

Bitterness for the zu-mu of the plain.

Told by Yang Xiu-gong.

They say that, once upon a time, there was a man who went and planted millet. When the millet was ripe the monkeys kept coming and eating it. The man went to the foot of the cliff staying there to keep guard against the monkeys. One day he fell asleep. The monkeys came and saw him and said, "Come let us carry him along to be a sacrifice". So the monkeys carried the man to their home.

The monkeys said to one another, "Shall we go and seek the zu-mu of the forest, or shall we go and seek the zu-mu of the plain?" (The zu-mu of the forest was the tiger, and the zu-mu of the plain was the rabbit.) There were some who said, "Since the zu-mu of the forest eats so much, let us seek the zu-mu of the plain".

The monkeys went off, called the zu-mu of the plain and he arrived. They took the man to the head of the room, then they brought all kinds of fine things and set them out. The man was lying at the head of the room with one eye open and the other closed, with one leg straight and the other bent. Then the zu-mu began to chant,

"Ta-pa-pi, ta-pa-pu,
One leg straight, one leg bent,
One eye open, one eye closed, ..."

Then the man jumped up to run out. Grabbing the knife he flashed it at the rabbit and cut off its tail. The monkeys said to him, "Where have you been hit, old man zu-mu?" The rabbit replied, "It is only the tail of my coat which has been cut off!" The man, meanwhile, had gathered all the fine things and carried them home.