

## Golden 126

### Chapter 126 Bronze Bodhisattva

Zhuang Rui's words left Qian Yaosi and Gu Lao exchanging disbelief. While it's true that in the antique trade, a master can guide you in, but the rest is up to you, the master who guides you is extremely important.

Because these old objects have been passed down for hundreds or even thousands of years, and are the culmination of the hard work and wisdom of our predecessors, it is also necessary to have a wealth of theoretical knowledge and long-term experience in handling and playing with them in order to identify their authenticity. Theoretical knowledge can be learned from books, but the experience of handling real objects cannot be understood by reading a few books. This is where the guidance of a master is needed, which can also help one avoid some detours.

Of course, there are also those who are self-taught without a master, like Uncle De from Zhonghai. He ran errands in the pawnshop in Zhonghai from a young age. Although no one taught him, Uncle De was quick-witted, intelligent and eager to learn. He paid close attention to the words and actions of the shopkeepers and tried to get closer to them when they were appraising items. In this way, with a lot of contact with real items, he gradually worked his way up from a junior shop assistant to the second shopkeeper, and then from the second shopkeeper to the head shopkeeper. If the pawnshop industry had not been abolished after liberation, Uncle De would probably have opened his own shop long ago.

However, even after a lifetime of collecting antiques, Qian Yaosi and Old Master Gu had never encountered a case like Zhuang Rui's. Firstly, Zhuang Rui was too young. At his age, unless one came from a family of collectors or a wealthy clan, it would be difficult for him to come into contact with a large number of genuine antiques. Secondly, he was able to distinguish between genuine and fake high-quality porcelain pieces based solely on knowledge he had learned from books. These two points were enough to astound the two old men.

"Brother Gu, compared to Brother Zhuang, we've lived this long life, and we've wasted our lives. By the way, Brother Zhuang, are you willing to sell your celestial pearl? This old man really wants to buy it, and I don't mind paying a higher price, as long as you're willing to sell..."

Qian Yaosi still couldn't forget Zhuang Rui's old dzi beads. After subtly praising Zhuang Rui with self-deprecating humor, he brought up the idea of buying the beads again.

“Mr. Qian, it’s not that your offer is low, but this dzi bead bracelet was personally bestowed upon me by the Living Buddha of Jokhang Temple. It has profound significance. Without the Living Buddha’s permission, I dare not give it to anyone else. Besides, it’s not appropriate to measure this dzi bead with money. Please understand my predicament.”

Zhuang Rui smiled and shook his head, stood up, looked around, and asked the shop assistant to take out a piece of silk from the counter where jade ornaments were displayed. He then spread it on the table, took off the dzi bead bracelet from his wrist, and placed it on the silk for the two to admire.

As mentioned earlier, dzi beads are gemstones with extremely strong magnetism. Generally, the magnetic field inside dzi beads is more than three times stronger than that of crystal. The magnetic field of Zhuang Rui's old dzi beads is probably at least five times stronger than that of crystal. Moreover, when dzi beads come into contact with the human body, they will automatically adjust and release magnetism according to the strength of the magnetic field inside the wearer. This is the principle behind the benefits of dzi beads to the body.

Everyone's magnetic field is different, so dzi beads are generally not allowed to be touched by people other than the owner, because doing so can easily cause the magnetic field of the dzi beads to become disordered.

Both Qian Yaosi and Old Gu naturally understood this principle. Holding a magnifying glass, they almost put their entire faces close to the bead, but did not let their skin touch it. After five or six minutes, the two sat back down.

“Brother Zhuang, please take this dzi bead back. It’s quite an eye-opener for us to see a personal ornament blessed by a Living Buddha. However, if you ever come across this old dzi bead again in the future, you must sell it to my old man.”

Having finally managed to tear his gaze away from the dzi bead, Qian Yaosi solemnly spoke the words above to Zhuang Rui. Wearing a dzi bead is said to bring wealth and good fortune, and Zhuang Rui is still young; who knows when he might encounter such a treasure again? Speaking to him now in advance might bring him a pleasant surprise in the future.

"You're into antiques, what would you need a dzi bead for? It's this old man who needs one. But young man Zhuang, if you take this dzi bead to tomorrow's jade exhibition, it's sure to be a big hit. How about it? Want to consider it? I can arrange a special booth for you."

The old man didn't intend to acquire the dzi bead, but he suggested that Zhuang Rui exhibit it. Zhuang Rui thought about it for a moment and then shook his head in refusal. It was his own item, and he didn't plan to sell it, so there was no need to make a big fuss about it.

While the group was talking, the shop assistant, at Qian Yaosi's instruction, had already cleaned and wiped the Zhu Kexin Cloud Dragon Teapot set, and packed it into an exquisite box lined with a soft foam pad. Zhuang Rui checked the time; it was already past nine o'clock in the evening. He stood up and said, "Gentlemen, we have other matters to attend to later, so we'll take our leave now. If we have the opportunity in the future, we will definitely seek your guidance."

Although Qian Yaosi's attempt to steal a chicken backfired today, his words were like water spilled on the ground. Since things had come to this, Qian Yaosi acted magnanimously, took out a business card and handed it to Zhuang Rui, telling him that if he came across anything good in the future, he should definitely consider him first.

"Brother Zhuang, if you're not in a hurry, you should wait a bit before you leave. The old man brought a bronze artifact with him today and asked Brother Qian to take a look. If you're interested, you can take a look too."

Unexpectedly, the old man spoke up to persuade Zhuang Rui to stay. He knew that although he had some knowledge of ceramics and antiques, he could never distinguish the authenticity of the many high-quality imitations in the shop in such a short time, as Zhuang Rui had done.

Jade and antiques are inherently interconnected. Among antiques, ancient jade has always held a very important position. For example, the jade seals used by emperors throughout history are still valuable antiques today. However, human energy is limited. While Gu Lao is an absolute authority in appraising jade, he is far inferior to Qian Yaosi when it comes to appreciating antiques. Therefore, during this trip to Nanjing, Gu Lao brought an item he had recently acquired to Qian Yaosi for his appraisal.

Upon hearing this, Zhuang Rui looked at Liu Chuan and the others with some difficulty. Liu Chuan was currently holding the box containing Zhu Kexin's purple clay tea set. As the saying goes, "He who takes a man's gift is bound to be obliged," so he didn't clamor to leave. As for Qin Xuanbing and Lei Lei, they had truly had their eyes opened tonight. The dramatic twists and turns in Zhuang Rui's appraisal left the two women speechless. With more to see, they naturally didn't want to leave.

Seeing that no one objected, Zhuang Rui sat back down. The books he had read recently were mostly about calligraphy, painting, and ceramics, and he had hardly read any books about bronzes. Now that he had this opportunity, Zhuang Rui wanted to learn. The difference between the knowledge he gained from reading books and the knowledge he gained from listening to people explain things with real objects was huge.

Old Gu waved his hand, and the person who had been standing behind him placed the box he was carrying flat on the clean table. After opening it, a bronze Bodhisattva statue appeared before everyone's eyes.

This is a seated bronze Buddha statue, not very large, only about 30 centimeters in size. Qian Yaosi put on a pair of gloves, took out the bronze Buddha, and examined it under the light. After more than ten minutes, he put the bronze statue back, with an ambiguous expression on his face, and said to Zhuang Rui, "Brother Zhuang, you should take a look too."

Zhuang Rui had only ever seen one bronze artifact in person, the bronze tree auctioned at the grassland black market. He didn't know much about bronze artifacts and couldn't explain their intricacies. Therefore, when Qian Yaosi was appraising it earlier, he had already used his spiritual energy to test the object, and it was undoubtedly genuine. This was because Zhuang Rui could clearly see that the Buddha statue contained extremely rich purple spiritual energy.

Upon hearing Qian Yaosi's words, Zhuang Rui took the gloves Qian Yaosi handed him, picked up the bronze Bodhisattva statue in the box, and examined it closely.

Although Zhuang Rui was unfamiliar with bronzes, he could tell that this was a bronze statue of Guanyin Bodhisattva. The entire statue had the characteristic green color of bronze and was exquisitely crafted. Guanyin in the statue had one hand on her knee and the other raised in a delicate gesture. The folds of her clothes, the necklace, the floral ornaments on her head, the high lotus seat, her full breasts, slender waist and hips were all made lifelike. In particular, Guanyin's face was dignified and graceful, just like a real person.

"Grandpa Gu, this bronze statue of Guanyin Bodhisattva should be an authentic piece. I think you can tell for yourself," Zhuang Rui said, putting the statue back into the box and looking at Grandpa Gu.

After hearing Zhuang Rui's words, Gu Lao replied, "To be honest, Brother Zhuang, this item is in such good condition that I'm afraid it's been washed. That's why I asked Brother Qian to take a look. At my age, if I fall down again, people will laugh at me."

"This old man, can't he just speak properly? He has to use all this jargon."

Zhuang Rui felt a bit resentful. He didn't know much about guilds related to bronze artifacts and could only roughly guess the meaning of the ancient saying. Liu Chuan and the others were even more confused.

"Hehe, I forgot, these kids aren't in this line of work. Let me explain it to you."

Seeing the expressions on Liu Chuan's and the others' faces, Gu Lao explained the jargon used in their earlier conversation.

The terms "washed" and "wrestled" are both jargon used in the appreciation of bronzes. Some surviving bronzes have been heavily stained with oil, so some craftsmen used liquids such as acetic acid to wash them clean. This makes the surface of the object shiny and uniform, which is beautiful but loses its original natural appearance and greatly reduces its value.

"Wrestling" refers to the mistake made by antique dealers when appraising bronze artifacts, either by misjudging the age of the artifacts or by failing to distinguish between genuine and fake items. It is the same as paying tuition for trying to find a bargain but making a mistake.