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## Grandfather tiger finds a wife for his grandson.

*Told by Yang Xiu-gong.*

They tell a story that once upon a time there was an orphan boy who lived with his sister-in-law and elder brother. Each day his sister-in-law and elder brother gave him buckwheat to eat, and every day made him go out digging. One day while he was digging, a tiger roared, "A-nbeu, a-nbeu!" The orphan lad said, "Mother! Father! I am afraid of that tiger!" Grandfather tiger said, "You need not be afraid, for I am your grandfather". Grandfather tiger took the orphan lad and carried him off to the foot of a great cliff on Gable Mountain. Every day he went and took the food of the traders and brought it back for his grandson to eat.

After a long time grandfather tiger said to his grandson, "To do this every day is not good. Now you tie a piece of tinder moss to my tail and I will go and fetch fire, so that you can prepare food to eat". His grandson tied a piece of tinder moss to his tail and he went to the place where people were living and roared two or three times. When everybody had gone, he took his tail with the tinder moss, put it in the fire until it was alight, then he brought it back to his grandson.

In time his grandson grew up. He said that he was going to take him to choose a wife at Hmao-nji-ve. He took his grandson and reached Hmao-nji-ve and brought him to the top of the village. He roared once and the girls all came out to see. Grandfather tiger asked the grandson, "Any good?" His grandson said, "No good!" He then said to his grandson, "Down at the bottom of the village is a good one, but she is already married.". The two of them came to the bottom of the village. Grandfather tiger roared again, and the girls came out to see. Grandfather tiger again asked his grandson, "Any good?" His grandson replied, "yes, all right, but you said she was already married". Grandfather tiger said, "Do not worry, we will take her along". So grandfather tiger took the girl and returned to Gable Mountain. When they arrived, the girl was scarcely breathing but the orphan kindled a fire to warm her so that presently she opened her eyes and looked at him. The girl said, "Are you human or supernatural?" The orphan replied, "I am human but my grandfather is supernatural!" While they stayed there their grandfather found food for them to eat, but when they had the food they could not prepare it. Their grandfather said, "If you cannot prepare it, I will prepare it for you, but when I prepare it, it will be unpleasant to look at". They replied, "Since we cannot prepare it, if you do it, it will be all right".

They lived like this for a long time, but day by day grandfather tiger was growing older. Grandfather tiger said to the couple, "Now I have grown old, I will take you two and find the house of your mother-in-law and father-in-law. Grandfather tiger helped his grandchildren to gather up everything for him to carry. The couple went by road while grandfather tiger kept to the undergrowth. Then grandfather said, "While you are travelling, if anyone molests you, you call me, won't you". As they were travelling some people did molest them, so they called to their grandfather who roared twice, and the people all ran away.

The day that they reached the home of their mother and father-in-law they were "escorting the spirits", so there were many people there. Their mother and father-in-law said, "Our place is too small for you to sleep here tonight". The couple said, "Small or

not, we shall sleep here!” Their mother and father-in-law had no option but to say, “We have a small lean-to, you may go and stay there”.

The pair had removed with a lot of things. Their mother and father-in-law enquired, “Your things are so many, who helped you bring them?” They replied, our grandfather helped us bring them”. Their mother and father-in-law said, “Why did you not bring your grandfather in to stay?” They said, “It would not be suitable for you to see our grandfather”. “What would your grandfather like to eat?” they asked. The couple replied, “Our grandfather only wants a little white wine”. (White wine means dog). So their mother and father-in-law gave them a dog for them to give to grandfather tiger to eat.

Later the wife said to her younger sister, “Up there, where I used to sleep I had a mouth harp, is it still there?” When she mentioned this, their mother and father-in-law knew that she was their daughter, and presently they brought their grandfather into the house.

When their grandfather was going to leave he said, “In future, if any matter arises, take a ploughshare, hang it up on the gable of the house, and take an iron pan and beat it until it rings”. Now not long afterwards, the people from whom grandfather tiger had seized the bride, came seeking her. The family did as grandfather tiger had taught them to do, and from every side came the roaring of tigers. Each one of those people who had come said, “Have it your way, grandfather tiger, we have nothing more to say”.