CHARLES E. HAMMOND

An Excursion in Tiger Lore

The tiger is a familiar feature of Chinese narratives, including myths, legends, folklore, fables, fiction, and historical writing.[1] It plays a variety of roles in omenology and religion, affecting the way ruling officials, the gods, and the larger society perceive and negotiate fate, as well as specific actions. This excursion into tigrine lore is meant to bring to light these roles and varying perceptions through several short translations. In the course of this brief discussion, I refer to a number of fascinating but neglected collections, one devoted solely to tigers, and touch on how other genres, particularly the standard histories, utilize such stories.

One might say that in traditional China the tiger was the most savage beast one could expect to meet.[2] Its terrifying aspect led people to interpret its appearance often as an evil omen, or as a signal of bad government. Some would interpret a tiger's behavior towards humans as heaven's just punishment, making the animal itself a symbol of justice, or righteousness. Occasionally, officials perceived attacks against tigers as interference with a smoothly functioning universe, and some, engaging in grand wish fulfillment, saw the tiger as benevolent or as an agent of their own destiny.

To a certain extent, the tiger is the East Asian counterpart to the lion: the *Shuo-wen chieh-tzu* 說文解字 dictionary defines it as the king of the beasts.[3] In China, not only is the tiger a symbol of ferocity, but it can also inspire such dread among humans that they use its likeness as a talisman to

[1] On theories and types of folklore, see William Bascom, "The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives," *Journal of American Folklore* 78 (1965), pp. 3–20; and Nai-Tung Ting, *A Type Index of Chinese Folktales* (FF Communications No. 223, 1978) (citing classical materials from philosophers, legends collected from the Six Dynasties to the Ch'ing, and vernacular literature).

[2] Other animals, not symbolic of savagery, have assumed important places in Chinese culture. See M. W. de Visser, *The Dragon in China and Japan* (Weisbaden: Dr. Martin Sandig oHG, 1913); Wen-hung Hsü, "The Evolution of the Legend of the White Serpent," in two parts, *Tamkang Review* 4.1 (1973), pp. 109–27, and 4.2 (1973), pp. 121–56; R. H. Van Gulik, *The Gibbon in China: An Essay in Chinese Animal Lore* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967); Hung Wu, "The Earliest Pictorial Presentations of Ape Tales," *TP* 73.1–3 (1987), pp. 86–112; and Fatima Wu, "Foxes in Chinese Supernatural Tales," in two parts, *Tamkang Review* 17.2 (1986), pp. 121–54, and 17.3 (1986), pp. 263–94.

[3] Hsü Shen 許慎 (30–124 AD), comp., *Shuo-wen chieh-tzu* (Taipei: I-wen shu chü, [1966]) 5A, pp. 43b–44a.

protect both the dead and the living. Similarly, its hair, skin, and eyes are used as medicine.[4]

Chinese writers frequently extend the tiger's savagery into an analogy for greed.[5] In Confucian political morality the tiger tends to symbolize oppressive government. A famous Chinese statement in the classic *Li chi* 禮記 concerning the tiger is attributed to Confucius; he once heard from an unhappy woman that in order to avoid oppressive government her family lived in an area victimized by man-eating tigers. The lesson that he drew from this, "An oppressive government is worse than a tiger," has become proverbial.[6]

In its original context, the sage's statement meant nothing other than that people would prefer living near tigers rather than under oppressive rulers. Many Chinese, influenced by practices and beliefs that linked rulers and other authority figures to religious forces, supposed the statement to mean that a ruler's subjects would be free of the depredations of tigers if the ruler were truly benevolent.

Examinations and criticisms of such connections appeared beginning at an early stage. For example, Wang Ch'ung 王充 (27–ca. 100 AD) mentioned the *Li chi* dictum in an entire chapter devoted to an explanation of the tiger's eating people as natural, not a manifestation of bad government.[7] Nearly a millennium later, Sun Kuang-hsien 孫光憲 (fl. ca. 900–954) identified tiger depredations as indications of the state of current government.[8] The official history *Yüan shih* 元史, compiled early in the Ming, cited Chao Yü-piao's 趙與票 (1242–1303) suggestion that the marauding of tigers is a

[4] There are several animal names the second syllables of which are *hu*; this connotes ferocity or hunting ability. See Ch'en Chi-ju 陳繼儒 (1558–1639), comp., *Hu hui* 虎薈 (*A Tiger Anthology*) (Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng edn.; hereafter *HH*), p. 58, and p. 55, which describes the placement of stone tigers near graves as protection of the dead. The Chinese also painted tiger heads on doors as talismans; see Tuan Ch'eng-shih 段成式 (803–863), comp., *Yu-yang tsa-tsu* 酉陽雜俎 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1981), p. 232. On medicinal tiger parts, see *HH*, pp. 53, 61, 84. Similarly, in Southeast Asia, tiger amulets or parts of tigers are used for curing disease, increasing strength, aphrodisiacs, and travel protection. See Robert Wessing, *The Soul of Ambiguity: the Tiger in Southeast Asia* (DeKalb, Illinois: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, N. Illinois U., 1986), esp. pp. 51–52.

[5] See P'i Jih-hsiu 皮日休 (ca. 834–883), "Pei chih shou" 悲摯獸 ("The Tragedy of Greedy Beasts"), in *P'i-tzu wen sou* 皮子文藪 (SPTK edn.) 7, pp. 84b–85b; also Wang T'ing-hsiang 王廷相 (1474–1544), "Meng hu fu" 猛虎賦 ("Rhapsody on the Fierce Tiger"), in *Wang shih chia ts'ang-chi* 王氏家藏集 (Taipei: Wei-wen shu-chü, 1976) 4, pp. 5a–6a.

[6] See *Li chi* (SPPY edn.) 3, p. 16a: *k'e cheng meng yü hu* 苛政猛於虎.

[7] *Lun heng* 論衡 (Shanghai: Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1974), pp. 249–51. See A. Forke, *Lun Hêng* (rpt.; New York: Paragon Book Gallery, 1962) 2, pp. 357–62. However, Wang did not explicitly deny any tigrine connections with omenology.

[8] *Pei-meng so-yen* 北夢瑣言 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1960), p. 170.

sign of oppressive government. Presumably, he referred to local officials rather than the emperor, since Qubilai (r. 1260–1294) is reported to have agreed with him.[9]

Beginning with early standard-history biographies, a tiger's presence in or flight from a district could reflect directly on the moral qualities of local officials. Notices of this type were paralleled in anecdotal literature, which burgeoned from the Han period onward. We see examples in which the populace suffers from tigers' having infested the area until a benevolent official assumes his duties; thereupon the tigers leave, and those who have fled return.[10]

As local representatives of the emperor, officials were responsible not just for rule over the people, but also over natural phenomena. The belief that officials had responsibility for the tiger's misbehavior in turn evolved into an understanding that they had authority over the tiger. Accordingly, officials could catch and interrogate tigers. In one historical biography, the misbehaving animal understood the official who first questioned it and then had it killed when it knelt in admission of its guilt. Yet the official permitted an innocent tiger to escape.[11] Another official forced a lictor to deliver a summons to a tiger, which returned holding it in his mouth, to the lictor's astonishment.[12]

For some officials, the solution to the problem of marauding tigers was to resist the impulse to interfere with them. Li Shen's 李紳 (fl. ca. 806–846) standard-history biography mentions one such incident. Before his arrival, the tea-pickers on Mt. Huo 霍山 (in Anhwei), had been so afflicted by tiger attacks that they laid traps to catch them and dispatched hunters to shoot them, to no avail. After he was posted to the area as prefect, Li Shen stopped the trapping and hunting of tigers, and the threat disappeared.[13] The biog-

[9] The incident occurred in 1291; see Sung Lien 宋濂 (1310–1381) et al., comps., *Yüan shih* (Peking: Chung-hua, 1976) 168, pp. 3959–60. Even if the historian has fabricated the incident, the principle is the same.

[10] *HH*, p. 3; see also the biography of Sung Chün 宋均 (fl. ca. 25–76), in Fan Yeh 范曄 (398–445), comp., *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1971) 41, pp. 1412–13; however, after tigers fled the area where Liu K'un 劉昆 (fl. 1–57) assumed office and the emperor Kuang-wu 光武 (r. 25–57) asked him about it, he claimed that it was happenstance; *Hou Han shu* 79A, p. 2550.

[11] The official was T'ung Hui 董恢; *Hou Han shu* 76, p. 2482. See the similar anecdote in *HH*, p. 75, which tells of an official who had a tiger beaten for its crimes, then released.

[12] Liu Fu 劉斧 (fl. ca. 1020–1090), comp., *Ch'ing-so kao-i* 青瑣高議 (Shanghai: Ku-chi ch'u-pan she, 1958), p. 6.

[13] Ou-yang Hsiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072) et al., comps., *Hsin T'ang shu* 新唐書 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1975) 181, p. 5349. Other standard-history biographies describe official behavior with similar results. See Fa Hsiung 法雄 (fl. ca. 107–114), in *Hou Han shu* 38, p. 1278; Lu Tsao 陸璪 (fl. ca. 713–741), in *Hsin T'ang shu* 116, p. 4240; and Ku Shao-lien 顧少連 (fl.

rapher only implied the cause, but in a pair of poems, Li himself boasted about how his actions had eliminated the threat.[14]

An official's responsibility for a tiger's behavior was also linked with religion. Officials offered prayers to the spirits to enlist their help in the performance of official duties; these included prayers involving tigers.[15] Just as the officials had secular authority over tigers, the local gods had spiritual authority over them. Yet even though tigers were subject to the gods, the gods themselves were hardly all-powerful; they had to accomplish their actions with the assistance of officials.

The interaction between gods, officials, and natural phenomena was imbedded in traditional correlative schemes and theoretics. Kan Pao 干寶 (fl. ca. 317) explains the appearance of a two-legged tiger in Nan-yang 南陽 (in Honan) in terms of theories of the Five Phases 五行 type. In his scheme the tiger corresponded to metal, while Nan-yang corresponded to fire. Since metal loses its shape in fire, this deficient tiger is a bad portent for the ruling house.[16] However, this interpretation, based on the location of the sighting, does not specify the color of the tiger, although according, once again, to Five Phases theoretics, metal corresponded specifically to the white tiger. Unlike its ordinary relative, the white tiger was a kind animal, which appeared when the sovereign was benevolent.[17]

The late-Ming work *Hu Hui* 虎薈, one of the most extensive collections of Chinese tiger lore, unfortunately does not cite the sources for most of its

ca. 780–804), ibid. 162, p. 4994.

[14] "I Shou-ch'un fei hu k'ang" 憶壽春廢虎穽 ("Recalling Destroying Tiger Traps in Shou-ch'un"), in P'eng Ting-ch'iu 彭定求 (1645–1719) et al., comps., *Ch'üan T'ang shih* 全唐詩 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1960) 480, p. 5464, and "Hu pu shih" 虎不食 ("Tigers Do Not Eat People"), ibid. 480, p. 5468.

[15] The preface of "Ch'o shuang hu fu" 戳雙虎賦 ("Rhapsody on the Stabbing of a Pair of Tigers") by the Ming author Tsou Lu 鄒魯 identifies the work as an offering to the city god after the latter responded to a prayer entreating his help against tigers; see Ch'en Meng-lei 陳夢雷 (1651–ca. 1723), comp., *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* 古今圖書集成 (Taipei: Wen-hsing shu-chü, 1964), vol. 63, p. 604c. Wessing, *Soul of Ambiguity*, p. 26, reports that Southeast Asians of Indochina, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia associate the tiger with kings and nobles, ancestors, holy men, culture heroes, shamans, magic, and reward or punishment of the soul. In India, being eaten by the tiger is punishment for infringing on the mountain spirit's territory; ibid. p. 47. Chinese tigers are also associated with the mountain devil (*shan-hsiao* 山魈); they punish it, or protect people from it (after the payment of a gift), or are sent by the spirit to harm people; see *HH*, pp. 6, 63, 64; and "Pan-tzu" 斑子, in Tai Fu 戴孚 (fl. ca. 757–800), comp., *Kuang-i chi* 廣異記, from Li Fang 李昉 (925–996) et al., comps., *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* 太平廣記 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1963; hereafter *TPKC*) 428, pp. 3480–81.

[16] Kan Pao, comp., *Sou-shen chi* 搜神記 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1979), p. 95, dates the incident to 285.

[17] *HH*, p. 40; on p. 49 it appears at a temple in memory of a kind official; yet ordinary tigers were also linked with temples.

quoted legends. Many are from the T'ang or earlier (preserved in the tenth century *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* 太平廣記), but some are from the Sung anthology *I Chien chih* 夷堅志, compiled by Hung Mai 洪邁 (1123–1202). Other legends in the book mention Ming-dynasty dates, and other, still later sources. One example from the collection concerns the important nexus of local officials and local religious practices.

> In the Ch'eng-hua period (1465–1487), Chang Ping 張昺 from Tz'u-hsi 慈谿 was the magistrate of Ch'ien-shan 鉛山.[18] When a tiger ate a widow's son, she brought her case before Chang. He told her to return five days later. Fasting, he then prayed to the city god, stipulating that the god had to force the tigers to submit to punishment, or else the temple would be destroyed.
>
> Five days later, before dawn, he dreamt that the god ordered the tigers to come. Chang armed himself with arrows and mounted the temple hall. Two tigers crouched in the courtyard, immobile.
>
> Chang said, "For those who have eaten our people, the crime deserves death. If either of you has not harmed anyone, you may go."
>
> One left, but the other remained submissive as before. Chang was a good shot with the bow: he hit the tiger in the head three times, then ordered his troops to beat it to death. Afterwards, he summoned the woman and presented the tiger's corpse to her. Ping's style was Chung-ming 仲明. He was the son of censor-in-chief Chang K'ai 張楷. Wherever he went he was known for his skill at governing.[19]

In other instances, tigers had to petition the gods for permission to kill their victims, according to Lang Ying 郎瑛 (1487–1546).

A Tiger Prays to the Local Earth God 虎拜土神

In Ch'i-tu 七都, in Jen-ho 仁和 (southwest of Hang-chou), at a

[18] See Chang's biography in Chang Ting-yü 張廷玉 (1672–1755) et al., comps., *Ming shih* 明史 (Chung-hua, 1974) 161, pp. 4392–94. He received *chin-shih* status in 1472. The fact that the biography records this tiger episode in a brief form, together with other anecdotes of his supernatural prowess, suggests that there was a longer legend about him that the historian relied upon.

[19] *HH*, p. 75. *Ming shih* 161 (see previous note) identifies K'ai as his grandfather. *Yüan shih* accorded Hsü Wei-chen 許維禎 (fl. ca. 1278) a biography in which a similar encounter occurred: when he silently prayed to the spirits in response to tiger depredations, one tiger left and another died in front of the temple; cf. *Yüan shih* 191, p. 4537. See also the story "Chao-ch'eng hu" 趙城虎 ("The Tiger of Chao-ch'eng"): an old woman insists that an official apprehend and punish the tiger who has killed her son; however as a result, the tiger in effect agrees to replace her son. Cf. P'u Sung-ling 蒲松齡 (1630–1715), comp., *Liao-chai chih-i* 聊齋誌異 (Taipei: Wen-hua t'u-shu kung-ssu, 1979), p. 63.

place called Ko-tun 葛墩, there was a temple to the earth god. It was desolate and abandoned, the walls on every side in ruins. In the Cheng-te period (1506–1521) a man by the name of Wang 王 set up a country school in the temple, where he also slept at night. One night he saw a tiger enter the temple and kowtow before the god, as if in prayer. After a while, it left. The next day, when he told others about it, I happened to be there. I wanted to make a note of this: before a tiger harms people it must first pray to the earth god for permission. Otherwise, with Wang lying nearby, wouldn't it just have bitten him and then left?[20]

The tiger is not viewed as a free agent, but subject to the gods. In the appended remark, Lang Ying's conclusion that tigers pray in preparation for attacking their victims suggests that this is so only in cases of human victims.

Another important aspect of traditional tiger lore was the transformation of humans into tigers. This was often accomplished by means of what Taoist alchemical theoretics frequently termed the power of "elementals" 精.

In an anecdote from 807, a thorough dousing with water interrupted a man's transformation into a tiger. The date is significant because it was the time of Li Ch'i's 李錡 (fl. ca. 780–807) rebellion.[21] A century later, the baleful significance of the weretiger explains an unfilial, unjust person who had changed to a tiger after cursing his mother; the Five Dynasties ruler Wang Chien 王建 then was advised that this was a sign of upheaval.[22]

The following is a legend of transformation taken from *Kuang-i chi*.

Fan Tuan 范端

The village head of Fu-ling 涪陵 (in present-day Szechwan), Fan Tuan, was by nature coolly efficient. He served in the regional and district governments, but after a while, changed into a tiger. His suffering

[20] "Hu pai t'u shen," in Lang Ying, comp., *Ch'i hsiu lei kao* 七修類稿 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1959), p. 657; cf. *HH*, p. 83. In another anecdote, Lang Ying affirms this belief that tigers act at heaven's behest, adding that there is no appeal, vindicating the official reluctance to act against them. See "Hu tsai" 虎災, *Ch'i hsiu lei kao*, p. 743; cf. *HH*, pp. 82–83.

[21] Li Chao 李肇 (fl. ca. 813), comp., *Kuo-shih pu* 國史補 (Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng edn.) B, p. 42; cf. the shorter versions, each with slightly different wording, in two treatises on the Five Phases: *Hsin T'ang shu* 36, p. 955, and Liu Hsü 劉昫 (887–976) et al., comps., *Chiu T'ang shu* 舊唐書 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1975) 37, p. 1375. According to his biographies (*Chiu T'ang shu* 112, p. 3341, and *Hsin T'ang shu* 224A, p. 6382), Li actually devoured two of his enemies.

[22] "Ch'iao Pen" 譙本; see Ching Huan 景煥 (Sung dynasty), comp., *Yeh-jen hsien-hua* 野人閑話 in *TPKC* 430, pp. 3996–97; cf. *HH*, p. 45.

village neighbors announced at the district office that he always brought in outside tigers to steal and eat their cattle.

The magistrate responded, "This is slander. How on earth could such a thing happen?"

When he summoned him, to ask him about it, Tuan's reply was in accordance with the magistrate's previous conclusion.

After a long time, a tiger entered a storehouse at night to steal meat but as dawn arrived was unable to leave. Then he was surrounded, but after wounding several people, he escaped. The elders again spoke of him to the magistrate, who strictly interrogated him about what he had done.

Tuan then confessed the entire affair: "I often wanted to eat raw meat, but I couldn't get it on my own. Then in the middle of the night I actually arrived at the corral of an eastern house, where I stole and ate a pig; I felt it was quite tasty. When I saw plump people, I wanted to taste them, but regretted I had no companions. Every night I looked for them everywhere, until I met a couple of tigers to follow. Whatever we got, we divided amongst ourselves. Nor did I know when I was about to change. But if I paid attention to my movement, it was as if I were drunk."

Because of this explanation, the magistrate dismissed him.

That night Tuan left, returning again after several days. His clothes were as before. He stayed at home three or four days, then after dusk one day, wild tigers came to roar outside the village, terrifying the inhabitants, who again wanted to kill him.

His mother ordered him to leave, and weeping, he bade her farewell. After several days someone saw three tigers. One of them wore a boot on his left hind foot, which was still human. His mother held him, weeping. After a long while, he left.

After this, occasionally the villagers would see him with the other tigers, and if they shouted, "Headman Fan!" two would flee, but the third would look back, lowering his head as if sad. Later no one knew what had happened to him.[23]

Fan Tuan is described as *kan liao* 幹了, a phrase that means efficient,

[23] *Kuang-i chi*, in *TPKC* 432, pp. 3507–8. See also the much-cited case, purportedly of the Han era, involving a magistrate named Feng Shao 封邵 who became a tiger and preyed upon his district; Tsu Ch'ung-chih 祖冲之 (427–498), comp., *Shu-i chi* 述異記, in *TPKC* 426, p. 3466.

but also connotes a lack of human kindness. This characteristic may have been a reason for his transformation, in view of the belief in cruel officials as equivalent to tigers. The magistrate's initial dismissal of the charges against Tuan as slander is self-serving, because such a transformation reflects badly on his own administration. Tuan's need for other tigers to help him hunt is curious. In such legends, sociability among tigers is almost unheard of (as well as unnatural for tigers). It is tempting to view Tuan's craving for tigrine companionship as an expression of an evil official's tendency to befriend others of his ilk. Similarly, the fact that the magistrate merely relieves Tuan of his duties when he discovers he is actually a tiger, instead of sentencing him to more severe punishment, as if he is protecting a subordinate, has a satirical flavor. On the other hand, his own mother is unable to help him, but because of social pressure, must ask that he leave.

The story of Fan Tuan is alluded to, if not actually related, in a standard-history treatise on Five Phases omenology. There we read, regarding Fan, in its entirety, "In the Tsai-ch'u 載初 period (ca. 689), Fan Tuan of Fu-chou 涪州 (that is, Fu-ling) became a tiger."[24] The Five Phases significance draws on the fact that this was the era of Wu Tse-t'ien's 武則天 (r. 684–704) own Chou dynasty, traditionally considered usurping and illicit.

Sometimes in this type of lore tigers are simply divine agents.

The People from Pa 巴人

People from Pa 巴 (corresponding to Pa-chung in Szechwan) like to work in groups, cutting down trees for planks. At the beginning of the K'ai-yüan period 開元 (713–741), over a hundred of them traveled through the mountains from Pao-chung 褒中 (present southwestern Shansi) to cut wood. They reached the Venus Temple, in front of which were over a hundred pine trees, each several spans in diameter.

Saying happily, "This is a heavenly treasure!" the Pa people stopped to chop them down.

When twenty had fallen, an old man wearing a cap and leaning on a staff arrived and told them: "These are holy trees. Why are you felling them?"

They would not stop right away, and the old man continued, "I am the god of the planet Venus. Stop with those that you have chopped down. I beg you: it is not suitable to go on with the remaining ones." But the Pa people would not stop.

[24] *Hsin T'ang shu* 36, p. 955.

The old man said, "If you don't stop, you'll all die without any good having come of it."

They did not stop, so he climbed a mountain, and shouted "Stripe!"

Suddenly several tigers arrived in succession, eating nearly all the people, sparing only five or six.

The god told them, "Because of your good hearts, I did not order them to kill you. You should leave quickly."

Towards the end of the T'ien-pao 天寶 period (742–755), the fallen trees were still there. When there was an order to repair the inner palace, Yang Kuo-chung 楊國忠 sent someone to the mountains to announce a decree to take the trees to be used for planks. The god finally permitted it.[25]

A likely reason for the use of the tiger to punish the people is that in the Five Phases system, Venus (literally, the Great White) is associated with the auspicious white tiger. Furthermore, the people's calling the trees "heavenly treasure" is a prognostication of the T'ien-pao reign.

The tiger, aside from its role as a bellwether of officialdom and servant of the gods, also appears as a verifier of a person's happy destiny, or as a moral example.[26] Some legends speak of a righteous, or loyal, tiger 義虎.[27] Hung Mai, in the following, suggests that the tiger's righteousness outshines that of some humans.

Chang Hui-chung Tells a Tiger 章惠仲告虎

Chang Hui-chung, from Ch'eng-tu 成都, and his brother-in-law scholar Ch'iu 丘 had passed the Szechwan provincial examination in the twenty-sixth year of Shao-hsing (1156), and went together to the next examination. Before they were through the Yangtze gorges, their boat overturned on the river, killing Ch'iu but sparing Chang. When he

[25] "Pa-jen," from *Kuang-i chi*, in *TPKC* 426, p. 3472. See also *HH*, p. 85, where a tree spirit in the form of a beautiful woman protects someone from a tiger. The spirit's tree was intended to be cut down, but was spared.

[26] A number of T'ang legends tell of a tiger that brings a bride to her fated groom: in "P'ei Yüeh-k'o" 裴越客 the tiger is honored as a matchmaker; see Hsüeh Yung-jo 薛用弱 (fl. ca. 821–848), comp., *Chi-i chi* 集異記, *TPKC* 428, pp. 3484–85. See also *HH*, p. 78.

[27] For example, tigers protect a Sung man from dishonest locals, and another from thieves; see *HH*, pp. 37, 59. In another legend, in order to seduce his friend's wife, a wealthy man attempts to murder his friend, then claims a tiger killed him. Just as he is trying to seduce her, a tiger eats him. The author credits heaven with this speedy retribution. See "I hu chuan" 義虎傳 ("The Righteous Tiger"), in Chu Yün-ming 祝允明 (1469–1526), comp., *Chu Chih-shan ch'üan chi* 祝枝山全集 (Taipei: Han sheng ch'u-pan she, 1973), p. 25; cf. *HH*, p. 77, and Liang Kung-chen 梁恭辰 (fl. ca. 1845), comp., *Ch'ih-shang ts'ao-t'ang pi-chi* 池上草堂筆記 (Taipei: Kuang-wen shu-chü, 1960) 8, pp. 40a–b.

passed the examination, he received the post of assistant magistrate of Ching-yen 井研 (in modern Szechwan).

When he had returned as far as Hsia-chou 峽州 (near I-ch'ang in Szechwan), he received a letter from home telling him of his younger brother's death, and grief-stricken, continued westward, riding a skinny horse. He hired a river soldier to carry his bags. When they passed Wan-chou 萬州 (present-day Wan-hsien in Szechwan), it was near evening, and as he struggled to go on, he tumbled down an incline, stopping some twenty or thirty feet from the brink of a cliff. Injured all over, he was unable to move.

Suddenly a tiger bounded in front of him and took his topknot in its mouth, about to eat him.

Terrified, Chang cried "You tigers are intelligent. Please listen to me. My mother is eighty, and had two sons and a daughter. A while ago, her son-in-law died on the river, and this year, a son died at home. I'm the only one left, and I'm on my way to support her on my small salary. If you eat me, that would be fate, and not worth begrudging, but what about my old mother?"

When the tiger heard him speak, it let him go, but stayed at his side as if to protect him. Halfway through the night, Chang's pain abated somewhat, and he fell asleep on a rock. He dreamt someone told him, "It's nearly light—you may go." When he awoke, it was already light, and clinging to the tall trees, he staggered up. When he reached the top of the incline, his horse was still standing there, so he remounted and resumed his journey. His orders were on his person, but his luggage had been taken by the soldier.

After he had completed his term of office, his mother died, and shortly thereafter, so did he.

From this we know that because of this single idea of filial piety, he escaped death, all because of his mother. For beasts to understand righteousness like this is far different from the type of person who not only refuses to pull someone out of a trap, but actually pushes him down and throws rocks after him. Such a person is not comparable to a tiger.[28]

[28] "Chang Hui-chung kao hu," *I Chien chih* (Peking: Chung-hua, 1982), p. 282. Biographies in the standard histories attest to similar tigrine behavior. T'o T'o 脫脫 (1238–1298), comp., *Sung shih* 宋史 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1977) 456, p. 13395, recorded a biography of Chu T'ai 朱泰, a poor but filial man who was similarly spared when he cried out to the tiger that he was his mother's sole support. Similarly, another pair of *Sung shih* biographies tell of filial sons left unharmed by tigers; ibid. 456, pp. 13395–96. See also *HH*, p. 21, where ten-

One can hardly blame Chang for feeling that despite having passed the examination and gaining office, the accidents he has suffered, not to mention the deaths of all the other men in the family, are difficult tribulations. Yet all he asks is to be permitted to support his aged mother. As Hung Mai indicates, the point of the story is Chang's filial plea to the tiger that death would be an acceptable fate for himself, but he is his mother's sole support. Thus, the tiger stands guard over him for the night.

Wang Yu-ting 王猷定 (1598–1662), another commentator, sees a tiger's righteous behavior as the product of its environment; yet this tiger still requires protection from officials.

Record of a Righteous Tiger 義虎記

In the spring of the year *hsin-ch'ou* (1661), I was wandering in Kuei-chi 會稽 (near Shao-hsing in Chekiang), and went to Sung Li-shang's 宋荔裳[29] summer retreat. When the guests talked of tigers, one spoke of someone from his native place, a *ming-ching* by the name of Sun. During the Chia-ch'ing era (1522–1566), he had governed Hsiao-i 孝義 district in Shansi, and saw a very strange righteous tiger. He requested me to make a story of it.

In the suburbs, in Kao-t'ang 高唐, in the lonely Ch'i 岐 mountains, there were many tigers. Once a woodcutter walking through the undergrowth and bamboo suddenly lost his footing, falling into a tiger's den, where two cubs lay. The den was like an overturned cauldron. The rows of stones on three sides were sharply angled, but the stone wall on the other side was comparatively flat, and about three or four yards high. Covered with moss, it converted his fall to a slide. This was the path the tiger took. The woodcutter tried repeatedly to jump up but fell back down. He ran back and forth at the foot of the wall, and weeping, prepared to die.

When the sun set and the wind rose, a tiger screamed, and jumping down the rock wall, entered. In its mouth it held a fresh deer, parts of which it gave to the two cubs. When it saw the woodcutter, it crouched, then stretched out its claws to seize him. Suddenly it looked around as if it were thinking, and ate the leftover meat, then went to lie down with

year-old Hsü Tan 許坦 beats a tiger that attacks his father; the emperor T'ai-tsung (r. 627–649) rewards him; cf. *Chiu T'ang shu* 188, p. 4921.

[29] This was the poet Sung Wan 宋琬 (1614–1673), who wrote "I hu hsing" 義虎行, in *An-ya t'ang wei-k'o kao* 安雅堂未刻稿, (SPPY edn.) 1, pp. 1b–2a; cf. "A Ballad of a Righteous Tiger," in Irving Yucheng Lo, ed., *Waiting for the Unicorn: Poems and Lyrics of China's Last Dynasty 1644–1911* (Bloomington, Indiana: 1986), pp. 71–74.

the cubs, embracing them. The woodcutter thought though the tiger must be full, he would surely die at dawn. But before the sun rose, the tiger jumped out. At noon, it returned, carrying a deer in its mouth. It fed its cubs, giving the remainder to the woodcutter. He was very hungry, and accepted it. When he was thirsty, he drank his own urine.

This lasted for an entire month. Gradually, he became more familiar with the tiger. One day, the cubs having become strong, the tiger carried them out.

Frantically the woodcutter raised his head, and cried out, "Great King! Save me!"

In a little while the tiger returned. Clinging with its feet, it lowered its head to the woodcutter, who mounted it. It then leaped over the rock wall. The tiger put him down, and led its cubs to the shade of a cliff.

The sound of birds in the thick vegetation died out as the wind soughed out of the black forest.

The increasingly nervous woodcutter shouted, "Great King!"

When the tiger looked back, the woodcutter knelt, saying, "You gave me my life. If you leave me now, I'm afraid of some other disaster. Please help me by showing the way to a main road. Even in death, I will not forget to repay you."

The tiger nodded, and led him to a main road, then turned and stood, looking at the woodcutter.

The woodcutter told it, "I am a poor man from the western pass. After today, we will be apart. On my return, I will raise a pig; on such and such a day at such and such a time, I will wait for you at the post pavilion three *li* outside the western pass, to regale you, Great King. Do not forget what I have said."

The tiger nodded, and they wept until they parted.

When he returned home, the woodcutter's family asked in astonishment what had happened. They were happy when he told them.

At the time agreed upon, they had prepared a pig and just cut it up when the tiger arrived at the rendezvous first. Not seeing the woodcutter, it finally entered the pass. When the people who lived there saw it, they called for hunters who locked it up behind a fence, guarding it with spears, sticks, guns, and crossbows. They agreed to present it alive to the district official.

The woodcutter raced to save it, telling the people, "This tiger has granted me a great favor. Please do not harm it."

When they had presented it to the official, the woodcutter beat the drum and cried out. When the angry official interrogated him, he told everything that had happened, but the official did not believe him.

The woodcutter said, "Let me prove it. If it is a lie, I am willing to be beaten."

The official himself went to where the tiger was.

The woodcutter embraced it, and wept bitterly, saying, "Are you the Great King who saved me?"

The tiger nodded.

"Great King, did you enter the pass because of our appointment?"

The tiger nodded again.

"I am pleading for your life. If I fail, I am willing to follow you in death."

Before he had finished speaking, the tiger's tears had started raining to the ground.

The several thousand onlookers all sighed. The official was very surprised, and quickly had it freed. They drove it to the pavilion, where it was thrown a pig. It straightened out its tail, eating a large amount, then after looking back at the woodcutter, departed.

Afterwards, the building was renamed the Pavilion of the Righteous Tiger.

Master Wang says: "I've heard that in the T'ang, there was a district resident by the name of Cheng Hsing 鄭興 who was known for his filial piety and righteousness, so the district was named for his virtues.[50] Now the pavilion is named for the tiger. This being the case, then is the natural pneuma concentrated only in this district?

"People always confine fierce beasts for killing people, but after hearing of the righteous tiger, one realizes that this is something to be ashamed of."

Chang Shan-lai 張山來 says: "People always consider the tiger to be a violent beast. After looking at this anecdote, I realized that there are righteous tigers, and so I wrote 'The Ballad of the Righteous Tiger.'"[51]

[50] For this, see also Yüeh Shih 樂史 (930–1007), comp., *T'ai-p'ing huan-yü chi* 太平寰宇記 (Taipei: Wen-hai ch'u-pan she, 1963) 41, p. 337.

[51] "I hu chi" 義虎記, by Wang Yu-ting, appears in Chang Ch'ao 張潮 (fl. ca. 1676), comp., *Yü Ch'u hsin-chih* 虞初新志 (Pi-chi hsiao-shuo ta-kuan edn.) 4, p. 1a. A later version appears under the same title in Wang Shih-chen 王士禛 (1634–1711), comp., *Ch'ih-pei ou-t'an* 池北偶談 (Taipei: Commercial Press, [1963]) 20, p. 8a; it also refers to poetic versions of the legend. There are several other legends of life in a tiger's lair: see *HH*, pp. 7, 51, 78.

The significance of the name of the setting is that it means filial piety and righteousness. Though the woodcutter's grateful invitation initially endangers the tiger, he then has the opportunity to further express his gratitude. More virtuous than the official, the tiger is the one honored with a pavilion. Wang Yu-ting's conclusions as to the propriety of trapping tigers reflect the view that they should be left unharmed.

These historical anecdotes and legends demonstrate that the Chinese believed a tiger's very presence indicated poor government, or coming political upheaval. On the other hand, some officials preferred to see tigers' attacks as the peoples' just due. Indeed, many people interpreted tigrine behavior as righteous, and assisting the attainment of destined success.

Compilers of the standard histories frequently cited the absence of tigers as reflecting the worthy nature of local government. Similarly, the authors of the Five Phases treatises apparently drew their material from tigrine material. Furthermore, since many legends in collections such as *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* and *Hu hui* appeared in truncated form in the standard histories, and since the latter were written after the legends, it seems that the legends served as sources for the histories. The existence of multiple versions of a particular legend demonstrates that the content of the legend circulated widely and was put to numerous uses.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HH *Hu hui* 虎薈
TPKC *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* 太平廣記