

Golden 84

Chapter 84 Initiation

"The color of the spiritual energy has changed again. Could it mean I can see through even more things now?"

Zhuang Rui's heart stirred. He looked up at a thangka hanging on the wall directly in front of him. He was four or five meters away from the thangka, but the spiritual energy in his eyes followed his gaze directly into the thangka. Zhuang Rui could clearly sense the spiritual energy flowing within the thangka. However, to his surprise, just like downstairs, he was still unable to absorb this spiritual energy. →

Feeling somewhat unwilling, Zhuang Rui tried again. This time, he discovered that the spiritual energy in the Thangka also had color. This was not something he saw through the spiritual energy in his eyes, but purely a feeling. He could even sense the total amount of spiritual energy contained in the Thangka.

"The spiritual energy has been upgraded, it shouldn't be a bad thing, right?"

Zhuang Rui could only console himself with this thought. Since he needed to find the little white lion, he dared not linger here any longer. If the little guy were taken away by some unscrupulous tourist, Zhuang Rui would be devastated. After spending so many days together, he had come to regard the little creature as family.

"Huh, why is the door closed?"

Zhuang Rui turned around and walked to the door he had come in through. He paused for a moment, realizing that he hadn't closed the door after coming in. Could it be that the little guy had closed it because he was afraid of being disturbed?

Zhuang Rui shook his head and chuckled to himself; the little thing simply didn't have the strength to push the door open.

The wooden door, painted red on the outside, was pulled inwards. When Zhuang Rui reached out and pulled the doorknob, he was surprised to find a young lama standing outside the door, where he had

come in. Judging from his face, he looked to be about seventeen or eighteen years old. Zhuang Rui even saw a few youthful pimples on his face.

“Rinpoche, you’re out. ‘Zhubigu’ requests your presence.”

When the young lama saw Zhuang Rui open the door, his face lit up with joy. It seemed he had been waiting there for a long time. However, his Mandarin was not very good, and he mixed in Tibetan pronunciation, which made Zhuang Rui a little confused. He could understand the general meaning, though: someone had invited him to meet.

“My name is Zhuang Rui, not Rinpoche. Young master, are you sure that the ‘Zhu Bigu’ you mentioned is the one who invited me?”

Zhuang Rui was afraid that the young lama had made a mistake, so he asked him a question. He still needed to find the little white lion and didn't have time to get entangled with the young lama. Besides, Zhuang Rui was also a little guilty. After seeing the many expensive thangkas in the room, he knew that he had entered a place he shouldn't have. He was afraid that the young lama had come to settle scores with him.

“That’s right, Rinpoche means... in Chinese, it means honored guest. And ‘Zhu Bigu’ is not the one you’re talking about. The person who invited you is ‘Zhu Bigu!’ That’s right, that’s what you Han Chinese call a Living Buddha.”

Upon hearing Zhuang Rui's words, the young lama looked displeased and offended. His smile vanished, and he glared at Zhuang Rui with a hint of hostility. It was clear that Zhuang Rui had been very devout when he mentioned the name "Zhu Bigu."

Zhuang Rui was quite surprised when he heard the young lama's words. He knew that in Tibet, apart from the Panchen Lama and the Dalai Lama, the Living Buddha held the highest status. Zhuang Rui did not know that the Living Buddha who invited him was a Living Buddha who had already reincarnated for twelve years. He was a master of Buddhism and even the teacher of the current Panchen Lama. He held a very high position in the Buddhist community and Tantric Buddhism in China, far surpassing the Living Buddhas in ordinary temples.

“I’m sorry, Master, I don’t speak Tibetan. I offended the Living Buddha just now. I’m very sorry.”

After a moment of surprise, Zhuang Rui quickly apologized to the young lama. He knew the status of lamas in the hearts of Tibetans, and the Living Buddha was a figure revered by all Tibetans, including lamas. Naturally, Zhuang Rui dared not be negligent.

The young lama, being young and untouched by worldly concerns from his time in the temple, was kind-hearted. Seeing Zhuang Rui's respectful attitude, he seemed somewhat flustered, standing there for a moment before saying, "Zhubigu has been waiting for you for a long time. Come with me... come with me.

After speaking, the young lama turned and left, leaving Zhuang Rui no time to ask more questions. He could only follow behind. When the Living Buddha summoned him, he couldn't bother looking for the little white lion anymore. After all, he was on someone else's turf. If he displeased the Living Buddha, even the spittle of his fellow Tibetans would drown him.

Zhuang Rui followed the young lama through the corridor and finally managed to find out his name. He said his name was Basang, which means Thursday in Chinese. However, when asked why the Living Buddha wanted to see him, the young lama remained silent.

The Living Buddha's residence was not far from here. After passing through a corridor, the two arrived outside a room. Basang did not knock on the door, but simply pushed it open gently.

An old lama with a thin face and some age spots, sitting on a hard wooden chair, came into Zhuang Rui's view. In the old lama's arms, the little white lion was lying there peacefully. After seeing Zhuang Rui, the little white lion immediately jumped down from the old lama's arms and ran to Zhuang Rui's feet. After Zhuang Rui entered the room, Basang closed the door, walked behind the old lama, and stood there.

The Living Buddha looked at Zhuang Rui with a kind gaze, like an elder looking at his child and grandchild. For some reason, Zhuang Rui thought of his deceased father at that moment, and his nose suddenly felt sore, and tears uncontrollably fell down.

Feeling a little embarrassed, Zhuang Rui rubbed his eyes and discovered that there was a snow-white hada (a ceremonial scarf) inside his jacket. Thinking back, he realized that Qin Xuanbing and the others must have slipped it in when they went shopping, but he hadn't noticed it until now.

Upon seeing the hada, Zhuang Rui took it out. Ignoring the little white lion that kept climbing up his trouser leg, Zhuang Rui imitated the way the herdsmen presented him with a hada, holding it with both hands until it was level with his head. He walked up to the old lama, said "Zhalidele," and was about to hang the hada around the Living Buddha's neck.

Upon seeing Zhuang Rui's actions, Basang behind the old lama burst out laughing. Even the old lama chuckled in disbelief. Zhuang Rui was somewhat bewildered. Had he done something wrong? However, the old lama's gaze did not seem to reproach him. It was as kind as before, only now there seemed to be a hint of mischievousness in it.

What Zhuang Rui didn't know was that when a junior presents a hada to an elder, he can only place the hada on the elder's wrist, while hanging it around the neck is a custom reserved for when an elder bestows a hada upon a junior.

The old lama smiled and did not speak. Instead, he raised his arm and took the hada (ceremonial scarf) that Zhuang Rui offered. Then, he gestured for Zhuang Rui to lower his head and hung the hada around Zhuang Rui's neck.

Zhuang Rui was overjoyed. Even though he didn't understand Tibetan customs, he knew how honorable it was to be given a hada by the Living Buddha. Just as he was about to raise his head to thank the Living Buddha, he found a somewhat withered hand stroking his head. The Living Buddha was chanting, seemingly reciting scriptures. At the same time, he heard Basang's voice: "The Living Buddha is giving you an initiation. Close your eyes and don't move."

Upon hearing this, Zhuang Rui quickly closed his eyes. Just as the Living Buddha's hand touched the top of Zhuang Rui's head, Zhuang Rui felt as if a cool, icy liquid was poured down from the palm of that hand, seeping into his skull and brain, causing an itch all over his body. Zhuang Rui didn't know if this was his imagination or if it was really happening. In his dazed state, at this moment, he heard a sharp "Pah!" in his ear.

Zhuang Rui was startled awake by the sound and opened his eyes. He felt the tingling and itching sensation on his body disappear completely, and his mind was clearer than ever before.

"Tudichi, Tudichi."

Zhuang Rui clasped his hands together and expressed his gratitude to the Living Buddha using the Tibetan "thank you" he had learned from Zhou Rui on the way. The old lama smiled again upon hearing Zhuang Rui's somewhat broken Tibetan, thought for a moment, and then took off a bracelet from his wrist and handed it to Zhuang Rui.

Although he didn't know what the bracelet was made of, he figured it must be something of high quality since it was taken from the Living Buddha. Zhuang Rui quickly took it with both hands. He originally wanted to put it in his pocket to show his respect for the gift from the elder, but when he saw the Living Buddha gesturing for him to wear it, Zhuang Rui put the bracelet on his left wrist. He didn't see that Basang, who was serving him, had a look of envy in his eyes.

The Living Buddha didn't seem to speak Mandarin. He turned to the young lama and said a few words. The young lama then said to Zhuang Rui, "This string of prayer beads is made of dzi beads and has been blessed by the Living Buddha. It has been worn for decades and can bring you merit and benefits, and protect you in all things. However, you must remember that this thing cannot be touched by outsiders."

Zhuang Rui was overjoyed upon hearing this. Although he did not know what a dzi bead was, the fact that this thing had been worn by a living Buddha for decades was enough to prove that this dzi bead bracelet was an antique.

Zhuang Rui couldn't help but look at his wrist. The dzi beads were dark brown, each one full and round, radiating a warm luster. On each individual dzi bead, it seemed as if there were several eyes. Between each dzi bead, there was a small spacer bead, presumably to prevent the dzi beads from colliding and being damaged. However, Zhuang Rui did not dare to use his spiritual energy to look at them now, because he was afraid that the old lama in front of him had some unknown supernatural power that would see through his true nature.

"Tudichi, Tudichi..."

Zhuang Rui used the only Tibetan he knew besides "Tashi Delek" to express his gratitude to the Living Buddha and his satisfaction with the gift.

Zhuang Rui was unaware that Living Buddhas would never bestow such personal items, which they had worn for decades, upon others. These items were often used when a Living Buddha reincarnated. It was a rare honor for him to bestow this item upon Zhuang Rui, which explained why Basang looked envious.

The Living Buddha smiled and beckoned to the little white lion on the ground. The little guy immediately ran to the Living Buddha's feet. The Living Buddha bent down with some effort, picked up the little white lion, and said a few words.

Zhuang Rui was somewhat surprised to see this scene. He knew that this little thing was unwilling to get close to anyone except him, but at this moment it was so intimate with this old lama. It seemed that this living Buddha was indeed quite influential.

"The Living Buddha said that the fact that this Tibetan Mastiff King from the Great Snow Mountain can follow you shows that you are a kind-hearted person. Moreover, the fact that you were able to comprehend Zen principles after entering the painting studios of the successive Tibetan kings and Living Buddhas in Jokhang Temple also proves that you have a deep affinity with Buddhism. I hope that you will treat this Tibetan Mastiff King well in the future, and it will bring you good luck."

The young lama actually had something he hadn't told Zhuang Rui. When the little white lion first entered the Living Buddha's room, the Living Buddha asked it if it was willing to become the guardian mastiff of the Jokhang Temple. The little guy shook its head and ran out of the room. The young lama chased after it and found Zhuang Rui, realizing that this mastiff king had already recognized its master.

"This little guy is a Tibetan Mastiff? And a king of mastiffs at that? Damn it, what kind of idiot is Liu Chuan? What kind of taste does he have?"

Upon hearing the young lama's words, Zhuang Rui looked at the little creature in the Living Buddha's arms in surprise. He secretly rejoiced, thinking that if he hadn't had the good intentions to treat the little guy, the pride of the Tibetan Mastiff King probably wouldn't have followed him so easily. When he got back, he would give Liu Chuan a good talking-to, so that the guy wouldn't always treat the two mixed Tibetan Mastiffs like treasures.

"This guy might really have a connection with Buddhism. I'll have to find some Buddhist scriptures to read later."

As for comprehending Zen principles, Zhuang Rui didn't take it to heart. He wasn't comprehending any Zen principles at all; he was just enjoying a feast of spiritual energy. However, the fact that the Living Buddha said this proved that he hadn't seen the problem with the spiritual energy in his eyes, which reassured Zhuang Rui a lot.

After speaking for a while, the Living Buddha seemed a little tired. He stroked the little white lion's head with his right hand for a while, muttering some words, and then put the little guy back on the ground. He waved to Zhuang Rui, indicating that they could leave.

Led by the little lama, Zhuang Rui found his way to the second floor. However, along the way, he noticed that there were lamas guarding the room he had just entered. He wondered how the little creature had managed to avoid the lamas and lead him into that magical room. Zhuang Rui looked down at the little creature with affection and found it wrapped around his finger and sucking on it incessantly. It must be hungry, just like him.

With the white hada draped around his neck, Zhuang Rui was still a little dazed even after walking down the stairs to the exit of the Jokhang Temple. Today's gains were truly immense. Not to mention the empowerment and blessing from the Living Buddha and the bracelet he received, the upgrade in the spiritual energy in his eyes alone was enough to make Zhuang Rui ecstatic. You see, the lack of spiritual energy in his eyes had troubled him for a long time.

"Zhuang Rui, Zhuang Rui, where have you been?"

Zhuang Rui, who was grinning foolishly with his head down, suddenly heard someone calling his name. Looking in the direction of the voice, he saw Liu Chuan standing at the door of a room next to the toll booth of Jokhang Temple, waving at him. Behind him, Qin Xuanbing, Zhou Rui, and the others were all there.

"Why are you here?"

Zhuang Rui walked over and casually asked, but he immediately realized that he had been taken to the Jokhang Temple for fighting and had not shown up for an entire afternoon. These people must have been looking for him for quite some time. If this had happened to Liu Chuan, he would probably be anxious too.

"Zhuang Rui, are you alright? Did the lamas here bully you?"

Upon seeing Zhuang Rui, Qin Xuanbing lost her usual composure and grabbed his hand, urgently asking, "What are you doing?" After speaking, she realized that everyone was looking at her strangely. Qin Xuanbing blushed, quickly let go of Zhuang Rui's hand, and hid behind Lei Lei somewhat embarrassedly.

"Hey, can't you hold on a little longer? I've never even held a girl's hand before."

Touching the spot where Qin Xuanbing had just held his hand, Zhuang Rui wore a wistful expression, which only made Qin Xuanbing's face turn even redder. She stomped her feet angrily, unaware that Zhuang Rui hadn't done it on purpose. His girlfriend from university, whom he dated, had just reached the point of holding hands with him when her whole family immigrated. So, strictly speaking, apart from his little niece, this was the first time a girl had ever taken the initiative to hold Zhuang Rui's hand.

"Zhuang Rui, where did you go? Didn't I tell you not to wander around?"

Gegu Lama, standing to the side, was furious after hearing Qin Xuanbing's words, but he couldn't confront the girl directly. So he vented his anger on Zhuang Rui. Besides, he was the one who brought Zhuang Rui in, and if he caused any trouble in the temple, he would have to take responsibility.

When Gegu Lama asked him this question, Zhuang Rui really didn't know how to answer. Could it be that he had stood in a room for an entire afternoon, and then the Living Buddha Lama gave him an initiation and blessing, and then bestowed upon him a treasure? Although it was a true story, if he hadn't experienced it himself, he probably wouldn't have believed it even if he told it.

Zhuang Rui thought for a moment and then said, "I was summoned by the Living Buddha to listen to Buddhist scriptures, and he even gave me a bracelet."

As he spoke, Zhuang Rui raised his wrist, pulled his clothes up, and revealed the dzi bead bracelet on his wrist. He thought to himself, "You probably won't believe me if I say I have a connection with Buddhism, but since the Living Buddha said so, I guess you won't make things difficult for me anymore." However, Zhuang Rui did not notice that Gegu Lama's expression changed drastically after hearing his words.

"Where did you get this string of dzi beads?"

Upon seeing the dzi bead bracelet, Gegu Lama asked sternly, stepping forward to grab Zhuang Rui's wrist while reaching for the bracelet with his other hand.

Gegu Lama didn't know if the bracelet belonged to a Living Buddha in the monastery, as he wasn't qualified to see Living Buddhas frequently. However, Gegu Lama was very familiar with dzi beads. He immediately recognized the dzi beads on Zhuang Rui's wrist as old dzi beads, hand-polished and shaped, then soaked in natural resin and various natural herbs. The patterns were then painted by a lama while chanting scriptures, and finally consecrated to form this bracelet, which was priceless. Even within the Jokhang Temple, there would definitely be no more than three such bracelets.

Such a precious item could already be considered a Buddhist artifact. Even a Living Buddha would not easily give it away. That's why Gegu Lama captured Zhuang Rui. As the Iron Staff Lama of Jokhang Temple, he was naturally responsible for the safety of the temple.

Zhuang Rui reacted quickly, using his right arm to shove Ge Gu's hand away from grabbing the dzi bead bracelet, and said to Ge Gu, "The Living Buddha said that outsiders cannot touch this thing."

Gegu Lama was taken aback upon hearing this. He knew that dzi beads were not to be touched by anyone other than their owner. Hearing Zhuang Rui say this, he believed it to some extent. However, the origin of the dzi bead was of great importance, so Gegu asked again, "What does this Living Buddha you mentioned look like? How old is he?"

Zhuang Rui inwardly cursed himself for being stupid, not even asking the Living Buddha's name. He could only describe the old lama's appearance and approximate age. After hearing this, Gegu Lama believed him to some extent, but he still wanted to verify it. He called over a few lamas at the door and asked them to accompany Zhuang Rui, probably because he was afraid Zhuang Rui would run away. He then hurriedly entered the Jokhang Temple.

"Is there anything to eat? I'm starving."

After Gegu Lama left, Zhuang Rui said to Liu Chuan that living on the plateau requires a lot of physical exertion every day. He hadn't eaten anything at noon, and now he felt extremely hungry.

"No, buddy, I haven't finished eating lunch yet."

Liu Chuan replied irritably that in order to find Zhuang Rui, the group of them had only managed a quick bite for lunch and were now feeling quite hungry.

"Zhuang Rui, you eat first."

Seeing Zhuang Rui's state, Qin Xuanbing felt a pang of pity and took out several bags of dried beef jerky from her bag, handing them to Zhuang Rui.

"Xuanbing, thank you. I'll treat you to a big meal later."

Zhuang Rui stuffed beef jerky into his mouth impatiently while mumbling incoherently. He also tore the beef jerky into shreds and fed it to the little white lion in his arms. The little thing was probably starving, as it ate with great relish. It hadn't even been weaned yet and was already eating meat.

"Are you going to have a big meal with Xuanxuan alone, leaving the rest of us behind?"

No sooner had Zhuang Rui finished speaking than Liu Chuan said in a sarcastic tone, calling Xuanxuan so affectionately that Lei Lei's little hand accurately touched the soft flesh of Liu Chuan's waist.

Zhuang Rui was not thin-skinned, and he was a little slow to react to the words. He didn't change his expression after hearing them, but Qin Xuanbing blushed and showed a shy side that was not usually seen.

Bai Meng'an sighed inwardly. No young master in Hong Kong had ever seen this side of Qin Xuanbing. Although she had seen it, it was a pity that Qin Xuanbing's feminine demeanor was not shown to her. She couldn't help but feel secretly jealous of Zhuang Rui's good luck.

As everyone was chatting and laughing, Gegu Lama came out of the temple, followed by Basang, the young lama Zhuang Rui knew. Seeing the young lama, Zhuang Rui felt relieved.

Sure enough, when Gegu Lama spoke to Zhuang Rui again, his attitude became much more respectful, almost as if he were treating an elder. He had already found out that the person who could receive personal empowerment and blessing from the Jokhang Temple Living Buddha, who had not been involved in the affairs of the Jokhang Temple for a long time, and who was also given personal items, must have an extraordinary background. Little did he know that Zhuang Rui was actually benefiting from the little white lion in his arms.

"The Living Buddha asked me to tell you that all sentient beings, from beginningless time, have been deluded into thinking they are things."

After saying a few cryptic words to Zhuang Rui, the young lama Basang returned to the temple, leaving everyone bewildered. However, Zhuang Rui remembered those words and planned to look them up when he got back.