xing 明知山有虎偏向虎山行 |
| 15) deep mountains and desolate moors | X |
| shenshan yewa 深山野瑯 |
| 16) blackish rock | X |
| qingpi shi 青皮石 |
| 17) his head was heavy and his feet light | X |
| tou zhong jiao qing 頭種腳輕 |
| 18) if the tiger had a pair of wings | X |
| hu sheng shuang yi 虎生雙翼 |
| 19) in no haste and no hurry | X |
| bu huang bu mang 不慌不忙 |
| 20) it swayed its head and swung its tail, bared its teeth and flaunted its claws | X |
| yao tou bai wei, zhang ya wu zhua 遙頭擺尾張牙舞抓 |
| 21) one word from the noble man is like digging the spurs into a flying horse | X |
| junzi yi yan, kuai ma yi bian 君子一言快馬一鞭 |
| 22) winged game and four-footed beasts | X |
| fei qin zou shou 飛禽走獸 |
only form a network of shared expressions inside *Yangzhou pinghua*, and most of them are only found in performances of exactly the tiger tale as told by the storytellers of the Wang School.

The fixed phrases are all coined in a terse, *wenyan*-like style, sometimes with *wenyan* markers, such as *zhi*, *fei*, *er* (expressions 8, 9, 11), most frequently as four-syllable expressions (expressions 3a, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22). Several of the wine names as well as other fixed expressions are in the form of three-syllable phrases (expressions 3, 6, 16). The fixed phrases cannot be broken up by inserted particles or suffixes. They always occur in their fixed form as petrified language.

In *Yangzhou pinghua* the fixed phrases occur with a certain regularity throughout the performance and they seem to serve as a help for the memorization of each tale, like ‘stepping stones’ along the storyline (cf. Børdahl 1996: 158–160). In this sense they clearly serve an important purpose for the oral performance and add to the oral aspects of the piece.

On the other hand, their grammatical and morphological shape in old-fashioned, literary style points to their relationship to high-style, written literature. Like the poems and set pieces they can be perceived as written/literary decorative inlays in the oral vernacular of the storytelling performance. One is tempted to say that certain literary features of an oral performance enhance the oral effect. On the one hand, these features appear to be helpful for the memorizing of oral material, and on the other hand to have the potential for inter-textual spread, usually between individual performances within the same genre, but sometimes across genres.

### 11.10. Stock phrases, genres and manners

The performance by Wang Shaotang in 1961 only contains one example of meta-narrative markers of the shifting of mode, time or focus (Børdahl 1996: 241), the so-called stock phrases, namely the expression ‘let’s slow down a bit’, *qie man*, a marker of storyteller’s comment. In the full-day performance of Wang Xiaotang in 1992 we find the following two phrases: ‘if not . . ., that is the end of the story, but *bu . . . bian ba*, a marker of storyteller’s comment (cf. Børdahl 1996: 269, 283), and the pre-verse phrase ‘in fact I have a few verse lines in praise’, *wo dao you jiju zan ta*, which occurs before the prose-poem about the tiger (cf. Børdahl 1996: 268, 283). The latter two phrases are also used at approximately the same points in the story by other storytellers of the Wang School (cf. Børdahl 1996: 295, 305, 331, 347). Otherwise stock phrases are almost non-existent in the oral versions of *Yangzhou pinghua*, both in the Wang School and in other Schools (cf. Børdahl 1996: 239–241; Børdahl 2003; Børdahl 2010a). 30

In the book version of our focal tale in *Wu Song* of 1959 the same was the case: there were very few stock phrases, and only one of them was identical with one of those from the novel, the pre-verse exclamation, ‘indeed’, *zheng shi* (cf. Chapter 8, 8.6). The other stock phrase-like expressions were unique to this
text, but shared with those found in the material of oral performances from *Yangzhou pinghua*. In my earlier studies (2003, 2010a) of ‘the storyteller’s manner’ and the usage of stock phrases in Chinese performance literature and oral performances I discuss the orality of the inventory of stock phrases found in the Ming and Qing novels (see also Chapter 2, 2.8–2.11; Chapter 4, 4.7; Chapter 5). Although these phrases are generally considered a reflection of the oral origin of the Ming novels and there are some findings that support this view, it is not less important that the ‘manner’ soon became a literary genre-defining format. In this connection it is significant that the modern storytelling genres that are still alive in living oral tradition do not share a specific set or inventory of stock phrases. On the contrary: each genre may occasionally use a few such phrases, but none of them have a rich inventory of stock phrases that are used in oral performance. Therefore the oral character of the stock phrases seems less pronounced, in other words: such stock phrases do not appear to be a constant and necessary equipment for the oral artist. We can hardly consider these expressions as *markers of orality*. On the contrary: when the storytellers of today occasionally use one of the stock phrases found in the novels, such as ‘indeed’, *zheng shi*, the phrase adds a literary flourish to the passage – as if the performer is playing on his own role as a storyteller ‘in the good old way’.

**11.11. Onomatopoeia and sound imitation**

*Yangzhou pinghua* as a genre is particularly rich in the usage of onomatopoeia, *xiangshengci*, and sound imitation, called the ‘six skills’, *liu ji* (Børdahl 1999a: 236). Various sounds are rendered in various ways, but there is a main distinction between the linguistic ‘sound-words’ or word-like onomatopoeia and the free imitation of sounds, non-word-like onomatopoeia. The word-like onomatopoeia belong to the linguistic system of the language with a phonological, morphological and syntactic usage that fits into the general system of the language. Each such word is related to a certain sound or movement, such as ‘dripping water’, ‘blinking eyes’, etc. The sound fits the dialectal sound system. Most of these word-like entities have Chinese characters to represent them in written versions. On the contrary, the free sound imitations are not part of the language as a linguistic system. These utterances are non-word-like, although they, too, may be represented by Chinese characters in an ad hoc manner (cf. Børdahl 1996: 130–134).

In Wang Shaotang 1961 we find only one instance of sound imitation, namely the sound of the wine being poured into Wu Song’s bowl: ‘Hua-a-a . . .’ [χuα-α-α-α-α-α], which is an example of a non-word-like onomatopoeia (Børdahl 1996: 133). The performance by Wang Xiaotang in 1992 is more typical of the oral performances of my material. Here we find about fifty instances of sound imitation, most of them in the second half of the performance during the fighting with the tiger. There are altogether about twenty different cases of onomatopoeia, including word-like and non-word-like, and most of them occur several times during the performance. They occur with a frequency of about one per minute of performance, but the frequency is much higher during
the second part of the performance, and there are only a few during the first twenty minutes. Therefore there is not a big difference between Wang Xiaotang and Wang Shaotang in this respect.

If we compare the frequency of onomatopoeia in Wang Xiaotang’s performance in 1992 with the written version in the book Wu Song (1959), based on Wang Shaotang’s performance, we find almost the same amount of onomatopoeia. Obviously the edited version of the oral performance has kept the better part of the onomatopoeia from the original oral performance. In the written format of Yangzhou pinghua as printed in the ‘new storyteller’s books’, xin huaben, these sound words are not only allowed; they are rendered quite conscientiously and have not been classified among the superfluous or unwanted elements of the tale. The sprinkling of onomatopoeia in the book version occurs at the same points where we find them in the oral versions, and therefore reflect a faithful attitude towards the oral performance that was the point of departure for the editors. However, one should also keep in mind that the editors might have been influenced by a certain literary model, namely the martial-arts novel. In this written genre that had arisen during the 19th century, apparently as a counterpart to contemporary oral storytelling, onomatopoeia were used abundantly and acquired a genre-defining status (Keulemans 2004: 131, 2007: 71, 78–79).

In the Ming novel of Shuihu zhuan, on the other hand, we only find the word for ‘roaring’, paoxiao, used in both the two jiaben and the fanben editions under study here. This word exemplifies the unclear borderline between some cases of onomatopoeia and action verbs: it has the sense of an action implying sound, ‘roaring’, but is not usually categorized as onomatopoeia, xiangshengci.
In any case it is obvious that the *Shuíhu zhuan* in the chapter of the tiger tale as well as throughout the novel does not render sounds by sound imitation to any great extent. We cannot be sure whether the oral traditions on which the novel was presumably based did not colour their performances by sound imitation, or whether the written format tended to suppress the writing of such utterances. Already during the Song dynasty sound imitation was a special art form, but we do not know if the storytellers of those days practised that art as they have done in Yangzhou during the Qing dynasty and in the 20th century (Borotová 1999: 200, 204–205).

In the drama versions and the versions of performance literature onomatopoeia are likewise rare, so rare that we have not found reason to treat them as a special phenomenon in these texts.

In some of the orally performed genres we find quite a number of onomatopoeia in the tiger tale, but relatively few compared to the *Yangzhou pinghua* versions. The oral versions of the tiger tale as found in *Yangzhou pinghua*, *Yangzhou qingqu*, *Shandong kuaishu* and *Sichuan pinghua* have the following frequency of onomatopoeia:

<table>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Yangzhou pinghua</em></td>
<td>1 (30 minutes)</td>
<td>50 (80 minutes)</td>
<td>3 (35 minutes)</td>
<td>16 (14 minutes)</td>
<td>11 (25 minutes)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It seems natural that a performance genre conducted purely in song, such as *Yangzhou qingqu*, would rarely apply 'mouth acrobatics', *kou ji*. In contrast, *Shandong kuaishu*, a metrically recited genre, seems to have a strong tradition of inserting both word-like and non-word-like sound imitations into the performance. In the *Sichuan pinghua* onomatopoeia also play a prominent role, but the tapping of the storyteller's stick, *xingmu*, appears to take over some of the functions of onomatopoeia. This use of the stick is completely at variance with the way it is used in *Yangzhou pinghua*.

In *Yangzhou storytelling* the word-like onomatopoeia are pronounced in Yangzhou dialect pronunciation, but most of these words are part of a larger inventory of onomatopoeia shared with MSC. The use of such words also has a long tradition in written Chinese, and it is difficult to argue that they are symptomatic of the orality of this art, even if one has a feeling that it is the case.

However, there can be little doubt that the training in the six arts, *liu ji*, of sound imitation, which is a traditional part of the education of the Yangzhou storytellers, belongs first and foremost to the sphere of oral performance. The
sounds imitated in ‘mouth acrobatics’, belong to the non-word-like onomatopoeia. The fact that Chinese writing allows a more or less systematic notation of the imitated sounds shows something about the adaptability of this writing system, but it is by no means a very accurate notation of the various sounds. On the contrary: only if one already is familiar with the ‘six arts’ and the spectrum of sounds that the storytellers usually apply in performance is it possible to guess how those ‘sound characters’ (found in the ‘new storytellers’ books’) should be uttered.

Just like the music or rhythm of certain oral genres is mostly implied in the written version, so the sound imitation of genres like Yangzhou pinghua is also more or less implied or suggested in book editions, but can only be appreciated in full during oral performance.

Notes

1 Wang Shaotang’s following performances for the radio are not so far available for research. It has not been possible to find out if these radio-broadcast recordings still exist and are in reasonably good shape.

2 I received this recording as a CD from the young Yangzhou storyteller Ma Xiaolong (Ma Wei 马偉, b. 1980), when I visited Yangzhou in April 2011. He had bought the recording in Beijing at an antique shop, and I was allowed to use the material for my research. This recording is, as far as I know, still completely unknown to the milieu of researchers and performers of Yangzhou storytelling.

3 Storytellers of the Wang School generally have two ways of ending the story of ‘Wu Song fights the tiger’. If the storyteller will continue his tale the following day, he will end at the point where the two tigers (hunters in disguise) turn up. If the performance is not meant to be continued, the storyteller will usually stop at the point where Wu Song has killed the tiger, and at this point the poem in praise of Wu Song will be recited. Cf. Børdahl 1996: Chapter VIII, compare performances by Wang Xiaotang (to be continued) with the performances of Li Xintang 李信堂 and Ren Jitang 任繼堂 (both not meant to be continued).


5 In the editors’ postface to Wang Shaotang’s Wu Song [1959] 1984: 1111–1131, their principles are stated, among which is the intention to bring the oral tradition back to the ‘logic’ of the so-called ‘original work’, yuanzuo 原作, i.e. the Ming novel Shuihu zhuan.

6 Stencil entitled Wu Song shi hui, Jiefang qian ben, Wang Shaotang shu. ‘Wu Song fights the tiger’ is found on pp. 1–28, but the stencil is incomplete, starting on page 6. A photocopy of this rare document was given to the author by Xu Deming 徐德明, Yangzhou University, in 1989, cf. Sources, Appendix B.

7 The recording from the 1950s that I recently received has not yet been thoroughly researched and the time and place of the recording have not been verified. The contents
of the performance indicate that this recording is from the time when the book version was under preparation, ca 1954–1958.


9 Wu Song shi hui, Jiefang qian ben, Wang Shaotang shu. ‘The tiger’s love story’ is found on pages 12–13, cf. Sources, Appendix B. See also Børdahl 1994a: 43, where Wang Xiaotang’s version is translated and commented upon.

10 Cf. Børdahl 1996: 441–66. The explanations of the terms are according to my informants among the storytellers. See also Yangzhou quyi zhi 1993: 2.45–55.

11 We should note that inner monologue (or thought) is categorized by the storytellers as ‘private talk’, not as dialogue.

12 As I have demonstrated elsewhere, there are minor differences in the way the individual storyteller obtains a distinction between square and round, cf. Børdahl 1996: 85–98. The sound of the voice of Wang Shaotang and his disciples are available on audio- and video-tapes in short extracts at the website www.shuoshu.org, go to > Chinese storytelling > Sagas of storytelling > Water Margin > 2–5. See also Research Database on Chinese Storytelling > The Wu Song Project.

13 The same features are found in the performance of Wang Xiaotang.

14 Cf. the speech of the hero Zhou Tong 周侗 in the performance by Hui Zhaolong 惠兆龍: ‘Meeting Zhou Tong by Chance’ 巧遇周侗 (Yangzhou 1992, also called ‘Sword-play under the Moon’). Zhou Tong is a master of the martial arts who at some point teaches Wu Song. While the speech of Wu Song is rendered in ‘Northern speech’ with loss of rusheng, Zhou Tong’s speech is rendered in difang guanhua in square mouth with rusheng intact, cf. Børdahl 1996: 92; Børdahl (Yi Debo 易德波) 2006: 111. This phenomenon is particularly evident in oral repertoires from other schools of Yangzhou storytelling, such as Three Kingdoms, San guo 三國.


16 This linguistic phenomenon, called ‘different pronunciation of literary and colloquial forms’, wenbai yidu 文白異讀, is widespread and important in many southern dialects, cf. Ramsey 1987: 38–39, 109; Egerod 1956. It is of marginal impact in the northern Mandarin dialects, but in the Yangzhou dialect, one of the most southern of the Mandarin dialects it is clearly manifested in a number of morphemes of daily usage, cf. Børdahl 1990, Børdahl 1993, Børdahl 1996: 124–129; Børdahl (Yi Debo 易德波) 2006: 145–150. See also Coblin 2002: 534. For more details, see Børdahl 2010b.

17 In Wang Shaotang’s radio broadcast of 1961 colloquial forms of jia 家 and xia 下 are heard in round-mouth passages. Note in particular the dialectal form of xiaxia 下下 (not MSC) where the first morpheme is in literary form and the second in colloquial. Other colloquial forms appear in the dialogue between the waiter and the innkeeper, cf. Børdahl 2004: 22, 25.

18 Zhu Dexi proposed the theory that the dialects of China can be divided into those that have the alternative question forms VP bu VP or VP meiyou and those that have the form ke VP, cf. Zhu Dexi 1981 (VP = verbal predicate). According to this study there was no overlapping. However, shortly after the appearance of Zhu Dexi’s study,
the Yangzhou based linguist Wang Shihua published an article where he demonstrated that the Yangzhou dialect is a case of overlapping, in the sense that both forms exist, cf. Wang Shihua 1985.

19 Cf. ZHU Dexi 1985, Wang Shihua 1985, HUANG Jilin 1990, and YUE-HASHIMOTO 1993: 41–48 for details. According to the study by Zhu Dexi the dialect forms with ke VP are quite differently manifested in the various dialects. To consider this form as 'literary' or 'classical' usage or as a remnant of classical grammar in these dialects seems premature, even though such an analysis might be an explanation for the usage of the storytellers.


21 My understanding of the storyteller’s usage of normative language is clearly at variance with that of some Chinese linguists who consider that the storytellers, in order to be understood by audiences outside of the Yangzhou area, tend to use literary language, shumianyu 書面語, which they read out aloud with Yangzhou dialect pronunciation, cf. HUANG Jilin 1988: 23.

22 In the speech of Wang Shaotang I have found some minor differences between round mouth in narration and round mouth in dialogue, cf. Table 11.5. Similar differences are not discernible in the language of his disciples. Cf. BØRDAHL 2004: 20–25.

23 This expression is borrowed from Patric Hanan’s description of the transition from mode to mode in the early Chinese short story, cf. HANAN 1967: 173.

24 In Tianjin, a city famous for its milieu of ‘telling and singing arts’, cf. LAWSON 2011, I was once in 1998 present at a storytelling evening in a local storyteller’s house. I was told that this storyteller was particularly beloved by his audience, most of whom were true aficionados of the art and took great pains to be present at his performances. This storyteller was apparently highly eccentric, waving an enormous fan and beating the table with an equally enormous ‘waking stick’, xingmu 醒目. He was unusually lively and expressive and what was unheard of to me – he entered into dialogue, i.e. true dialogue, with his audience. One had the impression of a clown, exaggerating his role as storyteller to grotesque proportions. Obviously the audience was enjoying the session tremendously. Apart from this experience, I have never seen a storyteller who would engage in true dialogue with the audience.

25 In Wang Xiaotang’s oral performance of 1992 the poem is spoken as follows. A few inessential words are added in this version, giving the poem a vernacular touch (marked in red):

‘造成玉液流霞，
香甜美味堪誇，
開壇隔壁醉三家，
過客停車駐馬。
洞賓曾留寶劍，
太白他當過烏紗，
神仙愛酒都不歸家，’
‘他上那裡去了?’
‘醉倒那西江月下!’

27 Interestingly, by comparing the various versions with the book version in *Wu Song* 1959 and with the pre-1949 stencil, we can see that one storyteller, Li Xintang 1986, is closer to the book version, while another, Ren Jitang 1992, has sentences identical with the pre-1949 stencil, not found in the book. This shows that his performance is closer to the oral transmission from his master, Wang Shaotang, and less founded on the published book.

28 F. ex. in the version by Wang Xiaotang 1992 we find the passage: 要如果說 [if we say that = if] which is in vernacular. But this expression is unique to his performance; 三個時辰 [three watches] is also in vernacular, but this is a formula which is found in almost all versions of the tiger tale, including the *Shuihu zhuan* versions.

29 In his study of *pingshu* and *pinghua* (including *Yangzhou pinghua*), Tan Daxian finds not a few cases of the use of standard stock phrases similar to those in Ming and Qing fiction in *Yangzhou pinghua*. This is in contrast to my own findings in the oral performances recorded in the 1980s-1990s. But the sources of this scholar were apparently from written material, where such phenomena can be interpolations by the editor. His findings from other genres such as *Shandong kuaisu* correspond with my findings, cf. Tan Daxian 1988: 151–158.

30 Cf. Jiang Kun and Ni Zhongzhi 2005: 470. Sound imitation as a professional art is called *kouji* 口技 [mouth acrobatics] in modern Chinese, but during the Song dynasty it was called *yinjiao* 吟叫 [crying and screaming]. It was one of the categories of professional performance arts described in *Wulin jiu shi* 武林舊事 [Old affairs of the Martial Grove] (ca 1276–1290) by Zhou Mi 周密 (1232–1308), cf. IDEMA and WEST 1982: 11, 66.

31 In the *chuanqi* and Kunqu version of the tiger tale sounds are a few times described in the stage instructions, but they do not enter the drama text. In the *Jingju* and *Huaxi* versions there are no such stage instructions, and onomatopoeia is not found in the drama texts. In the *dagushu* performance text there are two cases of onomatopoeia, rendering the sound of pouring wine and the bellowing of the tiger. In the *kuaisu* there are also two cases, rendering the sound of the staff being broken and of Wu Song beating the tiger. In the *Fuzhou pinghua* version there is only one case, rendering the sound of the staff being broken.
The Interaction of Oral and Written Traditions
12

The Interaction of Oral and Written Traditions

12.1. Conclusions and questions

The aim of the previous chapters has been to investigate the interaction of oral and written traditions in Chinese popular literature by narrow reading and analysis of one story in multiple versions. The study focuses on the linguistic building blocks of a storytelling tale existing in many oral and written genres through seven hundred years. The tale of ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’ functions as the example for this study, but the interplay between the oral arts of storytelling and drama vis-à-vis the written literature of novel, drama literature and performance literature is the central concern of these pages.

The legendary hero, Wu Song, is first mentioned in a catalogue of storytellers’ tales from the late Song or early Yuan dynasty (Chapter 2, 2.2). In the plain tale Xuanhe yishi (ca 1300) Wu Song’s name again turns up in the first narrative representation of the semi-historical events around the bandit leader Song Jiang and his men, belonging to the Water Margin complex of tales (Chapter 2, 2.5). Later in the Yuan period the words Wu Song da hu [Wu Song Fights the Tiger] appear as part of the title of a zaju drama (Chapter 6, 6.2). The first textual renditions of the tale are found almost contemporaneously in novel and drama: in Ming editions of the novels Shuihu zhuan and Jin Ping Mei cihua from the late 16th and early 17th centuries and in the Ming chuanqi drama Yixia ji from the late 16th century (Chapter 3, 3.2 and Chapter 6, 6.3–4).

Throughout the Qing dynasty, the Republic and the People’s Republic the novelistic version of the tale was widely disseminated through the Jin Shengtan edition of Shuihu zhuan from 1644. But it was likewise continually transmitted in oral genres of performance. Since the late Ming and early Qing the tale was for ever told and retold, performed and dramatized in China’s oral performance culture. It was a standard item in most of the Chinese storytelling genres, the ‘telling and singing arts’ (Chapters 6 and 8).\(^1\)

The first texts from Song and Yuan where Wu Song is mentioned are highly important for the documentation of early storytelling. The focal tale of the

Wu Song Fights the Tiger
Wu Song da hu
武松打虎

Legends of the Xuanhe Reign
Xuanhe yishi
宣和遺事

play, comedy
zaju
雜劇

Water Margin
Shuihu zhuan
水滸傳

Jin Ping Mei in verse and prose
Jin Ping Mei cihua
金瓶梅詞話

plays of the marvelous
chuanqi
傳奇

The Noble Knight-errant
Yixia ji
義俠記

Jin Shengtan
(1608–1661)
金聖歎
study is not rendered in narrative form in these random texts and pictures, but the various sources are nevertheless treated in some detail in Chapter 2, because of their essential role in linking the written heritage of storytelling to its oral provenance.

The tiger story is documented in verbal form for the first time in the Ming novel *Shuihu zhuan* (Chapter 3). This novel belongs to the very first vernacular prose narratives arranged in sessions or chapters, *hui*, and created at a time when the genre of the novel, the chapter-divided fiction, was finding its form. Although the earliest extant editions of this novel are from before 1540, the copies that include the *hui* of the tiger story are not among the oldest samples of the novel. This chapter is found for the first time only with some of the so-called ‘simple editions’, *jianben*, from the late 16th century and in a ‘full edition’, *fanben*, from 1610. A few years later the story appears in an alternative version in *Jin Ping Mei cihua* (1617).

The connections between early oral storytelling and this new genre seem particularly strong. The format of vernacular prose with some poetry interspersed is close to the format of the previous ‘plain tales’, *pinghua*, that likewise can be argued to stand in a close relationship to storytelling. But the question of the oral sources for the plain tale and novel is intricate, not least because transition from oral to written formats involves a number of factors that are not readily deductible from contemporary sources (Chapter 3). On the other hand, the format of the novel is particularly close to some of the present-day oral storytelling genres in China, traditions that can boast a history of four hundred years of documentation (Chapters 9–11). Knowledge about these living traditions may throw light on some of the shady questions of the novel and its relation to oral models.

At the same time as the tiger story was going through textual transformations in various editions of the novel, it also lived on in oral transmission, both in drama and in storytelling of many kinds (Chapters 7–8). Maybe oral storytelling had some influence on the different textual form of the simple and full editions, the *jianben* and *fanben*? Could this even be the case for the retelling of the story in *Jin Ping Mei cihua*? How should we understand the ‘storyteller’s manner’ of the novel? Is it a reflection of oral storytelling habits previous to the creation of the novel? Or is it a literary invention and perhaps a printing convention for a new written genre? Or both? In the following I shall recapitulate some arguments pro and contra the oral origin of the ‘manner’ and try to give substance to the discussion by adducing material from the study of the tiger tale.

Since 1644 when Jin Shengtan created his successful 70-chapter edition of the *Shuihu zhuan*, the novel version of the story has largely been fixed. But in drama and storytelling such fixation never happened. How far the written and oral legacies of these genres were built on the novel and how far they were built on their own traditions of oral transmission are among the essential questions of this study. Another recurrent question is how fixed phrases, including names and meta-narrative stock phrases, circulated among the various versions and genres, both in oral and written formats.
The textual samples of this study can all be categorized as written or oral, simply on the basis of their physical existence in books or manuscripts versus in electronic recordings of sound (and sometimes videos). One of the most intriguing questions of the study is to explore how oral and written features are intertwined inside both oral and written versions of the focal tale.

12.2. Stock phrases and the storyteller’s manner

One of the questions in the long-standing debate about the oral origin of the novel and short story of China concerns the status of the stock phrases. Were they part of the storyteller’s oral habits, or were they created by literary men in order to simulate the oral performance situation in the written medium? How can we know anything about which features might have been ‘heard’ from storytellers and imitated in writing, and which might be a deliberate literary invention, creating a ‘storyteller persona’ for the written fiction?

Figure 12.2. The manner of oral storytelling. The formal requisites of the Yangzhou storyteller: the folding fan, the storyteller’s stick, the handkerchief, teacup and teapot. Photo by Jette Ross, Yangzhou 2000.
In Chapters 4 and 5, a number of issues concerning the ‘orality’ and ‘literacy’ of these expressions are discussed:

- the usage/non-usage of such phrases in modern storytelling
- the aspect of printing culture and page lay-out in the early history of the vernacular literature
- the dilemma about the ‘essence’ of oral literature – whether ‘orality’ demands a high degree of formulaic expressions, or – just the opposite – that it is the ‘written’ imitation of oral performance that tends towards formulaic language, or perhaps rather that formulaic language is potentially a feature of both oral and written literature
- the status of the early texts and their potential connection to storyteller’s written notes
- the distinction between the form of notes as aide-mémoire for performance and the form of true performances (Chapter 9).

The comparison between the three editions of *Shuihu zhuan* and *Jin Ping Mei cihua* (Chapter 4), and between the plain tale *Xuanhe yishi* and the novel (Chapter 5), allows a number of preliminary conclusions about the usage of these meta-narrative expressions in the earliest prose narratives of our material, respectively the plain tale on Song Jiang and his men (including Wu Song) (around 1300) and the novel editions containing the portion about Wu Song’s fight with the tiger printed around three hundred years later. A discrepancy of three hundred years is considerable and must be taken into account in the argumentation.

The findings from these materials from ca 1300–1600 are in Chapters 6–11 tested in detail against the findings in drama and performance literature from the early 17th century to the present, a period of four hundred years. It is essential to keep in mind that the time distance between the plain tale and the early novel editions is just as long as that between the novel and the better part of the oral-related performance texts that are available for the present study. The true oral performances that are registered in their audio or audio-visual form (1961–2010) are then removed from the earliest sources of the story by yet another century.

12.3. Written and oral features of the narrative format

Alternation between prose and verse is, indeed, a feature that has deep roots in Chinese oral performance genres from the Tang period (618–907) to the present (Mair 1997). In the modern genres of oral prose storytelling, *pinghua* (Lower Yangzi area) and *pingshu* (North China) poems are inserted sparsely and irregularly. The distribution of poetry is highly reminiscent of the Ming novel, *Shuihu zhuang*. In this and other respects the early novel and modern oral prose storytelling are closer to each other than to any other genres.

The prose-verse format of the *Xuanhe yishi* and the novel most likely corresponds to at least one of the genres of oral storytelling, current since the late 13th century or earlier. From the period shortly after the publication of
the three *Shuihu zhuan* editions and *Jin Ping Mei cihua*, there are eyewitness reports about storytelling in this very format, namely prose narration without singing and music, called *baiwen* [plain narration]. That former prose storytelling contained inserted poetry seems to be taken for granted by most scholars. It would, indeed, be unlikely that early storytelling should not include an amount of verse, since the written novels and short stories that so explicitly are ‘simulating’ the oral situation have the sprinkling of verse as a typical genre feature, and this feature is in living tradition in *pinghua* and *pingshu* (Chapter 7, 7.6, Chapter 10, 10.9 and Chapter 11, 11.8).

The fact that the prose-verse format of the novel most likely reflects a style of storytelling that to the best of our knowledge has had a history of seven hundred to about one thousand years in China, does not automatically imply that pre-verse expressions of written genres like the plain tale and the novel, whether formulaic or in a free form, must also reflect directly the oral format of storytelling.

The other categories of stock phrases likewise invite a clarification of inherently ‘oral’ versus ‘literary’ or ‘written’ features. As already mentioned, there are many reasons why one must keep a reserve towards accepting these expressions as ‘left-overs of the technical requirements of an oral performance’ (Idema 1974: 69–72; Ge Liangyan 2001: 64). There are, however, also reasons to defend the formulary phrases of the plain tale and novel (or some of them) as probably true ‘storyteller’s stock phrases’ of a certain period.

### 12.4. Stock phrases and printing technique

If the stock phrases of the novel – in particular the full edition, *fanben*, of the *Rongyutangben* and the *Jin Ping Mei cihua*, did not reflect oral habits of the storytellers who performed during the centuries leading up to the creation of the written novel, why would they appear in the popular written genres? Could they be a kind of printing device, serving both aesthetic and pedagogical aims of book production?

In the novel, the pre-verse formula ‘the poem says’, *shi yue*, has in general a decorative function in addition to its deictic announcement of the following *shi*-poem. The Stuttgart fragment does, however, not use this formula at all; poems are marked in the page layout sometimes only by adding an empty space after each stanza, sometimes by indenting; sometimes you *shi wei zheng* precedes the poems, but not in the chapter with the tiger tale. In the ‘two-in-one’ edition of the *Yingxiong pu* [Tales of heroes], another *jianben* edition, some *shi*-poems are likewise inserted without the pre-verse formula *shi yue*, but the poems are indented throughout and mostly introduced by you *shi wei zheng* or *zhengshi* (Chapter 3, Figure 3.3.a and Chapter 13, Figure 13.1).

However, with the *Shuangfengtangben* the decorative function of the formula *shi yue* is obvious: all *shi*-poems are introduced by this expression and the two characters are placed not in the running line of characters but outside of the lines, comparable to a stage direction of drama; it seems likely that the formula is only meant for the eye and not supposed to be given voice (Chapter 13, Figure 13.2).
The *Rongyutangben* has the formula, too, but only for the first poem in each chapter (Chapter 13, Figure 13.3). This time again it is not placed as part of the running text, but in a separate line, and the decorative function seems to be primary – a kind of textual ornament which marks every chapter beginning.4

As for the plain tale of *Xuanhe yishi*, the original edition is not extant, but it is obvious how a great number of *shi yue* formulas are truly redundant, coming after another pre-verse formula.5 *Shi yue* might be seen as a Chinese invention of a ‘poem colon’, i.e. a colon used specifically for poems. This *wenyan* formula is much older than the vernacular literature, being in use since the earliest texts of the Chinese literary canon in reference to the Confucian classics, as coined in the set phrase ‘the Master says and the Odes said’ *zi yue shi yun*. The situation is not that people would not understand it, if it was spoken, but that it would seem superfluous, or remind of pronouncing [ : ] as ‘colon’ in a spoken performance (see also Chapter 9, 9.6).

**OTHER FORMULAS MIGHT SERVE** more or less similar purposes, insofar as they were perhaps primarily intended to render the printed page easier to read.
They might not have had a corresponding function as necessary markers for a spoken performance. The following stock phrases can be counted among such formulas: the pre-verse formulas you shi wei zheng, dan jian, zheng shi, you fen jiao, zhi jiao, the formulas introducing folk wisdom changyan dao, zi gu dao, and the formulas of narrative transition hua shuo, que shuo, zai shuo, zhi shuo, hua fen liang tou, bu zai hua xia, hua xiu xufan and others.

Verse, as noted, does not need an introductory formula in oral performance, since it is immediately felt from the rhythm and intonation that a poem or verse is being spoken. The same goes for folk sayings. The narrative transition markers are also superfluous in oral performance where a pause, a gesture or a facial expression easily informs the audience that the performer is switching to a new topic or that some time has passed, before the thread is taken up again. Even for a written version in modern print, such expressions are redundant, since the same function is obtained by typographical aids, such as punctuation, quote marks, indentation of new paragraph, etc.

That they also have appeared superfluous (and boring) to the translators of the Chinese novel into European languages, can be observed by the fact that they are only rarely translated at all, and even more rarely translated consistently as 'stock phrases' with a fixed translation for each. As textual markers, aiding readability of the pages in early Chinese print, which had no punctuation and often lacked indentation and other typographical means, the stock phrases might have served a pedagogical purpose vis á vis a readership with only limited education. The features might then have been perpetuated into the later editions where printing technique offered methods that made them superfluous as typographical aid. Convention might have kept them alive.

12.5. Stock phrases and literary 'simulacrum'

The stock phrases might have been created by literary men in order to establish a 'voice' for the vernacular tale in written literature (Chapter 5). According to this argument, these phrases are seen mainly as a written 'simulacrum' of the storytelling situation, in order to facilitate the creation of a respectable (or at least partly respectable) authorial persona for the sprouting genres of novel and short story. If the formulas were created for this purpose, they might or might not reflect actual storytelling. In the literary history of the Chinese novel and short story, it would, however, not be possible to point to an individual author as the creator of these genre characteristics. The plain tales and chantefables are evidence about the existence of this type of formulas in the performance-related literature of the 14th and 15th centuries (Chapter 2, 2.6–15). From the chantefables it is evident that such formulas belonged to the portions that were 'given voice' in performance, since they are part of the metrical verses. They could not be left out without destroying the rhythm, and therefore they cannot be considered mere results of printing technique. But even so, one cannot exclude that 'the storyteller's manner' was originally created to give 'written voice' to a new kind of literature in the vernacular. As soon as these features of...
the new written genre were widely accepted, they might of course be imitated, not only by later writers, but also by the performers of the oral genres.

The stock phrases of the novel that might particularly support this kind of argument are the following: *shuohuade . . . yin he, shuohuade zhi ai shuo zhe qingse er zi zuo shen, kanguan ting shuo*, where the narrator points to himself as 'the storyteller', *shuohuade*, and establishes a conversation between this storyteller persona and the narratee (the audience, *kanguan*). These expressions are absent, not only from the plain tales and *chantefables* (McLAREN 1998: 273, 275), but also from the simple editions, *jianben*, of the novel (Chapter 5).

On the one hand, the formulary expressions of the full edition of *Shuihu zhuan* and *Jin Ping Mei cihua* that are shared with the plain tale of *Xuanhe yishi* are strikingly few. Further, there is a remarkable difference between the simple and full novel editions. The full edition of *Rongyutangben* and the *Jin Ping Mei cihua* both have a much more developed 'storyteller's manner' with a considerably higher number of stock phrases and a more direct demarcation of 'the storyteller' as the narrator (the overt, extradiegetic, heterodiegetic type), while the simple editions, Stuttgart fragment and *Shuangfengtangben*, are closer to the plain tale in being far less open and explicit about the narrator, who is taken for given as a third-person omniscient narrator type (the covert or semi-covert, extradiegetic, heterodiegetic type). The story 'tells itself' in both the plain tale and the simple editions, but in the *Rongyutangben* and *Jin Ping Mei cihua* it 'is told' by an explicit 'storyteller'.

Those texts that stand closer to the beginning of the development of the style and presumably closer to the oral traditions that inspired the style, exhibit less of a storyteller's convention. So the convention might have been created by the literary men as part of their 'literary illusion'. They might have created an 'eternal storyteller' who was closer to an 'ideal storyteller' than any actual storyteller in Chinese oral tradition. This 'ideal storyteller' in the novel and short story, might again have influenced storytellers of later times to a certain degree, so that they adapted – sometimes – to this picture of what a storyteller should be. In the *Wu Song Collection* there are at least two examples of this phenomenon: the narrator of the written version of *Hangzhou pinghua* and the oral narrator of the *Sichuan pinghua* (Chapter 7, 7.9 and Chapter 10, 10.9 and 10.11).

In oral performances of *Yangzhou pinghua* from the 20th century, metanarrative stock phrases are basically absent. But 'simulated dialogue' with the audience is a prominent feature of the art. However, rhetorical questions and answers are conducted without the use of formulaic stock phrases (cf. Chapter 11, 11.10 and Chapter 12, 12.8). This living tradition testifies to the fact that metanarrative stock phrases, often called 'storyteller's stock phrases', are by no means a necessary expedient of storytelling.

### 12.6. The colloquial flavour of stock phrases

If the stock phrases of the full edition of the novel *did* reflect oral habits of the storytellers who performed during the centuries leading up to the creation of the written novel, *how* would we know?
Most stock phrases are colloquial and play with words that belong to the oral situation of storytelling (Chapter 5, 5.2). The language in which most of the stock phrases are coined is decidedly colloquial, *baihua*. Some of these simple phrases contain words and grammatical markers that belong definitely to the vernacular, and are not part of *wenyan* discourse, or would not be used in *wenyan* in this combination, such as *de* in *shuohuade*, *liangtou* in *hua fen liangtou*, *xiu* in *hua xiu xufan* (cf. 12.4). It is only a couple of the verse-introductory phrases that are coined in *wenyan*, i.e. *shi yue* and *you shi wei zheng*. Several of the stock phrases explicitly refer to ‘telling’, *shuo*, ‘listening’ *ting*, and ‘looking’ *jian*, as if encouraging the audience of an oral performance to listen and look during the telling of each ‘session’ *hui*. This very ‘session’ refers also clearly to the ‘returns’ of the storyteller for each instalment of his saga.

Most of the stock phrases are built with word combinations based on ‘tell’ *shuo*, ‘tale’ *hua*, ‘listen’ *ting*, and ‘look’ *jian* (marked in red), such as:

- *que shuo*, *zhi shuo*, *shuo shi chi*, *hua shuo*, *bu zai hua xia*, *hua xiu xufan*, *hua fen liangtou*, *shuohuade*, *qing ting, ting shuo*, *qing ting xia hui fenjie, zhi jian*, dan *jian* (cf. Chapter 5, Tables 5.6.a and 5.6.b).

A considerable number of the stock phrases or words that are frequently part of the stock phrases are found inside the dialogue between the characters or inside paragraphs of straightforward narration in the plain tale and the novel. This seems to me a strong argument that the expressions had a ‘life’ in the oral conversation of the time, apart from being (perhaps) part of the storyteller’s stock-in-trade. Embedded in the character’s dialogue are found phrases such as *que shuo*, *zhi shuo*, *shuo shi chi*, *hua shuo*, *bu zai hua xia*, *hua xiu xufan*, *hua fen liangtou*, *shuohuade*, *qing ting, ting shuo*, *qing ting xia hui fenjie, zhi jian*, dan *jian* (cf. Chapter 5, Tables 5.6.a and 5.6.b).

### 12.7. The Oral-Formulary Quality of Stock Phrases

Even though the phrases might be part of the common colloquial speech of the time, the frequency and regularity with which they are used in the plain tale and novel, particularly in the full editions, such as *Rongyutangben* and other *fanben* as well as *Jin Ping Mei cihua*, might not necessarily reflect the oral practice of storytelling. It might be in this respect that wielders of the pen had created their own ‘storyteller’s manner’, that is by using a set of colloquial expressions to design the framework of their tales.

The notion that oral performance tends toward repetitiveness and formulary language is an argument for taking the stock phrases as a ‘natural’ ingredient of the original form of storytelling that presumably is the source of the vernacular fiction. But there is the possibility that the literary men who wrote down the vernacular, colloquial Chinese *baihua* 白話 literary Chinese *wenyan* 文言 storyteller *shuohuade* 說話的 tell *shuo* 說 listen *ting* 聽 look *jian* 見

don’t tell *xiu shuo* 休說 let’s stop the small talk *xiyan bu dao* 閒言不道 have a tale to tell *hua shuo* 有話說 in fact *yuanlai* 原來
plain tales and later the novel and short story, consciously or unconsciously, accentuated this feature when they created their vernacular written texts. They might have been ‘overdoing’ it, so that the new written genres acquired characteristics that were ‘literary’ in the sense that they were not reproductions of oral storytelling, but artificially written storytelling, a kind of well-meant caricature. However, a caricature that does not resemble the person who is drawn is not a good caricature. Therefore in the end this argument supports the idea that the stock phrases did in fact have oral formulas as their model.

12.8. Orality and literacy of stock phrases

The particular set of stock phrases used for long and short fiction during the Ming period could have both oral and written models, and might also have had functions both in oral storytelling and in the written genres. These purposes might be partly overlapping and partly different.

The individual stock phrases that constitute the ‘storyteller’s manner’ of the Jin Ping Mei cihua, the Rongyutangben and Shuangfengtangben – and to a lesser degree of the Stuttgart fragment – have obviously individual origins and individual developments in the history of the language, both oral and written. In their totality – in the context of the Ming vernacular genres – they are essential in adding the flavour of ‘storytelling’ to the piece, but as individual words and expressions their origins and functions are disparate and manifold.

When some stock phrases are coined in wenyan and others in baihua, this does not imply, as mentioned above, that only those in baihua are ‘oral’, while those in wenyan are ‘unspeakable’. It only means that they belong to different registers. The wenyan stock phrases would add to the high style of the passages where they occur, while the baihua phrases would indicate the neutral or low style of the passages. For example, the wenyan tag ‘said’ yue, seems neutral in the Shuangfengtangben (functioning as a colon), but as a tag for poetry, shi yue, it does indicate a solemn tone, connected with verse recitation. In the Jin Ping Mei cihua the wenyan tag yue is found throughout the first part of Chapter 1, the so-called prologue, and adds to the serious or mockingly serious tone of this portion. As soon as the story proper begins, the tag is changed to the colloquial dao.

With a view to the literary function in printed books, there is in principle nothing that prevents the stock phrases from fulfilling both narrative functions as signals of the ‘storyteller’s manner’ and at the same time functions of layout for easy reading and for aesthetically satisfying page layout. These functions are not mutually contradicting, quite the opposite. The reasons for the poetry inserted in oral prose narrative for creating a rhythm of telling and chanting/singing, can easily be transferred to the medium of writing and reading where the need for – or pleasure of – variation is the same.

The Stuttgart fragment definitely has very little of the ‘manner’. The sparing use of stock phrases and the lack of simulated dialogue with the audience is a characteristic shared with extant scripts from Yangzhou storytelling, Yangzhou pinghua (late Qing and Republic) (Chapter 9). The explicit ‘manner’ found in
Rongyutangben only partly corresponds with that of oral performance in the Yangzhou pinghua tradition during the 20th century (Chapter 11, 11.10). The Yangzhou storytellers do occasionally – during performance – refer to themselves as ‘the storyteller’, shuoshude, in simulated dialogue with the audience, and they often use the first-person pronoun, wo, in reference to the narrator, i.e. the storyteller, so that they clearly have an overt narrator like the narrator of the Rongyutangben and Jin Ping Mei cihua. But stock phrases, like those considered the backbone of the ‘storyteller’s manner’ and used in the Rongyutangben and Jin Ping Mei cihua throughout, are not found in the language of the Yangzhou storytellers; nor do they use modern equivalents of these stock phrases.

In other oral genres the usage of stock phrases is also slight (Chapter 10). None of the sample texts for this study apply a contingent of such phrases, similar to the set of stock phrases used in the Ming novel in its full form. From this point of view the use of stock phrases in the Rongyutangben and Jin Ping Mei cihua might be considered either a reflection of former storytelling habits that have disappeared in the modern genres, or a primarily literary form that perhaps never had any correspondence in the oral genres.

12.9. Textual sharing and written/oral derivation

The sharing of episodes, poems, fixed phrases, proper names and stock phrases is typical of both oral and written transmission (Chapters 4 and 8). The fact that items of content, sentences and phrases are found in both the simple and full editions of the novel indicates their relation to the complex of oral and written versions of the story, but does not in itself point to textual borrowing between the printed versions (or rather between earlier editions related to those still extant). However, when two or more versions of the tale share a particularly large number of these textual items, the relationship between them would seem particularly close. But the closeness of the relationship could be based on more than one kind of proximity.

Evidence for a close written relationship of derivation between versions is most apparent from those identical or almost identical passages that do not display a particularly ‘memorable’ form (Chapter 4). When non-marked language, such as that found in longer passages of narration, is repeated in exactly the same form and sequence, it would indicate a written relationship, based on borrowing, i.e. copying. Since such passages – in contrast to the poems, fixed phrases, set pieces and important dialogue – apparently do not circulate in oral society and are not shared between different genres of the tale, their uniformity would most likely point to the milieu of book production, not to oral transmission.

The relationship between the jianben and fanben versions of Shuihu zhuan as exemplified by the tiger tale is complicated. Jin Ping Mei cihua’s retelling of the story represents still another case. The poems shared between the novel editions show minor differences, which could of course be the result of editing or sloppy printing (woodcutting). But the differences are within the limits of what would also be acceptable in oral transmission as known from the 20th
Table 12.9.a. Sharing and variation: Beginning of ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’ in oral performances of Yangzhou storytelling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wang Shaotang 1961</th>
<th>Wang Xiaotang 1992</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>radio broadcast</td>
<td>private recording</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

横海郡柴進留賓
景陽崗武松打虎
横口二郎武松在横海郡柴莊得著哥哥消息，辭別柴進，趕奔山東陽谷縣尋兄。在路非止一日，走了二十餘天，今日已抵山東陽谷縣地界，離城二十餘里。其時十月中旬天氣，太陽大偏西。英雄腹中飢餒，意欲打尖。抬頭一望，只見遠遠的烏酣酣一座鎮市。英雄背著包裹，右手提著一根哨棒，大踏步前進，走到鎮門口。抬頭再望，只見扁磚直砌到頂，圓圈鎮門，上有一塊白礬石，三個紅字：‘景陽鎮’。

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

Second Brother from Guankou, Wu Song, was in Henghai County at the estate of Lord Chai when he received news from his elder brother. He bade farewell to Chai Jin, and went off to Yanggu District in Shandong to find his brother. He was not just 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, more than twenty li from the city. 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 the distance a pitch-black town. Our hero shouldered his bundle and holding a staff in his right hand, marched forwards in big strides, making his way to the gate of the town. When he raised his head again and looked up, he saw the wall piled up with flat bricks all the way to the roof and the round city-gate. Above it there was a whitewashed stone with three red characters: ‘Jingyang town’.

Note: The portions that are in common are in black; deviations in Wang Shaotang’s performance are in blue, those in Wang Xiaotang’s performance are in red. In 1992 the radiobroadcast by Wang Shaotang was not accessible to any of the storytellers; it became available only in 1998. The other storytellers of the Wang school tell this portion with the same amount of variation – none of them are alike. Recordings of several tellings by the same storyteller also show a similar degree of variation. Further on in the story the variation between the versions becomes considerably more pronounced. This is because the first portion has been rehearsed with particular care by all the storytellers of this school. (Børdahl 1996: 221, 226–228, Chapter VIII)
12. The Interaction of Oral and Written Traditions

...century. Therefore the poems might have been in living oral transmission at the time when the early manuscripts for Shuihu zhuans and Jin Ping Mei cihua were put together, and the differences might be a consequence of various oral versions in circulation. In Chapter 4, 4.6 we illustrated the linguistic difference between the Rongyutangben and the Jin Ping Mei cihua versions of a prose passage from the tiger story. This variation could reflect not only written activity, i.e. rewriting of the passage, but it could also reflect oral memorization, corresponding to the variation found between different storytellers of the same school in 20th-century Yangzhou storytelling, cf. Table 12.9.a.

...If the story was written into the Jin Ping Mei cihua by a person who was close to a storytelling milieu and knew lots of stories and songs by heart, there would be nothing very strange in the fact that the version given in this novel had bits and pieces in common not only with the Rongyutangben, but also with the two jianben. It could have been an oral version that was the source for the Jin Ping Mei cihua, and not necessarily a rewriting by an author with several book editions of Shuihu zhuans at hand (Chapter 4, 4.4).

...But for the Shuihu zhuans editions, the narrative text portions in prose do, in all probability, point to written transmission, but the direction of the textual transfer represents a puzzle: if the prose passages shared between the jianben and fanben are isolated and read apart, they correspond with little divergence to the entire text of the tale as rendered in the two jianben, the Stuttgart fragment and the Shuangfengtangben. In other words, the entire tiger tale of the jianben is embedded in the Rongyutangben as an almost continuous string of text (Chapter 4, 4.6, in particular Tables 4.6.a and 4.6.b).

...The shorter text of the Stuttgart fragment and Shuangfengtangben (or an earlier master text from which these editions might be derived) could have been the source for the Rongyutangben. According to this line of thought the Rongyutangben would then be an amplified version, created in part by copying the whole text of a simple edition bit by bit, in part by developing sentences from each bit into more lively and well-turned expressions of vernacular language of the time, as well as adding extra passages at every turn of the story. We may imagine this activity as a creative author’s contribution. However, this kind of activity would remind no less of the way a storyteller of recent times would handle a script, if he owned one (Chapter 9). Moreover, it would also be the way he would handle his oral ‘mental text’. The difference between oral elaboration of a story from the tradition and written ‘creation’ could be minimal. A well educated aficionado of the oral tradition or a literate storyteller might be our best guess for the scribe of the fanben manuscript that was the ultimate model for the Rongyutangben.

...However, the opposite – a condensation (amputation) of the full edition Rongyutangben (or an earlier text similar to it) into a simple edition, jianben – cannot be excluded. The scenario for this process is the printing shop. The motive behind the jianben is then the shop-owner’s wish to bring out cheap and short editions, with little care for smooth language and quality woodcutting. This view of the relationship between fanben and jianben does, however, not exclude that the format of the jianben represents an earlier stage of the novel...
as a genre, although the samples that are still extant might be derived from a *fanben* version.

A number of features in the Stuttgart fragment and the *Shuangfengtangben* corroborate the view that these editions represent an earlier *stage* (which is not the same as an earlier master text). The less explicit ‘storyteller’s manner’ with only a few stock phrases and rhetorical questions to the audience, but no overt declaration of ‘the storyteller’, corresponds well with the evidence from the Song-Yuan plain tale, *Xuanhe yishi*, and the early Ming *chantefables*, while the accentuated ‘simulacrum’ in the *Rongyutangben* and the *Jin Ping Mei cihua* points to a later stage of the genre of the novel.

Speaking of ‘earlier’ and ‘later’ stages of the novel, it should, however, be explicitly clarified that both could exist side by side as different genre conventions, in the sense that there might have been two contemporary subgenres of the novel, the simple editions, *jianben*, representing one type and the full editions, *fanben*, another type (see PLAKS 1987: 301; GE 2001: 106–109).

In the following section we shall reconsider the question of storyteller’s script versus storyteller’s performance and suggest a link between the *jianben* as cheap and short novels (chapbooks) and storyteller’s notebooks or scripts, *jiaoben*.

### 12.10. Notational format versus script-like format

Based on the comparison of shared passages, fixed phrases and stock phrases, on the use of *wenyan* versus colloquial language (including dialectal expressions) in the several editions, an accumulation of diverging features among the four novel versions is apparent. Correspondence between certain features of the novel editions and *pinghua* storytelling still in living tradition is striking: 1) some features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 12.9.b. Imaginary tree of derivation for the <em>Shuihu zhuan</em>.</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Shuihu zhuan</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>storyteller’s script of <em>Shuihu</em></td>
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<td>↓</td>
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<tr>
<td>edited version of storyteller’s script = <em>jianben</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>early format of <em>Shuihu zhuan</em> as a novel = <em>jianben editions</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>later elaborated <em>jianben</em> of <em>Shuihu zhuan</em> = <em>fanben editions</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
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<tr>
<td>shortened editions in <em>jianben</em> format ↔ <em>fanben</em> editions</td>
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<td>extinct after Ming</td>
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<td>↓</td>
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<tr>
<td>continued as the standard format of <em>Shuihu zhuan</em> as a novel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Note: The asterisk * indicates imaginary non-extant manuscripts and editions.
tally with the performance of storytelling as oral text; 2) other features tally with the aide-mémoire of storytellers – the storyteller’s script, jiaoben.

Obviously, a printed text cannot ‘represent’ a performance in the way of an audio- or video-recording. A notational version of a storytelling session, based on word-by-word transcription of the spoken utterances (as fossilized in electronic formats, radio, audio-tape, video, etc.), is probably the closest approximation between a written/printed text and its orally performed counterpart or source text. If a written text strives to render an oral performance closely, sentence by sentence, whether based on stenographic writing or on writing from a good memory of an overheard performance, this is also sometimes called a notational version. A complete congruence between the performed and the written version would not be likely in this case, but the similarity would be dependent on the ability and interest of the scribe in rendering truthfully the oral version.

An essentially different format is that of the script, the aide-mémoire of professional performers. From both historical research and modern fieldwork on oral narrative arts in China it is clear that the form of scripts is highly genre-dependent. In some genres, such as the Ming chantefables, the printed texts seem to display a format where a notational, or near-notational, complete text serves at the same time as aide-mémoire during performance, because the verse portions are dominating, and these must be performed ‘by heart’ or ‘as written’.

In other genres, there is a considerable distance between the format of the script and that of the performance. Such is the case in the 20th-century Yangzhou storytelling, where prose is the dominant form of the performance. Evidence from storyteller’s scripts from late Qing and Republic, cf. Chapter 9, shows that only verse portions are rendered word by word in the manuscript as they are expected to be performed. The prose passages are condensed, abrupt, with semi-wenyan short-hand formulas, occasionally sloppy to the point of unintelligibility for the outsider, and representing (by count of syllables, zi) only a fraction of the corresponding performance.

In the relationship between a script and a performance one cannot say that the script is primary and the performance secondary, nor can one say the opposite. They do not stand in a derivative relationship, but exist side by side. The example of Yangzhou pinghua shows that usually it is impossible to establish with any certainty the origin of an oral repertoire. A script is sometimes datable, but this does not necessarily indicate anything about the origin of the repertoire which is usually much older. Storytelling is not taught with the help of scripts (BØRDHAHL 2005: 235–244; BØRDHAHL, FEI LI and HUANG YING 2004: 120–121). The young aspirant storyteller was traditionally taught only by oral-aural methods of listening and imitating the master. Scripts are not obligatory to the existence of a repertoire. Many repertoires exist without scripts. Scripts may be written at any point of the history of an oral repertoire, and they are personal, private memory books, kept secretly in the families of storytellers. They do not have an authoritative function, but serve as something to ‘fall back on’, if memory should fail.

The Stuttgart fragment and the Shuangfengtangben – with their compact form and laconic short-hand style – might have roots in script-like manuscripts.
The original master text for this line of editions could have been an edited version of a storyteller’s manuscript aide-mémoire. Another plausible possibility is that the script-like style, concise and short, with certain wenyan formulas and old-fashioned language, was an alternative genre convention in itself for the novel, a convention that survived in the chapbook production of many less famous, but widespread novels in Chinese popular culture (Idema 1974: 120, 134; McLaren 2005: 176 n1; Brokaw 2005: 189).

The fanben version of the Rongyutangben, on the other hand, would seem to imitate an actual performance to a much higher degree. The vernacular language of this edition is smooth and subtle, apparently closely reflecting the contemporary grammar of the spoken vernacular of North Chinese.

At the same time this version in the fanben style exhibits a deliberate shifting between high-style and low-style register, and even dialect (cf. Chapter 11, 11.4). It is noteworthy that the passages that are most clearly marked as literary Chinese, wenyan, belong to the dialogue – mimetic of spoken words (cf. Chapter 9, 9.4–9.7.) Dialogue is usually the part of the novelistic genre that would seem to stand in the most direct relationship to spoken, oral language. When the major characters speak in the idiom of wenyan, the most obvious reason seems to be the influence from historical written works. There is also a possibility that this style is a reflection of the formal spoken language of upper-class people, speaking the koiné of the period, which might have been coloured by literary phraseology. And in the third place, this feature might have been taken over from drama.21 This characteristic is a reminder that a simplistic correlation between ‘literary Chinese’, wenyan, and ‘literacy’ on the one hand, contra ‘vernacular Chinese’, baihua, and ‘orality’ on the other hand, must be evaded.

We have no way to know the exact style of a hypothetic first master text to which the Rongyutangben can be related by the evidence of written derivation. We can only make guesses on the basis of those editions that have survived, such as the Rongyutangben. But if the forerunner of the Rongyutangben, indeed, is to be imagined in the style of the later fanben, such a version seems closer to an actual performance of storytelling (as we know it from the twentieth century) than that of the jianben versions.

This early or proto-fanben edition could not be a notational version in the modern sense, simply because there were no means to reproduce an oral performance precisely as heard. It would necessarily have to be based on either memory of performance witnessed or it would have to be a recreation by a person who was well versed in the storyteller’s repertoire and was – so to say – able to ‘tell’ the story by means of his brush, tell it in the way of a storyteller to the paper. These two ways would only be ‘one way’, if we are speaking about a professional storyteller, because he would – if evidence from the modern period may be seen as relevant – have learnt the repertoire from his master by listening and memorizing. But this scenario would demand a ‘literate’ storyteller. The exceptional thing would not be a ‘literate storyteller’, because such persons have existed throughout the history of Chinese storytelling. The unusual about this scenario of the creation of the fanben proto-type is that literate storytellers would usually not need notational versions, and if
they wrote something, they would rather write a script, something closer to the two *jianben* versions.

Writing a ‘full’ version of the tale, not as aide-mémoire for performance, but *for reading* – where reading would take the place of listening to the storyteller – is the pivotal point where storytelling as a traditional oral genre and the novel, a sprouting written genre, could have been linked. The feature of the usage of stock phrases in the *fanben* seems to bear witness to the activity of literary editors, caring for assimilating the tale to certain genre demands that would at the same time adapt the text to a fixed printing convention.

It is tempting to speculate once more on the old ‘prompt-book theory’ about a connection between early vernacular fiction and storytellers’ scripts. The two scripts of Yangzhou storytelling from around 1880 to 1923 both exhibit an extremely laconic style – cut to the bone. One might wonder if any of the early pieces of plain tale, *pinghua*, or story, *huaben*, that have been considered candidates as storyteller’s scripts would really qualify as such. The short-winded and completely unadorned style of the Yangzhou scripts, bordering on the incoherent and sketchy, and the almost total absence of ‘storyteller style’ (such as narrative markers or simulated communication with the audience) are pertinent features in perfect harmony with the actual use of the scripts.

Evidence from these true scripts would fit better with the view that the early short and long fiction printed in woodcut editions has gone through considerable editing and layout adaptation before being printed as books. As scripts for a living performance tradition, this format would seem to incorporate an amount of unnecessary and superfluous elements. The *jianben* editions might, however, be closer to such a script-like format, while the *fanben* would belong to a performance-like format that would have demanded a much more subtle handling of language and style. Such literary rewriting might be closer in many aspects to the actual storytellers’ performance of the time than any potential scripts. The leap from oral tradition to the first oral-related written works seems to have Homeric dimensions, and there is no easy explanation how this could happen, neither in the West, nor in the East.

The *Jin Ping Mei cihua* version of the tiger story has always been considered the work of an ingenious author, albeit anonymous. Maybe the last word has not been said in this matter. The way the story is retold could point to the literary study where a scholar-author with a large library is flicking through a number of his editions of the *Shuihu zhuan* and rewriting the tale with a free hand, while still keeping a lot of the formulations that he picks from here and there, not sticking to one edition (Chapter 4, 4.4). But maybe there is also another possible scenario. Could one imagine this chapter – if not the whole work – as based on oral performance genres, including both storytelling, *shuohua*, *pinghua*, and story-singing, *cihua*, *tanci*. Could the ‘master text’ of the *Jin Ping Mei cihua* version be an oral version in the memorized repertoire of a gifted storyteller/story-singer? The committing to paper of the work would imply the same special circumstances as those described above for the proto-text of the *Rongyutangben*. From the point of view of the oral milieu and the necessities

plain tale *pinghua*
story *huaben*
of the oral performers, a written work of such enormous volume would be strange, indeed. But when the *Jin Ping Mei cihua* was conceived the idea of creating books from oral materials was already well established with plain tale, *chantefable*, and several novels available. But the fact that books were at hand should not prevent us from realizing that the oral culture was simultaneously alive and could deliver material for new books directly.

12.11. Intertextual Lines

The fact that drama, performance texts and oral performances from the 16th century to the present follow fairly closely the main plot of the tiger tale as rendered in *Shuihu zhuan* does not necessarily indicate a tight relationship to the novel. The tale is so widespread in Chinese culture, both written and oral, that the source for each text in drama and storytelling can hardly be determined on the basis of storyline.

The drama versions from the national genres of *chuanqi*, Kunqu and *Jingju* share a basic storyline that differs slightly from that of the novel (Chapter 6, 6.3, and 6.6). The dramas are textually related, but the traditions might be based on oral transmission as much as on written derivation, since only verse portions are preserved through these traditions word by word. The local drama of *Huaiyi*, on the other hand, stands in a completely different tradition, closer to some of the storytelling arts Chapter 6, 6.7–9).

Investigating the finer ingredients of the storytelling versions in written and oral formats, most of the performance texts (with *Hangzhou pinghua* as a prominent exception) seem to draw on local oral pools of storytelling materials, rather than directly on the written novel. Certain details in storyline and phraseology point to a common oral milieu for some of the performed genres, such as the *kuaishu* and the *Shandong kuaishu*, the *dagushu* and the *Shandong kuaishu*, the *dagushu* and the *Fuzhou pinghua* (Chapter 8, 8.1, 8.3, 8.7–10).

In narrative technique the mutual similarity of some storytelling genres is even more pronounced. In their immediate form, the *dagushu*, *kuaishu* and *Shandong kuaishu* share a number of features from northern oral genres, such as prosodic features, fixed phrases and stock phrases, together with some special characteristics of the plot. The *Yangzhou qingqu* is closer to drama than any of the other performance genres, in particular to *Huaiyi* drama. The two *pinghua* genres from Yangzhou and Hangzhou are very close in narrative form, but in this case one text is obviously created as written derivation (*Hangzhou pinghua*) from the novel *Shuihu zhuan* and from the *Yangzhou pinghua* printed version. The *Fuzhou pinghua* is a decidedly different genre from the two other *pinghua* genres, since it displays a truly prosimetric form, meant to be alternatively sung, recited and told. This genre shares a number of features with the *dagushu*.

Interestingly, several of the versions of the tiger tale in performance literature have features that point to a closer relationship to the *Jin Ping Mei cihua* (or oral traditions from which the *Jin Ping Mei cihua* might have drawn its story material) than to the novel ‘proper’, the *Shuihu zhuan*. For example, the *dagushu* enumerates in the prologue portion historical and fictional persons
Figure 12.11. Two sheets of popular prints representing Ten Chapters of Wu Song in twenty episodes. The first episode is ‘Fighting the tiger’ (upper print, upper row, first picture frame to the right). The characters are wearing theatrical attire, but the folk artist draws on narrative material from both novel, drama and storytelling (Riftin 2007: 125).
that are also mentioned, much in the same way, in Chapter 1 of the *Jin Ping Mei cihua*, while these names are not found as a similar ‘set’ in the *Shuihu zhuhan*.²³ The episode of the Dong Family Temple where Wu Song’s fight with the Li family’s staff fighters occurs, also seems to have some faint resonance in *Jin Ping Mei cihua*, in particular if evidence from the *huaben* of *Yang Wen lanluhu zhuhan* [*Yang Wen, the ‘Road-Blocking Tiger’*]²⁴ is taken into account. Nothing is mentioned about this in the *Shuihu zhuhan* editions, neither in simple nor in full editions. The name of the wine ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge’, *San wan bu guo gang*, a name that is given much emphasis in the novel of *Shuihu zhuhan* and in drama, as well as in most versions of performance literature, is left unmentioned in the *dagushu*, *kuaishu* and in *Jin Ping Mei cihua*.²⁵ Even if we may notice such resemblances, it is clear that the performance texts cannot have borrowed directly from the written page of the *Jin Ping Mei cihua*. We find no shared text between them, but on the contrary several of the names are written with alternative homophonic characters. The reason for the common features is more likely to be sought in the oral traditions of drum singing, clapper tale and courtesan story-singing where a ‘common storehouse of convention’ looms in the background.

12.12. Persons and names

The fast tale, *kuaishu*, is the performance text with the smallest number of persons called by a name. We only find Wu Song (also called Second brother Wu and Second Master Wu) and Chai Jin. Chai Jin is mentioned merely as a hint to Wu Song’s recent past and has no role in the rest of the ballad.²⁶ Since the waiter in the inn where Wu Song takes a rest and drinks heavily only rarely is provided with a name, but is just called waiter or innkeeper, it is obvious that the tiger tale can in principle be told with only one named figure, namely Wu Song. This is actually the case in the *Jingju* drama version, both in written (late Qing/Republic) and oral forms (1963) (Chapters 6, 6.5 and 10, 10.3).

The *dagushu* has the highest number of named persons, seventeen (with some additional nicknames). The high amount of persons mentioned is on the one hand due to the structure of the drum tale, including episodes that are absent in most other versions. On the other hand, the conglomeration of names in this genre serves specific stylistic and narrative purposes.

It is obvious how some episodes are far from indispensable to the tale (cf. Chapter 8, Table 8.1). Episodes leading up to Wu Song’s journey back home via Jingyang Ridge, as well as those coming after the killing of the tiger and the meeting with the hunters can be included or left out, and they can be detailed episodes or minor ingredients mentioned in passing. If a version contains much of the contextual material from the Wu Song saga in its entirety, it will naturally incorporate more names stemming from the larger story. The *dagushu*, for example, has a storyline that includes a substantial number of episodes leading up to the core story, but it has no extra episodes following the meeting with the hunters.

The *Fuzhou pinghua* and the *Hangzhou pinghua* both have a number of episodes and ingredients pointing to previous events, but also continue the
story after Wu Song’s meeting with the hunters. The other texts are somewhere in between, with the kuaishu representative of the basic ‘trunc’ of the storyline, including only the most essential happenings in the sense that these are shared by almost all the texts, with the dagushu as a conspicuous exception.

Thus the four names of commanders and ministers of Northern Song, Gao Qiu, Tong Guan (Tong Que), Cai Jing and Yang Jian, are found in the dagushu, in the Hangzhou pinghua and in the novel Jin Ping Mei cihua, because the tiger tale is given a traditional introduction in each of these versions. The same introduction is also found in Shuihu zhuan, but not in Chapter 22/23 where the tiger tale is told. It is interesting that the dagushu introduces names, such as Mrs Pan, Pan shi [Neé Pan], i.e. Pan Jinlian, and Ximen Qing at an early point in the tale where these persons are usually left unmentioned, since they (in accordance with the storyline of the novel Shuihu zhuan) enter the story only after Wu Song has returned home and found his brother.

The dagushu does not only include names from story material that belongs to the time before and after the tiger episode; the text also excels in a kind of ‘name dropping’ that seems to function as a stylistic ornament and communicative strategy. The many names, mostly entered without further ado, create a feeling of mutual understanding between the narrator and his implied audience. There seems to be an inherent joy in just ‘hearing’ (reading) all these more or less familiar names fitted into the rhyme and rhythm of the drum tale. A similar kind of enjoyment of name dropping seems apparent in Chapter 1 of the Jin Ping Mei cihua.

In a metric genre such as the dagushu, the rhythmic and rhyming format seems to invite variant forms of proper names, where the different appellations fit into various slots in the verse line, cf. the seven different ways of naming Wu Song in this text (Chapter 8, 8.8). But the other performance texts, whether in prose and verse or mainly in prose, also tend to use more than one name for the hero, three, four or even five. In the novel one also finds mostly three names, but in drama only the Huaixi version has a similar number of appellations, while the other drama forms only use Wu Song as the name of the hero.

### 12.13. Some special incidences and persons

Some of the special names of the dagushu version belong to an episode that is found only in this version and the Shandong kuaishu, namely ‘Fighting the Five Tigers’ in the Dong Family Temple, Dongjia miao (cf. Chapter 8, Tables 8.1 and 8.8). The Shandong kuaishu mentions the same place as Dongyue miao [Eastern Hill Temple]. The homophone or almost homophone sound of these two place names seems to point to a common reservoir of story-material. In the Wu Song saga as told in the tradition of Shandong kuaishu (Shandong kuaishu Wu Song zhuang 1957: 1–41) the whole episode of Dongyue miao is told in four sections, duan, which constitute the first of twelve ‘tales’ linked together as the full Wu Song saga in this tradition. This first tale is about how Wu Song kills the Five Tigers, Wu hu, of the Li family, which is the reason why he must leave his hometown and seek refuge with Chai Jin. The nickname of the Five Tigers

- Gao Qiu 高俅
- Tong Guan 童貫
- Cai Jing 蔡京
- Yang Jian 杨戩
- Mrs Pan 潘氏
- Pan Jinlian 潘金蓮
- Ximen Qing 西門慶

Dong Family Temple
Dongjia miao 董家廟

Eastern Hill Temple
Dongyue miao 東岳廟

sections 段

Five Tigers of the Li family
Lijia wu hu 李家五虎
stands for Li Gui and his four brothers, who bully the local people. They are all defeated by Wu Song in a dramatic cudgel fight and killed one by one.

This tale has many details in common with the early huaben entitled Yang Wen lanluhu zhuan. But while ‘road-blocking tiger’, lanluhu, is a positive nickname for Yang Wen, the cudgel fighter hero of the huaben, it is a negative nickname for the five Li brothers both in the dagushu and in the Shandong kuaishu tradition.28 Li Gui is a great cudgel fighter both in the dagushu, the Shandong kuaishu tradition and in the early huaben, just like Wu Song is also famous for his cudgel or staff fighting. In the huaben, Li Gui is called Guankou Erlang [The God Erlang from Guankou], and he fights with a full-length quarterstaff, qimeigun. In Yangzhou pinghua Wu Song is called Guankou Erlangshen (probably copied into the Hangzhou pinghua), and in both the dagushu, kuaishu and Fuzhou pinghua his weapon is named in particular a ‘quarterstaff’, qimeigun.29 It could well be that the dagushu and the Shandong kuaishu tradition are examples of this story material in oral tradition up to the present.

Further, in Chapter 1 of Jin Ping Mei cihua, Wu Song is told to have beaten a certain Commissioner Tong while drunk and this is the reason for his flight to Chai Jin in Cangzhou.30 In the Ming chuanqi drama Yixia ji, we find in Scene 2: You yu [Staying away from home] a hint at this same incident. Wu Song is told to have stayed in Dong Village, Dongzhuang, before he came to Chai Jin. Apart from this, nothing is told in the play about the happenings at that place. Considering the widespread use of homophonic characters in oral-related writings and the range of inaccuracy (Dong and Tong being close in sound, Børdahl 2007a: 89–90), one may speculate if this person ‘Tong’ from the Jin Ping Mei cihua should be understood as one of the fellows at Dongyue miao or Dongjia miao that are found three, four hundred years later in the performance traditions of dagushu and Shandong kuaishu?

In the Fuzhou pinghua one finds a unique episode about how Wu Song is confronted by a prostitute on his way home to his brother. The prostitute, whom Wu Song refuses, is guarded by a rough fellow called Li Second, Li Er. This is the first fight into which Wu Song enters in the Fuzhou pinghua version, and again one might speculate if this story material has a vague connection to the episode about Li Gui and his bullies that was found in the dagushu and the Shandong kuaishu. This fellow Li that turns up in stories with some affinity to ‘tigers’, stories about cudgel fights and stories about Wu Song’s previous life – before the great fight with the tiger – might have some background in an oral reservoir of story material that has had a living tradition up to the present. In some ways Li Gui, Li Er, The Road-blocking Tiger, could all be understood as alter egos of Wu Song, our hero. His character upside-down, his antithesis, or his personality at its worst.

12.14. The interplay of oral and written features

The different genres and versions of our focal tale ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’ are characterized not only by their relationship to orality and literacy in transmission, textual format, inter-textual ingredients, formulary language, etc. But also inside the single version of the tiger tale, whether in oral or written format,
we can observe the interplay of oral and written features. This phenomenon has in particular been treated in Chapter 11, where a Yangzhou pinghua oral performance is discussed in detail with a view to this aspect.

Chinese writing in characters, Hanzi, is ingenious as a writing system that is able to communicate through time and room, irrespective of dialectal and time-bound pronunciations. Alphabets are far more dependent on the specific regional language, even if most alphabetic writings are not strictly phonemic. Chinese writing, a logographic system, implies that phonological differences between various dialects and dialectal substrata, as well as historical differences in pronunciation, are largely ignored.

But differences in grammar and lexicon are often apparent from written versions of drama and performance arts, and such differences will by the insider to an oral tradition serve as markers of different contemporary or historical dialects. When such markers are registered by a reader who is alert to the dialect, they will evoke not only the dialect as special words and special grammatical forms, but the whole sound spectrum of the dialect that becomes a latent interior 'soundscape'.

It is, however, only when real oral texts are available that we can experience in detail and in actual sound the use of normative language, dialect and dialectal substrata in the art of oral performance. Although historical dialects are not immediately observable in present day performances, it is nevertheless highly fruitful to study these arts with a view to pronunciation habits of former times. The oral arts of drama and storytelling represent a treasure trove of pronunciation variants that can tell us much about earlier pronunciation habits, both in dialects and in normative status language, if only we have the key to open the chest (Børdahl 2010a).

The fact that the oral performance of Wang Shaotang for Nanjing radio (1961) is throughout spoken in Yangzhou dialect seems to add to the 'orality' of this piece. Not only is it orally performed but it is dialectal, and dialect is usually not associated with written culture in China. Therefore a dialectal performance appears 'more oral', than a performance in standard Chinese.

However, the dialect of Yangzhou pinghua is not a homogeneous language. As discussed in Chapter 11, 11.4–6, the performance language of this art is based on a shifting between various dialectal registers, called speaking styles, shuokou. The so-called 'round mouth', yuankou, reflects daily Yangzhou speech, Yangzhou jiaxiang hua (also called Jiangbeihua [speech from North of the Yangzi river]). The so-called 'square mouth', fangkou, reflects the normative variants of the Yangzhou dialect. One variant spoken by Wu Song is called guanhua [official's speech], Beifanghua [Northern speech] or Jinghua [Capital speech]. Another variant of spoken normative language is difang guanhua [local official's speech], used for local heroes' speech and for the more serious narrative passages. These dialectal strata are connected to the question of oral versus written features, because they reflect not only geographically conditioned pronunciation habits, but also class language.

Both the local and the Northern varieties of guanhua are symptomatic of high-style language. When these styles are used, the language is not only differ-
ently pronounced, tending towards the speaking habits of North China, but the language has less dialectal grammatical structures, less dialectal vocabulary and includes more wenyan-like sentence structure. Therefore the portions spoken in upper-class speech are closer to written style, while the portions in low-style daily language are closer to spoken style. In this sense the oral dialectal performance of Yangzhou pinghua is actually composed of several strata that alternate between oral and written flavours.

While an oral performance of Yangzhou pinghua is characterized by a constant shifting between oral and written features of the different registers, the written counterpart in the form of a book version, such as Chapter 1 of *Wu Song* (1959) (Chapters 7 and 8), is also a heterogenic text, containing strong features of the oral aspects of this particular storytelling art. Even though the shifting of register cannot be ‘heard’ when reading the text, these changing styles can be appreciated by the reader, in particular by local readers and regular customers of storytelling, who can supply the adequate sound of the registers from the way they are hinted at in grammatical structures and lexicon.

This interchange of oral and written/literary features of an oral performance is obviously not exclusive to the genre of Yangzhou pinghua. Similar phenomena can be found, both in drama and in other performance genres. The written textual counterparts of drama librettos and performance literature will often reflect such features to a certain limited degree, enough to serve as scripts for performers and to allow the habitués of the art to ‘reconstruct’ the oral performance from the written text or enjoy the written text as a mental performance.

Also in the written novel shifting and interchanges of a similar kind are observable in dialogue versus narration and in different kinds of dialogue. This phenomenon is no different from the heteroglossia demonstrated for the Western novel in the work of Mikhail M. Bakhtin (Chapter 3, 3.6–9). But in a novel or short story, primarily for reading, these features of style are generally not so directly ‘translatable’ into a specific performance tradition or specific pronunciation habits. There is a longer distance between the language of the written fiction and the language of actual dialects or class languages, so that the room for a reader’s imagination is larger and the reading implies a more individual interpretation.

The storytelling situation of oral performance in front of a listening audience is in Yangzhou pinghua actualized as one-way communication from the storyteller to the public (cf. Chapter 11, 11.7). Members of the audience are not expected to raise questions or express their views during performance. They are listening in silence. The storyteller will intermittently ask questions and answer them, ziwen zida. This form is very close to the ‘simulated dialogue’ with the reader that is found in the traditional ‘storyteller’s manner’ of the novel, zhanghui xiaoshuo, and short story, huaben. In the written novel this form is ‘simulated’ in a double sense: 1) the ‘simulated dialogue’ imitates the oral storytelling situation; 2) the ‘simulated dialogue’ reflects a storyteller’s monologue that imitates a conversation with questions and answers. In the oral
performance of *Yangzhou pinghua* only the second function is similar, since there is a true oral storytelling situation in this case. On a scale of ‘degrees of orality’ one could argue that a conversation between the performer and his audience during performance would reflect a higher degree of orality, while the ‘simulated dialogue’ is still oral, but less oral (cf. Chapter 11, 11.7, note 24).

Interestingly, the passages of ‘simulated dialogue’ in the tiger story belong to the well-rehearsed portions that every storyteller of the Wang School will incorporate into the tale in fairly the same way. Just like poems and set-pieces these passages are learnt by heart, not improvised. In that sense the ‘simulated dialogue’ of the oral performance seems closer to written culture, but the repertoire was and is traditionally transmitted by oral teaching, not by learning from manuscripts or books.

The narrative prose of *Yangzhou pinghua* is regularly interrupted not only by dialogue (impersonation) and simulated dialogue with the audience, but also by poems and set-pieces created in literary Chinese, *wenyan*, or in *wenyan*-like language (cf. Chapter 11, 11.8–9) Poetry and official documents are rendered in high-style language, typical of the written culture. In the oral performance these pieces are spoken in high-style register, square mouth, *fangkou*. The contrast between the high-style and the low-style passages in round mouth, *yuankou*, adds to the potentiality of the spoken language. Literary insets and *wenyan*-like fixed phrases seem to enhance the effect of the oral performance.

### 12.15. The logic of the oral and the written and the ‘original work’

At the end of this study the author is not tempted to draw hard-and-fast conclusions. The analysis of the Wu Song material has given occasion to reflect on many of the time-honoured issues of ‘oral theory’, in particular issues of long standing in the study of Chinese vernacular culture. But questions of the oral and the written (‘orality’ and ‘literacy’) have a tendency to grow perpetually more complex and intricate the more one is digging into the concrete materials of oral and written literature.

However, to conclude the analytical part of the study, I feel the urge to emphasize two of the major issues:

1) The ‘logic’ of written and oral transmissions

In the discussion of the relationship between *jianben* and *fanben* editions of *Shuihu zhuan* it has been argued that the *jianben* must be shortened and sloppy editions based on the *fanben*, because no one in his right mind would write (create) such sloppy works with so much bad grammar as the *jianben*. This could only be explained as the outcome of cheap book production and slovenly woodcutting. Similarly it is argued that no ‘author’ would take a careless *jianben* and use it for creating a master work like the *Rongyutangben*.

However, the Yangzhou storytellers’ scripts and their performers bear witness to a different attitude and behaviour vis à vis written materials. A professional
storyteller of a certain repertoire will normally be able to tell a developed and well-formed oral tale for which he may have only a sloppy or very abrupt script (corresponding in a certain way to the relation between a script-like jianben and a performance-like fanben). Moreover the words of the script will often be 'built into' the oral performance, just like the jianben words are found 'inside' the fanben. Another point is that scripts are not considered primary to the oral repertoires they represent. In cases where we know how a script was composed, it is the other way round; it turns out to be based on oral performance. There is no reason to consider the early performers to be less qualified than their successors. Therefore it is only natural that the scripts could have been based on well-formed oral performances. They were only meant to trigger memory, and therefore they were often written in haste, extremely short and sometimes ‘careless’.

The ‘logic’ of oral transmission and its relationship to scripts is, that a well-formed and well-developed oral tale (performance) can result in a succinct and sloppy script. But then again: a sloppy and short script can serve as an aide-mémoire for a well-formed and long tale (performance). This ‘logic’ of oral performance should be taken into consideration in further studies of the interrelationship of the early editions of Shuihu zhuan.

2) The relationship between the Ming novel versions of the tiger tale in Shuihu zhuan and the versions of this tale in drama and performance culture.

In the light of the preceding chapters, direct textual borrowing from the written pages of the Shuihu zhuan (and the Jin Ping Mei cihua) to the drama and storytelling genres is generally not sustained by the textual evidence, even though a couple of such cases are found as exceptions among the texts of the core material. Therefore the widespread idea of Shuihu zhuan as the ‘original work’, yuanzuo or yuanzhu, from which later oral and written versions have been ‘derived’, ‘developed’, ‘rewritten’, ‘recreated’, seems inadequate.\(^31\) This model is not able to take into account the actual features of the Chinese performed traditions which have arisen around the old storytelling theme. The common features across genres and versions are more likely to be anchored in the long and steady oral traditions of the telling and singing arts, shuochang, to which the Water Margin theme has belonged since the earliest beginning and where it is still growing in living tradition.

Notes

1 The ‘reality’ or plausibility of Wu Song’s fight with the tiger is not directly questioned in any of the versions of the tiger story under study in this book. But the life-and-death struggle is often treated with humour and irony, suggesting that the ‘feat’ is not really important as such. David Rolston has pointed out to me that there existed a Late Qing ‘criticism’ of the way the Ming novel describes Wu Song’s killing of the tiger, suggesting that the reader should try it out with a cat! It would not work, even with a harmless cat! See Bie Shi 別士 (Xia Zengyou 夏曾佑 1863–1924): Xiaoshuo yuanli 小說原理 (1903), in: Huang Lin and Han Tongwen 1985: 111.

3. The Yingxiong pu has 109 chapters, hui, and is placed after the Shuangfengtangben (called Pinglinben) in the line of descent in MA Yau-woon 1992: 32.

4. Jin Ping Mei cihua, Chapter 1, begins with a ci-poem announced by the pre-verse phrase ci yue, but this is an exception. Most chapters begin with a ci or shi-poem that are indented, but not announced by a pre-verse phrase.


6. The translations of Shuihu zhuan into English (by Jackson 1963 and Shapiro 1980) generally ignore the stock phrases, keeping only the chapter-ending formula. The translation by DENT-YOUNG 1997 ignores the shorter stock phrases, but keeps some pre-verse phrases and the chapter-ending formula.

7. The page layout of the Yuan pinghua texts is demonstrated in hegel 1998: 174–175. The pictures in the upper portion of each page are helpful for following the main events of the narrative, but the text is filled into the lower space as one whole piece of cloth, without markers of paragraphs or sentences. On first glance the text is mainly dissected by the recurring tags for speech, yue [he said], and with longer intervals there occur stock phrases such as que shuo [let us now tell] and hua fen liang shuo [the story divides into two narratives].

8. Some ‘stage directions’, such as ‘sing!’ chang, ‘speak!’ bai, and ‘tell!’ shuo, in the chantefables are clearly set apart from the text that was supposedly vocalized during performance, cf. McLAREN 1998: 109.


12. Rongyutangben, Chapter 2.6, Shanghai guji chubanshe 1988: 376.

13. Rongyutangben, Chapter 2.4, Shanghai guji chubanshe 1988: 335; Zhi guan ba xianhua lai shuo, in the narration, not as a narrative interjection or comment.


17. This point is clearly exemplified by Chinese poetry, which used to be written in a literary style, influenced by wenyan vocabulary and syntax, even if wenyan grammatical markers are not often used. But poetry is meant both for recitation and silent reading.

18. This view is strongly defended in the writings of Ma Yau-woon (see MA Yau-woon 2004: 60).

19. The are exceptions to this rule, such as the origin of the Yangzhou pinghua repertoires of Qingfeng Sluice 清風閘 [Qingfeng Sluice], and Xiyou ji 西遊記 [Journey to the West]. In these cases the storyteller who created the repertoire for oral performance is known, cf. Yangzhou quyi zhi 1993: 62–64, 69; WAN 2009b: 178–180; FAIRLEE 2010: 111–112.
This situation was changing in the last decades of the 20th century. Cf. Børdahl 2013.

This kind of spoken language is also typical of the heroes of San guo yanyi and its forerunners in the plain tale genre.

From oral performances of Fuzhou pinghua, cf. http://baike.baidu.com/view/298088.htm, we can observe that the performer often starts with a percussion solo played on the cymbal with chopsticks. After that there will be a recitation or song, the ‘introduction’, xutou 序頭. The story is performed sometimes in song, sometimes in recitation and sometimes in speech. The language is Fuzhou dialect throughout. The cymbal, the waking block and the fan are used throughout the performance to underline the sections of the tale.

The names are not to be expected in Chapter 22/23 of Shuihu zhuan, since this chapter is placed well into the work. But in the first chapter of Shuihu zhuan we do find a similar introduction with a description of Northern Song. The interesting thing is that the list of names found here is not so close to the list found in the dagushu as the list of names in Jin Ping Mei ci hua Chapter 1, cf. Børdahl 2007b: 90–92.

Originally from the collection Qingpingshantang huaben 清平山堂話本, translated in Ma Y.W. and Joseph S.M. Lau 2002.

In the Jin Ping Mei ci hua, Chapter 1, the episode in the tavern is not told in any detail and the name of the wine is not mentioned.

Wu Song’s stay with Chai Jin and Song Jiang belongs to the transitional portion at the beginning of Chapter 22/23 of the novel Shuihu zhuan and is also given more or less detailed narration in a number of the other performance texts.

The characters in parentheses are those used in the drum tale, dagushu.

This story material is not found in the tiger tale under analysis, Gao Yuanjun 1987, but in the first string of episodes from the Wu Song saga as told in Gao Yuanjun 1957.

In Chapters 3 and 73 of Shuihu zhuan we find a similar appellation of this kind of staff, qimei mubang 齊眉木棒 or qimei duanbang 齊眉短棒, which is also mentioned in the huaben tale about the ‘Road blocking tiger’. Patrick Hanan writes about some vestiges of the huaben tale in Jin Ping Mei: ‘It is impossible, therefore to be certain that the author [of Jin Ping Mei] derived his knowledge of him [Li Gui] from this story [Yang Wen lanlubu zhuan]. It is quite conceivable that his account, including the braggadocio, is drawn from other popular narrative or dramatic literature which now no longer exists’, cf. Hanan 1961: 37, additions in square parentheses by VB.

Both André Lévy and David Tod Roy translate this person as Tong Guan, cf. above, while Lévy in a note mentions that such an episode is nowhere hinted at in Shuihu zhuan, cf. Lévy 1985: 23, 1064 n1.

This view was basic in the work of Chinese folklorists in the 1960s-90s, cf. Chen Wulou 1990 and Duan Baolin 1990, and it is still the prevalent view as exemplified in Ni Zhongzhi 2007.
PART TWO

‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’ in Novel, Drama and Storytelling
Selected Written Sources
13

Novel

13.1. Shuihu Zhuan: Stuttgart Fragment (16th century)

Chapter 22

The following Chapter 22 from a ‘simple edition’, jianben, of the Water Margin, entitled Jingben quan xiang chazeng Tian Hu Wang Qing Zhongyi shuihu quan zhuang juan zhi wu [The Whole Story of the Noble and Righteous Men of the Water Margin, Capital Edition Complete with Illustrations, with Addition of the Tian Hu and Wang Qing Chapters, Scroll Five] is probably the earliest textual transmission of the tale about Wu Song and the tiger.1

CHAPTER 22

Chai Jin entertains his guests in Henghai County, Wu Song fights a tiger on Jingyang Ridge.

This brave man was as famous as Meng Chang
Blessed with good fortune he had talent and virtue boundless like the Eastern Ocean
Confident that he could fight the tiger all alone
He did not care about the saying ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge’

Strong and mighty was Wu Song, striking thousands with awe
Free and talented was Chai Jin, renowned across the Four Seas
Revenging his brother, Wu Song killed his sister-in-law – admirable indeed
Thereby gaining everlasting fame

That fellow came from Qinghe District, his surname was Wu and given name Song; he was the second son in his family. He had been here for one year. Song Jiang said: ‘I have heard much talk of Second Brother Wu among the rivers and lakes fraternity. But I had no idea I was to meet him here.’
He took Wu Song’s hand and led him into the inner hall to the table. There Song Qing [younger brother of Song Jiang] and Wu Song met each other. Song Jiang invited Wu Song to sit beside him at the place of honour. Wu Song modestly refused and took the third place. Song Jiang asked Second Brother Wu: ‘What is the reason for your staying here?’

Wu Song replied: ‘I, Little brother got drunk one day in my hometown and had a fight with someone. He really riled me. I only hit him once, but it looked like he was wounded to death, so I cleared off and came here. Now I’ve heard the fellow isn’t dead. I was planning to return, but since I came down with malaria I couldn’t travel. Just now I had a shivering fit and I was sitting over those coals in the gallery when you stumbled into the shovel. I was so shocked that I broke out in a cold sweat, and now I think I’m cured.’

Song Jiang was very delighted. That night, after drinking, Song Jiang insisted that Wu Song go and sleep in his quarters. Next day Song Jiang took out some money for Wu Song to make himself a new set of clothes. Chai Jin took out some pieces of fine silk, and ordered clothes to be made for Wu Song. In fact, Wu Song used to drink heavily and then often would beat the other guests in his residence, and because of this Chai Jin’s behaviour towards him had grown much cooler. However, now Song Jiang had adopted Wu Song and made him his constant drinking companion.

After about ten days Wu Song wanted to return home. Song Jiang and Chai Jin did their best to make him stay but failed. Chai Jin took out five taels of silver and gave to Wu Song for his journey. Then they took farewell. Song Jiang and Song Qing followed Wu Song five or seven li to a small tavern at the roadside and the three of them sat down in the tavern. Song Jiang called for the innkeeper to serve them wine. They all enjoyed the wine until they were in high spirits.

Wu Song said: ‘If Elder Brother will allow me, I want to prostrate myself so I can call myself your blood brother.’

This pleased Song Jiang greatly and he told Song Qing to take out ten taels of silver to give Wu Song. Wu Song said: ‘Elder Brother, as a guest [at Mr. Chai’s] I have received enough.’

Song Jiang said: ‘Don’t make a fuss about this, dear brother.’

Then Wu Song prostrated himself. After Song Jiang had paid for the wine, Wu Song took leave and was gone. Song Jiang and Song Qing returned to the manor of Chai Jin. Indeed:

Unhurriedly they took farewell, the road ahead was long
He stood up and went straight to Jingyang Ridge
In a drunken state he killed the mountain tiger
Thence his fame spread in all directions

After travelling for several days, Wu Song had reached the district of Yanggu. There he perceived in front of him a tavern, advertised by a sign which read: ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge’. Wu Song walked into the tavern and sat down. He then asked the host to bring him some wine. Just look how
the innkeeper came with three bowls and two jin of cooked meat which he laid in front of Wu Song. He quickly filled three bowls with wine that were emptied right away. Wu Song then called out again: 'Host! Why don’t you come and pour the wine?'

The waiter said: ‘Good guest, the sign says: “Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge”.

Wu Song said: ‘But what’s that supposed to mean?’

The waiter said: ‘Whenever a guest drinks three bowls of this wine he’ll get drunk and is unable to cross the Ridge’.

Wu Song laughed and said: ‘But I’ve had three bowls, how come I’m not drunk?’
The waiter said: ‘This wine of mine is called ‘Falling at the Door’. At first you only savour the delicious flavour, but after a while you will fall down.’

‘Stop talking nonsense!’ said Wu Song. ‘Bring me another three bowls!’

Seeing that Wu Song was still entirely steady, the waiter brought him another three bowls. Wu Song drank and said: ‘Surely a good wine!’ He went on guzzling for a long while. Then he took out some silver and shouted:

‘Dear host, tell me if this silver is enough to pay for the wine and meat?’

The innkeeper said: ‘This is too much!’

Then he poured another six bowls for Wu Song to drink. After this Wu Song grasped his cudgel, left the door and started marching.

But then the waiter was chasing after him, crying: ‘Good guest, please wait! Up there in the Jingyang Ridge there is a big beast with a white forehead. He comes out to attack people at night. The government notice says: ‘The travellers must gather into groups and cross the Ridge during the three watches from ten to four o’clock. It’s forbidden to cross at any other time.’ It is getting late, but I see that you are about to leave. Don’t throw your life away! You’d much better spend the night here. Tomorrow you can wait till a sufficient number’s gathered, and then you all cross the ridge together.’

Wu Song laughed this suggestion to scorn. ‘I’m from the region,’ he said, ‘and I’ve crossed this ridge a score of times. Who ever heard of a tiger here? It’s no good thinking you can frighten me with that sort of shit. Anyway, even if there is a tiger, I’m not afraid of it! What you want is to get me to stay in your house so you can come in the middle of the night and rob me of my money. That’s why you try to scare me with that tiger!’

The innkeeper said: ‘Here’s me, out of the kindness of my heart, trying to help you, but you give my words a bad meaning. All right, if you don’t believe me, just go ahead!’

Wu Song strode off alone towards the Jingyang Ridge. There he saw a big tree on which was written:

A tiger has been attacking people on the Jingyang Ridge. Travellers and merchants must gather into groups and cross the Ridge during the three watches from ten to four o’clock. Ignore this advice at your peril!

When Wu Song had read it he laughed and said: ‘It must be a trick by the innkeeper to frighten travellers. What is there to be afraid of?’ Grasping his cudgel he began to climb the ridge.

He came upon a temple dedicated to the spirits of the mountain. There was a notice bearing an official seal fixed to the door. After reading it, Wu Song realized that there was indeed a tiger. At first he thought of turning back and going to the tavern, but was afraid to endure the innkeeper’s mockery.

Then he hurried forwards to see how things were. As he walked along, the sun was setting, but swaying and stumbling he pressed uphill. He caught sight of a black rock, so he laid his cudgel aside and sank down to rest upon the rock. As he was drifting off to sleep, just look how there came a fierce gust of wind through the forest, before a crash resounded and out sprang a big beast with
golden eyes and white forehead. When Wu Song saw this he rolled off the rock and grabbed his cudgel.

That big beast pressed its two paws into the ground with ease, and taking off into mid-air intended to land on its prey from above. When he saw the beast spring, Wu Song leapt out of the way, ending up behind it.

When the big beast attacks a man, it generally has these three strategies: springing, looking and sweeping. When all these three methods failed its spirit was half broken. That big beast gave a loud roar and turned round again. Wu Song grasped his cudgel in both hands and brought it down. His motions were flurried, so he hit a dead tree. Now his cudgel was broken in two. That big beast roared, it turned and sprang at him again. Wu Song leapt to one side and saw his chance to catch hold of the striped neck of the big beast with his two hands and press it down. With all his might he concentrated his strength and with his legs he delivered fearful kicks to the big beast’s eyes. That big beast roared furiously, and as it thrashed about under this onslaught its paws churned up two mounds of mud. Wu Song thrust the beast down into the mud. He raised his fist and hit that big beast till from its mouth and nose the red blood began to gush, and it sank into a heap. There is an old air describing Wu Song fights a tiger on Jingyang Ridge. Behold:

On Jingyang Ridge a sudden squall,
Day hides its face in a thick black pall;
Red leaves reflect their colour like flames on the marshes,
Yellow grass sprouts grow throughout the land;
Twilight cloaks the desolate void,
And a deadly chill pervades the world.
A sound like thunder splits the ears
As the King of Beasts on the slope appears.
He proudly bounds, teeth and claws on show,
At the entrance of the valley the deer are all running in a panic.
Bian Zhuang sees it and gets frightened out of his senses,
Cun Xiao encounters it and gets scared from his wits.
The Qinghe hero, no longer tight,
Waits alone, but ready to fight.
To watch that man-eater hunt a meal,
The way it springs, with glaring eyes, would make you squeal!
He falls on the man like an avalanche,
But the man meets its power as if it were a heap of mud;
Blows and kicks, a relentless flood,
Both hands soaked in the crimson blood.
When you look at it closely its fierce power is mighty,
When you look at it from afar its awe-inspiring posture is imperial.
There it lies now, bright stripes fading,
Sprawled among weeds, both eyes clouding.

Wu Song beat the wild tiger on Jingyang Ridge till it did not move. Then Wu Song let go. Fearing lest the big beast revive, he belaboured it a while longer, till
it died. ‘I might as well drag the big beast down the mountain,’ he decided. But he could not move it. So he went back to the black rock and sat down to rest. He thought: ‘It’s getting quite dark now. If another tiger should appear, I don’t think I’d be able to cope. I’d better try and get down off the ridge. I can come back tomorrow to look for my hat.’

_Just look_ how at this moment two big beasts emerge from the brushwood! Wu Song cried: ‘Now I’m finished!’ But looking at them Wu Song saw, it was two men who had sewn themselves suits made out of tiger skins and both of them carried five-tined forks. They were shocked to see Wu Song and said: ‘How bold this man is! How could you dare, alone in the dark of night and unarmed, to cross the ridge?’

‘Who are you?’ Wu Song asked in return.

‘We are hunters from this place,’ they replied, ‘there’s a big beast right here on Jingyang Ridge. Every night it is out hunting for people. The Magistrate of our district has made us hunters responsible for capturing it. That evil monster is so strong and it has eaten a lot of people. It’s our turn again tonight. We had just finished setting our ambush. Did you see the big beast?'

When Wu Song told them, the two hunters were stupefied and at the same time very glad. They told the peasants to light some torches, and then the whole crowd followed Wu Song back up the mountain. There was the dead tiger, sprawled in a heap. Everybody was excited. They ordered one of the men to bring the news to the head of the village. Then the peasants put a rope round the tiger and carried it down the mountain. They invited Wu Song to come directly to the home of the village head. Wu Song sat down in the hallway, and then the big beast was carried over to the place. The hunters said:

‘This is truly a hero and a great man. Let us now first serve Wu Song a bowl of wine!’

But Wu Song was exhausted and needed rest. So the hunters had word about the event go around among all the peasants. The village households arranged a feast to thank Wu Song, and the villagers said: ‘Now at last a hero has appeared and rid us of the menace. What a relief for the people of this village.’

Wu Song thanked them and said: ‘I was simply enjoying the reflection of your good fortune.’

The next day the Magistrate sent someone to pick up Wu Song to come to the district capital and get his reward. They carried the tiger to Yanggu district. Lots of people came to get a glimpse of the tiger. Wu Song entered the yamen. He stood in the courtroom. The Magistrate looked at the brocade skin of the big beast and asked: ‘Hero, do tell us how you killed this big beast.’

So Wu Song told the facts about how he killed the tiger. The Magistrate then offered Wu Song several cups of wine in the hall and presented him with a thousand strings of cash as reward. Wu Song said: ‘I was simply enjoying the reflection of your good fortune. I was just lucky to kill the tiger. I have heard that the hunters here suffered sanctions on account of the tiger. We might divide the money and give it to them.’

The Magistrate followed the wish of the hero and distributed the money among the hunters. Impressed by Wu Song’s open-handedness, the Magistrate
Novel 365 said: ‘Since you are from Qinghe, that’s right next to us here at Yanggu. Today I would like to offer you a position as my captain.’

‘I shall be forever in your debt for this, Your Excellency,’ thanked Wu Song.

The Magistrate called the registrar and had him write out the order appointing Wu Song with immediate effect a captain of foot. All the members of the community came to offer their congratulations. Wu Song said: ‘I merely wanted to go home to see my brother, and now here I am, an officer!’

One day as Wu Song left the government offices in search of amusement, he heard someone call out behind him: ‘Wu Song, you’ve made your fortune now.’

Wu Song turned his head. *Who it actually was is explained in the next session.*
13.2. SHUIHU ZHUAN: SHUANGFENTANGBEN (1594)

Chapter 22

The following Chapter 22 from a ‘simple edition’ edition, jianben, of the Water Margin, entitled Jingben zengbu jiaozheng quanxiang Zhongyi shuihu zhuan pinglin [The Noble and Righteous Men of the Water Margin, Capital Edition with Additions and Corrections, Complete with Illustrations, and with Many Commentaries] (1594) is the earliest datable textual transmission of the tale about Wu Song and the tiger. It is usually referred to by the hallmark name of the publisher, Shuangfentangben.

CHAPTER 22

Chai Jin entertains his guests in Henghai County,
Wu Song fights a tiger on Jingyang Ridge.

The poem says:

This brave man was as famous as Meng Chang
Blessed with good fortune he had talent and virtue boundless like the
Eastern Ocean
Confident that he could kill the tiger all alone
He did not care about the saying ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge’

Strong and mighty was Wu Song, striking thousands with awe
Free and talented was Chai Jin, renowned across the Four Seas
Revenge his brother, Wu Song killed his sister-in-law – strange indeed
Thereby gaining everlasting fame

That fellow came from Qinghe District, his surname was Wu and given name Song; he was the second son in his family. He had been at this place for one year. Song Jiang said: ‘I have heard much talk of Second Brother Wu among the rivers and lakes fraternity. But I had no idea I was to meet him here.’

He took Wu Song’s hand and led him into the inner hall to sit beside him at the place of honour. Wu Song modestly refused and took the third place. Song Jiang asked Second Brother Wu: ‘What is the reason for your staying here?’

Wu Song replied: ‘I, Little brother got drunk one day in my hometown and had a fight with someone. He really riled me. I only hit him once, but I knocked him out cold, so I cleared off and came here. Now I’ve heard the fellow isn’t dead. I was planning to go home, but since I came down with malaria I couldn’t travel. Just now I had a shivering fit and I was sitting over those coals in the gallery when you stumbled into the shovel. I was so shocked that I broke out in a cold sweat, and now I think I’m cured.’

Song Jiang was very delighted. That night, after drinking, Song Jiang insisted that Wu Song go and sleep in his quarters. Next day Song Jiang took out
some money for Wu Song to make himself a new set of clothes. Chai Jin took out some pieces of fine silk, and ordered clothes to be made for Wu Song. Why was it so that Chai Jin was displeased with Wu Song? In fact, Wu Song used to drink heavily and then often would beat the other guests in his residence, and because of this Chai Jin’s behaviour towards him had grown much cooler. However, now Song Jiang had adopted Wu Song and made him his constant drinking companion.

After Song Jiang had been with them about ten days, Wu Song said: ‘If you’ll allow me I want to prostrate myself four times so I can call myself your blood brother.’ This pleased Song Jiang greatly. One day Wu Song wanted to return home. Song Jiang and Chai Jin did their best to make him stay but failed. Chai Jin took out some silver and gave it to Wu Song. Song Jiang took a tearful farewell of Wu Song, but we shall not speak more of this. Indeed:

*The poem says:*

Unhurriedly they took farewell, the road ahead was long
He stood up and went straight to Jingyang Ridge

Figure 13.2. A double page from Chapter 22 of the Shuangfengtangben edition of Water Margin (1594).
Let us resume our story. After travelling for several days, Wu Song had reached the district of Yanggu. There he perceived in front of him a tavern, advertised by a sign which read: 'Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge'. Wu Song entered the tavern and sat down. He then asked the host to quickly bring him some wine. Just look how the innkeeper came with three bowls and two jin of cooked meat which he laid in front of Wu Song. He quickly filled three bowls with wine that were emptied right away. Wu Song then called out again: 'Host! Why don't you come and pour the wine?'

The waiter said: 'Good guest, the sign says: 'Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge'.

Wu Song said: 'But what's that supposed to mean?'

The waiter said: 'Whenever a guest drinks three bowls of this wine he'll get drunk and is unable to cross the Ridge'.

Wu Song laughed and said: 'But I've had three bowls, how come I'm not drunk?'

The waiter said: 'This wine of mine is called 'Falling at the Door'. At first you only savour the delicious flavour, but after a while you will fall down.'

'Stop talking nonsense!' said Wu Song. 'Bring me another three bowls!'

Seeing that Wu Song was still entirely steady, the waiter brought him another three bowls. Wu Song drank and said: 'Really a good wine!' He went on guzzling for a long while. Then he took out some silver to pay for the wine and meat. He grasped his cudgel, left the door and started marching.

But then the waiter was chasing after him, crying: 'Good guest, please wait! Up there in the Jingyang Ridge there is a big beast with slanting eyes and a white forehead. He comes out to attack people at night. The government notice says: 'The travellers must gather into groups and cross the Ridge during the three watches from ten to four o'clock. It's forbidden to cross at any other time.' Don't throw your life away! You'd much better spend the night here at my place.'

Wu Song laughed and said: 'I've crossed this ridge a score of times. Who ever heard of a tiger here? What you want is to get me to stay in your house so you can come in the middle of the night and rob me of my money.'

The innkeeper said: 'Here's me, out of the kindness of my heart, trying to help you, but you give my words a bad meaning. All right, if you don't believe me, just go ahead!'

This Wu Song strode off alone towards the Jingyang Ridge. Here he saw a big tree with a white patch, on which was written:

A TIGER HAS BEEN attacking people on the Jingyang Ridge. Travellers and merchants must gather into groups and cross the Ridge during the three watches from ten to four o'clock. Ignore this advice at your peril!

When Wu Song had read it he laughed and said: 'It must be a trick by the waiter to frighten travellers.' Grasping his cudgel he began to climb the ridge.
He came upon a temple dedicated to the spirits of the mountain. There was a notice bearing an official seal fixed to the door. After reading it, Wu Song realized that there was indeed a tiger. At first he thought of turning back and going to the inn, but was afraid to endure the innkeeper’s mockery.

Then he hurried on onto the ridge. He caught sight of a black rock, so he laid his cudgel aside and sank down to rest upon the rock. As he was drifting off to sleep, *just look* how there came a fierce gust of wind through the forest, before a crash resounded and out sprang a big beast with golden eyes and white forehead. When Wu Song saw this he rolled off the rock and grabbed his cudgel.

That big beast pressed its two paws into the ground with ease, and taking off into mid-air intended to land on its prey from above. When he saw the beast spring, Wu Song leapt out of the way, ending up behind it.

When the big beast attacks a man, it generally has these three strategies: springing, looking and sweeping. When all these three methods failed its spirit was half broken. That big beast gave a loud roar and turned round again. Wu Song grasped his cudgel in both hands and brought it down. His motions were flurried, so he hit a dead tree. Now his cudgel was broken in two. That big beast roared, it turned and sprang at him again. Wu Song leapt to one side and saw his chance to catch hold of the big beast with his two hands. With his legs he delivered fearful kicks to the big beast’s eyes. That big beast roared furiously, and as it thrashed about under this onslaught its paws churned up two mounds of mud. Wu Song thrust the beast down into the mud. He raised his fist and hit that big beast till from its mouth and nose the red blood began to gush, and it sank into a heap. *There is an old air describing* Wu Song fights a tiger on Jingyang Ridge. *Behold:*

On Jingyang Ridge a sudden squall,
Day hides its face in a thick black pall;
Red leaves reflect their colour like flames on the marshes,
Yellow grass sprouts grow throughout the land;
Twilight cloaks the desolate void,
And a deadly chill pervades the world.
A sound like thunder splits the ears
As the king of beasts on the slope appears.
He proudly bounds, teeth and claws on show
At the entrance of the valley the deer are all running in a panic.
Bian Zhuang sees it and gets frightened out of his senses,
Cun Xiao encounters it and gets scared from his wits.
The Qinghe hero, no longer tight,
Waits alone, but ready to fight.
To watch that man-eater hunt a meal,
The way it springs the monster would make you squeal!
He falls on the man like an avalanche,
But the man meets its power as a cliff, he doesn’t flinch;
He grips with the force of a missile crashing –
And the tiger’s paws in the mud are thrashing,
Blows and kicks, a relentless flood,
Both hands soaked in the crimson blood.
When you look at it closely its fierce power is already used up,
When you look at it from afar its awe-inspiring posture is all but gone.
There it lies now, bright stripes fading,
Sprawled among weeds, both eyes clouding.

Wu Song beat the wild tiger on Jingyang Ridge till it did not move. Then Wu Song let go. Fearing lest the big beast revive, he belaboured it a while longer, till it died. ‘I might as well drag the big beast down the mountain,’ he decided. But he could not move it. So he went back to the black rock and sat down to rest. He thought: ‘It’s getting quite dark now. If another tiger should appear, I don’t think I’d be able to cope. I’d better try and get down off the ridge.’

*Just look* how at this moment two big beasts emerge from the brushwood! Wu Song cried: ‘Now I’m finished!’ But looking at them Wu Song saw, it was two men who had sewn themselves suits made out of tiger skins. They were shocked to see Wu Song and said: ‘How bold this man is! How could you dare, alone in the dark of night and unarmed, to cross the ridge?’

‘Who are you?’ Wu Song asked in return.

‘We are hunters from this place,’ they replied, ‘there’s a big beast right here on Jingyang Ridge. Every night it is out hunting for people. The Magistrate of our district has made us hunters responsible for capturing it. It’s our turn again tonight. We had just finished setting our ambush. Did you see the big beast?’

Wu Song said: ‘I am from Qinghe, my name is Wu and I’m the second in my family. Yes, I ran into the big beast on the mountain, and I’ve just beaten it to death.’

The hunters did not believe it. Wu Song said: ‘If you don’t believe it, look at all the blood on me!’

The hunters said: ‘But how did you kill it?’

Wu Song told the facts about how he killed the big beast. The hunters lit torches and followed Wu Song back up the mountain. There was the dead tiger, sprawled in a heap. They put a rope round the tiger and carried it down the mountain. They invited Wu Song to come directly to the home of the village head. Someone was then sent to the Magistrate with a report.

The village households arranged a feast to thank Wu Song, and the villagers said: ‘Now at last a hero has appeared and rid us of the menace. What a relief for the people of this village.’

Wu Song thanked them and said: ‘I was simply enjoying the reflection of your good fortune.’ Everyone in the village came to congratulate Wu Song and toast with him.

The next day the Magistrate sent someone to pick up Wu Song to come to the district capital and get his reward. They carried the tiger to Yanggu district. All the people of Yanggu came, eager to get a glimpse of the tiger. Wu Song got down from his sedan chair and entered the *yamen*. He stood in the courtroom. The Magistrate, having observed Wu Song’s stature and seeing the brocade skin of the big beast, asked: ‘Hero, do tell us how you killed this big beast.’
So Wu Song told the facts about how he killed the tiger. The Magistrate then offered Wu Song several cups of wine in the hall and presented him with a thousand strings of cash as reward. Wu Song said: 'I was simply enjoying the reflection of your good fortune. I was just lucky to kill the tiger. I have heard that the hunters here suffered sanctions on account of the tiger. We might divide the money and give it to them.'

The Magistrate said: 'I leave it to you to arrange it.'

Wu Song distributed the money among the hunters, and the Magistrate, impressed by Wu Song's open-handedness, said: 'Since you are from Qinghe, that's right next to us here at Yanggu. Today I would like to offer you a position as my captain. What do you say?'

'I shall be forever in your debt for this, Your Excellency,' thanked Wu Song.

The Magistrate called the registrar and had him write out the order appointing Wu Song with immediate effect a captain of foot. All the members of the community came to offer their congratulations. Wu Song thought to himself: 'I merely wanted to go home to see my brother, and now here I am, an officer!'

One day as Wu Song left the government offices in search of amusement, he heard someone call out behind him: 'Wu Song, you've made your fortune now.'

Wu Song turned his head, but to know who it really was, you must listen to the explanation in the next session.

Translation by Yu Jing and V.B.
The following Chapter 23 from a ‘full edition’ edition, *fanben*, of the Water Margin is the 1610 printing by the Rongyutang publishing house, entitled *Li Zhuowu xiansheng piping Zhongyi shuihu zhuan*. [The Noble and Righteous Men of the Water Margin with Commentary by Li Zhuowu], in this study referred to as *Rongyutangben*. It is the earliest extant version in the *fanben* tradition of *Shuihu zhuan* that contains the chapter about Wu Song and the tiger preserved in original printing.

## CHAPTER 23

Chai Jin entertains his guests in Henghai County, Wu Song fights a tiger on Jingyang Ridge.

*The poem says:*

This noble man was as famous as Meng Chang  
Blessed with good fortune he had talent like the ministers of the Eastern Cabinet  
Strong and mighty was Wu Song, striking a thousand men with awe  
Free and talented was Chai Jin, renowned across the Four Seas

Confident that he could kill the tiger all alone  
He did not care about the saying ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge’  
Revenging his brother, Wu Song killed his sister-in-law – strange indeed  
Thereby gaining everlasting fame

*The story says* that Song Jiang, in order to miss a round of drinking at Chai Jin’s manor where he was taking refuge after killing his mistress, had gone to wash his hands and, making a detour back to the gallery, had tripped over a shovel full of hot coals, greatly to the annoyance of a certain stranger, who leapt to his feet looking for a fight. And how his host came rushing to the rescue and how he happened to reveal Song Jiang’s name, so that the stranger, hearing who he was, threw himself on his knees and refused to get up, saying: ‘Fool that I am, I couldn’t see what was staring me in the face. I insulted you just now. Can you ever forgive me?’ and then Song Jiang raised him up and asked: ‘But who are you? Won’t you tell me your name?’

Chai Jin supplied the answer. ‘This gentleman is from Qinghe District; his surname is Wu and given name Song, the second son in his family. He has now been at this place for one year.’

Song Jiang said:  
‘I have heard much talk of Second Brother Wu among the rivers and lakes fraternity. But I had no idea I was to meet him here today. What a pleasure this is!’
"It's a great thing when men of honour meet by chance like this," said Chai Jin. "We shall celebrate with a dinner, so we can have some talk."

Song Jiang was pleased to take Wu Song's hand and lead him into the inner hall. He called Song Qing and introduced him to Wu Song. When Cai Jin invited Wu Song to sit down, Song Jiang immediately asked him to sit beside him in the place of honour. Wu Song naturally refused. This modest show of reluctance went on a long time until finally Wu Song was prevailed upon to take the third place. Chai Jin then ordered the cups filled again and invited them to drink deep. Song Jiang was now able by the light of the lamps to get a better look at his new friend:

His stature is awesome, his bearing deeply impressive; the eyes blaze like winter stars, the brows are an unbroken line drawn in lacquer; the chest so broad ten thousand foes could never throw him down, the speech forceful, evidence of a soaring ambition; the spirit so brave you'd think the lion which shakes heaven had descended from the clouds, the frame so powerful you'd imagine you were confronting the beast which shatters the world. Truly this seems a god walking the earth, a veritable Mars among men.

Song Jiang liked what he saw exceedingly, and he asked Wu Song: "Tell me, pray, what is the reason for your staying here?"

'I got drunk one day, back in Qinghe, and had a fight with a confidential secretary,' the other replied. 'He really riled me. I only hit him the once, but I
knocked him out cold. Well, I thought I’d killed him, so I cleared off and came here to Mr. Chai’s, waiting for it to blow over. Since then it has been more than a year and I’ve heard the fellow isn’t dead, they revived him. I was planning to go home to see my brother, but then I suddenly came down with malaria, so I couldn’t travel. Just now I had a shivering fit and I was sitting over those coals in the gallery when you stumbled into the shovel. I was so shocked that I broke out in a cold sweat, and now I think I’m cured!’

Song Jiang listened delightedly. That night the drinking went on till the small hours. Afterwards Song Jiang insisted that Wu Song go and sleep with them in the west wing. Next day Chai Jin organized a big banquet and had goats and pigs killed to feast Song Jiang.

Of this no more.

After a few days Song Jing took out some money for Wu Song to make himself a new set of clothes. When Chai Jin learnt of this, of course he would have none of it. He went to a chest and took out some pieces of fine silk, and commissioned his own tailor just outside the gates to supply all three of them with suits of clothes made to measure.

*Storyteller, why was it* that Chai Jin was displeased with Wu Song? *In fact,* when Wu Song first arrived he had received a grand welcome. But later he was always getting drunk and owing to his impetuous temperament he was inclined to get a stick and beat the servants whenever their ministrations failed to meet his standards. Consequently there was not one of them who looked on him favourably. In fact they all hated him, and invented all kinds of stories to tell Chai Jin about him. So although Chai Jin did not turn Wu Song out, his behaviour towards him had grown much cooler. However, now Song Jiang had adopted Wu Song and made him his constant drinking companion.

After Song Jiang had been with them about ten days, Wu Song felt the urge to return home to Qinghe to see his brother. Chai Jin and Song Jiang both urged him to stay on a while, but he said: ‘It’s a long time now since I had news of my brother; I think I should go back and see him.’

‘If you really want to go,’ Song Jiang said, ‘we must not detain you. But if you have time later, do let us meet again.’

Wu Song thanked Song Jiang and Chai Jin gave him some silver for which Wu Song thanked him, saying: ‘I am afraid, sir, I have given you a lot of trouble.’ Then he tied his bundle, took up his cudgel and was ready to depart. But first Chai Jin laid on a little send-off party. Wu Song was wearing a new robe of fine red silk and a white *fanyang* hat. With his pack on his shoulders and carrying his cudgel he was finally on the point of leaving, when Song Jiang said: ‘This is about the love between brothers. Dear brother, wait one moment.’ He went to his room and got some silver and hurried back to the manor gate. ‘I shall accompany you on the first stage of your journey,’ he said to Wu Song.

Song Jiang and his younger brother Song Qing waited while Wu Song said his last farewell to Chai Jin and then Song Jiang also told Chai Jin they would be back in a little and the three of them set off from Chai Jin’s eastern manor together. After a couple of miles, Wu Song suggested it was time to part: ‘Dear brother, you should go back now. Chai Jin will be waiting.’

‘Just a little further, why not?’ Song Jiang said.
They conversed as they went and without noticing it, they had covered another mile or so, when Wu Song stopped Song Jiang and said: 'You really shouldn't accompany me any further. You know the saying, 'When you're seeing someone off, you may go with them a hundred miles, but still you have to say good-bye!'

'Allow me to go just a little further,' Song Jiang pleaded. 'See that little inn on the highroad there, why don't we go in and drink a farewell cup together?'

They went in and Song Jiang seated himself at the head of the table. Wu Song laid down his cudgel and joined him, while Song Qing sat across the table from them. They told the waiter to bring wine and ordered some dishes and a variety of fruit and vegetables which were spread on the table before them. They drank some cups and watched the sun sinking in the west. 'It's getting late,' Wu Song said. 'If you'll allow me I want to prostrate myself four times so I can call myself your blood brother.'

This pleased Song Jiang greatly. The ceremony completed, Song Jiang told his brother to take out ten taels of silver to give Wu Song. Wu Song refused it, naturally, saying: 'When I was a guest at Mr. Chai's I received a generous allowance.'

'Don't make a fuss about this, dear brother,' Song Jiang said. 'If you refuse I shall think you do not prize my friendship.'

So Wu Song, after prostrating himself again, had to take the money, which he put away in his purse. Then, Song Jiang having paid for the wine with some loose change, Wu Song took up his cudgel and the three men left then inn. There at the inn door they said their farewells, Wu Song saluting with tears in his eyes before he departed. Song Jiang and his brother stood there at the door and watched him out of sight. Then they set off on the return journey. They had covered little less than five miles when they saw Chai Jin approaching on horseback, leading two riderless horses. It was a welcome sight. They rode back together to the manor. When they had dismounted, Chai Jin invited them to drink in an inner chamber. For the time being, Song Jiang and his brother stayed at Chai Jin's. Here our story divides. There is a poem in proof:

Unhurriedly they took farewell, the road ahead was long
He stood up and went straight to Jingyang Ridge

In a drunken state he killed the mountain tiger
Thence his fame spread in all directions

Let us just tell that Wu Song, after parting from Song Jiang, spent the night at an inn. Next morning, having breakfasted and paid for his room, he tied his bundle, grasped his cudgel and took to the road. As he went along, he mused: 'Among the rivers and lakes, they talk all the time about Song Jiang, the Opportune Rain. And what they say is no exaggeration. It's real privilege to know a man like that!'

After following the road for several days, Wu Song had reached the district of Yanggu, but was still some way off the provincial capital. By noon that day, when he was feeling hungry and thirsty, he perceived in front of him a tavern, advertised by a sign which read: 'Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge.'
Wu Song walked in and sat down. He laid his cudgel down and asked the host to quickly bring him some wine. _Just look_ how the innkeeper came with three bowls, chopsticks and a dish, which he laid in front of Wu Song. He filled one bowl with wine. Wu Song picked it up and drained it in one gulp. ‘This wine’s got a real kick!’ he exclaimed. ‘Now then host, how about something to line the stomach? I’ll have something to go with the wine.’

‘Some cooked beef is all I’ve got,’ the waiter said.

‘That’ll do,’ said Wu Song. ‘Slice me two or three catties.’

The waiter went in and cut two catties of beef and put it in a big dish which he then placed in front of Wu Song. Then he poured another big bowl of wine. Wu Song drank it off and said: ‘Now that’s what I call good wine!’

One more bowl was poured. And that made exactly three Wu Song had drunk and the host wasn’t going to pour any more.

Wu Song started to bang on the table. ‘Host! Why don’t you come and pour the wine?’

The waiter said: ‘Good guest, more meat I’ll bring you, if that be what you desire.’

‘I want more wine – but don’t worry, you can cut me some more meat as well.’

‘If it’s meat you want,’ the waiter repeated, ‘I’ll bring it for you, but no more wine.’

‘What’s all this?’ Wu Song said to himself. To the waiter he said: ‘Why don’t you want to sell me any more?’

‘Good guest!’ said the man. ‘You seen our sign, haven’t you? Says it clear enough, don’t it? “Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge”.’

Wu Song said: ‘But what’s that supposed to mean, “Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge”?’

The waiter said: ‘Although it’s a local brew, this wine of ours has got more class than many a famous vintage. Whenever a guest who comes to our inn here, he drinks three bowls of this wine he’ll get drunk and is unable to cross the Ridge. That’s why we say, “Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge”. All our guests, just three bowls you know, and after that they don’t ask for no more’.

Wu Song laughed and said: ‘Oh, so that’s it! But I’ve had three bowls, how come I’m not drunk?’

The waiter said: ‘This wine of mine is called “Flavour through the bottle”, but it is also called “Falling at the Door”. At first you only savour the delicious flavour, but after a while you will fall down.’

‘Stop talking nonsense!’ said Wu Song. ‘Are you afraid I won’t pay you? Bring me another three bowls!’

Seeing that Wu Song was still entirely steady, the waiter brought him another three bowls. Wu Song drank and said: ‘Certainly a good wine! Host, whatever I drink, I’ll pay for. Just keep me filled up!’

The waiter said: ‘Oh, good guest! Don’t go on drinking! When you’re drunk on this wine there’s no remedy.’

‘Enough talking of bullshit! And if you’re thinking of doctoring the wine, watch out, I’ve got a nose for that sort of thing!’
The waiter found it was no good arguing, so he poured another three bowls. ‘Bring me another two catties of meat!’ Wu Song said.

The waiter cut another two catties of beef, poured another three bowls of wine and Wu Song went on guzzling for a long while. He only cared about drinking. Then he took out some silver and called: ‘Host, come and count this silver, see if it’s enough to pay for what I’ve drunk and eaten.’

The waiter had a look and said: ‘More than enough, you’ll get some change.’ ‘I don’t want your change; just give it to me in wine.’ ‘But good guest, if you want it in wine, that’s another five or six bowls! I’ll warrant you can’t manage that.’ ‘I don’t care if it’s more than six bowls, just bring it!’ ‘You’re such a big man,’ said the waiter, ‘if you pass out, how are we ever going to carry you?’ ‘If I needed the likes of you to carry me, I wouldn’t call myself a man at all!’

But the waiter still didn’t want to bring the wine.

Wu Song began to lose his temper. ‘It’s not as if I’m not paying you for it. If you don’t stop trying to provoke me, I’ll smash the place up, I’ll turn your bloody house upside down!’

‘The bugger’s drunk, I’d better humour him,’ the waiter said to himself. And he brought another six bowls, all of which Wu Song drank.

Having consumed altogether no less than fifteen bowls, Wu Song now grasped his cudgel, rose to his feet and saying: ‘Who says I’m drunk?’ he marched out of the door. ‘And you can forget all that stuff about ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge’;’ he shouted back.

So off he went, brandishing his cudgel.

But then the waiter was chasing after him, crying: ‘Good guest, where do you think you’re a-going to?’

Wu Song halted and said: ‘What are you shouting about? I’ve paid for everything, haven’t I? Why all this song and dance?’ ‘I’m only trying to help,’ the waiter said. ‘You’d better come back inside and read the government notice.’ ‘What government notice?’

‘Recently, up there in the Jingyang Ridge there is a big beast with slanting eyes and a white forehead. He comes out to attack people at night. Done for twenty or thirty good men already, he has. The hunters are under orders to trap him, there’s a deadline set by the government. And there’s signs posted up in all the approaches to the ridge, warning the people living on both sides of the ridge that: ‘The travellers must gather into groups and cross the Ridge during the three watches from ten to four o’clock. It’s forbidden to cross at any other time.’ And what’s more, single travellers are not allowed to cross the Ridge during the day time and they are supposed to wait till there’s a group. It’s late now, it’ll soon be night, I said to myself, ‘he’s just throwing his life away.’ You’d much better spend the night here. Tomorrow you can wait till a sufficient number’s gathered, and then you all cross the ridge together.’

Wu Song laughed this suggestion to scorn. ‘I’m from the region,’ he said, ‘and I’ve crossed this ridge a score of times. Who ever heard of a tiger here? It’s
no good thinking you can frighten me with that sort of shit. Anyway, even if there is a tiger, I’m not afraid of it!"

‘I’m telling you what’s good for you! If you don’t believe me, come inside and take a look at the government notice.’

‘Balls! I tell you, if there really is a tiger, it doesn’t scare me. What you want is to get me to stay in your house so you can come in the middle of the night and rob me of my money and my life. That’s why you’re trying to intimidate me with some tale of a fucking tiger!’

The waiter said: ‘Well I never! Here’s me, out of the kindness of my heart, trying to help you, but you give my words a bad meaning and twist them around. All right, if you don’t believe me, just go ahead!’

Indeed:

Of those that went before, a thousand came to grief;
That the next will safely pass is surely beyond belief!
In pointing out the facts nothing but kindness is meant;
But the fool with his suspicions imagines an ill intent!

Shaking his head, the host of the inn stepped back inside. Then Wu Song picked up his cudgel and strode off alone towards the Jingyang Ridge. After little more than a mile, he arrived at the foot of the pass. Here he saw a big tree with a white patch, where the bark had been stripped off to make room for two lines of writing. Wu Song was a passable reader. He raised his eyes and read:

Recently, since a tiger has been attacking people on the Jingyang Ridge. Travellers and merchants must gather into groups and cross the Ridge during the three watches from ten to four o’clock. Ignore this advice at your peril!

When Wu Song had read it he laughed and said: ‘It must be a trick by that scoundrel of a waiter to frighten travellers into staying at his inn. That sort of bullshit won’t scare me!’ Grasping his cudgel he began to climb the ridge.

By now the afternoon was drawing on and the sun’s red disk was starting to sink behind the mountains. But Wu Song, spurred on by the wine he had drunk, was determined to conquer that ridge. He had not gone more than a few hundred yards, however, when he came upon a tumbledown temple dedicated to the spirits of the mountain. Approaching, he saw that there was a notice bearing an official seal fixed to the door. He paused to read it. It said:

Yanggu district office announces that due to the recent appearance of a fierce man-eating tiger and the fact that the local hunters commissioned to trap it have not yet succeeded in their objective, travellers and merchants must gather into groups and cross the Ridge during the three watches from ten to four o’clock, and furthermore single travellers are not to attempt the journey alone during the daytime, lest they perish in the process. Traveller take heed!

After reading this, Wu Song realized that there was indeed a tiger. At first he thought of starting to go back to the inn, but then he said to himself: ‘If
I go back there, I’ll have to endure his mockery. It’ll look as if I’m scared. So I can’t very well turn back.’ He turned it over in his mind for a while and then concluded: ‘What the hell am I afraid of? I’ll just go on and see what happens.’

So on he went. And as the wine began to mount to his head, he took off his hat and strung it on his back, and tucked the cudgel under his arm. Step by step, he trudged on up the ridge. Turning to look at the sun, he saw that it was slowly setting. This was real November weather, when the days are short and the nights long, and it’s easy for nightfall to catch you unawares. ‘What’s all this nonsense about a big tiger,’ Wu Song was muttering to himself. ‘People are scared of the mountain. That’s all; they don’t have the guts to climb it.’

He walked on a bit further and the wine began to make itself felt still more. He was feeling hot, so holding his cudgel in one hand he used the other to loosen his clothing and bare his chest. He was swaying and stumbling as he advanced towards a dense thicket. He caught sight of a smooth black rock, so he laid his cudgel aside and sank down to rest upon the rock. As he was drifting off to sleep, just look how there came a fierce gust of wind. When this wind occurs, behold:

Formless and invisible, it strikes to a man’s heart;
It comes in any season and it blows all things apart;
Sweeping through the autumn woods it strips the branches bare,
Whistling among mountain peaks, it fills with clouds the air.

In fact, clouds as is well known originate with dragons, and wind is associated with tigers.

When the gust had passed, he heard a crash through the trees and out sprang a big beast with bulging eyes and white forehead. When Wu Song saw this a horrified ‘Aiya!’ broke from his lips. He rolled off the rock and grabbing his cudgel in his right hand dodged behind it.

Now the big beast was ravenous. It pressed its two paws into the ground with ease, springing upwards, and taking off into mid-air intended to land on its prey from above. Wu Song had such a shock that he felt all the wine start out of him in an icy sweat!

It’s slow in the telling, but happens in a flash. When he saw the beast spring, Wu Song leapt out of the way, ending up behind it. That’s exactly what the big beast didn’t like, to have a man at its back. Thrusting upward off its front paws, it flexed its back and twisted round to pounce again. But again Wu Song dodged to one side. Failing to grasp its prey, the tiger gave a roar like half the heavens exploding, a roar that seemed to shake the very mountains, and lashed out at Wu Song with its tail, rigid as a steel bar. Once more Wu Song leapt aside.

In fact, when the big beast attacks a man, it generally has these three strategies: springing, pouncing and sweeping. When all these three methods failed its spirit was half broken. After that big beast failing to catch Wu Song with its tail it gave a loud roar and turned round again. Seeing the big beast had turned its back on him, Wu Song grasped his cudgel in both hands and brought it down with all the strength of his body. There was a resounding crash.
But what he had done was demolish a whole tree, branches and all. He looked for the big beast. His staff had not even touched it. In fact, in a fit of panic, he’d rushed his stroke and all he’d achieved was to hit on a dead tree. Now his cudgel was broken in two and he was left with only the broken half in his hand. That big beast roared, it was enraged, turned and sprang at him again. Wu Song leapt back, covering ten paces in a single bound. The big beast reared up on its hind legs and came at him with all its claws out. Wu Song threw away his broken stick and suddenly grabbing the big beast’s striped neck with his bare hands began forcing it down to the ground. The beast tried to struggle, but it lost its power, and all Wu Song’s strength was employed against it, not for a moment did he relax his grip. With his legs he delivered fearful kicks to the big beast’s nose and eyes. That big beast roared furiously, and as it thrashed about under this onslaught its paws churned up two mounds of mud. Wu Song thrust the beast down into the mud and irresistibly its power began to ebb. Still gripping the striped coat tightly with his left hand, Wu Song managed to work his right hand free and began raining down blows with an iron fist, hammering the beast with all his might. He got in fifty or sixty blows, till from the beast’s eyes, mouth and nose and ears the red blood began to gush.

With all the power of the heroes of old, by the sheer force of his manly spirit, Wu Song was able easily to convert that savage monster into a senseless heap, for all the world like an embroidered bag. There is an old air describing Wu Song fights a tiger on Jingyang Ridge. Behold:

On Jingyang Ridge a sudden squall,
Day shows its face in a thick black pall;
Maple leaves reflect their red colour like flames on the marshes,
Yellow grass sprouts grow throughout the land;
What meets the eye is twilight cloaking the desolate void,
And a deadly fog pervades the world.
A sound like thunder splits the ears
As the king of beasts on the slope appears.
He proudly bounds, teeth and claws on show,
At the entrance of the valley the deer are all running in a panic.
In the mountain fox and rabbit are hiding,
Behind the torrent monkeys tremble.
Bian Zhuang sees it and gets frightened to death,
Cun Xiao encounters it and shows his great valour.
The Qinghe hero, still half tight,
Waits alone, but ready to fight.
To watch that man-eater hunt a meal,
The way it springs the hideous monster it would make you squeal!
He falls on the man like an avalanche,
But the man meets the tiger as a cliff, he doesn’t flinch;
He grips with the force of a missile crashing –
And the tiger’s paws in the mud are thrashing,
Blows and kicks, a relentless flood,
Both hands soaked in the crimson blood.
Dreadful carnage! On the blood-soaked ground
Fur and whiskers are strewn around.
When you look at it closely its fierce power is not yet gone,
When you look at it from afar its awe-inspiring posture is all but gone.
There it lies now, bright stripes fading,
Sprawled among weeds, both eyes clouding.

At this moment what Wu Song on Jingyang Ridge provided for that savage tiger,
in less time than it takes to eat a simple meal, was a surfeit of blows and kicks:
he beat the big beast till it did not move. For a moment it lay helpless, faintly
panting. Then Wu Song let go and went to find the broken end of his cudgel.
With this, fearing lest the big beast revive, he belaboured it a while longer, till
the breath was quite gone out of it.

‘I might as well drag the big beast down the mountain,’ he decided. But
when he thrust his hands into the bleeding mass and started pulling, how on
earth was he to move it? In fact, he was only exhausting himself, till his arms
and legs began to fail and he couldn’t move. So he went back to the black rock
and sat down to rest. He thought: ‘It’s getting quite dark now. If another tiger
should appear, I don’t think I’d be able to cope. I’d better try and get down off
the ridge. I can come back and deal with this thing in the morning.’ He picked
up his hat, which had fallen beside the rock, and skirting round the thickest
part of the forest, set off at a steady pace down the mountain.

He had hardly gone half a mile when just look how at this moment two big
beasts emerge from the brushwood! ‘Aiya!’ Wu Song cried, ‘now I’m finished!’
Then in the shadow the two big beasts rose on their hind legs, and when Wu
Song looked carefully, it was two men who had sewn themselves suits made out
of tiger skins, fitting tightly to their bodies. They carried five-tined forks.

They were shocked to see Wu Song and said: ‘Have you the courage of a wild
beast, a leopard’s gall, a tiger’s claws? Have you a heart so big it won’t fit in your
body that you dare, alone in the dark of night and unarmed, to cross the ridge?
Are you a man or a ghost?’

‘Who are you?’ Wu Song asked in return.
‘We are hunters from this place,’ they replied,
‘And why are you headed this way, up the mountain?’

They registered amazement. ‘Haven’t you heard? There’s a big beast right
here on Jingyang Ridge. Every night it is out hunting for people. Seven or
eight of our fellows, hunters that is, have lost their lives already, and countless
travellers, all devoured by this terrible beast. The Magistrate of our district has
made the local authorities and us, the hunters, responsible for capturing it. But
it’s incredibly ferocious and dangerous to approach; no one dares get too near.
We’ve had I don’t know how many beatings on account of this, but we just can’t
catch him. It’s our turn again tonight. We’ve got a few dozen villagers here to
back us up. We’ve put down traps everywhere, loaded with poisoned darts. We
had just finished setting our ambush. Imagine our surprise when we saw you
strolling down the mountain. What are you? Did you see the big beast?’
Wu Song said: ‘I am from Qinghe, my name is Wu and I’m the second in my family. Yes, I ran into the big beast, in a pretty wild part of the mountain, and I’ve just beaten it to death.’

The hunters’ jaws fell open. ‘Are you joking?’ they said.

Wu Song said: ‘If you don’t believe it, look at all the blood on me!’

The hunters said: ‘But how did you kill it?’

Wu Song told the facts about how he killed the big beast. The hunters were as relieved as they were astonished. They called the villagers, who now came crowding forward, a dozen or more of them, carrying steel-tined forks, foot-bows, knives and spears.

‘Why didn’t these troops go with you up the mountain?’ Wu Song asked the hunters.

‘Catch them going up there, with a ferocious beast like that on the loose!’ the latter replied.

When the hunters told the villagers that Wu Song had killed the beast they didn’t believe it.

‘If you don’t trust me, let’s all go and have a look,’ Wu Song said. They had flints and tinder boxes with them, so they lit half a dozen torches and followed Wu Song back up the mountain. There was the dead tiger, sprawled in a heap. Immediately there was great rejoicing. One of the villagers was sent on ahead to inform the district authorities, while the others put a rope round the tiger and carried it down the mountain.

When they reached the bottom a crowd had already gathered. They proceeded on, the tiger going in front and Wu Song now being carried in a mountain palanquin, till they reached the house of a local bigwig. The heads of the household were all waiting for them outside the gate. The tiger was carried to the main hall. Everyone of any standing in the district had come to see Wu Song, and so had all the local hunters, so there were twenty or thirty people all told.

‘Won’t you please tell us your name and where you come from?’ they said to Wu Song.

‘My name’s Wu Song and I’m the second in my family. I was on my way home from Cangzhou. Last night I stayed at the inn on the other side of the ridge and got rather drunk. When I climbed the ridge there was this beast.’

Once more he gave a detailed account of his pugilistic exploits with the tiger.

‘My! This is a real hero!’ the audience said.

Wu Song was now offered wine and the hunters produced dishes of game to go with it. Wu Song was exhausted from his fight with the tiger and the master of the house, after telling the servants to prepare a guest-room, urged him to go and lie down.

Next day at dawn the head of the household sent someone to the Magistrate with a report. A frame was constructed for carrying the tiger. As soon as it was fully light Wu Song got up and washed. The important people of the village brought a sheep and a barrel of wine, which was served in front of the main hall. Wu Song dressed and put on his hat and came out to meet everyone. They toasted him and said: ‘Heaven knows how many people this beast injured,
or how many hunters suffered floggings because of it. Now at last a hero has appeared and rid us of the menace. What a relief, both for the people of this village and for all travellers, who can now complete their journey in safety! We really owe you a lot!'

Wu Song thanked them and said: ‘It is not through any merit of my own, I was simply enjoying the reflection of your good fortune.’

Everyone had come to congratulate him. When they had breakfasted and drunk wine the tiger was carried out and placed on the frame, while Wu Song was garlanded with a piece of red silk. Wu Song left his bundle and other things in the village, and they all departed through the gate. Immediately some persons sent by the Magistrate of Yanggu district appeared, with orders to escort Wu Song. After some introductions, four servants were instructed to carry Wu Song in an open sedan, while the tiger was borne along in front, draped in red cloth. Thus they proceeded to Yanggu.

The people of Yanggu, having heard about a hero killing the tiger of the Jingyang Ridge, all turned out to cheer. The whole district was in an uproar. From his sedan Wu Song saw them pushing and shoving, packing every street and alley, everyone eager to get a glimpse of the tiger. The procession reached the government offices and stopped at the entrance to the yamen. The Magistrate was already in the courtroom, waiting to receive them. Wu Song alighted and the bearers set the tiger down on a raised walkway. The Magistrate, having observed Wu Song’s stature and seeing the brocade skin of the big beast, said to himself: ‘Who but such a fellow could have finished off that enormous animal?’ When Wu Song had saluted, the Magistrate said: ‘Hero, do tell us how you killed this big beast.’

So Wu Song told the facts about how he killed the tiger in the courtroom. Everyone present heard him with amazement. The Magistrate then offered Wu Song several cups of wine in the hall and presented him with a thousand strings of cash collected by the local dignitaries as reward. But Wu Song modestly said: ‘I was simply enjoying the reflection of your good fortune, Your Excellency. I was just lucky to kill the tiger; it was not through any merit of my own. How can I accept this money? I have heard that the hunters here suffered sanctions on account of the tiger. Might we not divide the money and give it to them?’

‘If that is your wish,’ the Magistrate said, ‘I leave it to you to arrange it.’

Wu Song distributed the money among the hunters, and the Magistrate, impressed by Wu Song’s open-handedness and humanity, decided he would like to secure his advancement. ‘Although you are from Qinghe,’ he said, ‘right next to us here at Yanggu. Today I would like to offer you a position as my captain. What do you say?’

‘Wu Song knelt to thank him. ‘I shall be forever in your debt for this, Your Excellency,’ he said.

Accordingly, the Magistrate called the registrar and had him write out the order appointing Wu Song with immediate effect a captain of foot. All the important members of the community came to offer their congratulations and there were celebrations lasting several days. Wu Song thought to himself: ‘I merely wanted to go home to Qinghe to see my brother, and now here I am, an
officer in the Yanggu militia!' From that day on he had been favoured by his superior and his fame spread throughout the district.

Several days had passed, and then one day as Wu Song had nothing to do and left the government offices in search of amusement, he heard someone call out behind him: ‘Captain Wu, you've made your fortune now, is that why you don't come to see me?’

When Wu Song turned his head and saw who it was, he let out a cry: 'Aiya! What are you doing here?'

Had Wu Song not met this person, things would have turned out very differently. It was predestined: Yanggu was to witness a scene of terrible carnage.

It was destined:
Blades will whistle and heads will roll,
Bright swords be drawn and the hot blood flow.

Indeed:
Wine and women have ruined families and states,
But in poetry and history the reputation of a noble man stays unstained.

But to know who it really was who called out to Wu Song, addressing him as Captain Wu you must listen to the explanation in the next session.

Notes

1 The present translation follows to a certain degree the translation by John and Alex Dent-Young (translators): The Tiger killers – Part Two of The Marshes of Mount Liang, Hong Kong 1997, Chapter 23: 1–17. But stock phrases, fixed phrases and other shared language portions are adjusted to conform to the translations found elsewhere in this book. Chapter 22 of the Stuttgart fragment version includes many alternative passages and is only about half the length of the 'full edition' of the Rongyutangben which is the text translated in The Tiger Killers. The same is the case with the following text, the Shuangfengtangben, cf. Sources, Appendix B.

2 The translation by John and Alex Dent-Young is partly followed, cf. note 1. Poems, lines of poems and couplets, omitted from the Dent-Young translation, are inserted according to the original Rongyutangben edition, cf. Sources, Appendix B.
14.1. From Shen Jing: The Noble Knight-errant (1599)

Chuanqi, Scene 4 ‘Subduing the Beast’

Scene 4 ‘Subduing the beast’, *Chuxiong*, from *Yixia ji* [The Noble Knight-errant] (1599) by Shen Jing (1553–1610) is the earliest dramatic version of the tale about Wu Song and the tiger that has survived. Wu Song appears in the role of a *sheng* [male hero]. The other roles are: the two hunters in *mo* [older male] and *jing* [heavy male] roles and the waiter at the inn as a *chou* [clown].1 The sung passages are printed in large-sized characters which are rendered in the translation by a larger sans-serif font.

**ACT 4**

Subduing the beast

*(Shui Hong Hua) (Enter hunters jing and mo)* The local authorities have placed a bounty on the head of the Lord of the Mountain. This is an urgent affair, and we hunters are hard up. We have suffered to no avail, hesitating how to go about this difficult task. If we turn back, we are in danger of violating the strict deadline. If we press forward, we are in danger of losing our lives. We are surely risking our lives here.

*(Mo)* We are hunters from Yanggu District. Since a tiger with slanting eyes and white forehead has turned up on Jingyang Ridge, killing a lot of people, the local magistrate has given us hunters a deadline and ordered us to catch it. But this tiger is ferocious, how can we capture it?

*(Jing)* Brother, we should put on tiger’s furs and hide at the foot of the hill, and set up crossbows with poisoned arrows all around. Then we just have to wait until it succumbs to its death.

*(Mo)* That makes sense. On a narrow path there is no way back.

*(Jing)* Since we are on official charge, we have no choice.
(They hide and exit. Enter sheng) In daytime the road used to be full of horses and carriages. I have travelled a long way; that goes without saying. Still I do not know for whom I shall devote my life. This moment reminds me of Ping Yuan Jun. I, Wu Song, have stayed long at the residence of Lord Chai, a relative of the Emperor. I wanted to join Song Gongming. I expected him to arrive and waited for some more days. After I took leave with the Emperor’s relative, I had some news of Brother Song, and now I must travel to Yanggu District to visit my elder brother. (Bei Shuang Diao and Xin Shui Ling) What a hard lot Heaven had in store for this hero! My first twenty years passed like a dream. Unable to rise in the world, riding the clouds and roaming through the nine myriads of space, ending up floating about on thousands of waves and ripples of the stormy sea, wandering about, here today gone tomorrow. Sun and moon handle my life in vain. While talking, I

Figure 14.1. Illustration to Scene 4: ‘Subduing the Beast’ from Yixia ji (1599), reprinted 1612.
already arrive at Jingyang Ridge. After the long journey, I am now thirsty and hungry. Here is a tavern, advertised by a wine-banner with the words ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge’. What does that mean? Let me go in and sit for a little while. ‘Waiter?’

(Enter chou, answering) Wine! Wine! Wine! Here! Here! Here! Here! Want to buy on credit? Leave! Leave! Leave! Leave! Please come inside and sit, good guest!

(Sheng) I wonder what you mean by ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge’.

(Chou) Good guest, we brew really good wine here. Any guest who drinks three bowls of it gets drunk and cannot cross this Jingyang Ridge. Therefore, we call it ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge’.

(Sheng, pose of laughing) See if I can cross the ridge or not after drinking ten bowls!

(Chou, pose of pouring wine) We only have cooked beef here, but I am afraid it is not very tasty . . . would you like some?

(Sheng) No need to roast phoenix or cook dragons. (Then he drinks up one bowl of wine after each sentence) Wine is bubbling in the parrot cup, with a rich shine of amber. I didn't realize that five gallons of wine will sober you up, and three cups after another will work wonders!

(Chou) You already had twelve or thirteen bowls of wine, better stay here for the night.

(Sheng drunken singing) Why do you need to worry? I am going no matter what.

(Pose of leaving, pose of Chou grabbing) Pay me first, and I have something to tell you.

(Sheng speaks with his back towards the waiter) After the long journey, there is not much left of the silver that Mr. Chai gave me the other day. Waiter, you can have all the silver as well as my bundle. I feel ashamed to have so little money. So, what else do you want to say?

(Chou) Look at the government notice ahead! On this ridge, there has recently arrived a tiger with slanting eyes and white forehead, killing people. Single travellers are not allowed to cross the ridge for their own safety.

(Sheng, pose of becoming sober, speaking angrily) Had you not brought the wild tiger into the conversation, I might not have wanted to leave. But since you have mentioned this tiger killing people, I suddenly feel myself full of energy, even my hairs stand up. I must go and capture it!

(Chou) I don't think you are a tiger eater. Listen to me. Life is precious. Don't you go there and throw it away!

(Sheng, pose of leaving) No, I cannot hold my towering rage.
Well, I am in a great hurry to leave.

If he absolutely wants to throw away his life, that is none of my business. 'Everyone must sweep the snow from his own door and not worry about the frost on other people's roof'.

While sunset is fading, with drunken, drowsy eyes, I arrive at the ridge. Why is that big beast nowhere to be seen? Those guys are just trying to fool me, even the government notice is rubbish. Now, I start to feel the effect of the wine, and must take a nap.

There really comes a big beast! (Pose of a tiger jumping up, sheng) (Yan Er Luo) Watching from here, its hairy body looks strong and fierce. (Pose of cracking his cudgel in two on a tree) Yah! Now this wolf-teeth cudgel of mine got broken first! (Sound of gongs from backstage, sheng stops talking; pose of the tiger springing and sheng dodging, to be repeated three times) Here am I, dodging back and forth for ever. That damned monster is flaunting its claws and baring its teeth. (Again the sound of gongs from backstage, sheng stops talking; pose of the tiger jumping and sheng dodging, to be repeated three times) (De Sheng Ling) Yah! When I dodged, it turned round and jumped into the air; in the twinkling of an eye it lost the track. (Pose of holding the tiger and beating it). This is surely a man-slaughtering tiger, so enemies will we become! (Again the sound of gongs from backstage, sheng again stops talking; the tiger jumps once more and fails, pose of tiger slinking away). If you want to display your prowess, then your blows must come down with a weight of a thousand pounds. (Pose of holding the tiger and beating it to death) Tiger, today you have come to the end of the road. How much it resembles the flowers that cannot bloom for more than a hundred days, the flowers cannot bloom for more than a hundred days. Now the tiger is killed. I had better keep going while the wine still has its effect.

There are two more tigers coming! I'm dead this time! (Gu Mei Jiu and Tai Ping Ling) I can only fight the evening wind with my last energy. Fight the evening wind with my last energy. (Jing and mo, pose of walking, sheng) Yah! Those are moving with two legs!

Why! Are you a man or a ghost? How could you dare to travel alone here!

I'm the world's greatest hero, called Wu Song.

Did you meet a tiger?

Allow me to say it was indeed ferocious.

Please, tell us about it!

While prowling in the thicket, it was already awe-inspiring.
(Jing and mo) Wow!

(Sheng) When it sprang, it was like a mountain falling down.

(Jing and mo) Wow!

(Sheng) When it swung its tail, it was like a sharp steel knife upright in the air.

(Jing and mo) Wow!

(Sheng) Its mighty roar could scare a thousand people away.

(Jing and mo) Wow!

(Sheng) Even from a distance ordinary people would feel like being hurt already.

(Jing and mo) Wow! Then why weren’t you killed by it?

(Sheng) Me?! With my guts and great strength, I managed to finish off that big beast with my bare fists.

(Jing and mo) Wow! Then we must thank you sincerely, strong fellow!

(Sheng) Yah! Let everyone praise me then!

(Jing and mo) We are pleased to let you strong fellow know, we are hunters from Yanggu District. The local authorities have set up a deadline for us to capture this big beast. Since nobody could get close to it, all we could do was to place poisoned arrows around here and wait. Now since you big fellow killed it, where is the dead body?

(Sheng) You guys, follow me! (Pose of going back, jing and mo staring from afar, pose of looking frightened). (Yuan Yang Sha) (Sheng) Just here by the cliff, wasn’t this the place where the tiger succumbed and I displayed my great courage?

(Jing and mo) Such a big beast was beaten to death by your powerful fists, even Bian Zhuang and Cun Xiao² are no comparison to you.

(Sheng) I laugh at all those precautions of yours, spending days on end for nothing!

(Jing and mo) Well, since you came here, we can’t let you go!

(Sheng) Why is that?

(Jing and mo) We must send you to the Magistrate to ask for the reward.

(Sheng) I was just trading at the inn. Who would have imagined that I would get credit for my merits here?

(Jing and mo) You have to go with us!

(Sheng, pose of turning his back to them) I have to go to Yanggu District to look for my brother anyway. I will just go with them then. (Pose of turning around) I will go with you. But I am afraid of those six alleys and three streets with
crowds of people milling around in a hubbub. It will be the talk of the town that nobody in Yanggu District could fight the tiger, but a man from Qinghe District killed it.

(Jing and mo, pose of facing each other) What a shame!

(Sheng) How humiliating for the Yanggu people!

(Jing and mo) Strong fellow, you are a real hero of this world, and the Yanggu people will recognize you as such!

(Sheng) Alright then. (Pose of walking) I have to follow, how can I accept all these flattering words?

(He exits; jing) Strong fellow, you go first. Let me go and give the tiger a few punches.

(Mo) Why do you beat a dead tiger?

(Jing) People like us can just beat dead tigers! (Carrying the tiger, exeunt)
14.2. **COMPLETE SCENES OF FIGHTING THE TIGER (LATE QING)**

**KUNQU PLAY SCRIPT**

The *kunqu* drama *Da hu quan chuan guan* [*Complete Scenes of Fighting the Tiger*], a manuscript from the collection of Che Wang Fu (Qing), is textually closely related to the previous text, Scene 4 of the *Yixia ji*. While the passages to be sung are taken over almost verbatim, the spoken passages are not. Stage directions, written in smaller characters in the manuscript, are rendered in a smaller font in the translation.

**Complete Scenes of Fighting the Tiger**

*Singing in Xin Shui Ling*: What a hard lot Heaven had in store for this hero! My first twenty years passed like a dream. Unable to rise in the world, riding the clouds and roaming through the nine myriads of space, ending up floating about on thousands of waves and ripples of the stormy sea,

*Speaking*: Today I think that I, Wu Song, am wandering about, here today gone tomorrow. Sun and moon handle my life in vain.

*Sheng speaking*: Host, why is the wine-banner inscribed ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge’?

*Chou speaking*: Dear guest, my wine is very special! If you drink more than three bowls, you are not able to cross the ridge.

*Sheng speaking*: Is your wine really that strong?

*Chou speaking*: Yes, it is very strong.

*Sheng speaking*: See if I can cross the ridge or not after drinking at least ten bowls!

*Chou speaking*: I’ve seen numerous people who like to talk big, today I saw one more. Dear guest, I hope your throat is as big as your mouth!

*Sheng speaking*: Just bring your best wine!
Chou speaking: Okay! Waiter, bring a jug of wine here! Ha ha! Dear guest, here comes the wine!

Sheng speaking: Pour the wine!

Chou speaking: Oh! Pose of sheng drinking the wine, chou speaking: Dear guest, how do you like the wine?

Sheng speaking: This wine is just so so.

Chou speaking: Ha! Just so so?

Sheng speaking: Pour the wine!

Chou speaking: Oh! Pose of sheng drinking the wine again. Chou speaking: Dear guest, do you want me to cut some beef for you to eat?

Sheng speaking: Ha, host!

Chou speaking: Ha?

Sheng singing in Zhe Gui Ling: No need to roast phoenix or cook dragons. Pose of drinking again.

Chou speaking: Dear guest, do you intend to drink only?
Sheng speaking: Pour the wine!

Chou speaking: No more!

Sheng speaking: How come it's already finished when I just began to drink?

Chou speaking: I made the size of the jug exactly three bowls of the wine, not even one more drop!

Sheng speaking: Don't bother me with three or four bowls while I'm drinking! Just bring me more wine as long as you have some!

Chou speaking: If you say so, then I'll try to find a bottle and serve you.

Sheng speaking: Okay, go get some.

Chou speaking: Ah, waiter! Fetch a bottle of wine! Good guest, the wine is ready!

Sheng speaking: Open it!

Chou speaking: Oh! Pose of blowing.

Sheng speaking: Ahem!

Chou speaking: Good guest, please, take a good look at the wine!

Sheng speaking: Pour the wine!

Chou speaking: Ah, dear guest, this wine looks like amber!

Sheng speaking: Amazing! Singing: Wine is bubbling in the parrot cup, with a rich shine of amber. Pose of drinking.

Chou speaking: Dear guest, how is this wine compared to the earlier one?

Sheng speaking: This wine is way better than the earlier one.

Chou speaking: Dear guest, there is not a single drop of water in this wine. Not like other guests, you really know wines! Five gallons of rice is not enough for making this bottle of wine!

Sheng speaking: Host! Singing: I didn’t realize that five gallons of wine will sober you up!

Chou speaking: Five gallons of wine sobers you up and gives you energy.

Sheng speaking: Ha! I’d like to stand up and drink!

Chou speaking: Right! It’s more comfortable standing up drinking. If I, the waiter, were a guest here having a merry time, I’d like to play the finger-guessing game with you and see if we could match each other in drinking!

Sheng speaking: I drained another bowl!

Chou speaking: I poured another bowl! Let me count your bowls! Pose of tightening his belt You drank three bowls at the beginning and another three bowls just now. You have drunk six bowls in total!

Sheng speaking: Host, Singing: Three cups after another will work wonders!
**Chou speaking:** This sounds quite reasonable! Dear guest, this wine is very tasty and it’s hard to drop the bowl. You had better stop now!

**Sheng speaking:** Why! You son of a bitch!

**Chou speaking:** Why do you curse me?

**Sheng singing:** Why do you need to worry?

**Chou speaking:** Let him drink! That son of a bitch! Since I’m running a tavern, why should I care about such big fellows and their capacity? But surely, ten grains of rice only produce one single drop of this wine!

**Sheng speaking:** Pour the wine!

**Chou speaking:** It’s the bottom.

**Sheng speaking:** Give it to me! Pose of shaking the bottle. Take it!

**Chou speaking:** Do you want more?

**Sheng speaking:** No, that’s enough.

**Chou speaking:** Let me clean the table. Waiter, come and clean the table! Will you, please, pay for the wine?

**Sheng speaking:** Take it.

**Chou speaking:** This is not enough for one jug plus one bottle.

**Sheng speaking:** Then I will leave my bundle here as a pawn, I’ll come and pick it up another day.

**Chou speaking:** What’s your surname, dear guest?

**Sheng speaking:** My surname is Wu.

**Chou speaking:** Lu?

**Sheng speaking:** Wu!

**Chou speaking:** Wú?

**Sheng speaking:** My god! Wu!

**Chou speaking:** Ha-ha! Pose of tightening his belt. Hey! Waiter, come with a bill for our dear guest, Mr Wu, this through and through ‘martial’ [wu] fellow!

**Sheng speaking:** Heh! Singing: I feel ashamed to have so little money. I’m going up to the ridge.

**Chou speaking:** Where are you going, dear guest?

**Sheng speaking:** Going up to the ridge.

**Chou speaking:** Dear guest, you are not going there!

**Sheng speaking:** Why not?

**Chou speaking:** Recently there has arrived this tiger with slanting eyes and white forehead which has eaten numerous travellers on our Jingyang Ridge. The local magistrate has ordered to put notices everywhere, warning that all single travel-
letters must not cross the ridge alone because of the danger. If you go there, you will be just served as its meal.

*Sheng speaking:* Host, had you not brought the wild tiger into the conversation, I might not have wanted to leave. But since you have mentioned this tiger killing people, I suddenly feel myself full of energy, even my hairs stand up.

*Chou speaking:* Dear guest, you can’t go there!

*Sheng speaking:* Heh . . . mind your own business!

*Chou speaking:* Fine! You just go! It’s really none of my business!

*Sheng singing:* I cannot hold my towering rage and I am in a great hurry to leave.

*Chou speaking:* Dear guest, you better listen to me! Don’t go there! *Chou exits.*

*Sheng singing:* While this sunset is fading, I am drunk, with drowsy eyes. *Pose of throwing up, speaking:* Where is the tiger? Peh! Where on earth would that tiger come from? Even the government notice is rubbish. Forget it! I’d better carry on going up the ridge! *Pose of throwing up:* I start to feel the effect of the wine now. Here is a big rock, why don’t I take a nap on it and continue my trip later? *Pose of sleeping. Enter a tiger,* *pose of it roaring.*

*Sheng speaking:* The wind is so strong! There really comes a big beast! *Singing in Yan Er Luo:* Watching from here – its hairy body looks strong and fierce. Now this wolf-teeth cudgel of mine got broken first! Here am I, dodging back and forth for ever. That damned monster is flaunting its claws and baring its teeth. *De Sheng Ling:* Yah! Ha-ha . . . when I dodged, it turned round and jumped into the air, in the twinkling of an eye it lost the track. This is surely a man-slaughtering tiger, so enemies will we become! *Speaking:* Tiger! Ha-ha, tiger! *Singing:* If you want to display your prowess, then your blows must come down with a weight of a thousand pounds. Today you have come to the end of the road. How much it resembles the flowers that can not bloom for more than a hundred days, the flowers can not bloom for more than a hundred days. *Speaking:* Damned monster! I’ll kick your eyes blind! See where you are running to! Ha-ah! It’s dead! It’s not moving! I’ll carry it down from the ridge. I’ll get down the ridge and continue on my way! Yah! There are two more big beasts coming out! They, too, wish to eat me! I, Wu Song! I’m dead this time! *Singing in Gu Mei Jiu:* I can only fight the evening wind with my last energy. [*Repetition sign]*

*Enter two hunters,* *speaking:* There comes a tiger! Let’s shoot it!

*Sheng speaking:* They are not tigers! *Singing:* Those are moving with two legs!

Two hunters *singing,* and *speaking in chorus:* Are you a man or a tiger?

*Sheng singing in continuation of the former sentence:* Ha-ha! I am the world’s greatest hero, called Wu Song.

Two hunters *speaking in chorus:* Did you meet that tiger?

*Sheng speaking:* Since you ask me about that tiger, please, listen: *singing:* Allow me to say it was indeed ferocious. While prowling in the thicket, it was already
awe-inspiring. When it sprang, it was like a mountain falling down. When it swung its tail, it was like a sharp steel knife upright in the air. Its mighty roar could scare a thousand people away. Even from a distance ordinary people would feel like being hurt already. Speaking: I, heh-heh! Singing: With my guts and great strength, I managed to finish off that big beast with my bare fists. Let everyone praise me then!

Two hunters speaking in chorus: Such a big beast was beaten to death by your powerful fists? We don’t believe you!

Sheng speaking: Follow me if you don’t believe me! Singing in Sha Wei: Just here by the cliff, wasn’t it the place where the tiger succumbed and I displayed my great courage?

Two hunters speaking in chorus: Ah-yoo! Such a big beast was beaten to death by your powerful fists, even Bian Zhuang and Cun Xiao are no comparison to you.

Sheng speaking: Heh! Singing: I laugh at all those precautions of yours, spending days on end for nothing!

Two hunters speaking in chorus: Strong fellow, since you came here, we can’t let you go!

Sheng speaking: Why is that you can’t let me go?

Two hunters speaking in chorus: No, we must send you to the district office to ask for reward.

Sheng speaking: Ask for reward? Singing: I was just trading at the inn.

Two hunters speaking in chorus: You have to go!

Sheng singing: Who would have imagined that now I’m getting credits for my merits here?

Two hunters speaking in chorus: You have to go with us.

Sheng speaking: Well, if I have to go, then let’s go! Singing: I’m just afraid of those six alleys and three streets with crowds of people milling around in a hubbub.

Two hunters speaking in chorus: Milling around in a hubbub? What are you talking about!

Sheng speaking: How humiliating to the Yanggu people!

Two hunters speaking in chorus: It’s not like that! It’s just letting the local people recognize you, the good fellow who killed the tiger!

Sheng speaking: Let me stop holding back, I have to go to Yanggu District to look for my elder brother anyway and that’s all. Singing: I can only say yes and follow them.

Two hunters speaking in chorus: Please!

Sheng speaking: If I don’t go, singing: how can I face all these flattering words? Speaking: Let’s go!

Exeunt. The End.
The play script of ‘Fighting the Tiger’, *Da hu*, was published in 1954 by the Chinese Drama Research Institute, Shanghai, based on a manuscript owned by Gai Jiaotian, a famous *wusheng* actor of *Jingju* and other drama forms, who already in his youth specialized in Wu Song roles and had the nickname ‘The living Wu Song’. The script is extremely short, and the episode of ‘The tavern’, so important for most other versions of the story, is here only referred to in passing. The piece has no textual passages in common with *chuanqi* or *Kunqu*. The script is only a draft of the main storyline, and dialogue is kept at a minimum. It seems that acrobatics, mime and singing stand at the center of this performance.

**Fighting the Tiger**  
**Scene One**  
(Enter four hunters)  
Hunter A: Ready, everybody?  
All: Ready!  
Hunter A: Since a fierce tiger has turned up on Jingyang Ridge, obstructing the road and killing people, we are ordered by the local magistrate to catch the fierce tiger, and now we are going there.  
All: Let’s go!  
(Exeunt)  
**Scene Two**  
Wu Song: (Backstage) Hei!  
(‘Wu Ji Tou’, enter Wu Song, slightly drunk, wants to vomit)  
Wu Song: Good wine!  
(Singing in *Xipi Mixed Rhythm*)  
Just now I stepped out of the tavern,  
now I am going to cross Jingyang Ridge.  
This is me, Wu Song. I have left Lord Chai’s residence to look for my elder brother. Just now when I drank some wine at a tavern, the host said to me: ‘There has arrived a fierce tiger on Jingyang Ridge. It obstructs the road and kills people.’ While it’s still early, I had better hurry up and cross the ridge.  
(Singing in *Mixed Rhythm*)  
With big strides I hurry forward,  
on my way to look for my elder brother.
(Stares ahead for the mountain path, then turns round and looks back at the sun; thinking that it is still early, he makes up his mind to try and cross the ridge. *Exit staggeringly*)

**Scene Three**

(A tiger’s costume *crosses the stage*)

**Scene Four**

(*Enter Wu Song with staggering steps*)

Wu Song: (*Singing in ‘Gu Mei Jiu’ and ‘Tai Ping Ling’*)

I’m holding a cudgel,

I’m holding a cudgel. (Staring with a drunken look in the direction of the mountain path)
Moving a few steps forward, the ground is swaying under my feet, 
the path over the ridge is winding and it's hard to find the way. 
(Sound of the tiger's roar; Wu Song shivers.) 
Gosh! With my own ears I hear the tiger roaring again and again! 
(He goes round the stage. Enter the tiger's costume. As Wu Song suddenly sees 
the tiger, he is greatly shocked) 
Dear me! It scared me so that my spirit was shocked and my courage dwindled! 
(He dodges to the right and left; the tiger makes a fierce attack towards Wu 
Song; again Wu Song escapes.) 
The fight is hard, I am about to die a hundred times and can hardly find the 
mountain path any more. 
(The tiger leaps at Wu Song again, Wu beats the tiger with his cudgel, the tiger 
jumps over Wu, and turns back and leaps at Wu Song again; Wu Song kicks the 
tiger, then beats the tiger with his cudgel again, the cudgel breaks; gripping the 
tiger's tail with his right hand, and thrusting the tiger's head with his left hand, 
Wu Song punches the tiger with his fist three times with all his might, till the 
tiger doesn't move. He lifts the tiger and throws it into the mountain torrent. 
The wine begins to mount, he throws up.) 
(Enter four hunters) 
The four hunters: Who killed the tiger? 
Wu Song: It's me, Wu Song, who killed the tiger. 
The four hunters: Great, you follow us to report it to the Magistrate. 
(Exeunt) 
The End of 'Fighting the Tiger'
Wu Song Fights the Tiger. Secret Script for Famous Actor (Late Qing/Republic), Local drama Huaixi

The local drama Huaixi is close to the various performance genres of chantefable. The title of the lithographic print seems to point to an actor’s manual as the source for the present version published in Shanghai.4

The drama text alternates between prose passages and passages in heptasyllabic verse, just like the chantefables, shuochang cihua, from the 15th century. The difference is that role types are indicated in stage directions, so that the text is obviously meant to be dramatized by several actors, and not just performed by one singer. However, the characters of the play use not only dialogue and monologue, but also third-person narration in their performance.

The happenings of Wu Song da hu [Wu Song Fights the Tiger] in this local drama from the Yangzi-Huai River area are very different, both in content and sequential ordering, from the novel Shuihu zhuan and the chuanqi drama tradition. In the Huaixi version the encounter with Pan Jinlian, Wu Song’s sister-in-law, takes for example place before Wu Song kills the tiger. As usual Wu Song is dramatized in the sheng role and Pan Jinlian in the female role, dan. There is also a clown, chou, who in this play performs two different roles, namely as Wu Song’s dwarfish elder brother Wu Dalang, and as a minor official in the county. But most of the secondary roles are not given the standard role type designation, but the characters are called according to their occupations: the saltseller, the magistrate, the official, the runner, etc. The episode of Wu Song’s drinking bout at the inn is not part of the plot, and there is only a vague suggestion of it in the first part of the plot, but the waiter of the inn does not have any role in this version.

Wu Song Fights the Tiger
Secret Script for Famous Actor
First Part

Introduction:

An imposing spirit / In the whole world there is nobody like him

Speaking:

A hero born with tremendous courage,
I joined the fraternity of the Liangshan Mountain.
Fighting injustice is our common cause.
Who has not heard of me, Wu Song?5

Sheng speaking: ‘I, Wu Song live in Qinghe District of Shibapu. I am a native of Wu Family Village. Unfortunately my parents have passed away, leaving behind them us two brothers. My elder brother’s name is Wu Qiao. His arms and feet are crippled. He married Lady Pan, my sister-in-law, and now they live together in their home. I, Wu Song, have been travelling across the country, making
good friends everywhere. Now, this morning, as I have nothing particular to
do, why don’t I go into the streets of Qinghe town to amuse myself?’

Wu Song was born with tremendous courage, / Across the five lakes and
the four seas . . . / Wu Song was born with tremendous courage. / Across
the five lakes and the four seas he roams to visit friends.

Today there is nothing to take care of at home./ He wants to take a stroll
in the streets to cheer up a bit./ Starting to speak he calls nobody else,/
he calls his sister-in-law, the powdered beauty/

**Figure 14.4.a** Cover page of the lithographic edition of the *Huaixi* drama *Wu Song da hu.*
‘I’ll take a stroll outside to amuse myself. / When I return, I’ll wait upon my elder brother. / Excuse me, sister-in-law’, he says, and sets off, / walking past the two screens of his home. /

Following the South Gate highway, / he rushes ahead in a tiger’s gait. / Before long he arrives, / Qinghe Town is already in sight. /

He steps in through the city gate, / at the street market there is a hubbub. / He doesn’t care about the market scenery. / Better look for some friends in the tavern. /

He walks straight over to the tavern, / and calls: ‘Xiao’er (waiter)!6 Listen carefully! / Hurry up and bring me a bottle of wine, / and take with you some snacks to go with it. /

After finishing the wine, he pays his bill. / In the tavern he puts a lot of cash on the table. / Why not take a rest in the tavern / and wait to see who will turn up. / Wu Song takes a rest in the tavern. /
The salt-seller *speaking*: ‘Here I am, just arrived at the avenue!’

The salt-seller has arrived and he is as busy as ever./ He wants to take a stroll at the avenue./

Placing his carrying pole on his shoulder,/ he walks out the door of his home and moves ahead./ He wanders through streets and alleys./ Carrying the pole, his body is soaked in sweat./

Walking along he raises his head and sees,/ a crowd of people at the crossroad junction./ In haste he lays down his pole,/ and starts selling right there.

The salt-seller stops on the avenue./

*Sheng continues*: ‘Here I am in the tavern!’

Wu Song has drunk and eaten all the wine and food./ He is dizzy and drunk./

Starting to speak he calls nobody else/ he calls: ‘Xiao’er, listen well!/ Hurry up and take the money for the wine./ I’ll go outside to cheer up a bit.’

Saying so he sets off,/ and is out of the tavern in a blink./ As soon he is out in the street,/ he rushes ahead in a tiger’s gait

Walking along he raises his head and sees/ at the crossroad junction there is a hubbub./ He raises his head to look carefully:/ ‘It’s indeed the salt-seller who is out doing evil business.’

That moment Wu Song is filled with rage,/ and curses the salt-seller: ‘You son of a bitch!/ You won’t engage in fair trade./ Cheating and bluffing like this, you have no moral!/ Today, you criminal have fallen in my hands./ Thinking of escape is useless./ He shouts to the mass of people to back away./ Wu Song’s eyes are red with anger./

He steps forward and takes hold of the man,/ beating and kicking him without halt./ After beating him for a while,/ My God! The salt-seller is not breathing anymore!/ That moment Wu Song stands firm,/ he shouts: ‘People, listen to me,/ in my drunken state I have had an accident,/ and beat the salt-seller to death.’

Honest people do not conceal the truth./ So he goes himself to hit the [Yamen] drum and report the case./ He strides forward, fast as a shuttle./ The District Yamen is soon in sight/

With his two hands he grabs the drum stick,/ and beats the big drum, thump-thump-thump./ As Wu Song beats the drum,/ one can hear inside the district court./
The Magistrate of Qinghe District speaking:

‘The drum sounds in the district court, that means a new case to handle

From a young age one should study hard,
through mastering the skills of essay-writing one can get a career.
All other things are worthless,
compared to academic studies.

I am the humble official Chen Ying from Qinghe District. Today I was sitting at the midday session of the court when I heard someone beating the drum. Let me call my assistant.’

Runner speaking: 'Here, sir.'

The Magistrate speaking: ‘Quickly bring in the man who is beating the drum.’

Runner speaking: ‘Well. Who are you? The master calls you inside.’

Sheng speaking: ‘I pay homage to you, respected District Magistrate.’

The Magistrate speaking: ‘Who is that, kneeling?’

'It is me, Wu Song.'

The Magistrate speaking: ‘For what reason did you beat the drum?’

Sheng speaking: ‘I have a bad temper. Because I had drunken wine, I accidentally beat the salt-seller to death on the street. Honest people do not conceal the truth, so I came myself to report the case and admit my guilt.’

Magistrate speaking: ‘Listen, Wu Song! A person like you is a hero and a good fellow, but killing people cannot go unpunished. I’ll send you to prison today and the hearing will be tomorrow at court.’

Runner speaking: ‘Yes, Your Excellency!’

The Magistrate speaking: ‘Boys, get my sedan chair ready!’

I, The Magistrate opened the court today, / Wu Song plead guilty and was sent to prison. / I ordered the yamen runners to get the sedan chair ready, / and I’m going to the street to inspect the dead body. / The boys heard the order and did not delay, / they got the sedan chair ready, / I, the Magistrate entered the sedan chair, / and my boys lifted it up and hurried forward. / Just a short while later we arrived in haste, / reaching the mortuary. / I called the sedan carriers to a halt, / and ordered the coroner to inspect the wounds of the dead. / It took some time for the coroner to inspect the dead body all over, / then he concluded that the man had been beaten to death. / I gave orders that the body should be laid in a coffin, / with the lid on top, but without locking it with nails.'
The coffin was temporarily placed under the eaves of the hall, waiting for the relatives to claim the dead soul. Then I ascended the sedan chair and we returned to my office.

Tomorrow I'm going to hold a session and convict the suspect.

When the Magistrate had finished these words, he returned to his office.

Enter the Magistrate of Yanggu District.

Introduction:

Enjoying the Emperor's salary, a gentleman is obliged to respond with magnanimity.

The great golden seal as big as a bucket,
the white jade hall reaching to heaven.
Without studying ten thousand volumes
how can one face the sovereign?

Sheng speaking: 'I am an humble official, my family name is Liu and my first name Xiong. In Yanggu District I serve as a district Magistrate. Today I am preceding over the court.'

Boy speaking: 'I shall report to you, Your Honour!'

The Magistrate speaking: 'What is it?'

The runner speaking: 'On Jingyang Ridge there has recently appeared a mottled fierce tiger, insatiably devouring humans, both travellers and local people have suffered much harm. Your Honour, please, take action!'

Magistrate speaking: 'Is this true?'

The runner speaking: 'Who would dare to tell lies here?!'

The Magistrate speaking: 'If it's true, call the local functionary to see me!'

Before he had uttered this sentence, the local functionary came forward. Chou speaking:

'Locals we are, locals we are!
each of us has his special function.
If you don't show up on order,
your behind will suffer a spanking!

I'm an old local functionary, my name is Zhang De. Your Honour, the Magistrate, called me. In which way can I serve you?'

Magistrate speaking: 'I called you especially for one thing: On Jingyang Ridge there has appeared a mottled fierce tiger, and ordinary people have suffered much harm. Take this gong and go into the streets and villages, beat the gong and announce the fact. Here you also have a heap of proclamations, take them and put them up everywhere: The local people of Jingyang Ridge and travellers are only allowed to pass between the hours of nine in the morning and three in
the afternoon, between three in the afternoon and nine in the morning nobody is allowed to cross the ridge. This is in order to prevent that more people shall be attacked by the big beast. If there is someone who is capable to capture the fierce tiger, he will be awarded a thousand taels of gold. Keep this in mind!'

Chou speaking: ‘Getting an order like this is always tough!’

When the local functionary hears this order, he is scared out of his wits. In great haste he takes the gong in his hand and steps out of the Yamen with the proclamations under his arm.

Without a word and saying no more, he puts up the proclamations everywhere and cries out the contents. He walks straight into the streets and lanes, and beats his big gong with a loud clamour.

He yells into the streets and lanes. He yells: ‘Hear me, all you people! Before sunset you must shut your doors, everybody in your family, young and old, must stay indoors.

There is a mottled tiger on Jingyang Ridge. The tiger devours human beings. Many travellers were killed by it. We must prevent the big beast from coming down to the foot of the mountain.

If someone is capable to capture the fierce tiger, a thousand taels of gold will be awarded him. If you don’t believe me, please, look at the proclamation on the wall.’

Shouting this out for more than an hour, I make sure that all families have truly heard the message. After these words I continue on my way, according to my mission I set out from the avenue to the countryside.

There I’ll visit the farm houses one by one, making sure each family is informed. Now I’m on my way down the avenue.’ Sheng continues singing: ‘Listen, now, to what is going on at the Yamen.’

I, Liu Xiong, am preceding over the court. Everywhere the common people are handing in complaints: On Jingyang Ridge a fierce tiger has appeared. Day after day it has eaten lots of people.

So many residents are killed, so many travellers are swallowed up. The local families cannot do anything about it, so they come to the district court and hand in a petition.

When the district Magistrate has read the complaints about the tiger, he tells the crowd to go back home. The Magistrate issues an order to capture the tiger, and do away with the evil for the common people.

After hearing it the crowd is dismissed. But I, the official, how can I take things easy at this moment. Immediately I call the runner.

Runner speaking: ‘What do you want me to do, Your Honour?’
Magistrate singing:

‘You must call together some hunters,/ bringing crossbows and poisoned arrows,/ and immediately get off into the mountain forest./

If you can catch the evil beast, you’ll earn great merit./ Do away with the evil for the people of the hamlets and wilds,/ and I guarantee everyone of you a promotion./

‘This is an order from me, the Magistrate./ Hurry up and go hunting the tiger./’ After saying this he withdraws to the back./ Runner continues singing: ‘On our side we runners are scared to death./

When we yamen runners hear this order,/ we feel like sitting in a sinking boat./ A fierce tiger moves faster than the wind,/ how can we catch it and stay alive?/

Far from ordering us to catch the tiger,/ we are clearly ordered to feed the tiger!/ Thinking back and forth, we see no way out./ We must get going and make this trip./

Walking out the yamen,/ we call some hunters to follow us./ Bringing torches and poisoned arrows,/ we hurry forward to capture the tiger./

Travelling a short while, we soon arrive,/ the old South Gate road appears in front of us./ According to our mission we proceed from the South Gate,/ how would we dare to take a rest and delay the expedition?/

The group of yamen boys are about to enter the wilderness,/ every one is scared out of his wits./ ‘Let’s take a break in the wilderness,/ let’s have a small break before we go further./

The Magistrate of Qinghe District speaking: ‘My boys, please, summon Wu Song to the court for me!

Runner speaking: ‘Yes!’ They run quickly to the jail behind the court, and in haste they take Wu Song with them and escort him to the court.

Sheng speaking: ‘Your Excellency, the Magistrate! I, Wu Song bow to Your Honour.’

Magistrate speaking: ‘Wu Song, because of your hot temper and your drunken state, you accidentally killed a salt-seller, for which you should be punished. But since you came here and reported yourself to us and did not put the blame on anybody else, I appreciate that and consider you a good fellow. I will pardon your death penalty and banish you to Yunnan Province.’

Sheng speaking: ‘I am most grateful!’

Magistrate speaking: ‘My men are equipped with an official document and they will serve as your guard. You must take good care of Wu Song on your journey, remember that!’
Runner speaking: ‘Yes!’

Sheng speaking: ‘What a mess!’

Wu Song looks disappointed, because he is sent to Yunnan to serve in the army. Turning round he leaves the court, and follows his guard striding forward.

Out in the street he opens his mouth, shouting: ‘Guard, please listen to me! Now I am leaving for Yunnan, but I have not given my family information.’

Can we go to the hut of my home first, to visit my elder true brother. First I want to take leave of my elder brother, and also ask my sister-in-law, the powdered beauty, to take good care.

The guard replied: ‘Well, well, well! Second Master, you can go where you want!’ Hearing this, Wu Song doesn’t delay one moment, fast as the wind he leaps forward like a tiger.

On his way he lifts his head and looks up: ‘My home is already right in front.’ He stops walking and comes to a halt, shouting: ‘Elder brother, open the screens!’

Standing in front of the gate he knocks and shouts three times. Dan continues: ‘Even my incense room is shaking! I, Pan Jinlian, just went upstairs to the incense room, when I heard somebody shouting outside.’

Is it The Elder who is back home for a break? Or the neighbour looking in? I cannot stay in the incense room, I must go out and see who it is.

Moving along on her nimble lotus feet, she is soon there. In front of her is the main door. Coming to a halt she opens her mouth, asking: ‘Who is knocking at the door?’

Sheng speaking: ‘It’s your brother-in-law back home!’

Dan singing: ‘I hear it’s my brother-in-law who is back home.’ Lady Pan opens the door without delay. ‘Brother-in-law, please wait a short while.’

Your sister-in-law is opening the mandarin-duck door for you. She releases the two wings of the door, and her relative, her brother-in-law, steps inside. She lifts her head and stares at him.

Constables are following right behind him. Inviting only her brother-in-law to enter, the sister-in-law locks the two wings of the door. They walk over to the thatched hall.

Then they sit down on the chairs, and Lady Pan raises her eyes and takes a good look at him. Look how her brother-in-law is wearing iron chains! As soon as she notices this, she opens her mouth in haste, saying reverently: ‘Dear brother-in-law, please, listen to me!’ The other day you went happily out in the streets to amuse yourself. But after you
left, we didn’t hear from you for days./ Today you are back in the hut of our home again./

But why are you cuffed?/ What is the reason and what is the cause?/ Please, tell me everything from the beginning,/ please, tell me the true circumstances./

Only then, your sister-in-law, can feel reassured./ She asks him in a calm and patient voice./ *Sheng continues singing: ‘I, Wu Song step forward,/ and having heard the question I feel worried,’/

saying reverently: ‘Dear sister-in-law, please listen to me:/ If you hadn’t asked, I wouldn’t tell./ Let *me* explain shortly./ When I went out in the streets to amuse myself/

I stayed in a tavern to see some friends./ But because I had too many glasses of wine,/ I got involved in a fight on the street./ By accident I killed the salt-seller./

Then I gave myself up to the district office./ I am in great debt to the Magistrate who helped me,/ changing my death penalty into army service./ Today I came back to the hut of our home,/ to ask my sister-in-law a favour before I leave./ Since I am heading to Yunnan area now,/ could you please take care of my elder brother./ He is disabled./

Being a cripple he is not much use./ Everything will be depending on you, my sister-in-law,/ that you as husband and wife live happily together./ If my brother offends you,/ then let *me* Wu Song take care of everything./ Wait until *I* come back./ Then I shall repay you, beautiful lady./ This is my only request today./

Please, remember this in your heart when I am far away./ Now I have told you everything from beginning to end./ *Dan continues singing: On my side* I am scared to death./ Then Pan Jinlian replies,/ saying reverently: ‘Dear brother-in-law, please listen,/ you may set your mind at rest!/ I am going to take over the heavy task./ You just go to Yunnan and serve your military duty,/ You don’t need to worry about anything back home./ There is a long journey ahead for you,/ please, take good care of your own health./ Your brother is disabled,/ How can I neglect a person like him?/ Although your sister-in-law cannot read and write,/ I know those moral codes for women well:/ Once married, my husband is my master for the rest of life./

Being a couple they are obliged to think like one person./ Even if your brother is rude to me,/ I will forgive him just for your sake, brother-in-law./ You can be totally reassured./
Your sister-in-law is not a silly person. She tells him so in a calm and patient voice. Sheng continues singing: I hear your words. After listening to this, I feel very happy.

I admire your virtue, powdered beauty! From now on you will take care of my elder brother. Wu Song is not stupid. It's getting dark outside.

'I have to set off now. I really wanted to wait for my brother, but I am a criminal now and they won't allow me. We have a deadline for arriving at the army.'

I can't stay home and delay our trip. After these words he is about to leave. Dan continues singing: On my side I'm coming. Lady Pan steps forward and says:

'Brother-in-law, I call you one more time, please wait a moment here. Let your sister-in-law bring wine to send you off.' Saying so, she acts without delay,

rushes to the kitchen. She steps into the kitchen, cooks some dishes and prepares the wine in great haste. She washes the pot and cooks some rice.

The egg soup is soon wisped. In another pot she cooks fresh fish, on top of the rice she steams salted meat. A moment later she brings a jug of warm wine.

Carrying trays and small cups she hurries to the thatched wing. Just a short while later she arrives in haste, the thatched wing is already in front of her. Quickly she serves the dishes and wine,

and invite the two security guards to eat with them. The handcuffs of her brother-in-law are removed. She lifts the jug and pours the wine, standing beside them Lady Pan opens her mouth:

'Honourable security guards, today you have come under my humble roof, I can only serve you plain wine and simple dishes. Now that you are going to Yunnan together, please, do not neglect my brother-in-law. On the road you are responsible for everything. When you arrive at public stations, please, act according to religious conduct. I have ten taels of silver ready here, that I want to give to you two guards. Please, take it for travel expenses, and buy some wine in the streets on your way. If my brother-in-law comes back one day,

I will repay your kindness. After three cups of wine and tasting of the five flavours, the three men were eager to fill their rice bowls. In a hurry they finished the wine and food.

The security guards were eager to leave. Hearing this Lady Pan opened her mouth and cried: 'Brother-in-law, listen to me! Today you are sent to Yunnan Province.'
You are leaving your elder brother and sister-in-law at home. Please, do not delay today! The earlier you get off, the earlier you will arrive, and the earlier you may return! We shall wait for your return, Second Brother, my brother-in-law.

Only then shall we feel at ease again. Lady Pan keeps talking standing beside them. Sheng continues singing: ‘I hear your words.’ Wu Song steps forward and says, in a reverent tone: ‘Sister-in-law, please listen to me: You do not need to urge me. I shall remember everything deep in my heart. What I told you today, please, don’t forget like wind in your ear. You just stay at home in the hut, I, Wu Song, excuse me for leaving now.’ In a hurry he puts on his handcuffs, follows the guards passing the screen, and steps outside the main gate. There he meets his elder true brother. He walks over to him and opens his mouth:

‘Elder brother, please, listen to me! Because I drank some wine in the street, I happened to beat up the salt-seller and send him to death. I am in great debt to the Magistrate who helped me, sending me to Yunnan to serve in the army. The reason I came back to the hut of our home, was to urge my sister-in-law, the powdered beauty. Since I am now leaving for Yunnan, I wanted her to take good care of you, elder brother. Your silly younger brother is leaving now, be tolerant and patient in all matters! I’ll return when my duty is over.

Then we brothers shall meet again.’ They want to talk a few more words, but the guards are impatient and press them hard. So he takes leave of his elder brother and departs.

He rushes ahead in a tiger’s gait. Walking along he raises his eyes and sees the South Gate road appears in front of their eyes. They walk down the South Gate road.

Chou continues singing: On my side I’m crying bitterly. When The Elder hears the story, his soul is torn and his mind upset. ‘In the hut of our home we had a peaceful life,’ but suddenly misfortune enters our door. Today Second Brother committed a crime, handcuffs and heavy chains are wrapped tight round his wrists and ankles, and he is sent to Yunnan to serve in the army. Who knows when he is able to return? I’m disabled and not much use, who will protect the house and manage the home? He thinks it over and over.
all he can do is to return back home and wait for news. Just a short while later he arrives in haste, the main door is already in front of him. He raises his head and takes a good look.

Lady Pan is just about to shut the second door. He hurries forward and opens his mouth: ‘Dear wife, please hold on!’ The Elder shouts as he runs over towards her.

Dan continues singing: ‘On my side, I hear you!’ As Lady Pan is about to shut the main door, she watches her husband arriving. In haste she stops and waits.

‘I let my husband come inside.’ ‘Please, my husband walk in front of me!’ Then she shuts the double door after him. The couple walks over to the rear wing together.

The thatched hall is not far and they soon approach it. They step into the thatched hall, and without resting, Lady Pan moves a chair over for her husband to sit down.

The wife repeats a couple of times to her husband: ‘While you have been out on business, do you know what has happened to our family?’ When Second Master went out in the street to amuse himself.

he was drunk and killed a man by accident! Just because he killed the salt-seller, he was sent to Yunnan to serve in the army. Who knows if it’s for good or for bad?

Who knows when he will return? It’s such a long journey all the way to Yunnan, how can we husband and wife stop worrying? The more she talks, the sadder she feels.

All they can do is to sit at home and wait for news. ‘You should go back to your business, I will stay and wait for time to pass. If one day my brother-in-law returns, only then shall we feel at ease again.’ The couple stay in their home.

Sheng continues singing: Here we are at the South Gate road! Wu Song is in a great hurry.

catching up with the escort to go to the army. He walks ahead in a tiger’s gait. Through winding lanes he hurries on. Walking along he raises his head and sees,

the old South Gate road appears in front of him! He marches forwards from the South Gate, full of strength like a stretched string he rushes off. After three miles he passes Peach Blossom Tavern.

and after another five miles he passes Apricot Blossom Grove. He hardly notices the mountain scenery, nor the fishermen who ferry him over the rivers. Opening his mouth he does not swear at others,

he swears at his guards: ‘You, sons of a bitch! If I end up in this stream, be sure you’ll suffer for it!’ The bitterness in his heart is not relieved in one outburst,
but proud and stern he strides forward. Walking along they hear people mumbling; a big beast has appeared on Jingyang Ridge. He raises his head to look carefully.

There is a huge mountain peak in the front. On top of the mountain the trees look beautiful. Crowds of people are milling around, so they prefer to take a rest at the Mountain God Temple.

Waiting for somebody to ask, the good fellow Wu takes a rest at the Mountain God Temple.

**Chou speaking:** I am an old local official, Zhang De. On Jingyang Ridge there has recently appeared a fierce tiger, insatiably devouring humans. Because of this I received orders from the Magistrate to warn and take care of the villagers in the valleys here around. All you people here, please listen to me! You capable men and hunters, follow me and let’s go and catch the tiger! Let’s set out immediately! They travel faster than fast. In no time Jingyang Ridge rises in front of them. **He continues saying:** ‘**Just look:** three men are resting on a rock in front of the Mountain God Temple. Let’s go over and talk to the three men: ‘Listen, your guts must be bigger than the sky! On Jingyang Ridge there has appeared a fierce tiger, insatiably devouring humans! Why are you waiting here, and why don’t you run away?’

**Sheng speaking:** ‘Where are you from?’

**Chou speaking:** ‘I am sent by the Magistrate of Yanggu District to capture the tiger. But I do not know where the big beast is hiding.’

**Sheng speaking:** ‘You people are afraid of the tiger, but I would love to catch a tiger without problem!’

**Chou speaking:** ‘Are you serious?’

**Sheng speaking:** ‘Who’s joking with you!’

**Chou speaking:** ‘Since that is the case, listen, my fellows! Fire your guns and bombs!’

**Chou:** ‘Listen strong fellow! Now the tiger will come out!’

**Sheng speaking:** ‘Get out of the way, all of you, let me handle it!’

**Singing:** Wu Song is in a rage, and runs to the top of the mountain. Wu Song is in a rage, and runs to the top of the mountain to catch the big beast.

Ridding himself of the handcuffs and foot chains, he spends all his strength and climbs the mountain peak. In top of the mountain he stops, waiting for the tiger to attack.

Just as Wu Song stands there and waits, a stinking gust of wind attacks his nostrils. Then several gusts of fierce wind follow one after another, as if the earth was going to fall apart and the mountain was going to explode.

‘At the this sight I know, for sure a fierce tiger is on its way down the mountain.’ A few moments after the wind is gone, **just look** how ferocious that big beast looks!
It’s mouth is like a basin of blood and its teeth like swords. / Its bulging eyes shine like lanterns. / It’s claws are like steel hooks and its tail like an arrow. / It presses down its paws and springs towards Wu Song. / When Second Master sees it, he is enraged. / He dodges to the other side. / The evil beast jumps off again towards him. / But its two feet are obstructed, and it lands on nothing. / The damned monster shakes its hairy neck and roars. / Once again it dashes toward Second Master. / Wu Song swiftly turns round, leaping and bouncing with all his might. / Skipping and jumping back and forth for ten rounds and more, / Wu Song turns out to be the toughest. / Right now he is fighting and it takes a while, / but obviously Second Master is tremendously awe-inspiring. / Three times he yells with a frightening voice, / sounding like thunder and large bronze bells. / In the heat of fighting Wu Song gains more and more strength. / Why should he worry about the tiger? / The monster is constantly missing its aim. / I step forward to grab its hairy head, and then with one hand I grasp it by the neck. / Holding it firm he kicks it on the spine, / concentrated he withholds his breath, / aiming at his evil enemy he attacks, / aiming at his evil enemy: three heavy strokes of his fist. / Fresh blood covers the mouth, eyes and flanks of the evil beast. / Second Master looks it over and observes it carefully: / It is the end of the mottled tiger. / Wu Song is still not quite assured, / lifting the tiger with his two hands, he smashes it on the mountain rock. / Second Master is soaking wet. / From the top of the mountain he shouts with all his might, / he shouts: ‘You people! Hurry up and come over here! / The tiger is killed, and I did it!’ / Wu Song shouts again and again. / The crowd continues singing: From the foot of the mountain the sound is heard. / The crowd hears the shouting. / With a loud yell they hurry forward. / The whole flock climbs up the mountain. / Lifting their eyes, they scout about, / just look how Second Master stands valiantly before them. / The fierce tiger has met its fate. / The crowd of local people hails the hero. / Everybody sticking out their tongues in admiration. / The common people hurry forward to bring their thanks: / ’Please, tell us your name, great hero, / and where is your home, in which region and district?’ / Where were you born and brought up? / Please, tell me where your hometown is, / and I shall go to the Magistrate and report your merit!’ / So they ask the hero in a calm and patient voice. / I, Wu Song step forward, / walk over in front of the people and talks to them, / shouting: ‘Everybody, listen to me! / My home is not far away from here.’
I am not a person without a name. My home is at Shiba Pu, Wu Family Village in Qinghe District. Both my parents already passed away.

They left my elder brother Wu Qiao and me, Wu Song. I was born with a bad temper, in a drunken state I committed a crime. Because I killed the salt-seller,

I am sent to Yunnan to join the army. Passing the Jingyang Ridge, we heard about the nasty big beast. Now I have done away with the evil for you,

and have beaten the nasty beast to death. Today I killed the tiger, let’s hurry up and go to the district court to report the deed. Then I’ll tell what happened from beginning to end.

Chou continues singing: On my side, I step forward. The local official listens to his speech, calling him again: ‘Strong fellow! Please, stand here for a little while, let me gather some local people, to carry the dead tiger. Then we can leave for the district court.’ When the locals hear this, they are not slow to act.

They lift up the dead tiger and set out right away. Second Master walks in front, the local official and the people follow him. Just a short while later they arrive in haste.

the District yamen is already in front of them. They dropped the dead tiger outside the district court. The local official steps inside to report the news. He hurries forward and kneels,

reporting what he knows to the Magistrate. The local official cannot stop, but reports, and reports and reports.

Chou speaking: ‘I have something to report to you, Your Excellency.’

Magistrate speaking: ‘What is it?’

Chou speaking: ‘It is that the fierce tiger at Jingyang Ridge has been killed by Wu Song on his way over the ridge.’

Magistrate speaking: ‘Really?’

Chou speaking: ‘How would I dare to tell you lies!’

Magistrate speaking: ‘Where is he now?’

Chou speaking: ‘Just outside the yamen.’

Magistrate speaking: ‘Bring the tiger-killer to me!’

Chou speaking: ‘But he is a criminal.’

Magistrate speaking: ‘What kind of crime?’

Chou speaking: ‘He killed a man.’
Magistrate *speaking*: ‘In this case, his good deed redeems his crime.’

Chou *speaking*: ‘Yes!’ In the twinkling of an eye, he hurries outside: ‘Second Master Wu, the Magistrate summons you!’

Sheng *speaking*: ‘Here I am, Your Excellency.’

Magistrate *speaking*: ‘Wu Song, since you killed the tiger at Jingyang Ridge you have made a great contribution. Your previous crime is redeemed. During three days we shall parade you through the streets dressed in red silk and flowers.’

Sheng *speaking*: ‘Thank you, Your Excellency!’

Magistrate *speaking*: ‘Is there anything else at court?’

Runner *speaking*: ‘Nothing!’

Magistrate *speaking*: ‘Court adjourned!’

Sheng *speaking*: ‘Local official, will you order your men to carry the evil beast! Bring me red silk and flowers, and let your people lead the parade.’

Runner *speaking*: ‘Yes, yes!’

Sheng *speaking*:

‘Let people clear the road, / dressed in red silk and flowers . . . /

Let people clear the road, / dressed in red silk and flowers I look so majestic/

The mottled tiger is carried in the front, / I, the good fellow Wu Song, follow right after. / Martial and majestic I march forward, / under the eyes of the inhabitants of Yunyang Town. /

As we parade through the streets, / there is a stir among the local people, ending in a great hubbub. / Everybody is shouting bravo for me, / every family burns incense to show their respect to me. /

‘Were it not for this hero who has done away with the evil, / how could we live in safety?’ ‘So one of them says to another ten people, and those ten tell it to another hundred people. / Thousands and ten thousands know about my deed now. /

As my reputation is spreading, / everybody knows about this Hero the Second. / Wu Song enters the district court three times during the parade, / and then he meets the district governor Liu. /

He stops and stands there, / reporting to the district court: /

Sheng *speaking*: ‘Your Excellency, I Wu Song have obeyed your command and returned.’
Magistrate speaking: ‘Listen, Wu Song! I admire you as a hero and a good fellow. Your martial art skills are outstanding. I want to give you the title of Captain of the police forces. Do you accept?’

Sheng speaking: ‘Why should I not accept?’

Magistrate speaking: ‘If that is the case, tell me when you want to take office?’

Sheng speaking: ‘After I have visited my home.’

Magistrate speaking: ‘Where is your home?’

Sheng speaking: ‘I live in Qinghe District of Shibapu, a native of Wu Family Village. I have a brother and a sister-in-law. I will come back to take office after I have been back home and brought them with me to Yanggu District.’

Magistrate speaking: ‘How many days will that take?’

Sheng speaking: ‘Your Excellency, I am afraid that it is not so easy for me. After I killed a salt-seller in a drunken fit, I was exiled and sent away to join the army, and my case has not been settled.’

Magistrate speaking: ‘Wu Song, I have a document here for you. You just take it to the Magistrate of Qinghe District. Your case will surely be positively treated.’

Sheng speaking: ‘I am deeply grateful to Your Excellency.’

Magistrate speaking: ‘The sooner you leave, the sooner you’ll be back! Runner! If there is nothing else, beat the drum! Court adjourned!’

Runner speaking: ‘Yes, yes!’

Sheng speaking: ‘Guards, let’s go back together.’

Runner speaking: ‘Yes!’

Sheng speaking: ‘Please, lead the way.’

Sheng singing:

The guard leads the way,/ followed by Wu Song . . . /
The guard leads the way,/ followed by the good fellow, the famous Wu Song./

This time he is not going anywhere else,/ he is heading home to meet his elder brother./ He leaves the district yamen,/ fast as the wind he leaps forward like a tiger./

As soon as he is out in the streets,/ the local people welcome him and bow to him./ Every family and home is stricken/ with admiration for the hero, Second Master./

He walks straight into the streets and lanes/ and rushes forward, followed by the guards./ Walking along he raises his eyes and sees,/ South Gate appears in front of his eyes./
He marches forwards from the South Gate./ Marching by day and sleeping by night he travels fast./ The people on their way have heard the news,/ and all along there is a hustle and bustle./

They travel as fast as they can,/ and soon arrive in front of the administration of Qinghe District./ They enter the street,/ and in no time stand right outside the door of the district yamen./

‘Let’s take a rest outside the district court,/ while the guard enters to report our arrival./

Sheng speaking: ‘May I oblige you, my guards, to enter and report to the Magistrate that we are here with a document from Yanggu District!’
Runner speaking: ‘Second master, please wait a moment.’ In the twinkling of an eye, he hurries into the district court and reports to the Magistrate.
Magistrate speaking: ‘What is the matter?’
Runner speaking: ‘Here is a document from the Magistrate of Yanggu District.’
Magistrate speaking: ‘Show it to me!’
Runner speaking: ‘Please, have a look, Your Excellency!’
Magistrate speaking: ‘I tear the letter open and read as follows: ‘In fact, Wu Song, exiled to join the army, has on the way while passing Jingyang Ridge killed a fierce tiger and thus earned great merit. I, the Magistrate of Yanggu District have offered him the title of Captain of the police forces.’ Who would have thought he was so capable?’ ‘Alright, tell him to come in!’

Runner speaking: ‘With this order, I return: ‘Second Master, the Magistrate wants to see you!’
Sheng speaking: ‘It’s me! Wu Song present! Wu Song is facing you, Your Excellency!’
Magistrate speaking: ‘Wu Song, why do you not dare to lift up your head when you see me?’
Sheng speaking: ‘Because I am guilty of a crime.’
Magistrate speaking: ‘I pardon you. Just lift up your head and stand up to talk.’
Sheng: ‘Thank you, Your Excellency.’
Magistrate speaking: ‘Wu Song, your good deed of killing the tiger in Yanggu District redeems your crime. You have been offered the post of Captain of the police forces by the Magistrate of Yanggu District. Please, take office and proceed accordingly!’

Sheng speaking: ‘Yes, thank you!’
Magistrate speaking: ‘Your case is finished and you may leave.’
Sheng speaking: ‘Accepted!’
Magistrate speaking: ‘If there is nothing else, court adjourned!’
Runner speaking: ‘Yes, yes, Sir!’ Sheng singing:

Excited Wu Song leaves in haste, says goodbye to the Magistrate . . .
Excited Wu Song leaves in haste, says goodbye to the Magistrate and steps out of the yamen. / This time he does not go anywhere else, but directly back home to see his elder brother. / His steps are fast like flying darts. / Soon he faces the door of his home. / Slowing down his tiger’s gait, he comes to a halt, shouting ‘Elder brother, please, open the gate!’ / He shouts three times, waiting outside the door. / Dan continues singing: She hears something from her incense room. /

Lady Pan is sitting in the incense room, she hears a loud noise from outside. / She cannot remain sitting in the incense room, but must go out and see in detail. / Moving along on her nimble lotus feet, she is soon there, the main door is already in sights. / Stopping up, she stands there and hurriedly opens her mouth: ‘Who is knocking on the ‘mandarin duck’ door?’

Sheng speaking: ‘I, Wu Song am back home now!’

Dan singing:
Hearing her brother-in-law is back home, it is as if she suddenly discovers a piece of gold. / She exclaims: ‘Brother-in-law, please, wait a moment, let your sister-in-law open the ‘mandarin duck’ lock and let you in.’ / She opens the two wings of the door with her hands, and her brother-in-law, Second Brother Wu, marches in. / Expediently she shuts the doors after him. / Brother and sister-in-law walk side by side over to the thatched hall. / ‘Second brother-in-law, please, walk in front of me!’ / The powdered beauty, Lady Pan, follows behind. / They walk straight over to the thatched hall. / Lady Pan moves forward in a fluster. / She places a chair for her brother-in-law to sit down. / ‘Your sister-in-law wants to ask your explanation. / You were sent to Yunnan to join the army, so why are you back home after just a few days? / Was there somebody who helped you to escape? Or the road was blocked and you couldn’t go further? / Please tell me the truth. / Your sister-in-law is very worried about you.’

She asks her brother-in-law in a calm and patient voice. / Sheng continues singing: On my side, I hear . . .’
Notes

1 In contrast to the following drama texts, there is little trace of dialect in this version. But both Wu Song and the waiter use the dialect pronoun an [I, me] hinting to the Shandong region where the action takes place.

2 Bian Zhuang 卞莊 and Cun Xiao 存孝 are famous tiger-killers from ancient time, cf. Introduction.

3 As indicated in the manuscript in small characters between the lines, the hero Wu Song, the sheng role 生, speaks and sings in high-style register of Zhongzhouyun 中州韻[rhymes of the Middle Plains], but uses the Shandong pronoun an [I, me] in emphatic position. The comic character of the chou 丑 [clown], impersonating the waiter at the inn, speaks in Suzhou vernacular dialect, suhai 蘇白, and these passages are written with dialect characters. In contrast to the previous text, the chou does not use the pronoun an. See also Chapter 6, Figure 6.5.b.

4 The booklet was published by Dagong shuju, Shanghai. Lithography was introduced into China in 1876 and was a highly popular printing method until the 1930s, cf. Yao Boyue 1993: 128–129.

5 In the Huaixi drama Wu Song refers to himself alternatively with the pronouns wo 我, zan 喚, and za 咱. The latter two forms are used in emphatic positions, marked in the translation by italics, For me. One single time Wu Song uses the Shandong dialect form an 倒 in self-reference, bolded I in the translation.

6 Xiao'er 小二 [Little Number Two] is used in several of the versions about Wu Song and the Tiger as a name for the waiter at the inn at the foot of Jingyang Ridge. Here it seems to be used as a general calling name for any waiter.

7 'Here', zhèkuài 這塊 dialectal form of the Jiang-Huai dialects.

8 'Do you know?', ke zhi 可知 (ke V?) is a dialectal question type, found in the Jiang-Huai dialects, corresponding to Mandarin zhidao bu zhidao 知道不知道 (V bu V?).

9 The first booklet, chu ji 初集, ends here in the middle of a verse passage. The second booklet, er ji 二集, is of similar length and continues the verse passage. The division into two booklets seems to be arranged only from the point of view of the pages available for each booklet and has nothing to do with the divisions of performance.
15
Performance Literature

15.1 Wu Song Fights the Tiger on Jingyang Ridge (Late Qing)

Big drum tale, dagushu

Drum ballad, guci, is a general term for a number of genres of storytelling in prosimetric or metric form. Stories are performed by a singer who with one hand beats the rhythm on a drum placed on a high tripod and with the other hand uses clappers of various kinds. The singer is often accompanied by one or two string players. The roots for this type of performance are sought in traditions going back to the Tang and Song dynasties, and drum ballads are divided into many different subgenres and local forms. The North Chinese genre of the ‘big drum tale’, dagushu, has been known since the 18th century and was popular in Beijing during the 19th century. For this type of storytelling, scripts seem to have played a distinctive role as aide-mémoire. But the publication of drum ballads also met the taste of a readership outside of the ranks of performers. The small woodcut booklet Jingyanggang Wu Song da hu [Wu Song Fights the Tiger on Jingyang Ridge] belongs to dagushu. The text is metric throughout. The print is probably from the late 19th century.¹

Wu Song Fights the Tiger on Jingyang Ridge

Let me tell in this session about the time when Bianliang was the Emperor’s seat
All under Heaven was in a constant state of war.

Inside the borders were four factions, outside there were four bandits
The four factions were stronger than the four bandits.

Inside the borders the four faction leaders were Gao Qiu, Tong Que, Cai Jing and Yang Jian, who brought chaos to the imperial order.

In Huaiqing prefecture a pampered son, Wang Qing, revolted
At Mount Liang Third Brother Song had his base.
At Mount Liang one hundred and eight chiefs had their base
Whether man or woman – they all burned incense.
Seventy-two Terrestrial Powers entered the mortal world
and thirty-six Celestial Powers were also born.

*Meanwhile let’s wait performing* the story of Mount Liang,
*let’s rather perform* the story of the good fellow, Second Celestial Power.

His home was in Qinghe District of Guang Prefecture,
ten *li* from the town, in Kongsheng Village.

In Kongsheng Village there was a man called Wu Zishun
The same mother gave birth to two boys
The same mother gave birth to two persons
One was weak and one was strong
Wu the Elder was the eldest son of them
Second Brother was the Second Celestial Power
Wu Lin liked to study and took to book learning
Wu Song loved the martial arts and practised sword and spear
He could perform the art of the staff and the cudgel,
and mastered the use of whip, sword and hammer
Eighteen years old he stirred up trouble at Dong Family Temple,
and beat up those ‘five tigers’
With his fist he killed those ‘road-blocking tigers’
He kicked to death those ‘kings of empty streets’
He caught Li Gui, famous for his money,
and opened that guy’s chest
At Dong Family Temple the people who died were not few
Afraid of a trial, he fled to another district
You may ask where he fled
He went off to Cangzhou to seek refuge with King of Liang
‘King of Liang thinks I have a good heart
I think King of Liang has a big heart, too’
They got on well and became sworn brothers,
lighting incense in the incense burner
Meanwhile let’s wait performing what happened to Second Master,
let’s rather perform what happened to master Kong’s soldiers in the hometown
They could not catch that good fellow, Wu the Second
They caught The Elder and let him take the blame instead
The Elder was taken to the yamen
He was bound and cuffed and thrown in jail
Then he was sentenced to – in August, after the mid-autumn festival –
have his head cut off at the marketplace
Men who are not destined to die will survive
A happy imperial announcement was spread throughout the world
The Empress had given birth to an heir
All the soldiers were sent on a mission, and [Wu the elder] escaped the penalty
Kongsheng Village experienced a draught
Two persons – a husband and wife – fled from the disaster
You may ask where they fled from the disaster?
They set up house in the west wing at Ximen Qing’s
The Elder was selling flatcakes along the main street, when he bumped into the horse monger Little Liu Tang. Starting to talk, he called Big Brother, shouting: 'Big Brother, listen to my simple words!' Today I will start off to Mount Liang, I will go to Cangzhou to see the little King of Liang. If you would like to write a family letter, then please do so, I can bring it over to that place for you!

When The Elder heard him say this, he did not hesitate, but wrote a nice letter in a hurry and a haste. After finishing the letter he handed it over, and Liu Tang received it in his hand. He took farewell with The Elder and set out. Then he rushed along the highway. He travelled at high speed, and soon he arrived at the King of Medicine.

Liu Tang entered the village and had a look around, when he caught sight of the good fellow, Second Heavenly King. Starting to talk, he called Second Brother, shouting: 'Second Brother, listen to my simple words! Today I do not have any other purpose than to deliver a family letter to this place. He immediately handed over the family letter, and Wu Song received it in his hand.

Wu Song opened the family letter and read it. Afterwards he only longed to go home to see his elder brother. When King of Liang heard about this, he asked: 'Second Brother, listen to my simple words! Before you leave I will give you a quarterstaff. Prepared with this you can defend yourself on your journey. Here is fifty tael of silver to cover your expenses on the trip. Thus you have the means to buy wine on your way.' Wu Song accepted the silver and took it in his hand. Then he put his pack over the shoulder. He took farewell with King of Liang and walked away. Then he marched forward along the highway. After three li he passed by the Peach Blossom Tavern. After another five li he passed by Apricot Blossom Village.
The Peach Blossom Tavern was famous for their exquisite wine
Apricot Blossom Village was famous for their beautiful women

He did not care where the exquisite wine came from
He did not care where the beautiful women were

Wu Song walked forward in big strides
To the north of the road a tavern appeared
A building in several stories and two staffs’ height
The wine banner of the tavern was blowing in the wind

On the wine banner of the tavern big characters were written
Every character, every line was written very nicely
If Liu Ling would ask: ‘Which place should one chose?’
Du Kang would answer: ‘This place is the best!’

On the horizontal hanging there were four characters:
Turtledoves drinking our wine become a pair of phoenixes!

Wu Song then climbed the tavern building
His quarterstaff he put aside
The waiter looked up at him
and sized up the good fellow, Second Celestial Power:
‘His height is more than one staff’s length
His two shoulders are full of power
His head is the size of a bushel
His two eyes stare like the moon
His arms look like two ridgepoles
His body matches a roof beam
His palms are as big as dustpans
His fingers are as long as wooden sticks
When he stands up he looks like a tower
When he sits down he is like an archway!’

After he had finished looking he hurried to ask: ‘What wine would you like?
Then I can tell them to heat the wine!’

When Wu Song had heard what the waiter said,
he shouted: ‘Waiter, listen to my explanation!
I ask you, what kind of wine do you have?
Please, tell me, Second Master, in detail

The waiter said: ‘I have ‘Champion Red’ and ‘Buddha Hand Dew’,
old vintages, Shaoxing wine and strong liquor.’

Wu Song said: ‘I want the liquor!
Please, hurry and heat it for Second Master!’
When the waiter heard this he did not hesitate, but hurried to bring the wine and vegetables.

Hush-sh-sh! he poured four measures of wine and placed on the square table.

Wu Song drank one cup of wine. This wine was in fact better than that of other places.

Wu Song said: ‘Good, good, good!’

The waiter turned around and replied:

‘In the front room of the tavern we sell only ordinary wine. The good wine is in the rear of the tavern. If you wish to drink good wine, then come with me. When we come to the back room you can taste this wine.’

When Wu Song heard this he became very pleased and shouted: ‘Waiter, listen carefully! If you have good wine to serve Second Master, I will pay you a little extra, when I leave, do you agree?’

The waiter then went first, and Wu Song followed closely beside him.

They walked rather quickly ahead. Then the two men arrived in the back room of the tavern.

The waiter opened the lid of a liquor jar. Wu Song took a big bowl in his hands.

One jar was finished in three bowls.

He drank eighteen jars in one go.

When he had drunk fifty-four bowls, he started feeling a little tipsy.

Wu Song walked out in big strides.

The waiter came forward and pulled his clothes, calling Master, shouting: ‘Master, listen to my good advice! This wine has been stored for eight and a half years. I am afraid exposure to wind could hurt you!’

Wu Song said: ‘It does not matter. The wine has only made me a little tipsy!’

Second Master walked out in big strides. He walked forward and arrived in the front room of the tavern.

With his hands he opened his pack and took ten taels of silver in his hand.
'I give you ten taels of silver. Dealing with people I do not take advantage.'

When the waiter received the silver he became very pleased
‘Dear Master, you are really generous!
May I ask you: where are you headed now? To which village are you going now?’
‘Today I am not going anywhere else My mind is set to cross the Jingyang Ridge!’

The waiter said: ‘There has appeared a fierce tiger on Jingyang Ridge, harming people in the middle of the day!
One or two people do not dare to set out on the trip alone Even groups of eight or ten must carry swords and spears
He has eaten the bean curd seller Pockmarked Wang
He has eaten master Classroom Zhang
He has eaten Zhao, Qian, Sun and Li
He has eaten Zhou, Wu, Zheng and Wang
I propose that you, Good Master, stay here for the night Tomorrow you can join a group to cross Jingyang Ridge!’

When Wu Song heard this, he felt annoyed
He shouted: ‘Waiter, this is too bad! Is this tavern of yours operated by brigands, harming people in the middle of the day?’

The more Wu Song scolded, the angrier he was
He gave the waiter a slap in the face with his palm
He hit the waiter so that he fell to the ground
Blood started running from his nose and mouth

Wu Song walked out in big strides
The waiter slammed the door shut
‘Leave, leave, please, just leave! Why should I care if you feed the tiger or the wolf?’

Second Master pretended not to hear it and marched forward along the highway

So strong was the hero and good fellow Wu Song
He subdued the tiger at Jingyang Ridge
He dodged the tiger’s head and grabbed its tail With his two hands he sent it up in the air

He hurried along at high speed, seeing in front of him the Jingyang Ridge
He lifted his eyes, raised his head and looked around
To the north there was a wooden gateway
On that gate a tablet was inscribed with words
saying the same as the waiter had told
When Wu Song read this, he was furious
A burning fire rose in him and he pounded his chest
He pointed with his finger and started to curse
He cursed: ‘You, King of Beasts high in the mountain!
Instead of staying high up in the mountain in royal dignity,
you dare come down from the mountain and do people harm!’

The more Wu Song scolded the angrier he was
His only wish was to challenge the King of Beasts
In a hurry he put down his pack
and placed his big quarterstaff on the other side
Wu Song, the Second, quickly sat down there
As soon as he closed his eyes he started dreaming of his hometown
He dreamed about his sister-in-law, that woman née Pan
He dreamed about his elder brother, Wu the Elder
Meanwhile let’s wait performing what happened to Wu Song, let’s rather perform what happened to the King of Beasts high up in the mountain.

For three days it had not eaten fresh human flesh
It had grown so thin that its chest almost touched its back

Today it was not going anywhere else
Its mind was set to go for Jingyang Ridge!

It hurried along at high speed, seeing in front of it the Jingyang Ridge

It lifted its eyes, raised its head and looked carefully
There was a big fellow lying there

It bellowed ‘b-r-r-r-r . . . ‘ and fell over him at one jump
At one jump it grabbed him by his left arm

Wu Song was dreaming about a family union
‘Who is grabbing me by the palm?’

Second Master opened his eyes in haste, and saw a fierce tiger beside him there

Its height was more than one staff’s length
Its tail was truly like a spear

One hundred and eight stripes covered its body
After a black one came a yellow

On its forehead a character stood out:
Three lines and one stroke reads as ‘King’!

Its gaping mouth – a pail of blood – was big as a dustpan, its two eyes staring at you like tea mugs.

Wu Song said: ‘Not staying high up in the mountain in royal dignity, Instead you dare come down from the mountain and do people harm!’

The more Second Master scolded, the angrier he was
He grabbed his quarterstaff in his hand

He aimed straight for the fierce tiger
But as the tiger dodged, his cudgel was broken

With a weapon in hand one may kill a tiger
Without a weapon in one’s hand it’s hard to defeat a tiger

He remembered a forefather of an ancient dynasty
This Cun Xiao once killed a tiger on a mountain ridge

He dodged the tiger’s head and grabbed its tail
With one hand he grabbed the tiger’s neck
Moving his two arms, the power of each a thousand pound
He easily lifted it up in the air
Then he threw it down towards the rocks
The tiger made a whistling sound and went to see the King of Hell
Just as Wu Song killed the tiger,
high in the mountain another pair of tigers appeared
When Wu Song saw them, he had some secret thoughts
His mind kept turning back and forth:
‘It is difficult enough for one person to kill one tiger,
but how can one person defeat two tigers?’
He bent down and picked up a rock
Then he aimed at those bastard tigers
When Dong Ping saw this he said: ‘Damned!’
and shouted: ‘Second Brother, listen to my simple words!
Don’t move your hand! Please, slow down!
My words are meant to give you good advice!
The two of us received orders from the court
We had to dress up like tigers
Please, follow us, follow us!
Among the three of us you are the chief!’
The three men went down the high mountain together
Together they went to the court to report

This was the first part about killing the tiger
In the next session the story continues about Wu Song’s exile

Translated by
Yu Jing and V.B.
15.2 Wu Song Fights the Tiger. Jingyang Ridge (Late Qing, Republic), Fuzhou Storytelling, Fuzhou pinghua

Fuzhou storytelling, Fuzhou pinghua, is a prosimetric performance art, based on Fuzhou dialect, where longish passages in verse alternate with passages in prose. The verse portions are not accompanied by musical instruments and not sung, but hummed or recited in a special sonorous voice. This storytelling genre has a number of features that remind of Tang dynasty sutra-declamations, jiangchang jingwen, and is considered a ‘fossilized’ art where some of the oldest characteristics of Chinese storytelling have survived. A considerably large body of texts written in the style of Fuzhou storytelling have survived since the early Qing period. The Fuzhou pinghua lithographic edition Wu Song Fights the Tiger. Jingyang Ridge can be roughly dated to the late 19th or early 20th centuries.

Wu Song Fights the Tiger
Part One Jingyang Ridge

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

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

(Speaking) The story we are performing is about Qinghe District of Guangping Prefecture, Shandong Province. There was a hero named Wu Song, he was the second son in his family. He was handsome and had outstanding martial arts skills. His character was loyal in the extreme, but his temper was headstrong. He had an elder brother named Zhisheng, whom people called Wu the Elder, weak in character and very ugly, shorter than two feet and five-six inches.

Although he and Wu Song were born of the same mother, the elder was totally different from his younger brother. Thus, everyone disdainfully called him ‘Three Inch Poxy Midget’. Let us postpone this and take our time to perform the story. Let us now tell only about Wu Song. One day he was drunk and killed a man. He was afraid of being arrested by the authorities, so he ran away from Qinghe District. He travelled to Taiping Village of Henghai County in Cangzhou, and took refuge at the residence of Chai Jin, the Little Whirlwind. He happened to meet the Opportune Rain, Song Jiang from Yuncheng District there. Song Jiang was also taking refuge at Chai Jin’s village because of a court case. When he met Wu Song, he found out that they had very much in common,
so they swore each other blood brotherhood. Wu Song stayed at that Taiping manor for over half a year. Then he heard that the man he thought he had killed was actually not dead after all. Wu Song was a loyal person, and immediately he thought of his elder brother. He wanted to go back home to visit his family. So he took farewell with Song Jiang and Chai Jin and left.

Wu Song took farewell with Chai Jin, and travelled toward Qinghe District. With a quarterstaff in one hand he was not afraid of being robbed on the road. While feeling hungry as he walked, he had already reached a village without noticing it. But there were no restaurants or taverns. He stopped and hesitated. *Just then he saw* that to the east of the road there was a small gate.
Outside the gate stood a woman about twenty years old.
In his whole life Wu Song never was tempted by the opposite sex,
so he went straight forward.
The woman called on him loudly:
‘Good guest, you can have a rest here!’
Wu Song heard her calling,
stopped and addressed her thus:
‘Is there a place that sells wine and food in this village?’
The woman said:
‘All households in this village
are farmers each and everyone,
only mine sells wine and food.’
Wu Song asked: ‘If you sell wine, why don’t you have a wine-banner?’
The woman replied: ‘If you want food,
dear guest, please come inside.’
Wu Song asked: ‘What are you selling?’
The woman answered: ‘I sell things,
if you want to buy, please follow me to my home.’
Wu Song was not looking for a prostitute.
But he was hungry and thirsty,
and hearing that the woman was not insinuating,
he nodded his head and followed her.
They entered the gate and went inside.
There were three thatched huts
with bamboo curtains in front of the doors.
The woman opened the curtain and said: ‘Please come in, my guest!’
Wu Song then opened the door and stepped inside.
The room was quite tastefully furnished.
In the middle there was a table, with two scholars’ chairs on each side.
Behind the table there was a day bed covered with a clean sheet and a blanket.
Wu Song left his cudgel by the door, and sat down on the chair.
The woman took the other chair and called on her servant girl to pour some tea.
Wu Song said: ‘I want wine, not tea!’
The woman told him: ‘There’s no wine here, but I’ll go buy you some if you want.’
Wu Song said: ‘You just mentioned that you had good wine at home which was still sealed! Now let’s stop arguing about the wine, but quickly bring me some food to eat!’
The woman then called him ‘Good guest’ and said: ‘Tell me what you would like to eat!’
Wu Song said: ‘You just mentioned that you could offer me two steamed white buns, just bring me that stuff to eat.’
The woman said: ‘Good guest, you are so silly, those buns are really not eatable!’
Hearing this, Wu Song began to understand.
Then he said ‘If the steamed buns are not eatable, what else do you have then? Please, make yourself clear!’
The woman smiled and opened her mouth:
‘I call you silly, my dear little guest, everyone loves wine, sex, wealth and vigour.
Men love women and there’s no exception.
I was sent to a brothel since very young, where I entertained guests with my beauty.
Now since you are at my home being my guest, please taste me and see if it’s good.’
This was the kind of speech the woman put forth and the hero, Second Brother Wu, got terribly annoyed.

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

That woman called 'Good guest' and said:
'Please sit down. I have something to tell you.'

Wu Song asked what it was.
The woman told him:
'Good guest, although you are not asking for my service today, you have to leave some money for make-up.'

When Wu Song heard this,
he felt a thunder-like rage.
He told the woman: 'The money is not a big deal, but I will give you one more thing.'
The woman asked what it was,
and Wu Song replied: 'Two blows!'
He was rubbing his fist and just about to beat her,
when the woman scared out of her wits pleaded with him to forgive her.
She shouted: 'Honourable guest, for heavens' sake, control your thunder-like rage! I dare not ask for make-up money from you!'

After saying that, she prostrated herself.
Wu Song then forgave her,
took his cudgel, and went out of the door.

When he had travelled two li along the road,
he heard a man behind him yell.
He said: 'Stop there! I'm coming!'
Wu Song stopped and turned round.

There he saw a fellow approaching.
His age was around thirty or more;
he was wearing a felt hat and a black shirt,
and followed by two tough young men,
about the age of twenty.
All the three of them had cudgels,
and they were hurrying fast towards Wu Song.
Wu Song opened his mouth and asked:
‘Who are you chasing?’
The man answered: ‘We are chasing you!
We have an old score to settle with you,
and you try to be funny asking us ‘Who’!’
Wu Song asked: ‘What score do you have to settle’
That man replied: ‘In this village,
you didn’t pay the girl her make-up money
and even wanted to beat her. That is outrageous!’
Wu Song smiled:
‘What’s your relation to that woman?’
That man said: ‘You just try my cudgel!’
Wu Song asked: ‘Is she your auntie?’
That man answered: ‘Bullshit!
Don’t talk nonsense!
Where is such a beggar like you from?
Don’t you dare to come to our village and make a fuss!
Do you think you can go to that house and ask for sex,
without paying your bill and even using violence!
Beware of Second Uncle Li from our village! Who hasn’t heard of me
and who doesn’t know me!
My arms have a thousand pound of strength.
I bought a girl and settled her in this village,
so as to have her entertain foreign travellers.
What she earns on ‘make-up’ is what keeps us going.
If you don’t have any money with you today,
you have to leave something here and we will let you go.
Otherwise, don’t blame us
saying that we locals bully foreign travellers.
When I, Second Uncle, settle scores with you,
you will know what I am talking about!’
Hearing this Wu Song laughed out loud:
‘Since I have neither silver nor coppers with me,
you can make an entry on me in your account book.’
Li the Second split his mouth in a grin and replied:
‘I don’t have an account book and cannot make an entry.
Just get the money out and stop the squabble!’
Wu Song said: ‘If you don’t have an account book,
let’s go to your home and find a painting hanging in your hall.
You can write down ‘Wu the Second from Qinghe District
owes you five taels silver of whoring money’.’
Rage swelled within Li the Second when he heard this,
he shouted: ‘My good fellow!
How dare you curse me first!
Let my cudgel send you to heaven!’
He raised his cudgel fiercely with two hands
and brought it down towards Wu Song’s head.
Wu Song stepped aside and dodged the blow.
The two young men then charged forward,
both raised their cudgels trying to give a hand.
Wu Song raised his cudgel too, to give combat.
He posed like a cat teasing mice.

*Just listen* how he shouted ‘Aiya!’,
and Li the Second fell to his feet,
while his helpers stumbled in the grass, too.
Realizing that they already lost their ground,
one of them retired and ran away at flying speed.
Wu Song gave him time to go, and then he smiled
and cursed at the same time: ‘Son of a bitch!
I should have chased you and given you a good beating!
Now I give up like opening a cage and letting the birds escape.’
He turned round and said to Li the Second:
‘Hurry up! Get to your feet and let’s have this old score settled!’

*(Speaking)* The story *we are performing* is about how Wu Song ordered Li the Second to settle old scores. Li the Second was only concerned about his pain.
He kept groaning all the time. How could he care about giving a reply! Wu Song cursed again: ‘You blind bastard! Earlier you wanted to settle scores with me, the Second Master. Why don’t you say something now? If you don’t speak, then I don’t owe you anything. I am on my way!’ He quickly turned around and walked away after saying this. He travelled a distance of about three *li* and reached the border of Yanggu District. That very day it was about noon time.
He had been walking so long that he felt hungry and thirsty. *Just then he saw* there was a tavern by the road, advertised by a wine banner which read: ‘Three bowls and you can not cross the ridge.’ Wu Song walked into the tavern, laid his cudgel aside, and sat down at the table facing south. He called the innkeeper: ‘Quickly, bring some wine!’ *Just look* how the innkeeper came with three bowls and one plate of food, which he placed in front of Wu Song. Then he filled one of the bowls with wine. Wu Song picked it up and drained it in one gulp. He smacked his lips and exclaimed: ‘Good wine!’. Again he asked: ‘Landlord, have you something to line the stomach?’ The innkeeper said: ‘Some cooked beef is all I’ve got.’ ‘Slice me two or three pounds of the good part,’ said Wu Song. The innkeeper went in and cut three pounds of beef and put it on a big plate which he placed in front of Wu Song. Then he poured another big bowl of wine. Wu Song drank it off and said: ‘Good wine!’ One more bowl was poured. So now Wu Song had drunk exactly three bowls. And the host wasn’t going to pour any more.

Wu Song called out again: ‘Pour the wine!’
Xiao’er just ignored him.
Then Wu Song started to bang the table and shout.
Xiao’er quickly came over
and asked: ‘Good guest, what do you want?’
Do you want me to cut you more beef?’
’Why don’t you come and pour the wine?’
answered Wu Song.
Xiao’er exclaimed: ’My good guest!’ and said:
’Because you have already drunk three bowls of the wine.’
’After three bowls of the wine,
why don’t you sell any more wine when you have more?’ replied Wu
Song.
Xiao’er said: ’On our flag
is written clear enough, ’Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge’.’
’But what’s that supposed to mean?’ asked Wu Song.
Xiao’er spread his lips and answered:
’Our wine is rich and tasty,
and it has more strength than many other famous vintages.
Therefore we sell only three bowls of the wine.
If you want the fourth bowl, then I am sorry that we’re not going to sell.’
Wu Song said: ’How mean you are!
And how dare you to make up lies and cheat me!’
Xiao’er exclaimed ’My good guest’ and said:
’I was just warning you about the risk
because I am an honest guy,
I always care about our guests.
That’s why I wrote it clearly on the wine-banner,
So that our guests would notice it.’
Wu Song said: ’What you said
is not true and I’m not scared.
Hurry up and bring me some more wine!’
Xiao’er had not other choice but to pour him more wine.
Wu Song drank another three bowls of the wine,
became more excited and kept calling Xiao’er:
’Pour the wine, hurry up!’
Xiao’er exclaimed ’My good guest!’ and said:
’If you get drunk on this wine, then there’s no remedy.’
Wu Song shouted at him when he heard this:
’Whatever I drink, I’ll pay for.
It is none of your business whether I get drunk or not.
Bring me another three pounds of beef
and another three bowls of the good wine!’
Xiao’er had no choice but bringing him what he wanted.
Wu Song again finished the meat and the wine,
’Hurry up! Pour the wine!’ he requested.
Xiao’er replied: ’I dare not pour you more.’
Wu Song got very angry when he heard this.
He pointed his finger and shouted:
’Enough of your bullshit!
Are you afraid that I won’t pay you?"
If you say more and don’t pour me the wine,
I’ll smash your little tavern
into pieces and then it will be too late for you to regret!
Xiao’er was afraid that he would use violence,
so he dared not to stop pouring him the wine.
After he had consumed altogether twenty-four bowls of wine,
Xiao’er was really shocked:
‘I’ve seen so many guests,
but nobody was like this ‘wine jar with no bottom’!
He has eaten ten pounds of beef
and is still not full! I’ve never seen this in my life!’
When Wu the Second finally had eaten to his heart’s content,
he called the innkeeper to reckon up how much he should pay.

(Speaking) The story we are performing is about how Wu Song finished drinking and called the innkeeper to make out his bill. After he had taken out some silver and paid the bill, he laughed out loudly and said: ‘What ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge.’! I’ve had so many bowls today, how come I’m not drunk? You guys can watch me cross the ridge!’ With these words he grasped his cudgel and marched out of the inn in big strides. Xiao’er followed him outside, crying: ‘Good guest, please, come back!’ Wu Song halted and asked: ‘I’ve paid for everything, haven’t I? What are you shouting about?’ Xiao’er said: ‘I have something important to tell you.’ Wu Song asked: ‘What’s so important? Hurry up and tell! I’m on my way!’ Xiao’er said: ‘There’s something you don’t know. The ridge ahead is called Jingyang Ridge. Recently there has been a fierce tiger on the ridge with slanting eyes and white forehead. It attacks people along the road. Among the travellers and merchants it has eaten twenty or thirty already. Therefore, the Magistrate of Yanggu District has given orders to the headman to let the hunters trap it in three days. Now the hunters have been punished many times, but so far they have not been able to capture it. So the Magistrate has posted a proclamation warning travellers and merchants that they must cross the ridge in the morning, noon and afternoon. It’s forbidden to cross at any other time. And what’s more, single travellers are supposed to wait till there’s a group of twenty to thirty people. It’ll soon be night, and you travel alone. If you go up to the ridge now, you’ll be just throwing your life away. You’d much better spend the night here. Tomorrow, you can look for company and make the trip together.’ ‘Bullshit! You dare to fool me! I’m from Qinghe District,’ Wu Song said, ‘I crossed this Jingyang Ridge dozens of times, never heard about fierce tigers. Now you want to scare me and get me to stay at your inn, so you can come in at night and rob me of my life and my money. Isn’t that true? Even if there really is a tiger, it doesn’t scare a person like me! I will and shall cross the ridge!’ After saying this, he made off in big strides.

The words Wu Song said
made Xiao’er very angry and he said no more.
He said to himself: ‘I was too kind, trying to help him.
But he was provoked to give me such an answer.'
This was goodness paid with evil.
If you don’t believe me, why should I care?’
After saying so, he stepped back inside the inn, shaking his head.
I will not perform about Xiao’er who returned to the inn,
but I will tell about Wu Song who marched forwards.
He saw the Jingyang Ridge in front.
When he arrived at the foot of the ridge,
he noticed that the red sun was setting in the west.
He began to climb the mountain while the wine still had effect.
Just then he saw a temple at the roadside,
and a proclamation was glued on the wall.
Wu Song paused to read it.
It said: ‘The Magistrate of Yanggu District warns all travellers that
due to the recent appearance of a fierce tiger on the ridge
which incessantly attacks people and causes much distress,
he has set up a deadline for the headman
and hunters to capture it.
All travellers who want to cross the ridge,
are accordingly advised not to take such risk
except in the morning, noon and afternoon.
Furthermore, single travellers are not allowed to cross the ridge alone,
they must take care and not risk their lives!
Please, take heed of this urgent warning!’
After reading this,
Wu Song realized that what the innkeeper had said was true.
At first he thought he might postpone his journey,
in case he would meet the big beast.
‘But if I return to the tavern, Xiao’er will laugh at me.’
As he hesitated, he saw again the red sun setting in the west.
If he now admitted to feel scared,
people would inevitably make him a laughing stock.
After all, Wu Song was a brave man,
and the wine began to mount to his head.
How could there be any good argument for turning back?
In his heart of hearts he was still hesitating, so he told himself:
‘Wu Song, Wu Song, your bravery is useless!
You are famous enough among the rivers and lakes fraternity,
but how can a mere proclamation make a good fellow
so scared he does not dare to go forwards?’
Thinking of this, his courage returned,
so he trudged on up the mountain path.
He walked on a bit further along the mountain path
and the wine began to make itself felt still more.
He was swaying and wanted to sleep
as he advanced towards a dense thicket.
Suddenly he saw a rock by the road.
The rock was smooth like a mirror.
Wu Song said: ‘On this rock
I shall sleep a while!’
So he laid his cudgel aside,
loosened his clothing and sank down on the rock.
Wu the Second drifted off to sleep
and didn’t care about the big beast on the mountain.
Since he was a child he had always been very brave,
and now he was drunk, tired and could not keep his eyes open.
When Wu Song was half asleep,
there came a fierce gust of wind in the forest.
It swept the trees and stripped the branches bare,
and suddenly in the turmoil he woke up.
He opened his drowsy eyes and looked around.
He heard something roaring behind the trees
and out sprang a tiger with white forehead,
its skin like rich brocade.
It bared its teeth and flaunted its claws ferociously.
Wu Song had such a shock
that he rolled off the rock and stood up.
Grabbing his cudgel,
he felt all the wine start out of him.
He took one step and leapt behind the rock.

(Speaking) The story we are performing is about how that tiger already before
it sprang out from the wood, had spotted Wu Song. So it clawed the ground
with its front paws, pushed back its hind paws, and made a jump, springing
towards Wu Song. In a flash Wu Song dodged, and ended up behind it. That
tiger lashed out at him with its tail, it pressed the ground with its two front
paws and sprang again. Wu Song again dodged behind it. That tiger was both
hungry and thirsty, and failing to grasp its prey twice, it was burning with
impatience and gave an ear-splitting roar as if a mountain was falling and the
ground split open. It opened its enormous mouth and wanted to bite Wu Song.
Wu Song raised his cudgel in both hands and shouted: ‘You monster, try and
taste my cudgel!’ He brought the cudgel down with all the strength of his body.
But who would imagine that his cudgel did not even touch the fierce tiger? The
stroke went right on to the black rock.16 With a swash the cudgel was broken in
two, and he was left with only the broken half in his hand. At that moment the
tiger had already turned in front of him, and Wu Song was in a desperate hurry.
He threw away his broken cudgel, instantly stretched out his two bare hands
and took a firm grip on the striped neck of the tiger, forcing its head down to
the ground with all his strength, not a moment did he relax his grip. With his
legs he delivered fearful kicks to its face. The tiger was in unbearable pain, it
thrashed about but couldn’t get up, and all it could do was trying to move back
and forth. Wu Song thrust it down with his left hand, managed to work his
right hand free and hammered it under its ear with his fist. Just look how the
When I was sleeping in the wood a while ago,

Wu Song split his mouth in a grin and replied:

Did you see this tiger?

When we suddenly jump out traveling above here,

Now we were trying to catch the tiger.

And down steps and loaded them with poisoned darts.

So we gathered a group of local villagers.

If I am turn to be on duty tonight,

But six or seven hunters were killed by the tiger already.

We were ordered to take turns and try to capture this fierce tiger.

So he set up a reward and called his hunters into action.

According to the lesson in his mountain riddle:

Dear traveler, haven’t you heard?

Those mean split their mouth in a grin and said with a meaningful eye:

Wu Song opened his mouth and replied:

How do you dare to travel here in the dark of night?

And you have no weapon in your hand.

Then you dare to travel alone in this place?

Have you eaten a leopard’s gall?

Are you a ghost or a man?

They saw Wu Song and asked him in return:

Wu Song shouted to them:

Both of them carried steel-tined forks.

Wu Song was shocked in frights.

When he looked carefully, it was two men.

Wu Song was really shocked at this sight.

Jump one from the thicket of dry grass.

When he suddenly saw two tigers

He had barely gone half a li

When Wu Song had killed the fierce tiger

Wu Song split his mouth in a grin and stopped breathing.

I don’t think I’d be able to cope.

Another fierce tiger springs out.

If another fierce tiger springs out,

I better get down the ridge and find a place to stay for the night.

I don’t think I’d be able to cope.

and Wu Song speculated in the darkness.

As he see there and rested for a while, it was already night.

He went back to the black rock and sat down to regain his breath.

After Wu Song had killed the fierce tiger.
that tiger came out from the wood and sprang at me.
I grabbed the big beast's neck
and beat it to death, with my blows and kicks.'
Those men were shocked and didn't believe him:
'Not to mention the fact that you were all alone,
but even if there had been ten people, they would not dare to get close to it.
Let me just tell you one thing that happened last night:17
There was a local fellow called Xing Gang.
He led a group of ten people armed with knives and spears
and yesterday night they climbed the mountain to capture the fierce tiger.
Who could imagine that the moment they had climbed the mountain ridge,
Xing Gang didn’t even have a chance to do anything before the fierce tiger dragged him away,
tore his chest and ate him.
In no time it had devoured him, body and head.
He had no elder or younger brothers,
so his poor mother cried herself to death.
His wife and children were left behind,
and his children are crying for dad all day long.'
While these two hunters were talking,
just look how there came a group of local villagers.
Wu Song asked: 'What about this crowd? Who are these people?'
The hunters said: 'They are our comrades.'18
As they were speaking, the crowd was approaching.
The villagers asked: 'You two fellows over there, who are you talking with?'
The hunters replied: 'Look at this man, he climbed the ridge alone
and we were scared by him.
We asked if he saw the big beast,
and he told us he had it already beaten it to death with his bare fists.
But we don't know if it's false or true.
If one man would try and handle a fierce tiger,
he must have six arms and three heads.'
Wu Song said: 'If you don't trust me, let's go together and have a look.
Then you will know if it's true or false.'
The hunters called the people and they lit several big torches,
followed Wu Song and marched forward.
When they came to a big tree on the ridge,19
just look how the tiger sprawled in front of the rock,
with traces of blood from its four openings.
At this sight the crowd rejoiced tremendously.
They tied the dead tiger up with ropes
and carried it in procession.

(Speaking) *The story we are performing is about* how the hunters carried the dead
tiger down the ridge, while one of the villagers went ahead and informed the
headman. So when the headman had heard the report, he gathered all the vil-
lagers, lit up lamps and torches, and came to receive Wu Song. When Wu Song
arrived, they invited him to sit down. The headman said to him: ‘Since this fierce
tiger appeared on Jingyang Ridge, our whole village has been in danger. Now
at last you strong fellow have turned up and done away with the evil for our vil-
lage. But we still don’t know your name and where you come from? Please, *tell
us the details.*’ Wu Song told them the following: ‘I come from Qinghe District,
my name is Wu Song and I’m the second in my family. I travelled from Henghai
District of Cangzhou to here. It was sheer luck that I chanced upon the fierce
tiger and did it in, and this was because of the good fortune of your village. It
really has nothing to do with me.’ The headman said: ‘Strong fellow, how could
you say that? If you strong fellow were not such a hero, how could you kill the
tiger with your bare fists? Now you must be very hungry, strong fellow, let me
serve you some food and wine.’ So saying he arranged the food and wine, and
invited Wu Song to eat. Wu Song didn’t care about courtesy, but started eating
right away. He finished all the dishes there and then.

When the headman was cleaning up the table,
the other people wanted to make a feast with wine.
Wu Song told them: ‘It’s late now,
I feel very tired.
We can leave the feast till tomorrow.’
The headman at once prepared a bed
and Wu Song had a good rest that night.
The next day at dawn the headman sent someone
to the Magistrate with a report
about how Wu Song killed the fierce tiger.
The Magistrate was very delighted,
so he sent three of his officers
to this village, leading one riderless horse
to welcome the tiger killing hero.
*We shall postpone the session about these events.*
*Meanwhile let us tell* how Wu Song got up early in the morning,
washed and dressed. When he was ready,
all the villagers had a feast prepared for him.
As Wu Song and the villagers were beginning to drink the wine,
there came a man with a message:
‘The Magistrate has sent a messenger
to welcome the tiger killer, Second Brother Wu.’
When Wu Song heard this, he got to his feet.
The headman told people to make a frame for carrying the tiger.
They moved the dead tiger onto the frame,
several men were to carry it along.
Wu Song then mounted the horse
and proceeded to Yanggu District together with them.
On their way, all travellers were curious to see them.
In no time they had reached Yanggu Town,
where lots of people were waiting for them,
all of them eager to see the tiger killer,
and the whole of Yanggu District was in an uproar.
The cross-road street at the entrance to the district was packed.

I cannot mention all these persons here and now.

Meanwhile let us tell how the messenger reported to the Magistrate.
The Magistrate of Qinghe District\textsuperscript{20} was sitting in the courtroom,
when he called in the hero Second Brother Wu.
The villagers carrying the tiger were at the head of the procession,
and Wu Song on his steed followed behind.
When they reached the entrance to the \textit{yamen}, he got off his horse.
Order was given to carry the tiger into the hall,
as the Magistrate himself wanted to inspect it.
When the headman heard the order, he let his men
carry the tiger to the hall of the district administration.
The Magistrate of Yanggu District first inspected the tiger,
and then he asked for the tiger killer, the strong fellow Wu, to enter.
Wu Song stepped forward and entered the hall
saying: ‘Your Excellency,
your underling kowtows to you!’
The Magistrate took a good look at Wu the Second:
‘This is indeed a great hero!’
Then he said: ‘Strong fellow, please, do not stand on ceremony!’
Wu Song rose and stepped to the side.
The Magistrate asked: ‘How did you handle such a mighty fierce tiger
and manage to kill it with your naked fists?’
So Wu Song told his story about how he killed the tiger
all over again and in every detail to the Magistrate.
The Magistrate was very pleased by his story,
so he granted Wu Song three cups of wine and toasted to him.
Then the Magistrate called his accountant and said:
‘Check out five hundred strings of cash
and reward it to Wu Song, Wu the Strong Fellow.’
Wu Song split his mouth in a grin and said: ‘Your Excellency,
I’m simply enjoying the reflection of Your Excellency’s great fortune.
It was sheer luck, so I don’t deserve the reward.
Since these hunters here
suffered sanctions and punishments,
might we not give the money to these hunters?
That would be very kind of Your Excellency.'
The District Magistrate said: 'If that is your wish,
I leave it to you, strong fellow, to arrange it.'
So Wu Song took the five hundred strings of cash
and right there in the hall he distributed them among the hunters.
The Magistrate praised the action: 'Well done, Wu the Second!
I like your open-handedness and largesse!'
Then he said to Wu Song:
'Although you are from Qinghe District,
which is not far from our Yanggu locality,
I would like to offer you a position as captain in our district.
I wonder if you would accept it?'
Wu Song split his mouth in a grin and replied:
'Since Your Excellency is showing me such favour,
how could your underling dare resist?'
The Magistrate called the registrar and had him write out the order
appointing Wu Song a captain there and then.
When everything was done, the Magistrate left the hall,
and so did Wu Song.
At this moment there came two soldiers
who cleaned up the office room for Wu Song
and carried in his luggage.
About this time all the important members of the district yamen
came to offer their congratulations to the new captain.
Some came with gifts and others invited him for banquets
and celebrations lasted for many days on end.
Soon half a month had passed,
and then one day as Wu Song was free and had no official duty
he took a walk in the street to relax.
Just as he was walking alone,
he suddenly heard someone call out behind him.

(Speaking) The story we are performing is about how Wu Song was walking in
the street, when he heard someone call out behind him: 'Isn’t this my brother
Captain Wu? Why don’t you come to see me?’ Wu Song turned his head and
saw that it was his own brother, Wu the Elder! So he turned around and walked
over to his elder brother, asking: 'Brother, how are you doing these days?’ The
Elder said: 'I haven’t heard from you for over a year since you left home. I in-
quired around for your information, but didn’t hear anything, so I was very sad.
Yesterday, as I came to town, I heard there was a strong fellow who had killed
the tiger on Jingyang Ridge, with the name Wu Song. Moreover he had been
appointed a captain by the Magistrate of Yanggu District. I was pretty sure it
was you, my little brother. Today, we’ve met and it really was you! Where have
you been for such a long time?’ Wu Song said: 'I was in Cangzhou. I lived there
for over a year. When I was on my way coming back to see you, my brother, I
happened to kill that tiger. But how come you, my brother moved here?’ The Elder said: ‘Brother, there was a reason why I moved here. Just because last year I took a wife. In the neighbourhood there were some idlers who often came to my house and took advantage of me. I couldn’t do anything to protect myself.’ After hearing this, Wu Song shouted angrily: ‘Who are those bold bastards? How dare they bully innocent people?!’ When the brothers began talking to each other, they had so much to tell they could hardly finish.

Translated by Feng Yining and V.B.
15.3. ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’ (Republic)

**Fast tale, kuaishu**

The genre of ‘fast tale’, *kuaishu*, also belongs to the large group of drum ballads, *guci*, and is closely related to the so-called ‘gentry tales’, *zidishu*, that were popular among Manchu amateurs during the late Qing.\(^{21}\) The fast tale is in prosimetric form, alternately spoken and sung. It has a very distinctive way of pronunciation and grows faster and faster towards the end, which is the reason for the name of the genre. The present printed version derives from a version probably performed during late Republic or early People’s Republic in the Tianqiao area of Beijing.\(^{22}\)

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**Wu Song Fights the Tiger**

*(Poem)*

There was a hero with amazing martial skills, frustrated and hampered by a mundane life with dreams unrealized.

A sense of propriety and justice was natural to him though he was unlearned. Courage and righteousness had kept him pure and innocent.

Without a chance to demonstrate his ‘iron bones and copper muscles’, in his loyal and sincere heart, he had always been longing for a true friend.

On the mountain of Jingyang Ridge he won himself a name, and ever since his fame has spread far and wide.

*(Introduction)*

*Our performance is about* a hero who never forgot his dear brother, and who, after travelling a long way, finally returned to his old home.

*(Qing Yun Rhythm)*

Second Brother Wu longed to see his elder brother and his sister-in-law, and therefore he took farewell with Chai Jin and set off.

He had only a light bundle on his shoulder and a quarterstaff.

This journey started during late autumn, a freezing wind blew right through his clothes.

High in the sky fierce geese were flying in lines, deep in the forest maple leaves were falling.

On this day, as he approached Yanggu District, a red sun was slanting towards the west, still lingering in the horizon.

Before the mountain pass he saw a tavern, with a signboard hanging at the door.

One line read:

‘May I ask where I can find a tavern?’

A line opposite read:
The herder boy points to Apricot Blossom Village.23

Wu Song stepped into the tavern.

The waiter was very hospitable.

Second Brother Wu drank three bowls of wine one after another, and only then he began to talk to the waiter, saying: 'What is this mountain called, and how far is it?'

The waiter answered: 'It is not very far. But nobody travels there anymore, since a fierce tiger has appeared on Jingyang Ridge. Travellers should be warned of the danger.

You, good guest, should stay here for the night and wait until tomorrow morning if you want to cross the mountain. Those who want to climb this mountain must gather together, and they need to be armed with weapons to safeguard themselves.'

Wu Song did not really believe in what the waiter said. He asked the waiter to warm up more fine wine and fill up his bowl. Second Brother Wu kept drinking seven or eight more bowls of wine, and so our hero was at the point of getting drunk.

This master paid for his wine, then picked up his bundle and cudgel. He was ready to go, but the waiter grabbed Wu Song's arm and said these words:

(Liu Shui Rhythm)

The waiter said: 'Good guest, where are you going?'

Wu song said: 'I am going to visit my family in Yanggu Town.'

The waiter said: 'To get to the town you must cross the mountain.'
If you meet the fierce tiger at this time, you will be killed. Please think about it, good guest. Even sober people need to avoid this danger, let alone a drunken man like Your Honour.’ These words angered Wu the Pilgrim. *Just look how* he stared at the waiter, and anger showed in his face as he said: ‘I’m going! I’m going! I’m definitely going! You are forcing people to stay. You must have bad intentions!’ When the waiter heard this, he dared to say no more. Wu Song turned around and stormed out of the door. He walked toward the mountain pass in a great fury. The road was deserted, not a single person was within sight. When Second Brother Wu became aware of this, he felt weird. He began to look around and search the surroundings carefully. Suddenly, he saw a proclamation posted in front of the mountain. *In fact,* this was a proclamation from the District Magistrate to the people. It read: ‘There is a fierce tiger on Jingyang Ridge. Travellers and merchants should be on guard. The District Magistrate offers a thousand strings of cash to whoever kills the tiger.’ After reading this, Wu Song thought: ‘What the waiter said was true. Today, I’m travelling into the mountain alone. Isn’t that like seeking death without a reason? I wish I could stop and return to the tavern, but then I am afraid that the waiter will laugh at me and regard me as a coward afraid of death. Why not cross the mountain while the wine still has effect? I am surely able to protect myself by my usual agility and martial skills!’ At this point he made up his mind. *Look at him:* eyebrows arching and eyes glaring like tiger’s eyes, shouting to the top of the mountain: ‘Hey! Today, I, Wu the Second Master, shall meet the Lord of the Mountain!’

*(Poem)*

The hero was so mad, his rage flew to the sky. With no care for danger, he ran into the mountain forest. On Jingyang Ridge he won himself a name. Who would not praise this tiger killer?

*(Spoken part)*

*The story we are performing* is about how that Wu Song was offended by the waiter’s word, how he walked toward the mountain pass in a fury, and how he
saw the proclamation from the District Magistrate and thought: “There is in fact a tiger on the mountain. I should return to the tavern and stay over for the night, and then continue tomorrow. However, when I left the tavern, I bragged. If I do not climb this mountain, the waiter will laugh at me. A real man must face the world. How could he be happy just by staying alive? And how could he break down in fear just by facing death? Trusting my arms’ strength and this single cudgel, I shall for sure press on and aim for that fierce tiger! Yes, even if this Jingyang Ridge were a mountain of knives, I must go forward!’

*(Lian Zhu Melody)*

Second Brother Wu, climbed the mountain with long strides. When he entered the mountain pass, he looked around very carefully. He saw vertical cliffs up to the clouds on both sides. In between there was a winding path allowing only one person to cross. Along this winding path, he walked for quite a while, finally reaching the top of the mountain. The red sun began to set, and the evening glow covered the sky. Dark was about to fall and he felt lonely. As he stood on the top of the mountain, he took a little rest. Then he went on. Suddenly there was a blow of mountain wind. He felt the effect of the wine. His eyes blurred and he staggered along, swaying back and forth, with unsteady steps which he could not control. He gathered himself together, moved just about ten more steps, and without noticing it, he entered the pine forest. A large boulder of black rock blocked the road. It was smooth and clean and there was no dirt and mud on it. Wu Song was delighted to see the rock. He put down his cudgel, rested his head on the bundle and reclined on the rock. He closed his eyes and tried to sleep. When he was almost asleep, suddenly he heard a strong wind that swirled with sand and stones, blowing through the forest and above the gullies. Dust filled the air, and the wind blended with a stinky smell. Second Brother Wu woke up from his dream. He turned over and stood up. He looked far above into the sky where the moon appeared. The ridge top was lit up like a white painting, revealing a crouching mottled fierce tiger on the top. Wu Song shouted angrily when he saw it: ‘You damned monster, how dare you kill people?’ The tiger roared like thunder and sprang down when it saw this man. Second Brother Wu seized his cudgel with both hands. With the utmost of his strength, he whirled it aloft. With a loud cracking ‘Trash!’ half of his quarterstaff fell to the ground. In fact he had, in his haste, struck the root of a pine tree,
snapping the cudgel in two. Pine branches, pine leaves, pine needles and pine cones tumbled down his head and covered his body. That tiger bared its teeth and flaunted its claws, swung its tail and swayed its head; then it leapt at the good fellow. Second Brother Wu swiftly stepped to one side, threw the remaining half of the cudgel away. He stretched out his iron arms, seized the tiger’s head and held its neck with his hands, exerted all his strength which was no less than the weight of Mount Tai. The fierce big beast panted like a roaring bull. Its great strength was now of little use. Wu Song pressed the King of the Beasts to the ground. He lifted one leg and rode on the tiger’s back, freed his right fist and ‘Bah! Bah! Bah!’ with all his might began to pound. With the pounding sound, soon after, blood streams came out from the mottled fierce tiger’s nose and mouth and finally it died. Second Brother Wu, on Jingyang Ridge, he did away with the evil for all the people. Truly, so it was: everybody admired him, his name reverberated like thunder. Forever lasts the fame of this hero who killed the tiger.

Notes

1. Approximate dating of the text is attempted in Børdahl 2007b. The booklet might have been printed/reprinted as late as the 1920s.

2. Guangping Prefecture, Guangping fu 光平府, is found in some of the other versions.

3. Wu Zishun 武子順 seems to be a variant form (based on alternative pronunciation during oral performance) of one of the names of Wu the Elder, namely Wu Zhisheng 武直生, cf. 15.2 Fuzhou pinghua version. See also Jin Ping Mei cihua, Chapter One: Wu Zhi 武直.

4. Wu Lin 武林 seems to be still another name of Wu the Elder, only found in the present text.

5. ‘Road-blocking tigers’ and ‘kings of empty streets’ both seem to point to the same local rascals.


7. This is perhaps ‘shorthand’ for ‘listen to my sincere words’, ting zhongchang 聽衷腸, which is frequent in Beijing drumsinging, cf. Stevens 1973.

8. Yao Wang 藥王 [King of Medicine], name of Apothecary?

9. qimeigun 齊眉棍 [quarterstaff] for fending

10. This phrase is found also in several drama versions.


12. Cf. ibid.: 54.

14 Lithographic technique was first introduced in China in the 1880s and was largely superseded by modern print in the 1930s, cf. Cao Zhi 1992: 391.

15 This is the first time that the waiter is called ‘Xiao’er’, Little Number Two, in this version. The name is entered without any explanation or introduction. It is unclear if ‘Xiao’er’ is a general name for a waiter or a specific proper name.

16 It is a special feature of this version (and Xiuxiang Jingyanggang Wu Song da hu 繡像景陽崗武松打虎 [Wu Song Fights the Tiger on Jingyang Ridge, Illustrated], Shanghai shuju 1908, genre unspecified) that the cudgel is broken against the black rock. In other versions it is broken against an old tree, or the tiger grasps it. In some versions the cudgel is not mentioned. In the Rongyutang edition of Shuihu zhuan the cudgel is said to be broken against a tree, but on the illustration in that edition, it looks like the cudgel is broken on the rock.

17 The episode of Xing Gang 邢剛 is unique to this version (and Xiuxiang Jingyanggang Wu Song da hu 繡像景陽崗武松打虎, see note 16).

18 *Our, an:* italic typeface is used to mark the occurrence of the dialectal first-person pronoun an 俺 in the Wu Song texts.

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

20 ‘Qinghe’ (Wu Song’s home place) seems to be a mistake for ‘Yanggu’ (where the episode of the tiger takes place). This ‘mistake’ is also a feature of Jin Ping Mei ci hua.

21 Please, note that ‘fast tale’ kuaishu and ‘Shandong clapper tale’ Shandong kuaishu are separate genres. Between zidishu and kuaishu there is a close relationship, cf. Chan Kam-chiew 1982.


23 The two lines on the side boards are taken from the poem Qing ming 清明 by the Tang poet Du Mu 杜牧: 借问酒家何处有  牧童遥指杏花村.
Selected Oral Sources
16

Oral Performances

16.1 ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’ told by Wang Shaotang (1961)
Yangzhou storytelling, Yangzhou pinghua

Yangzhou storytelling, Yangzhou pinghua, is a local form of storytelling in prose with occasional verse. The language of performance is the Yangzhou dialect, including various registers of high and low speech. The tradition goes back at least to the early Qing period when oral sagas of Three Kingdoms, Water Margin and other tales were reportedly told by storytellers from Yangzhou. In the modern period this art was continued according to age-old rules of transmission and education, and a number of renowned ‘schools’ of storytelling survived during the 20th century. The most famous storyteller of that period was Wang Shaotang (1889–1968), who was honoured by having his family’s tradition established as the Wang School of Water Margin. In this tradition several cycles of heroic tales were told, such as Ten Chapters on Wu Song, Wu shi hui, Ten Chapters on Song Jiang, Song shi hui, Ten Chapters on Lu Junyi, Lu shi hui, and more.

In 1961 Wang Shaotang performed Ten Chapters on Wu Song for the Nanjing Radio. The Wu Song saga was broadcast in daily instalments of about thirty minutes. The translation below is based on the first episode of this series.1 Titles do not normally belong to oral performances, but are additions by editors of written versions. In the following three oral performances, 16.1, 16.2, and 16.3, titles are not added to the spoken text, since they do not occur there. The titles that are given in the heading to the pieces are those that the storytellers would use in a conversation about a given episode, or those given by the editors of the audio-editions.

Beginning of tape:

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

Second Brother from Guankou, Wu Song, was in Henghai County at the estate of Lord Chai when he received news from his elder brother. He bade farewell
to Chai Jin, and went off to Yanggu District in Shandong to find his brother. He was not just 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, more than twenty li from the city. 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 the distance a pitch-black town. Our hero shouldered his bundle and holding a staff in his right hand, marched forwards in big strides, making his way to the gate of the town. When he raised his head again and looked up, he saw the wall piled up with flat bricks all the way to the roof and the round city-gate. Above it there was a whitewashed stone with three red characters: 'Jingyang town'.

As he entered the gate, he saw a broad alley, neatly lined with shops on both sides, most of them thatched cottages. There were also quite a few people around.

Walking along he noticed an inn to his right, a brand-new thatched cottage with three wings. Under the eaves a brand-new green bamboo-pole was stuck in, 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!’

The moment 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 also two brand-new people. – You must be joking! Other things can be ‘new’, but how can people be ‘new’? Why not?

Behind the counter sat a young innkeeper, just in his twenties. In front of the counter stood a young waiter, eighteen or nineteen. Probably young people could be called ‘new’ people. And then it follows that old people might be called ‘worn’ people. The proverb is right:

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

So people can also be counted as ‘new’.

From the other side of the counter he saw the butler standing in the main room – that’s what he is called in storytelling, but it’s really just the waiter. He was handsome, with a clear brow and bright eyes, white teeth and red lips, a delicate mouth with thin lips: he certainly looked like he had a glib tongue. On his head he wore a soft cap; around his waist he had tied an apron as clean as can be, and below his feet showed in cotton socks and cotton shoes. With both hands on his hips he glanced out from the door of the inn. Why did he stand there and look? He was on the look out for business. Suddenly he caught sight of a customer, bundle on shoulder and staff in hand, who was approaching and made a halt. Sure enough, this must be someone who wants to drink some wine. A businessman who sees business coming his way will always give it a warm welcome! So the young fellow, all smiles, hurriedly took a few steps forward, greeting the customer with both hands clasped and a mouthful of phrases in so-so Beijing accent:

‘Sir! Does Your Honour 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 have good wine in this inn?’

Why would Wu Song pose as such a connoisseur! Even before he had entered the door of the inn, he began to ask if they had good wine. Well, he was this kind of lofty and unyielding character, not just like anybody. People of former times had four words they couldn’t do without: wine, sex, wealth and vigour. These four words are actually not for the good. So people nowadays don’t care too much about those four words. But at that time, they didn’t have any good education, so they couldn’t do without those four words. But Wu Song only cared for two things: He was fond of drinking good wine and he was fond of using his strength on behalf of innocent people, he was so full of vigour. These were at the same time his weak points impeding him his whole life. He saw that the town was small and the inn was small, too, so he was afraid that they did
not have good wine. He didn’t care for wine that was diluted with water. In that case he would rather not take his rest at that place. Therefore even before Second Brother Wu had entered the door, he first asked 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 makes people tipsy three houses away.
Guests passing by will pull up their carts and rein in their horses.
Lü 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!’

When Second Master Wu heard this, [he said]:
‘Good!’

Why did he say ‘Good!’ in this way? There was a reason to it. The wine was not merely good, it was extraordinarily good! When they opened a gallon of wine, the neighbours three houses away would become tipsy, just by smelling it you would get tipsy. What else was it that was so good about that wine? Lü Chunyang [Lü Dongbin] loved this house wine so much that he drank up all the money he carried in his belt and even pawned his famous sword to pay for the wine. Li Taibo [Li Bai] also loved the wine so much that he drank up every penny he had, whereupon he tore off his black gauze hat and pawned it to pay for more wine. How could it be true that Li Taibo pledged his black gauze hat or that Lü Chunyang pawned his famous sword?

No such thing ever happened. This was only flattery from the guests. But since the customers had thought out these phrases in order to flatter the wine of the inn, one can imagine that their wine was indeed good. Highly pleased Second Master Wu followed Xiao’er to the door and stepped into the hallway of the inn. They passed through a half-door and came to the next wing with a small courtyard and a thatched hall just opposite. The thatched hall was clean and nice, with seven or eight tables. But there was not a single customer. What was the reason? It was already long past the lunch-time rush. The sun was slanting steeply towards the west.

As Second Master Wu walked inside he took down his bundle and staff, placed his bundle on the corner of a table to the right and leaned his staff against it. He brushed the dust off his clothes and sat down at the main seat of
the table right in the middle. Xiao'er wrung out a hot napkin and served him a cup of tea:

‘Master, what do you want to eat with the wine?’
‘Good wine and good food, and be sure there is enough, too!’
‘Oh! Yes!’

Eh? How come the waiter Xiao'er had changed his accent? A moment ago at the doorway he was talking all in so-so Beijing accent. Why did he afterwards begin to talk in the dialect from the district north of the Yangzi River? What was the reason? There was some sense in it. This young man, Xiao'er, was from the district north of the Yangzi River, he was our fellow townsman. How come he was able to speak Beijing dialect? Because he would stand at the doorway of the inn looking out for business. The travellers from south and north were not acquainted with the dialect from north of the Yangzi River. Therefore he had made a special effort to study a few sentences of Mandarin in order to be able to deal with the customers.

But he had only learnt a few phrases, uncivilized whelp as he was, and he wasn’t able to get going much longer. At this moment he wasn’t able to turn out any more phrases in Beijing accent. He had better be honest and stick to his own dialect. Therefore his pronunciation was different.

Xiao'er went to the front and took a big piece of beef, more than two pounds, and cut it into thin slices, a big plate of red-chopped fragrant meat, just the right size. Apart from that, he peeled a dozen eggs; he peeled the shell off the boiled eggs. He sprinkled [the meat] with gravy. [The eggs] were snow white and tender. He put a handful of white salt on a small plate; the salt was for the eggs. Then he filled two other plates, one with steamed rolls and another with pancakes. When he had filled a mug with wine, he arranged cup and chopsticks on the tray and carried everything over to the thatched hall in the rear wing. He placed the tray on the table where Second Master Wu had left his bundle, and then he arranged the snacks, wine and food, beef, cup and chopsticks in front of his guest. Xiao'er removed the tray, took up a position to the left of our hero and smiling looked at Wu the Second. Second Master Wu pushed his teacup away and reached for the wine mug:

‘Get me a big cup instead of this one!’
‘As you wish!’

His wine cup was exchanged with another much bigger one. This wine cup was almost as big as a rice bowl. ‘Sh-sh-sh …’ he poured himself a cup: ‘Uh! That wine is not good. Its colour is not right and it doesn’t have any flavour. Such wine probably doesn’t have the least spirit. Let me try and have a sip! Let me see how it tastes in the mouth!’ Second Master Wu took two sips of the wine: ‘My goodness! This wine is really bad! It is watery wine and it has no body to it. Strange, it is not in line with what the waiter told me a moment ago at the doorway. I had better ask him!’

‘Xiao'er!’
‘Yes, Master!’
‘Is this the good house wine?’
‘Oh, no! This is only a medium good wine of our inn!’
‘Ah, why do you not bring the good wine?’
If you want the good wine, it’s surely not bad. If it’s the good wine that Your Honour wants, it’s “Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge”.
‘Fine!’

Oh, my, how glad Second Master Wu was! Sure enough, before he entered, he had noticed a piece of pink paper glued to the wine-banner of the inn with the inscription ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge’. ‘I do not understand, I have no idea what it means, why not ask him?’

‘Xiao’er, what does it mean: “Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge”?’

Well, Master, our small town, this town of ours is called Jingyang Town, and west of the town, seven li along the highway, there is a mountain ridge, called Jingyang Ridge. The highway runs east–west and the mountain ridge runs north–south, so all the travellers going west must cross the ridge at this point. But you should not drink the wine of our humble inn, or else drink only the medium good wine, because if you really do drink the best wine, then after only three bowls – when you have drunk three bowls – you cannot cross that Jingyang Ridge ahead. That’s why people have given the wine of our humble inn this name: “Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge”.

‘Fine! Bring me a mug to taste!’

‘Oh, don’t be in a hurry! Ordinary people cannot drink this wine, or else they get drunk!’

‘No harm in that!’

Well, Master, if you insist on having this wine, that’s up to you, but I should like to ask a question: After you have dined and wined, do you plan to stay overnight in our humble inn? We can find a room for you, and in that case I shall serve you promptly. But if you want to travel onwards after your meal, that won’t work!’

‘I’ll travel on!’

‘You cannot travel on!’

‘Why not?’

In case you want to travel on, and in case you are going west, as I can see you are, I’m afraid you cannot cross our Jingyang Ridge, and what will you do then?’

‘What nonsense are you talking? 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!’

‘Oh!’

Xiao’er was frightened. The voice of his guest resounded like a bronze bell and the whole place trembled at his shouting – it was deafening. Glancing at his guest’s face, he saw him rolling his eyes and blinking ‘wa-da-wa-da’, his fists as heavy as a five-bushel willow basket each! A businessman is not very brave. As soon as he is scared, he has no guts to refuse, and acting by order the wine came on the table. The mug of bad wine was removed and changed into a mug of wine from the front and you can be sure it was ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge’.

‘Please, Master!’
'Fine!' Wu Song gripped the handle of the wine mug and filled himself another bowl. 

Ah, interesting, no need to drink this wine – just a glance would tell how good it was: the green and clear colour, the fragrance attacking the nostrils, and wine ‘crystals’ clinging to the edge of the bowl. What is a wine crystal? A wine crystal is the same as a wine ‘flower’ [bubble]. What kind of wine was it, this wine? ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge’. 

This name ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge’, how to explain it? No need to come up with explanations. Such names are simply fabricated by the wine merchants. After serving you a good wine, they may overhear the names you people invent. There are lots of such names, not just one name, all kinds of odd and strange names that they have overheard from winebibbers who like to outdo each other by voice power. For example: ‘The fragrance penetrates the bottle’, ‘Clear like seizing the moon’, ‘A gust of wind and you collapse’, ‘You will collapse before paying your bill’, and then there is also the name ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge’. Searching for the root and source of such names leads to nothing but the fact that it is an exquisite wine, an original brew. Anyhow, it is just a good wine, and that’s all. 

What good is there in drinking good wine? I think there isn’t necessarily any good in it. But according to those who like to drink, drinking this wine has two advantages. Which advantages? When you drink it there are two flavours! First the flavour you feel when taking a sip of the wine in your mouth and it smells so delicious. After a while, you may have a good burp: ‘A-a-ah!’ Again you feel the delicious smell. Apart from this there are no other advantages. 

Second Master Wu had great capacity. After three large cups the wine mug was finished. It would be unfair to say that there was too little wine in the mug, the reason was that the bowl was particularly large. Well, if he had stopped drinking, that would have been the end of it. But after these three cups he looked both greedy and thirsty and stared at Xiao’er like a greedy caterpillar hanging on a straw. Xiao’er was standing silently beside him, biting his tongue: ‘The drinking capacity of that fellow is frightening. Our large cups are as big as rice bowls, but he empties them in one mouthful. Although he has a capacity like the sea, I’m afraid he is good and drunk by now!’ 

‘Xiao’er!’ 

‘Master!’ 

‘Fill up!’ 

‘Uh, you must be joking! Just think the way Your Honour is eating, I’ve never seen the like, and those two bowls Your Honour downed, that’s quite something! You shouldn’t drink more! More of this wine and Your Honour will surely get drunk, and then you cannot cross the Jingyang Ridge ahead!’ 

‘What nonsense are you talking? 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!’ 

‘Sure, sure!’
Xiao'er did not dare to refuse him, noticing how his eyes were beginning
to roll again. He left to get him another mug which he filled up: ‘Hua-a-a . . .’
‘Bring the wine!’
‘Here you are!’
‘Fill up!’
‘As you wish!’

Like the rich and wealthy who know no limits, so Wu Song who was drink-
ing deep. How much had he drunk? Five mugs. Each mug could hold three
bowls, three times five is fifteen. Henceforward he began to shout and cry ever
more rudely and roughly to the alarm of the other one, the young innkeeper at
the counter in the front.

The young innkeeper was astonished. He couldn’t figure out what was going
on in the rear, and he couldn’t relax the way they were shouting and quarrelling.
The young innkeeper lifted up his gown, stepped down from the counter and
went over to the half-door, where he glanced inside: ‘Hem!’ All he saw was that
single customer sitting and drinking with Xiao'er attending to him. The young
innkeeper called in a low voice. What did he call? He called:

‘Wang Er!’

The waiter's surname was Wang and he was second among his brothers, so
the young innkeeper called him Wang Er [Wang Second]. As soon as Wang Er
heard his boss calling, he hurried over to the half-door at once:

‘Yes, boss, you were looking for me?’

‘Why does the customer over there quarrel with you?’
‘For no reason, he wants to drink!’
‘If he wants to drink, please, serve him! We innkeepers are not afraid of
big-bellied guys!’
‘Do you realize what kind of wine he is drinking?’
‘Eh?’
‘It’s “Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge”!’
‘My goodness! You can’t let him drink much of that wine!’
‘Exactly my words!’
‘How much has he drunk?’
‘Five mugs!’
‘Oh, mine! You stupid fool! Other people cannot take even one mug of that
wine, and you have served him more than five mugs!’
‘But he ordered me to!’
‘Does our guest want to drink more?’
‘No idea!’
‘Let me give you a hint: If he doesn’t order any more, well and good! But in
case he orders more . . .’
‘Yes?’
‘Then you have to fix it a bit on the sly!’
‘Sure!’

What does it mean: ‘to fix it a bit’? It is a secret expression used by people
in that trade, something they cannot say openly. If a customer shouts for more
wine, you may dilute it with a little water, you cannot give him more of the real
stuff. But since you cannot admit openly that the wine is diluted, you just ‘fix it a bit’ on the sly. It is only the insiders who understand it; outsiders have no idea.

When the young innkeeper had left, Xiao’er did as he was told. What about Second Master Wu? Second Master Wu still wanted to drink. He was in high spirits. Had he not drunk his fill long ago? He certainly had drunk his fill. Why did he then want to drink more? Because a moment ago he had uttered a certain sentence: ‘Are you poking fun at an outsider for having no drinking capacity? I can drink thirty bowls and still go straight across the ridge!’

As said, so done. Had he said how much he could drink, then he had to drink that much. Since he had said he could drink thirty bowls, he couldn’t stop short of a single bowl. One mug equalled three bowls. He had drunk five mugs. Three times five is only fifteen bowls. He was only halfway through and that’s why Second Master Wu wanted to drink more.

‘Xiao’er!’
‘Yes, Master!’
‘Bring more wine!’
‘Please!’
‘Fill up!’
‘There you are!’

Thereupon another five mugs went down the hatch. The last five mugs were, however, far less potent than the first five. The first five mugs were from the original brew, but the next five were diluted with water, three parts wine to seven parts water. At that moment Second Master Wu couldn’t tell the difference any more. Why? The more he drank, the less he was able to cope. He sure had an enormous drinking capacity, but now he had downed almost ten mugs and his face had turned the colour of crimson silk, he looked blank and his tongue was glued to his gums so that he could hardly speak:

‘Xiao’er!’
‘Yes, Master!’
‘Bring more wine!’
‘Does Your Honour want still more? It’s no joking matter! Hasn’t Your Honour had enough?’

‘What nonsense are you talking? Are you poking fun at an outsider for having no drinking capacity? I can drink thirty bowls and still go straight across the ridge!’

‘You have already had thirty bowls!’
‘Have I?’
‘Yes! Please have a look, Your Honour, and count the mugs! On the table there are altogether . . . five . . . ten . . . about eight or ten wine mugs. One mug holds three bowls, ten mugs of wine for sure equals thirty bowls!’

‘Ha, ha!’
‘Why do you laugh?’

‘I laugh at [you poking fun at] an outsider for having no drinking capacity. Now I have drunk thirty bowls, and what has it done to me, pray?’

‘Sure, Your Honour has a considerable capacity, were it not that your eyes look blank and your tongue is glued to your gums, stiff as a plank!’
‘What nonsense are you talking?’

Second Master Wu had stopped drinking and now he was busy eating the steamed rolls, pancakes and beef. Otherwise he only cared about drinking, not about eating. But at this moment he was eating, not drinking. He even ate up all of the eggs, to the very last: ‘Burp!’ He was full. Since he was full, he stopped eating. Xiao’er wrung out a napkin for our hero to wipe his hands and face.

‘My bill!’

‘Sure! Will Your Honour please come over to the counter?’

‘OK!’

Second Master Wu rose to his feet, gripped his bundle and staff, and stumbled and staggered forwards . . .

‘Oh, no need to hurry! Be careful not to fall, let me give you an arm!’

‘No-no-no need for your arm!’

Second Master Wu had arrived in front, and Xiao’er was right behind him ready to give account:

‘Hello! Listen over there at the counter! Our guest wants to pay his bill! Four silver ounces and five coppers all in all!’

This meal didn’t cost more than four silver ounces and five! In those days prices were much lower.

Second Master Wu stopped in front of the counter, placed his bundle on top of the counter and leaned his staff on the long end against the counter. The young innkeeper looked at Wu Song and nodded, well aware that he was drunk: that was obvious from the expression on his face and the blank look in his eyes. Second Master Wu opened his bundle and took out his black silken silver-wrapper from the bundle. He had more than thirty taels of silver in his wrapper.

Originally, when he set out on this trip from the Chai estate, the Lord of Liang had just presented him with fifty taels to cover his travel expenses. On his way he had used up about ten taels, so he still had a nice sum left. The larger pieces weighed more than two taels and the smaller four or five ounces. Second Master Wu deftly fished out a piece – a piece which, as I, the storyteller, may inform you, weighed more than one tael – and placed it on the counter:

‘Please, count it!’

‘Oh, sure!’

The young innkeeper hurried inside to fetch his steelyard.

When he returned, he climbed the bench again and turned his face toward Wu Song. His full attention was fixed on the face of Second Master Wu. After scrutinizing him for a moment, the young innkeeper put the silver piece on the pan of the steelyard. With two fingers of his right hand he picked up the string of the steelyard and with his left hand he picked up the stick of the steelyard. The sliding weight hanging from the stick was moved to the point of balance, horizontal position. The he removed his left hand, while his right hand still held the string of the steelyard. He looked at the silver piece, lifted his head and looked at the face of Second Master Wu and then he announced the amount:

‘Master, this silver piece of Your Honour’s, I have just weighed it, it is one tae-e-e . . . e-e-el minus one copper!’
Why did he talk like that? As if he tried to press the counterweight out of balance! What was the reason?

Well, this young innkeeper was harbouring evil intentions. He had noticed that his guest was fond of drinking and now was good and drunk. He also saw what a large silver piece this was, and he wanted to swallow the whole piece. He meant to let a big piece seem like a smaller piece. How heavy was this silver piece after all?

He had just weighed it and found out it was actually one tael five ounces and four coppers. How much did he say it weighed a moment ago? He said one tael minus one copper! Do you see how much he wanted to grab for himself? One tael minus one copper, that's nine ounces nine. Do you see what he was up to? If it were nine ounces nine, why not say nine ounces nine? Why did he have to draw out the 'one tae-e-e . . . e-el' and then add 'minus one copper'? For what reason did he have to break the sound halfway?

Well, he had his means and ways. Even though he saw that his guest was drunk, could he be sure whether his guest kept good account of his silver? If he did keep good account, as he usually would, and if you said that this silver was nine ounces nine, it would be like dressing with your arms stretched out stiffly – you can't turn a corner! If the guest did keep good account of his money, he would be likely to swear at you and make a mess: 'In this inn you are all scoundrels! How dare you lie about my silver?' In that case he would have no reply in defence.

Therefore he used this alternative way of saying it, making it 'one tael minus one copper' which allowed him two ways out. He would draw out the sound of 'one tael', and while he was still saying this and drawing it out, his would fix both of his eyes on the face of Wu Song. 'If he actually does keep good account of his silver, and he hears me say one tael, he will begin to quarrel and shout: “How can this silver piece be only one tael?”, but then I’ll just add: “and five ounces!” And so I will steer clear.' At the moment when the word 'one tael' came out of his mouth, he saw that his guest didn't react and clear enough didn't keep account of his silver. Since his guest didn't care, he promptly took his eyes away, adding: ‘. . . minus one copper!’

Let's slow down a bit! Did Wu Song actually keep account of his silver? The money was a gift from a friend, how could he be so narrow-minded as to weigh piece after piece? And even if he had weighed his silver, he wouldn't be able to remember. Otherwise, he would have had to stick slips of red paper to each piece and bother somebody to keep them. Second Master Wu simply used his money as need be. No need to blame him for not keeping good account, but even though he used to keep account, he didn't do so right now.

Why so? He had drunk too much wine. And Second Master Wu was in no mood to waste words:

‘Is this piece of silver too much or too little?
‘This silver piece is a little too much!’
‘If there is too much, then give the surplus to Xiao’er!’

Xiao’er was standing at the half-door and looking. He saw the young innkeeper weigh the silver. He heard the young innkeeper announce the amount.
Xiao’er was smart, he too, so he hurried out in front to take a good look at that piece of silver. Why did he do that? He guessed what his boss was up to, that he was cheating the other man out of his money. But Xiao’er was not as crafty. When Xiao’er heard the guest say that the surplus was for him, he was quick in his reply:

‘Thanks a lot, Master, excuse me for not seeing you off, Master, please come again early tomorrow!’

Second Master Wu put the silver into his bundle, tied his bundle and flung it over his shoulder. He took his staff and walked out of the door. As he lifted his head and looked up, oh, my! To the east the moon was already up! The moon was already up! Well, today it was in the middle of the tenth month, and when he had arrived at the town the sun was slanting steeply toward the west. He had been drinking for quite some time, too, and in the tenth month the days are at their shortest. ‘In the tenth month there is hardly time to comb one’s hair and eat a meal’. But now the moon was up. Second Master Wu shouldered his bundle and headed straight to the west.

The young innkeeper and Xiao’er didn’t waste another thought on Wu Song. All their interest was concentrated on the silver. The interest of Xiao’er was also concentrated on the silver, since he was well aware that his boss had cheated the other man on his money. The young innkeeper had evil intentions about the money he had cheated; he wanted to pocket it for himself, not to give it to Xiao’er. There they were, equally suspicious, when the young innkeeper deftly grabbed the silver piece and put it into his drawer. Xiao’er was on the spot:

‘Hey, boss!’

‘Eh?’

‘Don’t put it into your drawer! A moment ago the guest said that he wanted to give me the surplus!’

‘Did he want to give it to you?’

‘Sure he did, he gave it to me! Please, give it to me!’

‘I shall, but this piece is too much! You don’t mean to grab everything including the money for the meal, do you? This piece is nine ounces nine; our guest’s meal amounted to four ounces five. Now I first take this piece of silver and then I’ll return a piece of five ounces and four coppers to you, all right?’

‘What! You can’t fool me with your piece! Give me that piece of silver! Give it to me! Later this evening when we do the accounts, I’ll of course return your money!’

‘Let’s solve the question right now, all right?’

‘We make up this evening! Please give it to me first!’

‘Why do you want that piece of silver?’

‘Why do you want that piece of silver, pray?’

‘I have my reason why I want this piece of silver. It’s because some days ago your sister-in-law asked me to have a hairpin made for her. But the silversmith of our town doesn’t have good-looking silver, and to take the trip to the city seems a bit far. So my plan was to have a hairpin made for your sister-in-law . . .’

‘Take it easy! My sister-in-law is a widow. Why do you make a hairpin for her?’
'Please, don't suggest that kind of suspicion! It's not the sister-in-law of the family on your side; it's a female relative on my side!'
'A female relative on your side! How could that be my sister-in-law?'
'We call each other brothers; I'm older than you, so my wife is of course your sister-in-law!'
'Aha! Not bad, not bad, not bad at all!'

Just as the two of them were debating, the old innkeeper stepped into the inn …
16.2 ‘WU SONG FIGHTS THE TIGER’ TOLD BY LUO SHIZHONG (1974)
Sichuan Storytelling, Sichuan Pinghua

Sichuan storytelling, Sichuan pinghua or Sichuan pingshu, is a local form of storytelling in prose with occasional verse, in a style reminiscent of Yangzhou storytelling. The language of performance is the Sichuan dialect and the art has spread to neighbouring provinces where the dialect is easily understood. Sichuan storytelling is considered to have a long history including the development of various schools and performance styles. Among the traditional sagas are Three Kingdoms, Water Margin and other tales.

The recording of Luo Shizhong’s performance of ‘Wu Song Fights the tiger’ was undertaken by Göran Malmqvist in Chengdu 1974. Luo Shizhong (b. 1943) entered the Chengdu Quyi Troupe in 1957 and became a disciple of senior masters, such as Wang Decheng and Zhou Shaowei. In recent years the art has suffered strong setbacks and presently Luo Shizhong seems to be the only tradition bearer of Sichuan pinghua.

Beginning of tape:

Tap, tap, tap, tap, tap! Tap! Tap! Tap!3

As Wu Song had taken leave of Chai Jin – the Small Whirlwind – he planned to travel to Qinghe District and visit his elder brother. On his way he ate when hungry and rested by night, and about this journey our story has nothing to say. Before he realized, he had arrived at Yanggu District, and he had come to a tiny small village at the foot of Jingyang Ridge. Tap!

This forlorn village of about thirty to forty families was situated in a desolate tract. When Wu Song arrived, he was hungry and thirsty, and so he wanted to buy some food to relieve his hunger. He looked up. Behold: on his left he found a tiny small tavern with a flagpole made of black jujube inserted above the entrance. From the pole a hempen flag was hanging with five characters written on it as follows: ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge’. Tap, tap!

Undauntedly Wu Song stepped into the tavern and sat down on a chair beside a small table at the door. The innkeeper, who stood in front of the tavern to welcome guests, suddenly saw a good fellow approaching. The man who had just arrived and was eager to have a drink of wine was – Wu Song! Tap!

This good fellow was more than eight feet tall, broad-shouldered and slim around the waist – the back of a tiger and the belly of a bear. His hair was tied in a ‘tiger coil’, held together by a silver clasp. Hanging aslant from his neck, he wore a broad-brimmed felt hat and a pink shoulder bag. His heavy brows were as black as the night; his handsome eyes sparkled with life. He had a fleshy nose and a big mouth. His black dress was buttoned all the way from top to bottom with plum-blossom buttons. Under his dress he wore a pair of wide black trousers and big Shandong boots with patchwork leggings. Over his dress a black cloak was draped in hero-style, embroidered with the pattern ‘mice stealing grapes’. In his hand he held a staff – and that’s the way he marched into the tavern.
As Wu Song was about to choose a seat, the waiter came hurrying over all smiles:

‘Dear guest, would you like some wine?’
‘Yes, I want wine! Please, open a jug of good wine!’

With a smile on his face the waiter fetched three bowls and placed them on the table together with a small plate of vegetables and a pair of chopsticks. Then he brought an earthenware jug from which he poured Wu Song a bowl of wine. Wu Song was both hungry and thirsty and wanted to drink and eat well. He knew since long that the tavern at the foot of Jingyang Ridge was famous for its quality wines. So he lifted his hand and emptied the bowl of wine in one go. He was very pleased and praised the wine over and over again:

‘Good wine! Good wine!’

When [the waiter] Xiao’er saw this and noticed the way the good fellow was drinking, [he thought]: ‘He surely has a great capacity for wine. He can drink that big bowl in one go with no further ado!’ Then he immediately lifted the earthenware jug and poured wine into the two other bowls. Wu Song had travelled a long distance, and now he was both hungry and thirsty and had a strong craving for good wine. So without noticing it, he had in one go emptied all the three bowls that Xiao’er had poured him! Tap, tap!

‘Waiter, bring more wine!’

The waiter heard it [and said]:

‘Dear guest from far away, in this place we only sell three bowls of wine. We do not dare to sell more than that. Three bowls of this wine more than enough for anybody that drinks it. If someone drinks more, he will not be able to walk out of here. But if you want to have some meat, we still have some cooked beef.’

Wu Song spoke:
‘Waiter, please, bring me two pounds of cooked beef, and then serve some more wine!’

These were his words. The waiter could see very well that Wu Song was not the least drunk. So he hurried out and quickly cut up two pounds of meat that he arranged on a big plate and placed on the table. Moreover, against the rule, he lifted the earthenware jug and poured Wu Song another three bowls of wine.

Wu Song was just about to lift his hand and try the wine, when Xiao’er suddenly came over to him and bowed:

‘Dear guest! Sir, you have a strong craving for wine, and your humble servant will pour you as much as you like, sir! But you should know, sir, that this wine is far from ordinary. The wine is called “Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge!” No man who has downed three bowls, no matter how much of a hero or good fellow he might be, has ever been able to cross the Jingyang Ridge in front of our tavern. This wine also has two other names. One is: “Flavour through the Bottle”. The other is: “Falling at the Door”.

Tap!

When Wu Song heard that [he said]:

‘“Falling at the Door”, what does that mean?’

‘Dear guest, when you have drunk this wine and step out of the door, the first gust of cold wind will make you fall to the ground, and you will not be able to walk steadily forward. People, who leave the door of their home, are seeking good fortune, not disaster. But if they miss the right moment, they may run into trouble. Dear guest, wine and water is ready for you, but please, think it over thrice before making your choice!’

After having heard this speech [Wu Song said]:

‘Waiter, please, stop talking and just pour the wine!’

Saying so, he gulped down those three bowls of wine one after another and finished them in one go. The meat also went down in big lumps. Tap!

The waiter stood by, observing him, and thought by himself:

“We have run this place for several years, but never has good fellow with such enormous capacity for wine been seen here around!”

So he kept up his position at the side of Wu Song and served him dutifully.

When Wu Song had emptied those six bowls of wine, he shouted:

‘Waiter, bring more wine!’

The waiter was not so keen on fetching more wine, but he saw that Wu Song was getting half drunk by now, and therefore he was afraid of provoking his anger. On the other hand, if he did bring more wine, the waiter was afraid that his guest would drink so much that a calamity might result. At that moment the waiter was finding himself in a tight corner. Tap!

‘Dear guest, this wine is extremely strong! You have already had six bowls, which is more than enough! But we have more of the meat, please, do not take offence, dear guest!’

‘Dear me!’ Tap! ‘Six bowls are not worth mentioning! Since you have more of it, be sure that this person here wants to drink and make merry! “Falling at the Door” and “Flavour through the bottle” is not worth mentioning! But
if you secretly mix drugs into the wine, be sure that my nose will tell me! Just pour the wine!' Wu Song shouted.

The waiter had no way out, and being well aware of the saying ‘gentlemen stay clear of drunkards’, he went out at once to cut another two pounds of cooked beef and pour three more bowls of the wine. He noticed how Wu Song first finished the three bowls and then ate about one pound of the meat. On the plate was still left a pound or so.

Wu Song stared after the waiter with a look as if he wanted more wine.

The waiter had no way out. He could not go on pestering his guest, so he poured him another three bowls. Now Wu Song had drunk twelve bowls without further ado! Tap!

But even after Wu Song had downed these twelve bowls of wine, he did not feel really excited. So in a flurry he took out some silver pieces and placed on the table:

‘Waiter! Please, take the silver! Tell me if this is enough to pay for the wine I have had in your tavern today!’

‘Dear me! Good fellow! This money is surely enough, and more than enough. I shall give you change!’

‘Just bring me more wine! The surplus silver is yours for a tip!’

When the waiter heard this, he thought:

‘Today I’ve had good luck in my business! I’ve sold out all the ready wine, and now only five or six bowls are left. I wonder if this guest is able to drink up even these five or six bowls! Take it easy! If something untoward might happen, our tavern could not afford to be held responsible!’

In a flurry the waiter spoke to him:

‘Dear guest!’ – Tap, tap! – ‘You have already drunk twelve bowls! In our humble tavern we only have five or six bowls left. How would I dare to offer you this, dear guest! Surely, the wine is called “Flavour through the Bottle” and “Falling at the Door”, and if you drink more now, our humble tavern could not take the responsibility!’

‘Pour the wine! Stop provoking me! Do I owe you anything, perhaps? Don’t try to escape! If you make me angry, don’t think I’m bragging: I’ll turn your small tavern upside down! Bring the wine!’

The innkeeper had no way out but to pour the last six bowls of wine for Wu Song. Wu Song gobbled them up like a tiger or wolf, and soon he had finished off all these eighteen bowls of wine! Tap!

At this point Wu Song felt satisfied in heart and soul. Since he had already paid for the wine, he rose to his feet, and standing beside his chair, he picked up his felt hat and put it askew on his head. Then he grasped his staff, and went in big strides out of the tavern.

In the moment when Wu Song was stepping out of the tavern, the innkeeper came running and called him:

‘Hello! Good guest! Please, wait! On the board there is a notice, please, take a look, dear guest!’

‘What? Didn’t I pay you enough for the wine?’

‘That’s not the problem, dear guest! But where are you going?’
‘I’ll cross the Jingyang Ridge and get to Yanggu District!’
Tap!

[Pause]

As Wu Song was about to leave the tavern, the innkeeper held him back:
‘Dear guest, where are you going?’
‘Dear host, I want to cross Jingyang Ridge and get to Yanggu District!’
‘Dear me, dear me! Dear guest, dear guest! You cannot go there! For one thing, you are in a drunken state, but the point is that even if you were completely sober like everybody else, you could not cross the Ridge alone! Please, take a look at the proclamation on the board in front of our humble tavern! Do you read characters, sir?’

Wu Song was astonished on hearing this. He turned his head and opened his ‘tiger eyes’ wide. Then he caught sight of a board in front of the tavern with two rows of characters written on it:

Lately a man-slaughtering big beast has appeared on Jingyang Ridge. The hunters have not succeeded in catching it within the deadline. Therefore travellers and merchants who travel alone, all travellers and merchants, must cross the Ridge in groups during the three watches between 10 and 4 o’clock. At other times it is forbidden to cross the Ridge and single travellers are not allowed at any time lest their life be endangered. With immediate effect!

Notification by Yanggu District

Tap!
When Wu Song had read this proclamation, he raised his staff:
‘My dear host, what a nerve, what a nerve! Where on earth would that man-slaughtering big beast come from? How do you dare to cheat me? These years I have crossed Jingyang Ridge at least ten times and I’ve never seen any big beast around there. I wonder if you are cooking something up for the sake of your tavern? Are you concocting a story about a tiger on the Ridge in order to trap the travellers and merchants and make them stay in your tavern? And then maybe you have evil plans of grabbing their riches and do them in? Is that it?!’ Tap!
‘Dear guest, I’m only warning you for your own sake! But let’s turn the matter round: How do you know, sir, that there is no big beast on Jingyang Ridge?’
‘Since this proclamation is issued by Yanggu District, why is it that there is no official stamp on it?!!’ Tap!
‘Oh, dear guest, the magistrate of Yanggu District has put up a proclamation at the Temple of the Mountain Spirit in the mountain. There is a stamp on that. We are just afraid that travellers and merchants should be unaware of the true situation, and that in case someone really climbs the Ridge, he might be attacked by the big beast and come to a sorry end. In order to prevent every eventuality, we have asked one of the brave hunters to go up there and write a copy for us which we have put up at the entrance for the benefit of our guests. Since this is only a copy of the official text, there is of course no stamp on it.
Dear guest, believe me! We wouldn’t dare to put up false information on the board!’ Tap!

‘What’s there to be afraid of? Even though there might be a big beast, I don’t fear it!’

Saying so Wu Song raised his staff, and while still good and drunk he marched off in big strides towards the top of Jingyang Ridge!

It was already time for supper. The sun was slowly sinking behind the mountains. It was in the tenth month with long days and short nights. Wu Song walked and walked. He was mighty drunk and felt uneasy. So he unbuttoned the embroidered buttons in his dress and let his felt hat drop to his shoulder. Staff in hand he walked straight towards Jingyang Ridge.

Wu Song walked along without paying attention to the blue mountains and green lakes. Bypassing a few groves, he had not come very far, when he suddenly saw that same proclamation. So far Wu Song had only halfway believed that there could be a big beast on Jingyang Ridge. Tap, tap!

A hero intoxicated with wine, a man of skill and courage! Since Wu Song had bragged in front of the tavern, he now had to ride the tiger if he met one, and it was too late to step down. Therefore he walked in big strides towards the Ridge.

When he had travelled half a mile or so, he actually came to the Mountain Spirit Temple, a decrepit place. At the entrance of the temple a proclamation had been put up. Wu Song took a look at it and saw that it was indeed the same proclamation as that glued up at the tavern. The text was exactly alike, no mistake about it, but this one carried a bright red official stamp.

‘For sure there must really be a fierce tiger in the mountain!’ Tap!

People from Shandong call a ‘big beast’ (dachong) a ‘fierce tiger’ (menghu).

Wu Song realized the situation: the sun was slowly sinking behind the mountain, and he was travelling alone. But then he steeled his heart:

‘If I return straight away to the tavern, I’ll be their laughing stock!’

‘Well, you big beast! If I’m in luck, you’ll suffer from my fist! If I’m out of luck, I’ll suffer from your jaw!’

Staff in hand Wu Song continued to climb up the top of the mountain. He must cross that tiny ridge before getting to Yanggu District. Since Wu Song was on his way to visit his elder brother in Qinghe District, he first had to pass Yanggu District. Only after crossing Yanggu District would he arrive in Qinghe District. Therefore Jingyang Ridge in Yanggu District necessarily had to be crossed before he could return and visit his elder generation. Tap!

As Wu Song was about to take a rest on that black flat rock, he suddenly heard a violent gust of wind coming from the forest. Tap! Tap! Tap!

‘Hu, hu, hu, hu, hu . . . ’ – Tap! – came the sound of the wind, wavering through the forest ‘sh, sh, sh, sh, sh . . . ’, so that branches and leaves were
swaying high in the wind, and it was as if myriads of bamboos were falling down. At this moment Wu Song suddenly understood that the fierce tiger of the mountain was coming! Tap!

Wu Song got on his feet and quickly tied his silken belt around his waist. He took off his felt hat and left it there. Grasping his staff firmly, he sought out a spot where he could meet the sudden attack of the fierce tiger. Tap, tap!

Indeed, there was a tiger with white forehead and slanting eyes on Jingyang Ridge! That tiger had already found its way through forests and groves, and now it was only a few trees away from Wu Song. It was about to display its tiger’s awesome way. It was already enjoying the wonderful smell of its prey, intending to swallow Wu Song then and there! Tap, tap!

As this tiger was displaying its martial power, it jumped around and made somersaults, and thus the air came into oscillation and blew up into a violent gust of wind. Tap, tap!

Wu Song heard the sound of the second gust of wind, and it was stranger than the first time, blowing up clouds of yellow sand into the air. In the twinkle of an eye Wu Song was ready and looked straight forward! Tap, tap!

The tiger was moving forwards, and now there was only one tree between the tiger and Wu Song. That tiger was dreadful! Indeed:

The fierce tiger appeared on the Ridge,
six feet from head to tail.
With eyes like golden lamps,
devouring humans without fail.

Tap, tap!

That tiger had planted its two forepaws in the ground and opened its big mouth that looked like a pail of blood. It was grinding its upper teeth and lower teeth with a sound of ‘gnash, gnash, gnash’. Its tongue was like a sharp knife. *It’s slow in the telling, but happens in a flash!* Aiming for Wu Song, it jumped into the air and sprang towards the man: ‘Crash!’

Even though Wu Song had no experience in fighting tigers, he had since long been acquainted with the world of the rivers and lakes, and he had grown up in the underworld and made friends with many heroes of the greenwoods. So when this tiger was coming forth and attacking, Wu Song was resourceful enough and knew how to move and counteract. The moment Wu Song saw the animal springing towards him – tap, tap! – he steeled his heart, grasped his staff and dodged! Tap!

He dodged to the other side of the tiger. So when the tiger sprang on him – tap, tap! – it couldn’t get at him, cause Wu Song had jumped over behind the tiger! The tiger also wanted to turn round – tap, tap! – this was a moment of great urgency! The tiger concentrated its force towards its hind part; it concentrated its force in its hips and let its hind part swell up, so that its fur looked like steel needles. *It’s slow in the telling, but happens in a flash!* In the next second the tiger came pouncing on Wu Song. By turning its hip, it was able to strike down on Wu Song, and that’s what’s meant by ‘pouncing’! ‘Swoosh’ – Wu Song jumped right up in the air; this movement is called ‘swallow dives through the
clouds'! To the rear of the tiger he made a somersault and now stood to the right of the animal. So the tiger had not had much success in trying to ‘pounce’ on Wu Song!

Now the tiger gave a roar! – Tap! – It came like a bolt from the blue! The animal raised its iron tail like a steel whip and – tap, tap! – It’s slow in the telling, but happens in a flash! – swept down on Wu Song. What does it mean to ‘sweep down’? That means that the tiger’s tail like a whip of steel knocks you out, and then the tiger can devour you in one gulp! That was called to sweep down, and now it was about to give Wu Song a surprise and sweep down on him! But Wu Song dodged – ‘swoosh’ – and made a ‘swallow dives into the clouds’ jump, landing in front of the tiger.

Whenever a fierce tiger attacks a human being, it uses three movements. This is a common characteristic of all tigers, called: springing, pouncing and sweeping. And every time a man is fighting a tiger, if only he can dodge the tiger’s springing, pouncing and sweeping, then the tiger’s power will be diminished by one half!

At this moment the tiger prepared to demonstrate its second flourish! Tap, tap! It planted its two tiger paws in the earth, opened its big mouth like a pail of blood, and – tap, tap! – was about to spring on Wu Song for the second time! Tap!

Wu Song grasped his staff and took a step in the direction of the tiger, and with all his might – tap! – he swung his staff: ‘Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah!’ – Tap! He let the staff swish through the air, but the tiger dodged! Well, because Wu Song had spent too much force on this blow, while the tiger had slipped away, his staff bumped into the dead trunk of a tree to the left and got split up. There happened to be a dry forking branch right there, and the forking branch was broken into two, but the staff was also split into two pieces – crash! – because of that mighty force of Wu Song. Tap!

Wu Song dropped the staff without hesitation. In the same instance the tiger flew into a rage. Tap! It sprang towards Wu Song for the third time. Tap, tap! Wu Song dodged and moved backwards. The tiger planted its forepaws into the ground. Wu Song was standing face to face with the tiger at a distance of about ten steps. Who would imagine that the tiger had still another trick? It was about to open its mouth and attack the man by spitting him in the face! Indeed, how many heroes in this world have not been killed by tigers that spat them in their face?

Wu Song knew it! He noticed how the tiger’s lips began to quiver – Tap, tap! – A pair of eyes like golden lamps looked at Wu Song! Tap! Tap!

From fighting with people Wu Song knew that the first blow is half the battle, so with swinging arms he made a sudden big stride forward, lifted both hands and took a firm grip on the tiger’s mottled skull. With all his might he pressed the tiger’s head down into the ground and gave it a heavy squeeze. At the same time as Wu Song pressed down the tiger’s head, he swung his left foot into the air and began to kick the tiger furiously in its eyes, nose and mouth. Tap, tap! It was as if iron hammers or iron balls were dancing in the air! ‘Bang, bang!’ The tiger was struggling desperately, but Wu Song had endless strength.
Before fighting the tiger he had poured out cold sweat a couple of times, and now – ‘Wow!’ – he was completely rinsed from the effect of his great drinking bout. Presently the tiger was suffering badly, and it was trying with all its might to prop itself up on its two front legs in order to free itself. Who would have imagined that the earth below was so loose that a big hole was excavated by the tiger! Wu Song immediately realized that this was a chance for him to kill the tiger. Tap, tap! With all his might he squeezed the tiger’s mottled skull and constantly pulled it downwards. Finally he managed to pull the tiger’s head down into the muddy hole that the animal had excavated with its own forepaws.

With his left hand Wu Song held the mottled neck – Tap, tap! – His right hand was clutched into an iron hammer fist, and now he beat the tiger all over its body with his fist. Tap! Tap! Tap! He beat it ‘bang, bang!’ more than a hundred times. At that point Wu Song was totally exhausted. And the tiger? Wu Song had knocked the tiger out, and it was at its last gasp.

Wu Song stepped aside and took a look at the tiger. The tiger was sprawling on the ground, but it was still breathing, and its fur was glimmering, signifying that the tiger was not yet fully dead. Tap!

Wu Song bent down, and with what energy was left to him after this tiger fight, he set his teeth and went over to the tree and picked up his split staff. Then he returned to the tiger and began to beat it on its head all over again! Tap! His blows came like raindrops, and he beat it scores of times. In the end the tiger had to give up and did not breathe any more.

Wu Song dropped his staff and drew a long breath.

‘Gosh!’ So he had to take a breather!

The red sun had already sunk completely in the west, and a mist was spreading. Wu Song was weak and exhausted, and he was all attention lest another fierce tiger should turn up: How would he be able to tackle it? One only saw how Wu Song stood up in haste. Then he bent down and picked up the broken staff, selecting the longer of the two pieces. With his left hand he fumbled after his broad-brimmed felt hat and put it on. Then he began to stumble down the ridge step by step. Tap, tap, tap!

As Wu Song walked down the mountain, he turned over in his mind the whole course of the fighting of the tiger. Surely, it had been a bit frightening! Who would have thought that he would end up in such a state of weakness that he could hardly move his legs! Wu Song walked along slowly, slowly and had not yet come all the way down Jingyang Ridge. Although it was pitch dark, Wu Song had a hero’s eyesight, and he saw everything around him quite clearly. All of a sudden he discovered at the foot of the mountain ridge – Tap, tap, tap! – from a heap of grass three tigers turn up! All three of them sprang towards him at the same time. Wu Song faced them and . . .
Shandong clapper tale, *Shandong kuaishu*, is performed by a storyteller who tells in rhymed verse to the rhythmical accompaniment of the bamboo or metal clappers that he holds in one hand. Intermittently he breaks the rhythm with some passages in spoken prose. The Shandong dialect of this genre is only slightly different from modern standard Chinese. Only one or two rhymes are used throughout a performance, and the tempo is high, demanding a great deal of agility on the part of the performer. The roots of this genre are sought in earlier drum ballads and beggars’ clapper songs since the mid-19th century. There was a strong tradition of telling tales about Wu Song, nicknamed Second Brother Wu, Wu Lao’er. The most famous performer of Shandong clapper tale in the 20th century was Gao Yuanjun (1916–1993) who was honoured as the master of the Gao School. His foremost disciple was Sun Zhenye (1944–2010), the performer of the version translated below.

**Beginning of tape:**

Let’s stop chatting
and tell about staunch heroes instead.

*Once again let me perform* the tale about the good fellow Second Brother Wu.

That Wu Song
went home to fight at the Dongyue Temple,
where the whole Li clan was beaten up by him,
and there, in his home town he did away with those Five Tigers of the local despot.
This good fellow
did not feel like going through a trial and fled the place.
He lived in the manor of Lord Chai for a year,
where he met the good fellow from Shandong called Song Jiang.
He and Song Jiang became blood brothers,
they were as close as if they had the same father and mother.
On this certain day
Wu Song missed his home
and really wanted to go home for a visit.
He bid farewell with the two good fellows Song Jiang and Chai Jin.
He took his bundle over his shoulder
and a cudgel in his hand,
and hurried along the sloping highway,
hey – simply on his way today, longing for tomorrow!
This certain day
he reached the border of Yanggu district.
Zhangqiu town belonged to the district of Yanggu,
and to the west of Zhangqiu town there was a Jingyang Ridge.
Wu Song arrived in Zhangqiu town,
and glanced towards the north of the road.
Wu Song looked north of the road,
where the signs of different taverns were blowing in the wind.
One of them was inscribed 'House of intoxication',
on another was written 'Flavour escapes the jug',
and – hey! – in the midst of them there was a large signboard
inscribed 'Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge'.
Oh? Wu Song thought: What is the meaning of 'Three bowls and you
cannot cross the Ridge'?
Aha! Small tavern – big talk,
I, Wu Song,
was born with the love for wine,
let me go inside to have a taste of the good wine.
The good fellow Wu Song went inside
and glanced around the room:
There was a table
near the door
with two chairs on each side.
He examined the room in both directions.
Ah, a huge amount of wine jars.
This Wu Song
put his bundle on the table
and leaned his cudgel against the wall.

'Waiter, bring wine!'
'Waiter, bring wine!'
'Waiter, bring wine!'
He called three times in a row but no one responded.
He called three times in a row but no one answered.
This angered the good fellow Second Brother Wu,
this angered the good fellow Wu the Second.
He slammed his hand on the table and said:

'Waiter, bring wine!'
Ah! Never mind that he yelled like this,
but good heavens,
it made the room shake all over,
'crash, bang, bang', the dust falling down,
even the wine jars were making a ringing sound.4

The innkeeper came out to see.
'What's happening here?'
Oh, my goodness!
How tall this big brother is!
Look at Wu Song,
his height is more than one staff’s length,
his two shoulders are full of power,
his head is bigger than a bushel,
his two eyes stare like bulging bells,
his arms stretch out like ploughshares,
his fists are like iron hammers,
his palms are like dustpans,
his fingers are as long and pointed as wooden sticks.

‘Oh, please, Dear Sir, good fellow,
What wine would you like to drink? What food would you like to eat?

Just give your orders and I’ll serve you fast!’
Wu Song said:
‘What wine do you have? What food do you have?
Please, every item on your list from the top, tell me so very carefully.’
‘Well, Dear Sir, good fellow,
well, if you want wine,
we have ‘Champion Red’, ‘Grape Syrup’,
then we have ‘Strong Yellow’,
then we have ‘Falling at the Door’,
and then we have ‘Flavour through the Bottle’.
If you want food we have beef,
our beef is rich in taste,
if you want solid food we have big flatbread,
if you want something watery we have noodle soup.’
‘Bring a lot of good wine and five pounds of beef.’
‘Will do.’
The innkeeper came with two bowls of wine,
and five pounds of beef was quickly put on the table.
This Wu Song
swallowed one bowl in a gulp,
Mm, good!
Then he swallowed the other bowl in a gulp,

Mm, not bad!
‘Waiter!’
‘Dear Sir, good fellow?’
‘Bring wine!’
‘Dear Sir, good fellow, please have something to eat!
The flatbread is ready-made,
and we just have to light the fire to cook the noodles.’
‘Bring wine!’
‘You cannot drink any more of the wine.’
‘Why?’
‘At the door we have a signboard which states it clearly:
‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge.’’
‘Oh? What does that mean?’
‘It doesn’t mean anything else than that.
We have the Jingyang Ridge to the west.
Wow! It is a huge mountain forest.
No matter how much wine one usually can take,
if you drink three bowls of my wine,
you’ll get so drunk you tumble down already at the foot of Jingyang Ridge,
so you won’t be able to cross that ridge.
This is the meaning of ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge’.’
‘Oh!’
Wu Song said:
‘Some can drink and some can’t,
I can,
so just bring more good wine.’
‘Exactly! It was because you can drink
that I came with two bowls.
Normally people drink one bowl or half a bowl
and then they can’t take any more.
I still haven’t seen anyone drink one and a half bowl,
you drank up two bowls in no time,
and think this is nothing?’
‘Bring wine!’
‘Now I can’t under any circumstance give you more to drink.’
‘Ah? I don’t owe you money, I haven’t bought anything on credit, so why won’t you bring me more of this good wine? If you bring wine we will forget about it, but if you don’t, I will give you a couple of slaps.’
‘I really couldn’t take that.
Not to mention a couple of slaps, I would be gone to my forefathers after one.’
The innkeeper brought two more bowls of wine, and Wu Song ate and drank up every drop.
‘Bring wine!’
‘You still want more to drink?!’
The innkeeper brought two more bowls of wine, and Wu Song drank up every drop.

‘Waiter!’
‘Dear Sir, good fellow!’
‘Bring wine!’
‘How can you still drink, can you take any more?’
This Wu Song drank eighteen bowls in a row, and without noticing it, he finished five pounds of beef. Don’t you think he could eat up all that? He drank one bowl of wine, then ate one piece of meat, then drank one bowl of wine, then ate one piece of meat. When eighteen bowls of wine were empty, the five pounds of beef were also gone. In addition he ate three big flatbreads and gulped down two bowls of noodle soup.
‘Waiter!’
‘Dear Sir, good fellow.’
‘How many bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge.’
‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge.’
‘How many did I drink?’
‘You drank two bowls here, two bowls there, two bowls here, two bowls there, eighteen bowls altogether!’
‘The upper part of my body doesn’t shake!’
‘You really can drink!’
‘The lower part of my body hasn’t lost control!’
‘You have a great capacity!’
‘How about your signboard saying “Three bowls and you cannot cross the Ridge”?’
‘Haven’t I already placed it behind the door? I don’t dare to hang it up ever again.’
‘Ah! Just joking, the signboard can still hang.'
I really can drink.
Bring me the bill!’
‘Exactly three silver dollars, no more, no less.’
This Wu Song
opened his bundle,
paid the bill,
tied his bundle,
put it over his shoulder,
grabbed his cudgel,
and said: ‘Waiter!’
‘Dear Sir, good fellow!’
‘See you later!’
Wu Song was about to leave
when the innkeeper pulled his clothes:
‘Dear Sir, good fellow, where are you heading?’
Wu Song said:
‘Today I am crossing the Jingyang Ridge.
After drinking eighteen bowls of wine
I will cross the Jingyang Ridge!’
‘Dear Sir, good fellow, it’s not possible to cross the Jingyang Ridge.’
‘Eh?’
This came as an unpleasant surprise to Wu Song.
‘Why is it not possible to cross the Jingyang Ridge?’
‘Dear Sir, good fellow, listen carefully:
there has appeared a fierce tiger at the Jingyang Ridge.
The tiger is the King of the Beasts.
See! This tiger has eaten such a lot of people that not even groups of
three or five dare to set out on the trip.
He has eaten such a lot that not even groups of eight or ten will go
without arming themselves with swords and spears.
He has eaten such a lot that people outside the city walls have fled inside
of the walls.
He has eaten such a lot that people in the small villages have fled to the
larger villages.
He has eaten such a lot that the local gentry and scholars have had meet-
ings with officials.
The village leaders’ eyes are brimming with tears.
The magistrate of Yanggu District ordered people to kill the tiger,
but many of them were killed by the tiger.
Now, in all the four counties they have put up a proclamation:
One may cross the Ridge in the morning, noon and afternoon.
One may only cross the Ridge in the morning, noon and afternoon.
Ten people make a group.
Everyone must bring swords and spears.
If you cross the Ridge by yourself alone,
you will definitely be killed by the tiger.
Now the time to cross has passed,
so listen to me and stay at my tavern.’
‘Heh?’
Wu Song said:
‘So if I stay here at your place then I shouldn’t need to worry about the tiger?’
‘Dear Sir, good fellow, please, listen carefully:
In our town we have more than twenty young men,
who sleep at day until the sun sets,
and as soon as the night falls they guard all the shops in town,
each of them carrying sword and spear.
If they hear any movement outside,
they make a big noise, shouting and beating the gongs and drums.
This way the tiger doesn’t dare to enter our town,
so he won’t injure anyone.
‘Oh?!’
Wu Song said:
‘You see that I have a great capacity for drinking,
you notice that I can eat a lot,
so if you can keep me here,
you can earn a lot of money from me
to buy land and build a house.’
‘What kind of nonsense is this?
I spoke to you with good intentions,
and you insult me with vicious and sarcastic remarks?
If you wish to go, then go,
whether you feed yourself to the tiger or the wolf
is none of my business.’
‘Hey, waiter,
I am well skilled,
and I have my cudgel,
so if I meet the tiger, I will fight it.
If I can do away with the tiger
and relieve the people here of this calamity,
that would be a good thing.

Good bye!’
‘Are you really leaving?!’
‘What do you think?’

This Wu Song walked five li without stop,
and then he started to feel hot.
‘Phew, how come it’s so hot?’
He loosened his clothes and continued walking.
Eh? Wu Song turned his head to one side,
and saw a big tree by the road.
A large piece of bark had been scraped off, and some lines of characters were written clearly on it. Wu Song went closer to read. What was written here? Oh! It was the same as the waiter said. Was it an evil scheme of the owners of the taverns and guesthouses? They might wish to scare the travelling merchants passing by. The cowards would become scared as soon as they saw it and go back to stay in their township. Eh! What tiger, what wolf? Who cares about tigers and wolves on the mountain ridge? Wu Song walked another three li.

This Wu Song now reached the Jingyang Ridge. Wow! What a huge forest! Hem! Over there he saw a temple dedicated to the spirits of the mountain. On the door of the temple there was a big proclamation glued up. Wu Song went closer to read it. What kind of proclamation was this? Hey? Oh! There was for sure a fierce tiger on the Ridge. Was there really a tiger? It was an official proclamation of Yanggu District, so it must be true. ‘Oh, dear me! If I cannot do away with the tiger, then it will continue to kill people. I’ll bite my teeth together and march up the mountain, let’s see if the tiger can match my sword.’ Wu Song walked another half li when he caught sight of a big rock beside the road. ‘It is still early, let me rest for a while.’

This Wu Song laid his bundle on the rock and leaned his cudgel against a tree. Wu Song had just laid down to rest, when, Oh, my God, bellowing ‘b-r-r-r-r-r-r…’, a tiger – King of the Beasts – jumped out from behind the hill. Hey! Never mind that this tiger bellowed ‘b-r-r-r-r-r-r…’, but it made all the branches and leaves shake. Wu Song was startled and jumped up. He looked in the direction of the sound. What’s this? Oh! Good heavens, this fierce tiger was strong.
this tiger was six and a half feet high, 
and more than eight feet long. 
If it jumps eight feet forward, people are scared out of their wits, 
if it moves backwards the length of one staff, people are scurrying off. 
The stripes on its body run one next to the other, 
after a black one comes a yellow. 
Its gaping mouth – a pail of blood – is big as a dustpan, its two eyes stare at you like tea mugs. 
On its forehead a character stands out: 
three horizontal and one vertical stroke makes 'King'! 
When Wu Song saw that there was in fact a tiger there, 
cold sweat soaked his clothes. 
‘Pooh!’ 
The eighteen bowls of good wine, 
all came out through his pores. 
Nothing left, 
nothing left! 
When Wu Song saw the tiger approaching, 
he said to himself: 
‘Don’t become flustered, 
it doesn’t help to be afraid. 
My goodness! I certainly want to see how strong this tiger is.’ 
When the tiger caught sight of Wu the Second, 
in its heart of hearts it felt awfully happy. 
Oh! The tiger thought: ‘This guy isn’t small, 
after two meals there will still be leftovers.’ 
The tiger thought: ‘What an opportunity! 
After two meals I cannot eat him up!’ 
After two meals it cannot eat him up, 
but what about the man, can he stand it? 
This tiger, 
‘b-r-r-r-r . . . ’ it roared as it came forth, 
and leaped towards the good fellow Second Brother Wu. 
Wu Song cried out: 
‘Holy terror!’ 
and dodged away to one side. 
Since Wu Song dodged away 
the tiger hit the ground. 
As the tiger did not catch the man 
it couldn’t but think: 
‘Why!’ The tiger thought: ‘Where is that guy? 
When eating humans I never used to spend much energy, 
how come today is different?’ 
Sure! When ordinary people saw the tiger, they were terribly frightened, 
they would cover their eyes with their hands and call for mummy. 
The tiger would eat to its heart’s delight,
digging its claws into the neck of its victim: yum, yum, delicious!
The tiger took him for an ordinary man,
how could it know that man in front was the good fellow Second
Brother Wu.
As Wu Song dodged away,
he saw the waist of the tiger raised in a bow,
and ‘pooh’ it swooped on him again,
but Wu Song dodged and jumped aside once more.
This tiger,
as it wasn’t able to straddle Wu the Second,
it roared ‘b-r-r-r-r . . .’,
raised its tail like a spear,
pressed its paws into the ground and let the tail sweep down on him,
aiming for the good fellow Second Brother Wu.
Wu Song made a sudden jump,
jumping more than eight feet.
Ha! This tiger –
swooping down on Second Brother Wu, it missed him,
trying to straddle Wu Song, it couldn’t get at him,
sweeping him with its tail, Wu Song cleared off,
so the tiger started to feel anxious.
The tiger thought: ‘Damned!
He is spoiling my meal
and getting troublesome.’

Even though Wu Song wasn’t afraid,
he felt a little flustered all the same.
He grabbed his cudgel and started to beat,
but forgot that he was so high and his arms so long.
He swung the cudgel upwards and beat downwards,
‘boom’, he hit the forking branch of a tree.
‘Crack’, the cudgel broke in two.
In his hand was left just a short piece.
Wu Song stamped his feet in anger.
‘Hey! I told you not to be flustered, but you are.
I told you not to be flustered,
but you cannot control yourself.’
The tiger had missed him,
but now it heard the ‘boom’ just beside its ears.

The tiger thought:
‘What’s going on?
Oh, he wants to beat me up.
I am not able to eat him,
and in addition he is giving me a trashing,
this is too much,
I’m not willing to take this!’
The tiger made a sudden jump forward, 
turned round in a big circle, and aimed for the good fellow Second Brother Wu. 
Wu Song saw at once 
that this time the attack would be even fiercer than before. 
He said to himself: 'If I dodge again and again, I am afraid it will get at me. 
This Wu Song, 
in his urgency hit upon a way out: 
he drew off, 
'thump, thump, thump, thump, thump, thump, thump', 
retreating ten steps without halting. 
Wu Song retreated more than ten steps, 
and so the tiger hit the ground about one foot from Wu Song. 
When Wu Song saw this, he was delighted. 
This Wu Song, 
rushing forward in eight steps, he pushed it down. 
His two hands grabbed around the tiger’s neck, 
his two arms held it with the power of a thousand pounds. 
‘Humph!’ He pressed the tiger down to the ground. 
The tiger could not hurt him, 
but felt an intolerable pressure on its neck. 

‘Good gracious! How come he squeezes me even further down?’
The tiger hadn't tasted this kind of misfortune before, 
so it couldn’t take it. 
It planted its forepaws in the ground and said: 
The tiger said: ‘I can’t take it!’ 
Wu Song said: ‘You can’t take it, but you have to!’ 
The tiger said: ‘I have to get up!’ 
Wu Song said: ‘Just you wait a bit!’ 
The tiger said: ‘It’s not comfortable!’ 
Wu Song said: ‘If you were comfortable, I would be finished!’ 
The tiger tried to get up three times, 
but Wu Song pushed him back down three times. 
Who knows how much power was in play! 
This tiger, 
its paws penetrated the ground with more than half a foot. 
Wu Song thought: “This doesn’t work! 
If I press like this forever, 
and it tries to get up like this forever, 
after some time 
I shall not be able to overcome him, 
and will still end up as his dinner. 
Woe on me!’
When he had thought these thoughts, he pressed even harder with his left arm and freed the power of his right hand, and towards the tiger's backbone he hammered away ruthlessly.

'Pooh! Ah!'
This tiger, Wu Song had already smashed it into a state of great pain, and now it felt the backbone aching all over. What kind of feeling was this? It definitely hadn't tasted this kind of misfortune before, and couldn't take it. It screamed out in pain. The sound was really scaring. This Wu Song clenched his iron fist and beat the backbone of the tiger:

'Ah! Hey!'
'B-r-r-r-r . . . !'
'Ah! Hey!'
'B-r-r-r-r . . . !'
'Ah! Hey!'
'B-r . . . '

He beat it three times, thump, thump, and then lifted his foot, kick, kick, kick, kicking the tiger on its forehead. After beating and kicking it for a while, this tiger, had blood flowing from its nose and eyes. Wu Song killed this one tiger, and his fame spread throughout the world. 

When we have sung this far, that is reckoned as one performance, but the next session 'Avenge for his brother' follows right after.
Yangzhou ballad singing, *Yangzhou qingqu*, is performed in the Yangzhou dialect and based on local songs and melodies that are traced back to the Yuan period. There is usually only one singer who plays and sings throughout the performance to the accompaniment of a small troupe of instrumentalists, comprising plucked and stroked string instruments, as well as chopsticks drumming on a porcelain plate. A ballad is often composed of several melodies that form a set. The words of the ballad seem to be fairly fixed according to a literary, written, tradition, but the performer is free to make a certain amount of improvisations. The performance by Nie Feng and Yangzhou Ballad Instrumental Ensemble, translated below was recorded by the author on 24 May 2000 in the park of the Slender West Lake, Yangzhou, where the troupe was performing in public.

**Beginning of tape:**

Drunk and not in my right mind,  
I happened to wound a man;  
Elder Brother insisted on my leaving our hometown,  
for more than a year I have been hiding.  
*My surname is Wu, my given name is Song,*  
and everyone calls me Second Brother Wu,  
I am from Qinghe District; both of my parents died long ago.  
Depending on my elder brother, I grew up.  
Since childhood I loved fighting with sword and cudgel,  
all my life I defended people who suffered injustices,  
my character being great-hearted and staunch.  
Unforeseen, one day in a drunken state, I wounded a man by accident,  
scared, my elder brother insisted that I escape from my hometown.  
Thus I took refuge with Chai Jin, hiding for a while.  
How fortunate it was that I met Song Jiang at a tavern!  
I heard the news from him: that man I wounded never died,  
calling to mind my longing for home, so I wanted to go and see my elder brother.  
Therefore, I said farewell to Chai Jin and Song Jiang,  
anxious to return to my hometown.  
Wearing a broad bamboo hat and a dark coloured cotton dress,  
I hold my cudgel and carry a bundle with silver on my shoulder;  
all this was given to me by Lord Chai,  
and the warm-hearted Song Gongming.  
I travel during the day and sleep at night,  
arriving at Yanggu District before I realize it.  
Suddenly I feel my empty stomach and I am awfully hungry.  
From a distance I see a wine-banner waving in the wind;
five characters are written on the banner: ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge’!
This leaves me, Second Brother Wu, in the dark; I step into the tavern, lay my cudgel aside, put my bundle down and take out some silver, calling the host: ‘Hurry up and pour some wine for me to taste!’
Hearing the call, the host comes to the table right away, brings a plate of cooked food and a pair of bamboo chopsticks.
He pours a big bowl of the wine and places everything on the table.
Wu Song takes the bowl in his hand and drains the wine in one gulp, exclaiming: ‘Good wine!’, and it is surely strong.
He calls the host: ‘Bring more wine and dishes, to fill up my hungry stomach!’
The host does not dare to neglect his guest, he goes to the kitchen right away;
he cuts two catties of beef and prepares five plates of sausage, then he pours another bowl of wine –
Again Wu Song drains the bowl in one gulp!
He keeps praising: ‘Good wine, what a good wine, strong and tasty!’
The host pours another bowl of wine, turns round and steps out of the dining room.
‘This guest already drank three bowls, now I must take care of the other guests.’
Wu Song bangs the table and shouts out –
‘Why don’t you come and pour the wine?’
Hearing his call, the host hurries over –
‘Good guest, please, listen so very carefully: I can bring you more rice and dishes, but not even one more ounce of the wine;
the wine-banner says – ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge’!
Although the wine of our humble tavern is a local brew, it is much stronger than old liquors, everyone gets drunk after three bowls, and is not able to cross the ridge ahead;
all guests both new and regular, after three bowls they drink no more, so that is why it’s called ‘Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge’.
On hearing this Wu Song bursts into a loud laughter—
‘Wine sellers always claim their own wine is better; I already drank three big bowls of your wine, how come I’ve not collapsed in drunkenness here in your tavern?’
‘Good guest, since you come from far away, you don’t know that our wine has a name ‘Flavour through the Bottle’; another name is ‘Falling at the Door’, it is tasty when you drink it, but it has a real kick afterwards!’
‘Stop talking nonsense, my dear host. Quickly get me the wine, just pour the wine, I won’t cheat you of one single silver coin!’
The host can see that his guest sure enough is not yet drunk, so he pours another three big bowls of the wine and places them on the table.

Wu Song yells again: ‘Hurry up and bring me more beef!’

Once again he drains three big bowls of the wine in one go.

He calls the host again: ‘Hurry up and bring more wine, all this silver here is for paying the wine!’

Even though the host can see his guest is capable of drinking quite a lot, he intends to ignore him, so he turns away and just stands idle; but this good guest has an impatient temper, so he has to pour bowls of wine one by one.

Figure 16.4. ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’ performed by Nie Feng and Yangzhou Ballad Instrumental Ensemble, 2000. Photo by Jette Ross.
Second Brother Wu drinks eighteen bowls of wine from the first to the last,
before he finally feels satisfied and walks out of the tavern; he shouts:
‘Host, from now on you can stop reminding me “Three bowls and you cannot cross the ridge”! Look, with bundle on my shoulder and cudgel in my hand, I am as steady as ever!’
The host steps out right away, yelling at the top of his voice:
‘May I ask, good guest, where are you going?’
Wu Song stops and turns, looking back:
‘Surely I, Second Master, have paid my bill for the wine and beef?’
‘Good guest, listen so very carefully,
please come back and have a look at this proclamation, this proclamation.
Recently there has arrived a fierce tiger on the Jingyang Ridge,
often attacking people;
twenty, thirty big fellows were eaten up,
and many hunters were wounded, yes, wounded.
Travellers and merchants shall gather in groups before setting out,
only morning, noon and afternoon are they allowed to cross the ridge.
Since you’re alone, why don’t you stay here over night and wait until daybreak.
Wait until daybreak and cross the ridge together with more guests!
If you go alone, I’m afraid you will have a short life!’
Wu Song suddenly laughs out loud when hearing this –
‘My home is right there in the neighbourhood of Qinghe District,
I used to pass this Jingyang Ridge, going back and forth ever so often,
at least thirty to fifty times,
and I never heard there was a tiger attacking people,
since you want me to stay for the night in your tavern,
I know what’s in your dirty mind:
You’ll wait until the third watch and then sneak in, steal my silver and take my life!
You’d better not try to scare me with your lies,
evien if there is a tiger, what can it do to me!’
After these words, Wu Song takes to the road,
the hero strides off towards the Jingyang Ridge.
Shaking his head, the host heaves a sigh:
‘All my good will is turned into the worst of intentions!
Since you don’t believe me, just do what you like!’
Having no choice, the host returns back inside.
Holding the cudgel, Wu Song strides off towards the ridge.
After travelling three or five li, he sees a notice;
lifts his head and scrutinizes it, it is written so very carefully,
saying: recently a tiger frequently attacks people on the mountain.
After reading this, Wu Song is scared, realizing that the host didn’t lie to him.
‘Shall I cross the mountain or return to the tavern, this I must find out –
If I go back to the tavern, they will laugh at me of course.’
After thinking back and forth, he just strides off to cross the ridge.
‘I will see what this big beast can do to me!’
While I’m walking, the effect of the wine is coming,
I’ll take off my broad-brimmed bamboo hat and string it on my shoulder.

Looking at the sun going down towards the foot of the ridge,
I ponder: Where is the tiger which attacks people? Oh, oh, my!
Surely, people worry of troubles of their own imagining and are bewil-
dered by their own fantasies.
My goodness! I have no choice! The wine makes me feel hot.
I have to loosen my clothing and bare my chest.

I hurry through the forest, staggering and stumbling, staggering and
stumbling,
but just look: a black rock, so big and long and smooth!
Ah! I can’t wait to get rid of my bag and lie down on the rock.’
Suddenly a gust of wind can be heard blowing up in the forest: ‘Hoooh –’

After the wind has passed, from behind a tree a resounding ‘Plop’ is heard.
In fact it is a big tiger with slanting eyes and white forehead,
giving Wu Song such a shock that he turns sober on the spot;
he jumps over the rock, grasps his cudgel,
with a fixed look he stares towards the big beast.
See, how awe-inspiring this tiger is!
It is so famished that it hunts humans, swaying its head.
Just look how it plants its forepaws into the ground, it’s rear paws hump,
and then it jumps into the air,
like a mountain it swoops directly down on Wu Song.
With a sudden step Wu Song jumps to the rear of the big beast,
The moment the creature realizes that it missed its aim,
it has to bend its back and tries to lift Wu Song.
Wu Song dodges to the other side,
he feels no panic, he is so calm.
But now the tiger is getting truly angry,
its mighty roar makes the mountain ridge shake;
the tail of the tiger is hard as a steel bar,
the tiger raises it and lashes out at Wu Song;
Wu Song dodges to the other side again,
the creature’s three attacks were not able to wound the hero!
When such a tiger tries to eat humans,
it only has three ways of assault: thrusting, springing, lashing;
if these three methods fail,
the creature’s strength is half broken.
Again it sends out a mighty roar and turns around,
turning its head and coming back to look for Wu Song.
Wu Song grasps his cudgel in both hands,
With all his strength, he brings the cudgel down
straight onto that big beast!
One only hears a loud ‘Crash’,
unintentionally, he breaks it on a pine tree;
branches and leaves all fall to the ground,
he misses the big beast;
his cudgel is broken in two,
and he is left with only a broken half in his hand.
The creature is enraged and roars once again,
it turns back and springs at Wu Song;
Wu Song leaps back more than ten steps,
also this time the big beast misses its aim;

Just look,
as its forepaws reach the ground,
the tiger’s head ends up next to the hero.
Wu Song throws his cudgel away,
and with both hands he catches the big beast;
he grabs the tiger’s striped neck firmly,
and unflaggingly forces it down to the ground.
As the tiger struggles to free itself,
Wu Song kicks the big beast with his swift foot;
putting all his strength into every kick,
he kicks that tiger in the eyes.
Its forepaws keep thrashing about all the time,
churning out two big holes in the ground;
Wu Song presses down the mouth of the tiger,
deeply into the yellow mud hole.
That creature seems to have lost its strength,
panting it lies there, unable to move.
Wu Song grabs it firmly with his left hand,
with his right hand free he starts beating the big beast;
he keeps beating the creature until red blood gushes from its mouth and
nose,
its whole body and four paws stop moving.
Only then can Wu Song let go,
standing by its side he looks at the big beast.
Wu Song stares at it for a while,
until he can see that the creature doesn’t move the least,
with both his hands he starts dragging the big beast;
but now he is drained of all his strength, how can he move it?
His arms and legs are numb and weak, and he must let go.

Sitting on the black rock, he makes a plan:
‘It’s getting quite dark now. If there is another big beast on this mountain,
how am I able to cope? I’ll just end up losing my life;
I’d better get down the mountain ridge, 
and deal with this dead big beast tomorrow!’
Second Brother Wu makes up his mind.
He shoulders his bundle, neatens his outfit, and sets off down the ridge.
Step by step he presses forward, but before he has made half a li,
Gosh! Another two big beasts jump out and block his way!
Staring closely, the hero discovers that 
these are two hunters climbing the ridge to catch the tiger,
they are dressed up in tiger’s fur, 
and Wu Song is relieved.
He tells them so very carefully the story of how he killed the tiger. 
Shocked as they are, the two hunters are dumbfounded for a while, 
they gather some villagers and follow Wu Song back up the Ridge,
they help each other to bind up the dead tiger and carry it, 
bind it up and carry it down the Ridge.
The hunters and villagers immediately inform the authorities, 
the magistrate of Yanggu District gets very happy, 
and gives Wu Song a reward;
in a parade with gongs and flowers, riding a horse through every street 
and alley, 
he is appointed a captain and assigned work in the yamen. 
Ever since he killed the tiger with his clever fist, 
Wu Song’s fame spread throughout the world!
Only one thing was still on his mind: 
to come back to his hometown in Qinghe and visit his elder brother.

Translated by Huang Ying and V.B.

Notes

1 Wang Shaotang’s performances for the radio were inaccessible since the 1960s, and in the 1980s and 1990s it was generally assumed that the tapes were in bad condition or lost. I am deeply grateful to Nanjing Radio and Li Xin 李新 for presenting me in 1998 with this audiotape of 30 minutes, copied from the original broadcast tapes. The quality of the copy is astonishingly good, only the first few words are slightly distorted.
2 Xiao’er 小二 [Little Number Two], name of the waiter at the inn of Jingyang town, but also a general name for waiters, cf. BØRDAHL 2014.
3 Luo Shizhong uses his storyteller’s stick, xingmu 醒目 (in Yangzhou storytelling called zhiyu 止語) almost as a kind of clapper, something that is totally different from the way the stick is used in Yangzhou storytelling. Therefore the tapping of the stick is inserted into the text.
5 The description of the tiger in this oral version of Shandong kuaishu reminds of the corresponding passage in the pamphlet of the drum tale, dagushu, in Chapter 15.1.
Sources

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH DATABASE ON CHINESE STORYTELLING

The primary sources of the study are available in the Research Database on Chinese Storytelling which is accessible on the website Chinese Storytelling www.shuoshu.org. This research tool has been established in cooperation with Jens-Christian Sørensen, who has designed and developed the database. Presently the database contains four major collections: 1) The Wu Song Project Collection; 2) Four Masters of Chinese Storytelling; 3) Yangzhou Oral Performance Culture; 4) Chinese Storytelling in Photos and Pictures.

The Wu Song Project Collection
The overall aim of the Wu Song Project is to explore the interplay of the oral and the written in Chinese popular culture. The tale of ‘Wu Song Fights the Tiger’ found in a variety of versions in novel, drama and performed narrative arts is the focal example. Through analysis anchored in the collection of the Wu Song Project the special linguistic and narrative forms of the various instances of this tale are uncovered. The purpose is to bring out the contrastive patterns that become apparent from the categorization and comparison of a number of features of the tale.

System of the Wu Song Project Collection
The textual sources of the collection are organized into three main categories: 1) Oral Performances; 2) Written Genres for Performance and Reading; 3) Written genres for reading.

Oral Performances
This category includes performances recorded on radio, audio-tape, videotape, CD, VCD, DVD, film, etc. The oral texts from these source materials are available in digitalized versions (audio files or video files), transcriptions into Chinese characters, and translations into English. Two subcategories are listed under this heading: 1) Drama performances, xiqu; and 2) Performance genres, shuochang. These categories are represented by a number of national and local genres.
This category includes written texts with a close relationship to performed genres of drama, \textit{xiqu}, and telling and singing arts, \textit{shuochang}. Such texts often imply a twofold purpose: on the one hand, as \textit{aide-mémoire} or script for performers of the given genre in oral tradition; on the other hand, as reading material for the aficionados of the oral genre or for the general public. This part of the source materials is available in facsimile scannings of the original sources, in transcriptions into Chinese characters (with a view to electronic searching) and in English translations. Two main categories are listed under this heading: 1) Drama literature, \textit{xiqu wenxue}; and 2) Performance literature, \textit{shuochang wenxue}. These categories are represented by a number of national and local genres.
Written Genres for Reading

This category includes texts belonging to genres that are mainly produced as reading material for a general readership. This part of the source materials is available in facsimile scannings of the original sources, in transcriptions into Chinese characters (with a view to electronic searching) and in English translations. Three categories are listed under this heading: 1) Novel, zhanghui xiaoshuo; 2) Plain tale, pinghua; 3) Other genres for reading, qita duwu zhonglei. These categories are not further subdivided.

Table A.3. Written Genres for Reading

1) Novel, zhanghui xiaoshuo 張回小說
2) Plain tale, pinghua 平話
3) Other genres for reading, qita duwu zhonglei 其他讀物種類
Items of the Wu Song Project Collection
The system of main categories, subcategories and individual genres laid out above reflects the present status of the Wu Song Project Collection. This system is not considered to be representative of the full spectrum of these genres in China, nor is it considered to be static. It is constantly under revision as new materials are collected. Each of the genres is currently represented by one or more samples of the tiger tale or – in a few cases – by another story from the Wu Song saga of Water Margin.

Every instance of this tale is classified as an item of the database with an item number, bibliographic information and links to the relevant formats of the item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table A.4. Formats for the items of the research database</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Scanned versions of the original written/printed sources in Chinese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Transcription into computerized characters. The character version strives to follow the original textual version closely, using the same character forms as far as possible. Standard and non-standard forms, simplified, jianti 簡體, and traditional forms, fanti 繁體, of characters are applied according to the original written text. Oral texts (audio- and video-recordings) are transcribed with traditional characters, fanti.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) English translation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Digitalized audio- or video-recordings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Written items will have links 1), 2) and 3); oral items will have 2), 3) and 4). The database is constantly being developed. If not all the relevant links are found to a certain item, it means that this item is in the course of preparation or that the collection does not include all relevant formats.

Within drama and performed narrative arts (also called performance genres), the system is doubled, so that genres where an item is found in oral performance are also represented in the corresponding system of written forms, even if no item exists in the collection so far. And vice versa, if a genre in written form contains an example of the tiger story, then the genre is also represented in the oral system.

Four Masters of Chinese Storytelling
Under this entry the database offers electronic access to the catalogue of the project 'Large-scale Registration of Chinese Storytelling', published as Four Masters of Chinese Storytelling. Full-length Repertoires of Yangzhou Storytelling on Video, edited by Vibeke Bordahl, Fei Li and Huang Ying, NIAS Press, Copenhagen 2004. In 2001 to 2003 the four masters of Yangzhou storytelling, Yangzhou pinghua, Dai Buzhang, Gao Zaihua, Fei Zhengliang and Ren Jitang, had their full repertoires recorded on video in daily sessions of one hour. Dai Buzhang (1925–2003) told from Xiyou ji [Journey to the West] in 100 days. Gao Zaihua (1928–2008) told from Zhong San guo [Central part of Three Kingdoms] in 110 days. Fei Zhengliang (1932-) told from Qian San guo [First part of Three Kingdoms] in 50 days, and Ren Jitang
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(1942-) told from Wu shi hui [Ten Chapters on Wu Song] in 88 days, as well as 12 days from Qian Long Huangdi xia Jiangnan [Emperor Qian Long Goes South]. The database contains the summaries of each performance, written by the storytellers, altogether 360 hours of performance. The videos are accessible for research in four libraries: Library of Congress, Washington D.C.; Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing; Academia Sinica, Taipei; and Danish Folklore Archives, Copenhagen.

Yangzhou Oral Performance Culture
This collection contains the private tape-recordings and video-recordings, recorded and/or collected by the author since 1986. They span the period 1961-2010. So far this collection includes the following genres of oral performance: Yangzhou storytelling, Yangzhou pinghua, Yangzhou story-singing, Yangzhou xianci, Yangzhou ballad singing, Yangzhou qingqu, and Yangzhou opera, Yangju. The materials have been digitalized and are available for research directly from the database. Among these recordings many items are relevant for the Wu Song Project and are tagged to this collection as well. The rest of the entries belongs to other repertoires, that are not registered under the Wu Song Project, but can only be found in this collection.

Chinese Storytelling in Photos and Pictures
This collection contains several sub-collections of photos and pictures concerning Yangzhou storytelling and other genres of Chinese storytelling. These sub-collections are accessible under the name of the person who created the photos or pictures, or the name of the person who collected the materials and made them available for the database.
APPENDIX B

SELECTED PRIMARY SOURCES

This list contains bibliographic information about selected samples of the tale "Wu Song Fights the Tiger". The samples are taken from 1) written texts (novel, drama, performance literature) and 2) oral performances (of both drama and performed narrative arts). These selected samples form the central corpus of the study and are treated in detail in the book.

WRITTEN TEXTS

NOVEL

1) Stuttgart fragment

(also called: Chazeng jiaben 插增甲本 [Edition A with additional chapters])

2) 'Di nian'er hui: Henghaijun Chai Jin liu bin, Jingyanggang Wu Song da hu' 第廿二回 橫海郡柴進留賓景陽崗武松打虎 [Chapter 22: Chai Jin entertains his guests in Henhai County, Wu Song fights a tiger on Jingyang Ridge]

3) Zhanghui xiaoshuo 章回小說 [novel]


1) Shuangfengtangben 雙峰堂本 [Edition from the Shuangfengtang printing house]

2) 'Di ershier hui: Henghaijun Chai Jin liu bin, Jingyanggang Wu Song da hu' 第二十二回 橫海郡柴進留賓景陽崗武松打虎 [Chapter 22: Chai Jin entertains his guests in Henhai County, Wu Song fights a tiger on Jingyang Ridge]

3) Zhanghui xiaoshuo 章回小說 [novel]

4) Jingben zengbu jiaozheng quan xiang Zhongyi shuihu zhuan pinglin 京本增補校正全像忠義水滸傳評林, 1594, 120 hui 回, 25 scrolls, juan 卷. Upper section, commentary, mid-section picture, lower section main text, shang ping, zhong tu, xia wen 上評中圖下文. Published by Shuangfengtang. Fac-
The samples are arranged according to main genre, i.e. novel, drama, performance literature and oral performance – the latter divided into drama on stage and performed narrative arts. Samples from the collection of popular literature in the Fu Ssu-nien Library of the Academia Sinica, Taiwan, are marked with the initials ASC (Academia Sinica Collection).

Titles of samples that are separate booklets are written in italics; those that are part of a larger book are written in normal print with quotes, oral performances are written in SMALL CAPITAL LETTERS.

Written texts

The four novel editions under study are each given 1) a shortened title which is generally used throughout the book; 2) the number and name of the chapter of the tiger story; 3) genre; and 4) full name of the novel edition and other bibliographical information. They are entered in chronological order according to the publication date of the edition or the estimated date.

The written drama versions are arranged according to genre – chuanqi, Kunqu, Jingju and local drama (only one example, Huai xi). Within the genres, the instances are in chronological order: 1) name of the drama; 2) number and name of the scene where the tiger story occurs (some dramas only treat the tiger story, so that 1) and 2) collapse); 3) genre; and 4) bibliographical information.

Performance literature is arranged according to genre and chronology. The genres are arranged according to their format of metric lines versus prose. Those genres that are metric throughout are entered first; next follow those with prosimetric format; and finally the genres mainly in prose. For each sample is given 1) the title of the text (book, pamphlet, manuscript) that contains the tiger story; 2) the name of the particular instance of the tale (sometimes 1) and 2) are the same); 3) genre; 4) bibliographical information.

Oral performance

Orally performed drama and narrative arts are arranged in the same way as written drama and performance literature, indicating 1) the title of the audiocassette or CD that contains the tiger story; 2) the title of the instance of the tale (with private recordings only 2) is relevant).

Table B.1. Note on the arrangement of primary sources

<table>
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<td>Simile edition in: Ming Qing shanben xiaoshuo congkan chubian 明清善本小說叢刊初編, Tianyi chubanshe, Taipei 1985, and in Guben xiaoshuo jicheng, Shanghai 1990. The text belongs to the simple recensions, jianben 簡本, of the Water Margin, Shuihu zhuán 水浒傳.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1) Rongyutangben 容與堂本 [Edition from the Rongyutang printing house]

2) ‘Di ershisan hui: Henghaizun Chai Jin liu bin, Jingyanggang Wu Song da hu’ 二十三回 橫海郡柴進留賓景陽崗武松打虎 [Chapter 22: Chai Jin entertains his guests in Henghai County, Wu Song fights a tiger on Jinggang Ridge]

3) Zhanghui xiaoshuo 章回小說 [novel]

4) Li Zhuowu xiansheng piping Zhongyi shuihu zhuán 李卓吾先生批評忠義水塗傳, 1610, 100 hui 回 Facsimile edition Ming Rongyutang ke Shuihu zhuán
Wu Song Fights the Tiger

1) *Jin Ping Mei cihua* 金瓶梅詞話 [Jin Ping Mei in verse and prose]

2) 'Di yi hui: Jingyanggang Wu Song da hu, Pan Jinlian qian fu mai fengyue' 第一回 景陽岡武松打虎 潘金蓮嫌夫賣風月 [Chapter 1, Wu Song fights a tiger on Jingyang Ridge, Pan Jinlian disdains her mate and plays the coquette]

3) *Zhanguo xiaoshuo* 章回小說 [novel]


**Drama**

1) *Yixia ji* 義俠記 [The Noble Knight-errant]

2) 'Di si chu: Chu xiong' 第四齣 除兇 [Scene 4: Subduing the Beast]

3) *Chuanqi* 傳奇 [plays of the marvellous]


1) *Zhongyi xuan tu* 忠義璇圖 [The Jade Chart of the Noble Knight-errant]

2) 'Di shisan chu: Jingyanggang bihu yufan' 第十三出 景陽崗斃虎遇凡 [Scene 13: Killing the Tiger and Meeting the People on Jingyang Ridge]

3) *Chuanqi* 傳奇 [plays of the marvellous]


1) + 2) *Da hu quan chuanguan* 打虎全串貫 [Complete Scenes of Fighting the Tiger]

3) *Kunqu* 崑曲 [Kun drama]

4) Anonymous. One drama, manuscript, Qing period. In: ASC, Che Wang 車王 59 han 函 4 ce 冊, 8 pages.

1) + 2) *Da hu* 打虎 [Fighting the Tiger]

3) *Kunqu* 崑曲 [Kun drama]

4) Anonymous. One drama, stencil, Jiangsusheng Kunjuyuan 江蘇省崑劇院, 1982, 6 pages. The stencil was given as a present to the author in 2006.
together with a VCD of a performance from 2005 by the Nanjing Kunju Troupe.

1) + 2) Da hu [Fighting the Tiger]

3) Jingju [Beijing opera]


1) + 2) Wu Song da hu 武松打虎 [Wu Song Fights the Tiger]

3) Jingju [Beijing opera]


1) + 2) Tebie mingling miben Wu Song da hu 特別名伶秘本武松打虎 [Wu Song Fights the Tiger. Secret Script for Famous Actor]

3) Huaixi [Huai drama]

4) Anonymous. One drama in two parts, ji, 集. In: ASC: Lithography, Shanghai: Shanghai Dada shudian, late Qing

Performance literature

1) + 2) ’Wu Song da hu’ 武松打虎 [Wu Song Fights the Tiger]

3) Yangzhou qingqu 楊州清曲 [Yangzhou ballad singing]


1) + 2) Jingyanggang Wu Song da hu 景陽崗武松打虎 [Wu Song Fights the Tiger on Jingyang Ridge]

3) Dagushu 大鼓書 [Drum tale]


1) + 2) ’Wu Song da hu’ 武松打虎 [Wu Song Fights the Tiger]

3) Kuaishu 快書 [Fast tale]

1) Gao Yuanjun 高元鈞: Wu Song zhuàn 武松傳 [The Saga of Wu Song]

2) 'Jingyanggang' 景陽岡 [Jingyang Ridge]

3) Shandong kuaishu 山東快書 [Shandong clapper tale]


1) Wu Song da hu 武松打虎 [Wu Song Fights the Tiger]

2) Shang ji Jingyanggang 上集景陽岡 [First Part Jingyang Ridge]

3) Fuzhou pinghua 福州平話 [Fuzhou storytelling]

4) Anonymous. First part of two in the pamphlet Wu Song da hu. (Late Qing/Early Republic). In: ASC, lithography, 7 ce 册, 21–201, 74 pages. The pamphlet contains two parts, ji 集, i.e. Shang ji Jingyanggang 上集景陽岡 [First Part, Jingyang Ridge], 10 double-pages, 1a-10b, and Xia ji Shi zi po 下集十字坡 [Second collection Cross-roads Rise]. The tale of Wu Song and the tiger is found in the first 4 double-pages, 1a-4b, of the First Part, clearly demarcated with a break at the end of page 4b.

1) Liu Caonan 劉操南, Mao Saiyun 茅賽雲: Wu Song yanyi 武松演義 [The Romance of Wu Song]

2) ‘Di yi hui: Toupingju Wen Kang mai jiu, Jingyanggang Wu Song da hu’ 第一回: 透瓶居文康買酒 景陽岡武松打虎 [Chapter One: Wen Kang Sells Wine in the Tavern of Flavour through the Bottle, Wu Song Fights a Tiger on Jingyang Ridge] ‘Di er hui: Chu menghu haohan li wei ming, ji changjie Dalang shou zhuri’ 第二回: 除猛虎好漢立威名, 擠長街大郎受恥辱 [Chapter Two: Subduing the fierce tiger a good fellow makes his name, In the crowded street Wu the Elder is insulted]

3) Hangzhou pinghua 杭州評話 [Hangzhou storytelling]

4) From: Liu Caonan and Mao Saiyun: Wu Song yanyi, Hangzhou: Zhejiang renmin chubanshe, 1980: 1–32. The tale of Wu Song and the tiger is narrated over the first two chapters.

1) Wang Shaotang 王少堂: Wu Song shi hui 武松十回 [Ten Chapters on Wu Song]
Oral performance

Drama on stage

1) *Dahu; Youjie* 打虎, 游街 [Fighting the Tiger. The Parade]

2) ‘Da hu’ 打虎 [Fighting the Tiger]

3) *Kunqu* 崑曲 [Kun drama]


1) *Wu Song* 武松 [Wu Song]

2) ‘Jingyanggang da hu’ 景陽崗打虎 [Fighting the Tiger on Jingyang Ridge]

3) *Jingju* 京劇 [Beijing opera]


1) *Guzi laoxi* 骨子老戲 [Good Old Operas]

2) ‘Wu Song da hu’ 武松打虎 [Wu Song Fights the Tiger]

3) *Jingju* 京劇 [Beijing opera]

4) Performer: Li Buchun 李卜春, DVD. Published by Beijing wenhua yishu yinxiang chubanshe, 2009.
1) *Wu Song sha sao* 武松殺嫂 [Wu Song Kills His Sister-in-law]

2) ‘*Wu Song sha sao*’ 武松殺嫂 [Wu Song Kills His Sister-in-law]

3) *Yangju* 揚劇 [Yangzhou opera]


1) *Wu Dalang zhui qi* 武大郎追妻 [Wu the Elder Pursues His Wife]

2) ‘*Wu Dalang zhui qi*’ 武大郎追妻 [Wu the Elder Pursues His Wife]

3) *Yangju* 揚劇 [Yangzhou opera]


1) *Wu Song sha sao* 武松殺嫂 [Wu Song Kills His Sister-in-law]

2) ‘*Wu Song sha sao*’ 武松殺嫂 [Wu Song Kills His Sister-in-law]

3) *Qinju* 秦劇 [Qin opera]


**Orally performed narrative arts**

1 + 2) ‘*Wu Song da hu*’ 武松打虎 [Wu Song Fights the Tiger]

3) *Yangzhou qingqu* 揚州清曲 [Yangzhou ballad singing]


1) *Shandong kuaishu* 山東快書 [Shandong clapper tale]

2) ‘*Wu Song da hu*’ 武松打虎 [Wu Song Fights the Tiger]

3) *Shandong kuaishu* 山東快書 [Shandong clapper tale]

3) Sichuan pinghua 四川评话 [Sichuan storytelling]


1) + 2) 'Wu Song da hu' 武松打虎 [Wu Song Fights the Tiger]

3) Yangzhou pinghua 扬州评话 [Yangzhou storytelling]


1) + 2) 'Wu Song da hu' 武松打虎 [Wu Song Fights the Tiger]

3) Yangzhou pinghua 扬州评话 [Yangzhou storytelling]


1) + 2) 'Wu Song da hu' 武松打虎 [Wu Song Fights the Tiger]

3) Yangzhou pinghua 扬州评话 [Yangzhou storytelling]

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