

Longevity 631

Chapter 631 Thundering Buddha Flame, the humble monk gladly accepts

Recorded for a lifetime, Tao Qian glimpsed secrets.

It was said that this kind of reincarnation talent had an extraordinary effect in this world.

At that moment, secrets emerged in his mind, which even within the Demon Buddha Temple, only the high-ranking demon monks, such as Hei Bo and Flower Staff, who were equivalent to the cultivators of the Cavernous Mystery Profound, were eligible to know.

For Tao Qian, understanding these came in the blink of an eye.

Had it been earlier, Tao Qian would have been shocked by the scale of the Demon Buddha Temple's operations.

Now, having seen much, he even leisurely judged in his heart,

"It's still the old fishing tactic."

"Using the Devil Concubine as bait to attract various warlords and strong people, using their flesh and life as nourishment for Refining Treasure."

"After completion, to then counter-strike the Gao Family? To swallow up the whole of Tiannan Province as well?"

Though he did not know the specifics,

Tao Qian somehow felt he had guessed correctly.

Outside Yinping City, after the Buddha Light Array was activated by the two demon monk venerables, they suddenly sat opposite each other, smiled as they looked at one another, each forming a Buddha Seal, muttering words.

Suddenly, in the middle of the vast array, a crack explosively formed.

Behind the crack appeared to be another world, or perhaps, a Secret Realm.

A Buddhist chant that shocked both Tao Qian and Yuan Gong sounded through.

Master Yuan even directly transmitted a message to warn,

"Kid, do not pry, that's some old bald monk from the Demon Buddha Temple."

Master Yuan's description was certainly strange.

However, Tao Qian immediately understood; the so-called old bald monk referred to the topknot of flesh on their heads.

That meant, the owner of the Buddhist chant was some Buddha.

"Is it that Namu Nirvana Demon Buddha?"

"What level is he at? Equivalent to a Daoist Transformation? Or a Tribulation Immortal?"

Tao Qian pondered.

The Buddhist chant quickly faded, and from the crack, an object fell out.

It was a half-mechanical, half-glassy bony substance, resembling a mechanical relic.

Its surface was engraved with numerous runes from an Exotic Realm, layered endlessly as if one could never find the bottom.

The most astonishing thing was, this object seemed to be... alive?

Accompanied by a "roar," a storm filled with the Essence Qi of life swept over the entire Buddha Light Array.

Anybody could feel the vibrant life emotions from it, a thirst.

A thirst for flesh, soul, and elemental essence!

It went without saying!

This object was the so-called Mechanical Seed.

As it landed, fitting perfectly in the center of the array, runes dazzled and treasure light soared.

It seemed as if the gate to Ten Thousand Marvelous opened, and corps filled with Extraordinary Power from Yinping City were devoured into it.

Its speed was so fast, even Tao Qian could not react in time, but only watch as the mechanical relic devoured ten thousand All Demons.

Originally, the object was half pitch black and half sparkling glass.

But now, it had startlingly turned blood-red.

A "Blood Buddha relic" was dragging a sticky crimson blood trail, burrowing straight into the "fetal membrane" behind hundreds of chanting demon monks.

At this moment, the two Venerables, along with all the demon monks, suddenly changed the scripture in their hands and began to recite the "Demon Buddha's Long Sutra."

The reason for reciting this sutra!

It was because the Dirghagama - sutra depicted the [birth of a Bodhisattva].

The original name of the scripture was simply "Dirghagama - sutra," which was a Secret Book of the Great Freedom Temple.

Somehow, it had been stolen by the Demon Buddha Temple, directly adding three words and claiming it as their own.

At this moment, Tao Qian, accompanied by Yunrong, stood atop Yellow Cloud Mountain, feeling somewhat eager to move but silently aware that the timing was not yet right.

At the same time, he couldn't help but complain to Yuan Gong about the Demon Buddha Temple at the bottom of his heart,

"Everyone says the Demon Buddha Temple is powerful, capable of resisting Guanyin Temple, Great Freedom Temple, Great Reincarnation Temple, these orthodox Buddhist Sects with the strength of one temple alone."

"Could it be, all relying on this kind of method?"

"Stealing other's classic Secret Books and claiming them for their own?"

For some reason, when Tao Qian mentioned the word "stealing," he was especially grinding his teeth, utterly vexed.

Previously, when Tao Qian asked questions, Master Yuan nearly always had an answer, but this time, he was somewhat vague, saying: "The reason for this, cannot yet be spoken, cannot be spoken."

Just as Tao Qian wanted to pursue further questions, suddenly within Yinping City.

Refining Treasure was reaching its final stage.

That sticky blood-red mechanical relic, amidst the vast chanting, burrowed into the fetal membrane.

In that instant, a thousand-mile territory plunged into Buddha Country.

All around, traces of ten thousand Buddhas appeared, flowers rained disorganized, and Earth Bursting Golden Lotus.

Inside the now flesh-colored fetal membrane, that initially blurred figure's outline suddenly took complete form.

Sitting atop a Lotus Platform, adorned with layer upon layer of a thousand arms, spread out like a peacock displaying its feathers, and in each hand, in every Buddha's Palm, there was an eye of wisdom.

Moreover, in those Buddha hands were held many Magic Artifacts and Buddha Treasures, like Yang Branch, White Feather, Treasure Vase, Counting Beads, Skull Treasure Staff, Treasure Mirror, Treasure Conch, Jade Ring, Vajra Wheel... as if countless, until switching to another direction where five hundred arms held peculiar cold and menacing mechanical creations.

Things like copper pipe iron cannon, fortress towers, mechanical globes... even Tao Master did not recognize any.

He could only sense the danger, a danger that also terrified him.

Once this object, the Dharma Image, was revealed.

Inside and outside the city, under the lead of the two Venerables, all demon monks spoke simultaneously:

"We welcome the Great Compassionate and Merciful Transcendent Bodhisattva to this world."

All demon monks showed joy on their faces.

Anyone who wasn't blind could see this Transcendence Bodhisattva modeled after the Thousand-Handed Guanyin, was a Buddha Treasure of incredible Power.

During the Buddhist chant, this Great Transcendence Bodhisattva suddenly began to shrink.

Its thousand hands closed together, Buddha Light surged, and split open the left flank of the fetal membrane.

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The next moment, a figure of majestic appearance, wearing clean robes untainted by filth, descended as a Bodhisattva.

The figure stepped onto the ground and took seven steps, unaided, looking in all directions, and proclaimed with a gesture:

"Heaven and earth, only I am honored, I want to save all living beings from birth, aging, sickness, and death."

As the words fell.

Instantly two springs emerged, one warm and one cold, for bathing purposes.

This scene caused the entirety of Yinping City to erupt into frenzy.

Hundreds of thousands of people, as if mad, all showed expressions of frenzied insanity.

Some couldn't even control themselves, starting to cheer and cry, shouting:

"A miracle! No, this is Buddha showing himself."

"The Bodhisattva is born, identical to what the scriptures described, the Great Compassionate and Merciful Transcendent Bodhisattva."

"It is us, our devout scripture reading, sincere prayers, finally moved the Bodhisattva to pity us and descend from the Ultimate Happiness Heaven to the mortal realm."

"The Bodhisattva has descended to save us."

"We waited, all will ascend to the Ultimate Happiness Land, all will be free from catastrophes and suffering, forever enjoying ultimate bliss."

...

This sight, however, reminded Tao Qian again of Changle Town after its fall to demons.

Then and now, there was no difference.

But no wonder the suffering mortals within Yinping City couldn't resist; they were already poisoned by the Demon Buddha, with no ability to resist.

Now seeing a miracle recorded only in the Buddhist scriptures, how could they not be moved?

Hundreds of thousands of people had the same thought at this moment: they wanted the Bodhisattva to transcend them, to let them enter the Western Pure Land and forever escape the suffering of this earthly realm.

With such hopes, it was natural for them to endure being in the midst of mire and filth.

However, could they have known?

Transcendence might be realistic, but how could ultimate happiness be attained?

The mortals saw it as a miracle, but in Tao Qian's eyes.

The so-called "Bodhisattva" was merely a cold, fierce object devoid of any emotions, merely cloaked in a veneer of great compassion and mercy.

This Bodhisattva, step by step, approached tens of thousands of city dwellers.

Underneath the witness of thousands of Buddhas, behind it emerged a scene like a peacock fanning its feathers, thousands of Buddha hands reaching out and stroke everyone's heads.

Before even touching, hundreds of thousands of people's faces showed expressions of ecstasy and joy.

Within their bodies, souls, life spans, and essence blood all showed signs of eagerness to escape.

Especially the souls, almost half an inch away from leaving the body.

Seeing this sight!

Tao Qian immediately realized, the time had come.

"Indeed, the souls of hundreds of thousands of devotees are the final cause, Wisdom Mother."

"Once devoured by this Great Transcendence Bodhisattva, this inconceivable Buddha treasure will be forged, and within Yinping City, there will be hundreds of thousands of fools."

"It seems there are no other choices, although this will provoke the Demon Buddha Temple, now that I'm disguised as a disciple of Qingjing Zen Master, coming from the South Sea as the Wu Gou Buddha Son, in the eyes of those bald monks from the Demon Buddha Temple, I'm just a bumpkin trying to snatch a meal."

"To hell with it! How can two Venerables of the Cavernous Mystery Profound demon monks trouble me?"

Once the decision was made, Tao Qian immediately took action.

First, he mixed the True Word Secret Decree with the Lion Roar, using the overlay of divine powers to stop the evil acts of the Great Transcendence Bodhisattva.

"Hold on!"

"Stop!"

Just as Tao Qian shouted, unexpectedly another mishap occurred.

He shouted from the south, and suddenly heard a furious shout from the north.

The voice, like thunder, intimidated all directions, causing all beasts to cower, also using the Buddhist Divine Power [Lion Roar].

The Great Transcendence Bodhisattva, still incomplete with the Wisdom Mother occupying it, was delayed in its actions and was instantly paralyzed by the remote divine power restraint of two strong individuals, seemingly stuck in place.

While outside Yinping City, the two Venerables looked toward the north and south.

First looking at the southern direction, the dirty, dark Yellow Cloud Mountain that had been there for many years suddenly burst open a huge gap by ten thousand feet of Buddha Light. The void birthed thousands of lotuses and Divine Light turned into colorful clouds, and under the golden light phenomenon at the cloud peak, the Wu Gou Buddha Son, played by Tao Master, leading the Miao Yin Bodhisattva, played by Yunrong, descended majestically.

Then looking at the northern direction, no phenomenon occurred, just seeing a young monk wearing a Hundred-Patch Zen Robe, ordinary looking, even slightly ugly, with a strange lump on his forehead, coming over mountains and seas.

Although there was no special vision, including Tao Qian, everyone instantly recognized the young monk's roots and origin.

It was naturally because of the escape skill he used, appearing instantly upon recitation.

His voice hadn't yet fallen, but he had already first stepped into Yinping City.

Such an escape method was self-explanatory.

"Great Freedom Heart Light Escape!"

"How did a Free Buddha Son suddenly appear?"

At the moment of Tao Qian's bewilderment,

In the city, they were already exchanging blows.

Hundreds of demon monks were not blind, they could tell that the Great Freedom Monk who appeared out of nowhere must have come for the "Great Transcendent Bodhisattva" Buddha Treasure.

They all shouted angrily and rushed to surround and kill the monk.

Sadly, there was a huge gap between the two sides.

The young monk, disregarding everything, charged forward, and declared, "Fellow Demon Buddha Daoists, if you do not wish to be obliterated instantly, do not touch my Dharma Body."

Though the monk said this, the hundreds of demon monks thought he was boasting.

But the next moment, bunches of green Buddha Flames suddenly burst forth from the monk's body, seemingly with thundering sounds within them.

Each demon monk that came into contact with him immediately let out a miserable howl,

And their bodies were immediately burnt from the outside in, their flesh, spirit, and even souls were thoroughly incinerated.

In an instant, they turned into vitrified forms, falling seated, and passed into oblivion on the spot.

With just that one collision, over a hundred demon monks from the Demon Buddha Temple perished.

Had the remaining demon monks not reacted quickly, they would all have met their demise right there.

This spectacle instantly intimidated everyone present, even Tao Qian couldn't help but reveal a look of shock.

In his arms, Master Yuan immediately transmitted through a voice message:

"It's the 'Great Freedom Thunder Sound Buddha Flame,' within the Great Freedom Temple itself, this is extremely rare. Cultivating such Divine Power is equivalent to you, lad, obtaining the Transmission of the Scripture of Salvation in the Spirit Treasure Sect."

"This little monk is quite fierce, surely one of the top talents among the current generation Buddha's sons of the Great Freedom Temple."

"Ha-ha-ha, you lad have finally met your match, hurry and go forth to encounter him."

Master Yuan recognized that Divine Power.

The two venerables of the Demon Buddha Temple, of course, recognized it as well.

Because the young monk and Tao Qian appeared simultaneously, it was clear they came to cause trouble and to seize the treasure.

Thus, Hei Bo Venerable and Flower Staff Venerable each moved to intercept from south and north.

In the views of these two men, they could easily subdue these two little Buddha thieves.

But the extremely harsh reality took place almost simultaneously:

First, meeting the Great Freedom Monk, the Flower Staff Venerable initially planned to confront the monk with his Demon Buddha Vajra Body in a head-on collision.

Yet, as soon as he saw the Great Freedom Thunder Sound Buddha Flame emerging from his opponent, he was immediately shocked and retreated.

He then threw his Buddha Staff, which instantly expanded and transformed into a pillar to strike at the young monk's head dome.

But the monk merely raised his hand to protect his head and continued to plow forward aggressively.

With a heavy "thud", the Flower Staff Venerable's wooden staff, which was also clearly a powerful Buddha Treasure, was forcefully repelled. To avoid the same fate as his disciples, although feeling immensely frustrated, the Flower Staff Venerable had no choice but to clear the way.

However, at the last moment, he managed to cast a spell, flicking his sleeve robe and throwing the trapped Great Compassionate and Merciful Transcendent Bodhisattva toward Hei Bo Venerable outside the city.

While casting, he thought to himself,

"This ugly monk from the Great Freedom Temple is a powerful Buddha's son with a plain exterior but an extremely fierce combat strength, having even cultivated the supreme Demon-suppressing Divine Power like the Thunder Sound Buddha Flame."

"As for that pretentious white-robed monk, he must be a foil, surely subduable by Hei Bo."

The thought had just settled in his mind when,

His eyes captured a scene that no one could have imagined:

That Hei Bo Venerable, he didn't even have time to release any Divine Power.

As he met the couple who approached upon a cloud top radiating Golden Light, exhibiting the elegant young Miao Monk who walked barefoot, untainted by dust, he suddenly pulled out a worn cloth bag hanging from his waist.

He spoke aloud, "This Venerable seems spiritually exhausted, why not rest a while inside this humble monk's People Species Bag."

No sooner had he finished speaking than the cloth bag was tossed up and expanded in the wind.

It generated a forceful suction and instantly swallowed the Hei Bo Venerable.

Right then, the Flower Staff Venerable threw out the "Great Compassionate and Merciful Transcendent Bodhisattva" from the city.

Seeing one Venerable being captured, Tao Qian couldn't help but reveal a brilliant smile.

He uttered a Buddhist chant, saying,

"Amitabha!"

"People always say that the brothers of the Demon Buddha Temple are very generous, which I did not believe, but now it seems to be true."

"This treasure certainly bears some mysteries; this monk is also keenly curious. Since the Venerable has been so hospitable, how could this monk decline?"

"Accepting it with gratitude."

Thus saying, he waved his hand and captured the Bodhisattva treasure.

Without further inspection, he too stuffed it into the worn cloth bag and then with an air as if nothing significant had happened, he cast a somewhat curious glance at that ugly monk from the Great Freedom Temple.

Chapter 633: Free Buddha Son Named Shenxiu, Wu Gou Monk Saves Hei Bo

But speaking of the Demon Buddha Temple, it had cast out the Han Mountain Monk and occupied Qiantang Province, opening a sub-temple there.

The presiding monk in the temple was of course Kongchan, with Shipi and a host of Arhats from the Ultimate Happiness Realm, each of them unparalleled in strength, with limitless Buddhist Law.

They seldom took action themselves, sitting firmly in the sub-temple ready to respond to powerful enemies.

All other matters were handed over to yet another group of venerable demon monks under their command, such as Hei Bo and Flower Staff, who were among the best, and that's how they secured the task of casting the [Great Compassionate and Merciful Transcendent Bodhisattva] in Yinping City.

In recent times, the divine powers displayed by monks Hei Bo and Flower Staff had indeed subdued all directions.

Those two big warlords, Pi Mao and Chi Shen, came to Yinping thinking to cause trouble, but they were each subdued single-handedly by the two Venerables, becoming docile and obedient; they were manipulated into becoming supplies and treasure materials without any ability to resist.

Who could have expected, just when it was time to harvest the rewards,

Two young monks suddenly appeared out of nowhere, one from the north who, with a single collision, dispatched over a hundred demon monks into Nirvana, even forcing Venerable Flower Staff to avoid; the other from the south who, with a toss of his cloth bag, not only captured Venerable Hei Bo but also took the opportunity to snatch the Great Transcendence Bodhisattva.

After so many days of hard work, to have it taken advantage by others, how could this be allowed?

Venerable Flower Staff's face showed anger, and he no longer cared about another enemy, the Free Buddha's Son, only fixing his gaze on that "silver spearhead with a pewter handle" of a handsome young monk.

He opened his Buddha Eye and applied Sublime Dharma, trying to peer into the foundation of his power.

But no matter how he looked, he could not find any weakness.

Only thinking to himself in his heart,

"I must have been mistaken before, the mana within this young man is so ferocious, it's even stronger than that of the Great Freedom Buddha's Son; that ragged cloth bag was able to capture my brother Hei Bo, clearly it's a great treasure, which sect did he come from, to have such achievements at such a young age?"

"Hmph, no matter which sect, it's not bigger than my Demon Buddha Temple."

With his mind made up, Venerable Flower Staff decisively included both young monks in his verbal attack.

The Buddha Staff paused for a moment, then he angrily shouted,

"Who are you two, daring to meddle in the affairs of my Demon Buddha Temple, one killing my monks, the other capturing my brother, and taking the treasure of the Demon Buddha."

"You must think yourselves mighty with Great Divine Power and possession of great treasures, hence you provoke my brother and me."

"Young and inexperienced, you know not the immensity of heaven and earth."

"If today you do not give a satisfactory explanation, before long, my Demon Buddha Temple will have Arhats come to capture you both, and we will then go and settle the score with your masters."

This threat from Venerable Flower Staff, if it were directed at the young talents of other Great Sects,

It might have some effect.

Unfortunately, he happened to encounter two who were not susceptible.

Upon hearing this, the two monks exchanged a glance, then developing a bit of a rapport, the ugly monk with a lump on his forehead was the one to speak first,

"This humble monk, Shenxiu, is a native of Tianfu Province, simply a kitchen monk from Free Temple."

"The Mage claims this humble monk killed; the accusation is greatly unjustified. When this humble monk arrived, I had already warned not to touch my Dharma Body. It was those hundred or so comrades who

did not listen, and that's why they ascended to heaven; this ledger should not fall on this humble monk's head."

"It is not possible to capture this humble monk, as I came into this realm to overcome my Cultivation Tribulation and need to amass nine great merits and ninety-nine small merits; I cannot afford delays."

"As for seeking out my master to settle accounts, that I can accommodate. I can indicate the path; Mage, you go to Great Freedom Temple yourself and look for Long Meng Arhat, he is my master."

After saying the last sentence, the ugly monk considerably raised his hand and conjured the illusion of an Arhat.

This act seemed like an honest person, yet also like one harboring cunning, making him difficult to decipher.

However, he spoke with a Tianfu Province accent, occasionally spitting out some odd slang, which Tao Qian found amusing, while Venerable Flower Staff found it infuriating.

At this moment, in Tao Qian's mind, he suddenly heard Lian Jing'er's voice revealing more about the ugly monk's background.

"Comparison in progress... confirmed to be Great Freedom Buddha's Son, Master Shenxiu."

"This individual is nominally a kitchen monk but is actually ranked within the top three amongst his generation of Buddha's Sons in Great Freedom Temple and is even recognized by many cultivators who have sparred with him as the foremost Buddha's Son."

"This individual is only a step away from the Ultimate Happiness Realm."

"This person's temperament and mental state have reached the stage of returning to the truth, he cultivates the 'Great Buddha's Top Secret Scripture' as his life's work and is adept at divine powers such as [Thundering Buddha Flame], [Observing the Buddha Eye of Freedom in All Worlds], [Mahayana Demon Suppression Fist], [Great Wisdom Mantra] etc., all of which are methods to subdue demons and hence he has earned the nickname 'Demon-suppressing Ugly Vajra'."

"Since this person has been in this world, he has subdued devils and eliminated demons, accumulated good deeds, and enlightened mortals without a single evil act, and even peers in the Daoist and Buddhist circles cannot help but admire him."

No sooner had Lian Jing'er finished speaking than Master Yuan transmitted a message.

Different from before, he revealed the background of the ugly monk's master.

"Boy, I know you were once duped by a baldy from Great Freedom Temple, but also don't develop a bias; if this temple could be the leader of the Buddhist Sect, it could not possibly be a haven for all that is filthy. There is good and bad, just differences in the paths and philosophies."

"This ugly monk's master, being Long Meng Arhat, should be a promising acquaintance."

"Long Meng, this baldy, is just as his name suggests, exceptionally strong."

"Nonetheless, he's also an honest monk, practicing the proper Buddhist Law. Once, knowing that a different lineage brother named Venerable Bao Ye misunderstood Buddhist principles and robbed civilians to increase his mana, he specifically intercepted him on the way and not only beat him severely but also forcibly destroyed his cultivation."

"Because of this, he was reprimanded, but the baldy did not change his ways and continued beating disciples from Vajra Temple, Dharma Cakra Temple, Da Zhao Temple, etc., for similar reasons until eventually he was punished to face the wall in contemplation for five hundred years within the temple. I did not expect such a straightforward baldy to start teaching disciples now."

Tao Qian listened to the message while also following Shenxiu's lead and volunteered his own background,

"This humble monk, Wu Gou, a native of the South Sea."

"The Daoist's rebuke is entirely without reason; kindly, I offered that Venerable entrance into my People Species Bag for rest; to nourish and protect his Divine Soul, where is the wrong in this? As for the Buddha Treasure, it was the Daoist himself who threw it, and it just happened to fall into my bag, signifying that the treasure was fated to be mine."

Chapter 634 Free Buddha Son Named Shenxiu, Wu Gou Monk Saves Hei Bo_2

"Daoist, trying to capture me is futile," said the monk entering the world to face his cultivation tribulation. "Although accumulating virtue is not necessary for me, I bear a heavy responsibility. I must

lead my wife through the Three Mountains, Five Mountains, and Seventy-two provinces to fulfill our fate and together realize the truths of Mahayana Buddhism."

"It's also acceptable to seek out my master for a reckoning," the monk offered. "I can show you the way. Daoist, go yourself to the South Sea's Hooking Turtle Cliff and look for a Qingjing Zen Master. He is my teacher."

...

Tao Qian's words might have been better left unsaid. Parroting them just like a parrot enraged Flower Staff Venerable to the point of fuming with rage.

After all, he was a revered figure from the Demon Buddha Temple, highly esteemed with powerful Divine Skills. When had he ever been subjected to such humiliation?

To him, these two monks with their identical speech and their odd, mocking tones were clearly making fun of him.

His thought was both right and wrong.

Heartless and deceptive, Master Tao was indeed mocking him.

However, Monk Shenxiu was sincerely serious.

Yet, Tao Qian's interference mixed truth and falsehood indistinguishably.

"You two... dare to insult me like this?"

Enraged to the extreme, Flower Staff Venerable looked around, his fatty chest quivering with anger, wishing he could devour the flesh and blood of the two monks.

Unfortunately, though it was just one round, he had already realized he was no match for either of the young monks.

He couldn't beat either of them.

While his face was filled with bitter anger, his mind quickly recalled the powerful backers of the two monks, and he started to strategize:

"So, that one is the little thief Shenxiu. No wonder I'm no match for him."

"And that bumpkin from the South Sea, called Wu Gou, has Qingjing Zen Master backing him. I've heard from Master Kongchan that he's a dangerous man, and he has some connections with the Dharma Cakra Temple."

"There's no way I can deal with either of them. It seems I must send a message to invite Master Kongchan or Uncle Shipi to come."

"Damn it, just when I got such a good task, it's all gone wrong. I'll likely be blamed for this mess."

"However, since Hei Bo was captured, perhaps I can push all the blame onto him and avoid punishment..."

As Flower Staff Venerable was formulating his plan in his mind, preparing to use some methods to send for an Arhat while also attempting to keep the two monks in Yinping City,

Suddenly, Tao Qian seemed to read his thoughts.

He laughed heartily, pretending to have just remembered, "I almost forgot that the esteemed one is still in this bag of mine. He should have rested enough by now and can come out."

With that, he turned the cloth bag upside down.

Pouring it out over the city, Buddha Light flashed, and Hei Bo Venerable's Dharma Body rolled out.

But looking at him now, dazed and unable to tell north from south, did he seem like someone who had rested well?

Obviously, he had been drugged by someone.

Flower Staff Venerable stepped forward to help, angrily saying, "What a little thief, relying on the name of Qingjing Zen Master to bully my fellow disciple. You truly deserve to die."

His shouting was really aimed at provoking Hei Bo to call for his master, Shipi Arhat.

Shipi was extremely protective; even if Qingjing Zen Master himself came, he would be in for trouble.

Unexpectedly, Hei Bo, who had just come to his senses, shook his head to refuse:

"Brother, don't be annoyed. This was clearly my opportunity."

"I must thank this young friend for his gift."

"Only after entering this treasure bag did I realize my past understanding of Practicing Daoism was somewhat mistaken."

"Hiss"

No one expected Hei Bo Venerable's response, including the younger demon monks, who all gasped in shock and surprise.

They all knew that the two Venerables, cunning Flower Staff and fierce Hei Bo, had strong personalities.

Was this worn, old cloth bag so strange?

Just one trip inside changed his temperament?

Seeing this, Tao Qian was momentarily taken aback, but since he was the owner of the [Holy Embryo Human Species Bag], a slight sense brought him the reason.

He thought to himself with joy:

"This treasure was transformed by a master in his dying moments as he realized Dao, originally named Holy Embryo, containing the ultimate truths of Innate and Postnatal, the path of evolution of the Primordial Embryo."

"Though it currently has flaws, it can still be considered naturally mysterious and unparalleled."

"Previously, with my low level of cultivation, I treated it as a personal treasure bag, which concealed its true potential."

"I'll tentatively rename it [People Species Bag], meaning that an opportunity has come. Coupled with my entering into the Profound of Cavernous Mystery and breaking through the Divine Communication Barrier, this treasure in my hands has finally revealed its true power."

"The demon monk's mind, after being inside the bag, is likely rid of most of his evil thoughts. His spirit is clear, not quite as pure as an innately born infant, but still barely qualifies as a good person."

"Unfortunately, my level of Cultivation Realm is still not strong enough, and the effect will not last more than a few hours, after which the demon monk will revert to his original state."

"If one day I can realize Enlightenment on my own and step into the Daoist Transformation Realm, perhaps I could convert and enlighten tens of thousands of Evil Demons in one breath."

"Eh? Should I also change my name to Maitreya?"

At this thought, Tao Qian couldn't help but laugh.

He was a legitimate inheritor of the Spirit Treasure lineage; he could hardly join the Buddhist sect as the future Buddha Venerable.

...

These back and forth thoughts, though complex when spoken, actually took but a moment to form in his mind.

The ugly monk named Shenxiu, originally curious about Tao Qian, the Wu Gou Buddha's son, became even more intrigued after witnessing the power of the [Human Species Bag].

Using a technique known as Heart Light Escape, he traveled from north to south, appearing before Tao Qian and Yunrong.

Joining his palms together, he greeted them with a Buddhist bow,

"Junior monk Shenxiu has had the pleasure of meeting the honorable couple."

"I hope the two of you won't take offense at Shenxiu's bold approach. It's just that the Buddha Light and energy from this Daoist companion give me a strong sense of kinship, as if from the same family."

"Additionally, it's that mysterious cloth bag; seemingly Daoist, yet not quite, seemingly Buddhist, yet not quite, but containing the utmost truth of Buddhism within."

"I shall not conceal that it inspires in me a profound desire to bow in worship."

This powerful and mystical ugly monk began with a succession of pleasant remarks.

If such words came from anyone else, they could not escape suspicion of sycophancy.

But coming from Shenxiu's mouth, neither Tao Qian nor Yunrong could muster the slightest animosity toward him.

Even now, as the monk's eager gaze fixated on the cloth bag at Tao Qian's waist, it did not provoke any disdain.

Tao Qian kept his innate spiritual vision active.

Upon inspecting the ugly monk, he saw no sign of mutation, only pure and shining Buddha Light radiating in all directions.

"What a Free Buddha Son!"

"Such mana, such a profound realm, indeed stronger by much than peers I've seen before such as Zhong Ziyang and Chen Xiyi."

"Seriously considering it, among his peers, only Xu Xun and Brother Wei might surpass him by a slim margin."

While Tao Qian expressed his admiration, he also made a surprising move.

He directly took off the Human Species Bag from his waist and handed it over, then said, "Great Master, if you wish to look, please do."

Master Tao, in doing this, was not suddenly bewitched, thinking to give away his personal treasure.

The Holy Embryo Bag, or rather the Human Species Bag,

Had been with him for a very long time and, in truth, the bag itself actively chose its owner.

There were indeed strong people capable of taking the bag from Tao Qian, but they would need, at a minimum, the power of the Daoist Transformation Realm.

Shenxiu had extraordinary talent, but he was far from reaching the Daoist Transformation level.

Caught off guard by Tao Master's action, Shenxiu the monk immediately showed a look of struggle.

His ugly face twisted with conflict.

However, he quickly overcame it and, without stepping back, merely smiled bitterly, shook his head to refuse, and once again bowed in thanks,

"Amitabha!"

"Your realm is extraordinary, I have learned much, Monk."

Having said that, as if he understood something profound,

Shenxiu gave a mysterious smile, formed a Wisdom Seal with his hands, and began meditating on the spot to enhance his mental state.

This change left Tao Master speechless. He had only wanted to show the monk his treasure since he was someone worth befriending, and there was no risk of it being stolen. Who knew that Shenxiu could also gain insight into his realm this way?

Let's leave aside the real monk and the pretender becoming friends by a twist of fate.

On the other end, the Flower Staff Venerable, with the changed temperament of Hei Bo, and the remaining demon monks surrounded Tao Qian and the three, feeling somewhat like they were riding a tiger they couldn't dismount.

They couldn't beat them in a fight, but letting these two monks simply go wasn't an option either.

Not to mention anything else, the Great Compassionate and Merciful Transcendent Bodhisattva was still inside the Wu Gou Buddha's son's treasure bag.

If they let him escape with the Buddha Treasure, when the few Arhats place the blame, everyone in Yinping City, monks or laymen, would face annihilation.

The Flower Staff internally lamented, sending a message to Hei Bo,

"Junior Brother, think carefully."

"If this Transcendence Bodhisattva is taken by this petty thief, and we two do nothing, even if Uncle Shipi dotes on you so much, he can't prevent a visit to the [Refining Buddha Tower]."

"You wouldn't want your cultivation to go to waste, leaving only a Hei Bo relic for others to make use of, would you?"

The Flower Staff Venerable pondered, thinking the threat sufficient.

But immediately, he saw the Hei Bo Venerable show a face of sorrow and shake his head, saying,

"If such a transformation could redeem some sins, Hei Bo would be willing."

"Older Brother, all that has passed..."

These few words left both the Flower Staff Venerable and the surrounding demon monks dumbfounded.

Chapter 635: Shenxiu's Words Suppress the Demon Monk, Tao Qian Takes Advantage of the Situation to Invite a Gambling Match

Demon Buddha Temple decided to establish a sub-temple in Qiantang Province, naturally, they had to transfer some ruthless and strong people from the main temple.

Hei Bo Venerable was considered among them, famed as a fierce monk adept in slaughter.

Most notably, he was a disciple of Shipi Arhat, a master of leading others to fall into evil demise.

Unexpectedly, one day, he was enlightened by another, was this supposed to lead to a virtuous downfall?

The horde of demon monks initially feared Shenxiu's Thundering Buddha Flame the most; now, they feared Master Tao even more.

They hung their heads low, terror flickering in their eyes, for a moment not daring to look at that pure, white-robed Buddha's son who came from the South Sea.

To be consumed by the Buddha Flame, to perish and fade from the Dao, was considered a quick end.

To enter that cloth bag, to have one's nature profoundly altered, from demon to Buddha, was a fate worse than death by threefold.

However, Flower Staff harbored different thoughts, greed shining in his eyes.

"Such a treasure!"

"This lad must be the True Inheritor of Qingjing Zen Master. With such exquisite and unheard-of Buddhist Exotic Treasures willingly given away, if I could seize it, reaching Ultimate Happiness with ease and attaining the Status of Arhat might not be impossible."

"Just watch my actions."

With a thought, Flower Staff suddenly made a ruthless move toward Hei Bo.

Taking him unawares, he struck Hei Bo in the forehead with a palm.

This palm strike had a reputation, if performed with True Skill, it could enlighten one's true nature.

If performed with inverse intent, it could confound the mind.

Now, what Flower Staff Venerable applied was indeed the true form, yet he wanted Hei Bo to realize: You're a demon monk, why put on an act of kindness and compassion, only to make a laughing stock of yourself?

Feeling the effect was insufficient, he simply manifested a bizarre Arhat vision, namely Hei Bo Venerable's master, Shipi Arhat, also merging into his skull.

A muffled "thump" could be heard.

Hei Bo Venerable swayed like a drunken man; whether it was the palm's impact, the vision of Shipi, or both, it was not clear.

Hei Bo stabilized his stance and was immediately drenched in cold sweat, showing both shock and irritation—he had truly awakened.

"Thank you, senior brother, for saving me!"

"What a treacherous and conniving bald thief, almost ruining my Dao path."

In the past, Hei Bo Venerable secretly looked down on Flower Staff, but now, he thanked him sincerely.

Flower Staff Venerable didn't take credit, simply sending a telepathic message:

"Junior brother, there's no need for politeness, there are more pressing matters now."

"These two thieves are not only exceptional, but they also come from notable lineages; even if we join forces, we can't subdue them. Instead, it's the Great Transcendence Bodhisattva who was taken by the Wu Gou Buddha Son."

"At the moment, the best plan is for the two of us to find an excuse to delay these thieves while we send a message to several of our elders."

"Even if just one of them were to come, we could retrieve the Buddha Treasure and rid ourselves of blame."

"That's exactly right."

Upon hearing these words, Hei Bo nodded in agreement.

Then, the two advanced together, speaking in turn to Tao Qian and Shenxiu.

Flower Staff Venerable, as always, was first.

This demon monk put on a hypocritical smile and cordially invited:

"Originally, we thought the two young friends were minor thieves here to steal treasures, hence our harsh words."

"Now that the misunderstanding is resolved, we realize both of you are disciples of renowned masters."

"Wu Gou, young friend, I have heard of your master Qingjing Zen Master, indeed a high monk who has attained the Dao, a reclusive Buddhist Practitioner."

"Shenxiu, young friend, need not mention your master Long Meng Arhat, though Great Freedom Temple and our Demon Buddha Temple have some friction and grievances, it does not prevent us from befriending each other in private."

"Just so happens, our Demon Buddha Temple wants to hold a Buddhist assembly in Qiantang Province, where ten thousand cultivators will gather, and All Saints will descend. We ask the two young friends not to leave the city but to join us in Qiantang Province for the assembly."

"Then, you can debate scriptures and meditate with many other Buddhist cultivators; wouldn't that be delightful?"

After finishing these words, as if it were an afterthought, Flower Staff Venerable added one more thing to Tao Qian.

"By the way, Wu Gou, young friend, you fortuitously picked up our painstakingly forged Buddha Treasure; could you return it?"

"We have a grave responsibility, and if we lose that object, I fear even Kongchan Arhat, Shipi Arhat, and the other elders will blame us."

"Furthermore, that item is missing the final stage to be truly forged. If you take it now, it's hardly different from holding a useless object."

"If you return it to us, there will be a rich reward."

"Sutra scriptures, resources, treasures... we shall not withhold anything."

...

As Flower Staff spoke, the crowd of demon monks and Hei Bo Venerable watched, thinking they might have some hope of coaxing the treasure back with smooth talk.

But instantly they saw the young, beamingly smiling monk's expression change drastically upon hearing the words "requesting the treasure."

His once handsome head shook like a rattle, sternly refusing:

"Your words are misguided, Mage!"

"All Treasures under heaven belong to those with destiny."

"I, Wu Gou, have always been beloved by the Female Bodhisattva; since the treasure has flown into my People Species Bag, it signifies that it's fated to be mine."

"From now on, it's my treasure."

"What's this about picking up or seizing? It's nonsensical and unreasonable."

As soon as Tao Qian finished speaking, and seeing his miserly demeanor, the demon monks all felt a chill in their hearts.)

Especially Flower Staff and Hei Bo, who inwardly cursed, "The utmost shameless!"

Fortunately, they had anticipated such an outcome, and knowing that actions follow after civilities, it was not too late.

Hei Bo Venerable, his face livid with anger, stepped forward and began to emanate a gloomy Buddha Light from within, which in midair coalesced into an intricately detailed Buddha temple constructed of white bones.

Within the temple, a terrifying aura leaked.

Tao Qian, whose senses were sharp, immediately recognized that this aura belonged to the formidable demon monk who constructed "Steamed Buddha City," known as Shipi Arhat.

Indeed, the next moment he heard Hei Bo Venerable threatening:

"You should know, young friend."

"I possess a Divine Skill called 'Empty Body Inviting Saints to Sublime Dharma.' It serves no other purpose but to invite a Buddha Saint to embody me."

"My master is Shipi Arhat; as long as I invite him, my master will surely descend."

Chapter 636 - Shenxiu's Words Subdue the Demon Monk, Tao Qian Takes Advantage of the Situation to Invite a Gambling Match_2

"If the young friend is unaware of my master's renown, you can ask Shenxiu Monk for guidance,"

"I have no other desire but to hope that the young friend will first hand over the Buddha Treasure, allowing me and my fellow disciples to complete the final link and thoroughly refine it."

"Once the treasure is perfected, it will choose its master naturally."

"If the young friend is truly one destined, I think you won't refuse such an arrangement."

"You mustn't act rashly, young friend. Nowadays, everyone knows the power of the treasure bag at your waist. If you intend to release that bag, I will instantly perform the Sublime Dharma, and then we shall see if your treasure can also take my master."

Hei Bo Venerable, being the dry killer he is, naturally couldn't articulate such clearly reasoned speech.

Every word was taught by the Flower Staff Venerable.

Upon hearing this, Tao Qian coldly scoffed in his mind:

"No matter how meticulous the reasoning is, it's useless. I am the eldest brother of the Duobao Lineage, and our principle is only to take in, never to give out. What can you do to me?"

"Furthermore, you two are merely conniving with spirits. This so-called Summoning God Technique surely comes with a steep price; perhaps performing it just once could sever your Dao path, or even kill you on the spot."

"Your real intention is probably to detain me first, then send a message to Qiantang City to call upon Kongchan, Shipi, and these other old bald thieves without cost."

As his thoughts settled, Tao Qian secretly prepared to act.

It was not the exposed People Species Bag he planned to use, but a Divine Skill.

This skill was given by the Sheep Buddha Protector and is called "Destiny Defining Divine Light."

Upon casting, one can emit Divine Light through eyes and mouth, rendering the enemy speechless and immobile, with their Divine Soul fixed. Then, Tao Qian would use the People Species Bag to take Hei Bo Venerable back into the bag.

As for Flower Staff Venerable, having pushed Hei Bo out as a scapegoat, he was either unable to perform the skill or simply unwilling to.

Just as Tao Qian's eyes flickered, about to make his move,

suddenly, a sigh resounded through the area.

Everyone turned their heads and saw Shenxiu Monk.

He was looking at Hei Bo, Flower Staff, and the other demon monks with eyes full of indignant fury.

Then, he opened his mouth and sighed:

"Amitabha, it is truly a sin."

"If the little monk's learning is not mistaken, whether it was the previously seen 'Ten Thousand Buddha Array,' the 'Dirghagama - sutra,' or the 'Summoning God Technique' used by this mage just now, all originated from our Great Freedom Temple."

"These methods are all good, and if they could benefit the world, it would also be the merit of our Free Temple."

"How did they fall into the hands of these mages, only to be so twisted?"

"Mage, I see an Arhat branding within your Divine Soul, it appears you intend to use this to perform the Summoning God Technique. Do you realize, with this act, not only will your Dao path be severed, but your life is also at risk. Your Divine Soul, Essence Blood, and Primordial Embryo will all be devoured by that Shipi Arhat."

"If it were the original, the True Skill, would the cost be so high?"

After saying this, Shenxiu's expression once again turned merciful and compassionate.

Opening his mouth again, he recited a Buddha's verse:

"The source water is always clear, gradually becoming muddy as it flows."

"Those greedy in mind turn cunning over time, thoughts of illusion darken the nature."

"Foolish children, all foolish children, awaken swiftly."

"Return to the pure origin!"

"Clarify your mind to discern your nature!"

Shenxiu, unexpectedly, made a sudden move.

If one only observed the scene, it seemed to be not any shocking Divine Skill.

It appeared more like Shenxiu Monk was preaching. He held the Wisdom Seal, opened Merciful Eyes, spoke with a Lotus mouth, and Buddha Light enveloped the city.

Every single word contained profound Buddha Dharma, and within, nothing was concealed, teachings laid bare.

Even hearing just one sentence could lead to sudden insight, gaining some enlightenment.

Thus, in the next moment, whether it was the city's populace or the group of demon monks, all sat down cross-legged, closed their eyes, concentrated their minds, and meditated towards enlightenment.

It stands to reason that with Flower Staff and Hei Bo being two Venerables with the highest cultivation, they should have had some resistance.

Regrettably, precisely because their cultivation was high, they couldn't resist at all.

As the Lotus bloomed, the Buddha Dharma was pronounced.

The two Venerables simultaneously closed their eyes, sitting cross-legged in the swamp, radiating immense joy just like the rest of the population.

This sudden change was indeed too swift; even Tao Qian had not reacted in time.

In a daze, he recalled how Bai Qin had launched a sneak attack inside the Beautiful Corpse Bodhisattva's body, targeting the Primordial Spirit using the "Bu Jue Guanyin Root Seal," forcibly inducing meditation and sudden insight—it was ingeniously similar.

At that moment, Yuan Gong also transmitted a message, lamenting,

"See that, this is the depth of the Buddhist Sect's leader."

"These little demon Buddhas stole the Great Lifebook Scripture, practicing it through perverse methods, twisted theories. Though the cost is great, the power is high and casting convenient."

"Yet, once they encounter a genuine Free Buddha Son, just one move like this, no matter how many little demons there are, all will be invalidated."

"Of course, this is also why these little demons are unworthy; if a genuine Demon Buddha Son were here, they might contend and debate with this little monk."

...

Not long after, Shenxiu Monk ceased his enlightened preaching.

The people and monks in the city were still immersed in the divine Buddhist laws, unable to extricate themselves.

If someone had just arrived, they would be astonished by the scene and later exclaim: truly an Earthly Buddha Country.

However, after observing, Tao Qian suddenly pointed at Yinping City, his tone laced with a hint of blame, and asked Shenxiu,

"Master, look at these city dwellers, hundreds of thousands of people, all evidently harmed by Demon Buddha."

"Yet according to what you said, the root of Demon Buddha Dharma is the Free Dharma."

"Only your Buddha's verse allegedly shirks responsibility, claiming the source water is clear but gradually muddied."

"Master, with your profound Buddhist law, do you have a good solution for the present predicament?"

Shenxiu, upon hearing the question, paused slightly startled, then pondered seriously.

After a long while, he solemnly bowed and replied,

"Om Amitabha!"

"If there is chaos caused by a Demon Buddha, we should summon a True Buddha to correct the source and save the world's people."

Tao Qian was asking both Shenxiu and himself.

Upon hearing the answer, he immediately shook his head,

"I fear it won't work; the capacity to save others sometimes exhausts, better to let people save themselves."

Uttering these words, Tao Qian's eyes immediately lit up.

As if sensing something in a moment of blessings, a joyful expression also appeared on his face.

Meanwhile, Shenxiu Monk, after hearing this, pondered though wasn't convinced, and was about to say something. However, Tao Qian didn't give him the chance.

A joke? Who doesn't know that Buddhist monks are best at Debating Scripture?

Master Tao, quick-witted and tricky, might gain little advantages, but seriously debating was as hard as ascending to the heavens.

Though debating Scripture was not his strong suit, it didn't mean Tao Qian couldn't do other things.

"This monk has extraordinary Divine Skills, and his support is no less substantial than mine."

"Hmm, he could be of great use, must be utilized."

Settling on this thought, Tao Qian immediately interrupted Shenxiu.

First, he brought out the Great Compassionate and Merciful Transcendent Bodhisattva, then pointing at the current state of Yinping City, he began,

"Master!"

"Our oral debate is futile."

"Now, in Qiantang Province, to say that Demon Buddha has thrown the world into chaos and people into suffering isn't an exaggeration; seeing such a ferocious Buddha Treasure, the monk would admit there's evil power from your Free Temple involved, you can hardly deny."

"Master has entered the world to accumulate merits through overcoming tribulations, my wife and I are heading north for the same purpose."

"As chances would have it, instead of this, how about we gamble using Qiantang Province, each deploying Sublime Dharma to see who can reverse the decline in Qiantang and return a clear world to these tens of millions of people—shall we see who wins?"

Shenxiu initially thought this proposal was just a casual joke from a southern recluse.

But in the next moment, as the words of the Wu Gou Buddha Son came to an end, he faintly sensed a "thunderous boom" from the void, an overwhelming rush of Human Dao Fortune surging forth.

Chapter 637 - Tao Qian Tricks Shenxiu into the Jar, Kongchan Wishes to Make Wu Gou Famous

Shenxiu was an honest monk and didn't hide the fact that he came into the world to accumulate merit and fortune.

At this moment, with just a few words, Tao Qian had transferred such immense Human Dao Fortune over to him.

As long as Shenxiu accepted the bet, regardless of success or failure, he was bound to gain something, and if he won the bet, he could even take a large share of the merit and fortune.

It was possible that with just this one venture in Qiantang Province, his nine great merits and ninety-nine small merits could be brought to Perfect completion, allowing him to return to the Free Temple, set foot in Ultimate Happiness, and attain the Status of Arhat.

Such a great "temptation" was not something common cultivators could easily resist, not to mention those truly virtuous monks.

Yet Shenxiu Monk's reaction was somewhat comically unexpected.

He appeared astonished, his true self fully revealed, as he hastily stood to cast spells, repelling the incoming fortune into his body, all the while exclaiming:

"My heavens, Buddha above, such ferocious merit and fortune."

"My master once said, benefits that come knocking are bait, and I must not blindly accept them. If I do, surely I will be caught."

"You're inviting me to gamble—are you entertaining such thoughts?"

Earlier, Shenxiu, though ugly, suppressed the Demon Buddha Venerable with his Flower Staff and Hei Bo when casting spells to subdue demons.

Anyone who saw him would praise: Worthy of the Free Buddha Son, a virtuous high monk.

Now, he finally showed a bit of humanity, much more lively and animated.

Especially with that Tianfu Province accent, it was both endearing and amusing to listen to.

Hearing that Shenxiu intended to refuse the duel, Tao Qian's expression remained unchanged, as if he had anticipated it, and he didn't do anything to interfere.

There must be a cause before there can be an effect.

The cause was not Tao Qian's; he was merely fulfilling the predestined role.

Unless something unexpected happened, Shenxiu absolutely couldn't refuse.

Indeed, before Tao Qian could respond,

As soon as the overwhelming Human Dao Fortune surged into Shenxiu's Dharma Body, the honest monk's expression changed instantly.

His face full of worry, he clapped his hands repeatedly, unable to form the Wisdom Seal, deeply annoyed and incessantly muttering:

"When I was in the temple, my master told me I needed to fix my habit of debating scripture; otherwise, it would sooner or later lead to karmic consequences. At that time, I argued with my master, saying his habit of hitting people also needed to change, otherwise, he too would have to face the wall."

"It seems that we were both right."

"If I don't accept this bet today, there may be no immediate harm, but the resentment of All People also weighs heavily on my heart. I fear I may eventually nourish some terrible Heart Demons."

"If I accept this bet, though there is a benefit, and I may complete most of the task of accumulating merits to overcome the Cultivation Tribulation, trouble is also significant."

"After all, Qiantang is the Mage's territory of the Demon Buddha Temple. How can I, alone, compete with them? I'm afraid of being swallowed whole and I must call for help."

"Take Shipi Arhat, for instance, even my master may not be able to defeat him, much less me. Perhaps I'd have to ask Master Auspicious Arhat for assistance just to have a chance."

"And there are many demon monks, big and small; I don't have many friends in my temple, so I'll have to go to Vajra Temple to ask for help. There are over a hundred Vajra Monks there, and some have an old connection with me..."

As Shenxiu rambled on, he didn't notice that the mighty fortune he had rejected and was about to dissipate

Gradually found a foothold and smoothly, bit by bit, entered the body of this ugly monk.

At this sight, Tao Qian revealed a smile, clearly understanding: the bet was set.

"The Buddha's son ranked in the top three of the Great Freedom Temple, due to a twist of fate, has been lured into my trap."

"Regardless of whether I win or he wins, the destiny of millions in Qiantang Province will surely improve significantly."

As Tao Qian pondered, Shenxiu also came to his senses.

Looking at himself, he showed a joyful expression on his face, evident that he had reaped a decent reward.

He joined his hands together and said with a bow:

"Since the deed is done, I must accept. Thank you, Daoist, for facilitating this."

Tao Qian returned the gesture and, pointing to the people of the city who were meditating for sudden insight and the demon monks, asked:

"How should we handle this situation? Even the enlightening sermons won't cure the underlying issues. When these demon monks awaken, they may take their anger out on the townspeople... Killing these demon monks would also be futile, for a few of the Arhats from the Demon Buddha Temple will probably arrive soon, and seeing their demon monks eradicated, they will be even angrier with the townspeople."

Shenxiu seemed to already have an answer to this issue.

He pointed straight at the Great Transcendence Bodhisattva summoned by Tao Qian and responded:

"Daoist need not worry. The people within Qiantang Province are considered by the Demon Buddha Monk as fodder sheep."

"They eat the delicious and enjoy the Wish Power; they won't easily squander it."

"It is permissible to use them for refining such Buddha Treasures; at other times, far from venting their anger, because I have released this enlightening Dharma, they will even take greater care of them, providing grain if they need grain and shelter if they need shelter. They aim to once more corrupt the people's minds to offer up Incense Fire Wish Power. This will continue for at least some time."

"As for the future... the monks of the Demon Buddha Temple may not be able to stay in Qiantang Province any longer."

"By then, the province should have returned to its original purity, resonating with the sound of the Free Buddha's teachings."

With the last sentence, Shenxiu Monk finally showed the domineering spirit befitting one of the top three Buddha's sons from the Great Freedom Temple.

His words showed clear disdain for the Demon Buddha Temple Monks.

Tao Qian, of course, was pleased to see this, secretly laughing to himself:

"What a domineering monk!"

"Open plots are useful indeed; the truth does not deceive me."

"Earlier, I wasn't sure how to deal with the complex circumstances of Qiantang Province—with the Gao Family, Alchemists, Demon Buddha Temple, Cheng Arhat, a multitude of warlords... just Ultimate Happiness Realm holds no telling how many esteemed beings, much more troublesome than New Moon Province."

"Now that I've recruited this monk to our side, hehe, everything seems much clearer."

While Tao Qian was somewhat pleased with himself, Shenxiu Monk's gaze remained fixed on the Great Transcendence Bodhisattva.

His face showed a hint of embarrassment; he eventually blushed and, clenching his teeth, said to Tao Qian:

"This treasure is a malevolent item crafted by the opposing methods of the Demon Buddha, combined with the Mechanical Species from the Outer Realm."

Chapter 638 - Tao Qian tricks Shenxiu into the jar, Kongchan wishes to make Wu Gou famous_2

"Daoist, this artifact embryo in your hands is incomplete without the 'Wisdom Mother' and thus can only be considered flawed," he said. "If it were refined with the Sublime Dharma of Buddhist wisdom, it could indeed be transformed from evil to righteous."

"I am but a humble monk, yet I happen to have cultivated a scroll of the 'Great Wisdom Heart Sutra.' Perhaps I could take on this task..."

Shenxiu had only spoken halfway when he suddenly realized—

The Master Wu Gou, who a moment prior was smiling broadly and speaking kindly, had his expression change in an instant.

He promptly stuffed the menacing Bodhisattva statue into a Buddhist Exotic Treasure known as the 'People Species Bag,' then took the hand of the Female Bodhisattva, chose a direction, and turned to flee the scene.

Just before he left, he threw out one parting remark:

"Master, do not worry, Wu Gou is inept at everything else but excels at subduing the most malevolent beings."

"The bet is on; let us each use our skills to our best abilities."

As his last word fell,

This pair of extraordinary-looking Buddhists, who came from the South Sea, vanished without a trace.

Only a wretched-looking monk remained behind, sorrowfully lamenting with a face full of regret, muttering to himself:

"Misjudgment, misjudgment."

"At that time, I shouldn't have been concerned with the distinction between the sexes, charging ahead instead of embracing; otherwise, that Buddha Treasure should have been mine."

"And to think, you folks actually crafted a Buddha Treasure with the likeness of a Female Bodhisattva."

"Deviant from the path and harboring deceit in the heart, no wonder it's called Demon Buddha."

After Shenxiu blamed a group of demon monks within the city, he also quickly employed the Heart Light Escape to leave.

He was different from Tao Master; he was more straightforward.

Having accepted the wager, he was determined to give it his all.

With his identity as the sole disciple of the Great Freedom Buddha's Son, Long Meng Arhat, he was ready to exert all his efforts, and no one knew how much Power he could borrow.

...

Shortly after their departure, the demon monks and the city dwellers began to regain their senses.

Previously, including the two Venerables Flower Staff and Hei Bo, a horde of demon monks peacefully received worship and harvested Incense Fire Wish Power from the people.

But they had just been recently restored to righteousness through the Buddhist Law by Shenxiu Monk and were unsettled by reflections on their past conduct.

So, they earnestly began to make amends.

On one side, the monks opened their storehouses to distribute grain and even dismantled their grand temples built of gold and silver treasures to distribute wealth among the city's citizens.

On the other side, the two Venerables sat meditating in the mire, sincerely reciting the 'Longevity Scripture,' using their own Life Span and Magic Power to heal hundreds of thousands of Mortals of hidden injuries and minor illnesses.

About thirty minutes later,

A Buddha Light suddenly descended upon Yinping City.

From within the light emerged a benevolent and peculiar-looking old monk with a seven-pronged Bodhi Branch in his hand, upon which perched a Jade Cicada.

Had Tao Qian still been there, he would have immediately recognized the figure,

It was the familiar old figure, Kongchan Arhat.

When this Demon Buddha Arhat appeared, the city echoed with the indicative sound of cicadas chirping.

In the past, such noise meant he could expect to see his many disciples kneel in adulation, shouting, "Welcome Kongchan Old Ancestor."

But today, for some unknown reason, he was deprived of this reception.

Looking around, the citizens were mingling happily with the demon monks, even including the deceitful and ruthless Flower Staff and Hei Bo.

When he arrived, the group of demon monks looked at him with anger in their eyes.

Especially the rash Hei Bo Venerable, who yelled out:

"Demon Buddha Kongchan, leave this place at once."

"If you wish to harm anyone today, you'll have to step over our corpses."

Kongchan Arhat was indeed a Long-year-old Demon and had witnessed countless bizarre and unthinkable things.

Yet in this moment, he was struck with laughter by the audacity of it all.

Watching his once-obedient disciples now rebelliously facing him, he suppressed his rage and gently waved the Bodhi Branch in his hand.

Suddenly, the cicada's melody shifted from mellifluous to raucous, and denser still was the "sweet rain" that poured forth from within the Jade Cicadas on the Bodhi Tree Branch.

It was sweet, yet with a hint of fishiness.

But its effect was astonishing, as all the townsfolk and those demon monks came back to life.

From evil to good and then back to evil, only to circle around again.

The other townsfolk and demon monks were easier to deal with, waking up with faces full of confusion and bewilderment.

But Flower Staff and Hei Bo, upon regaining their senses, instantly turned pale with terror, sweating profusely and trembling so violently they nearly lost control of their bowels.

Especially Hei Bo, who just moments ago was speaking arrogantly, now had the color of death in his eyes.

He prostrated on the ground, ceaselessly kowtowing, and wailed mournfully,

"Uncle Master, please spare me this one time, Hei Bo was possessed just now."

"It's all that Shenxiu Monk's fault, he confused our hearts with the Free Dharma, leading Hei Bo to spout madness. Please see the truth, Uncle Master..."

Witnessing Hei Bo's nonsensical chatter and untiring defense, yet not a word making sense, the countenance of Kongchan Arhat darkened even more.

Flower Staff Venerable, not caring for anything else, immediately interrupted and meticulously reported everything that had happened.

After speaking, he pulled Hei Bo into a prostrate position and waited to face their fate.

His face maintained calmness, but his heart was filled with despair, and he thought to himself:

"Alas!"

"We all were deceived by Shenxiu Monk using the Free Dharma, which doesn't count as a sin; that ugly monk is the Free Buddha's Son, and indeed not someone we could rival."

"But what's truly fatal is that monk from the South Sea, Wu Gou."

"This little thief stole the Great Transcendence Bodhisattva; if Uncle Master Kongchan seeks accountability, Hei Bo will be put to death by Uncle Shipi, and I, Flower Staff, will have to leave first and die right here in Yinping City."

"Such is fate and life, it's inescapable."

Just as Flower Staff Venerable was racking his brains trying to find a way to survive.

Above Yinping City, after hearing the whole story, Kongchan Arhat's face showed a trace of killing intent.

Without uttering a word, he immediately began to make calculations.

Flower Staff was right, Kongchan was in the midst of calculations, and if he determined that the mess these worthless beings had caused was irretrievable, he would indeed make a deadly move.

But soon, he paused in his calculation, as the cicadas chimed again and Buddha Light surged, seeming to connect with a certain Void.

He murmured an incantation without sound escaping his mouth.

After a moment, Kongchan's expression softened, and he laughed loudly towards the Southern void,

"So that's how it is, I didn't expect Qingjing Zen Master to have the intention of establishing a lineage. This is a good thing, a great thing indeed; Kongchan will certainly go to the South Sea to offer his congratulations.

"As for that Buddha Treasure, since the Zen Master personally guarantees it, Kongchan naturally believes it."

"I'll lend it to the esteemed nephew to play with for some time. When I and my brother Shipi hold a Dharma assembly in Qiantang City, I hope the Zen Master will inform that Wu Gou nephew to be sure to attend, as Kongchan, being his senior, must give a welcoming gift and ensure he is well entertained."

After these words fell, both Flower Staff and Hei Bo wore puzzled expressions.

But they quickly understood that the little thief called "Wu Gou," his Master Qingjing Zen Master, had past ties with Uncle Master Kongchan, and was currently connecting with him; it seemed that Wu Gou Monk was borrowing the Buddha Treasure and would return it after some time.

With this realization, both Venerables immediately breathed a sigh of relief.

Their lives seemed to be saved.

Sure enough, in the next moment, they heard a cold snort, from Uncle Master Kongchan's voice, still filled with anger, but devoid of killing intent,

"Consider yourselves lucky, wretches, that the Buddha Treasure is not yet lost."

"I am aware of Shenxiu's troublemaking in Qiantang and indeed, it's a complication."

"As for that Wu Gou Monk! This child is the true inheritor of the Southern Sea Qingjing Zen Master. Qingjing, being both righteous and wicked, has connections with our temple and has obtained the true teachings of the Dharma Cakra Temple. It's said that he even has tangled dealings with Guanyin Temple. He's not far from achieving Daoist Transformation, and now that he's made up his mind to establish a lineage, he might just attain Daoist status before we do."

"Such an old monster must be won over, not to be offended without reason."

"Since Wu Gou Monk is his true disciple and has traveled here to Qiantang, you might as well help him out."

"Promote his reputation! It's best to lead people to mistakenly believe that this child has a good relationship with our Demon Buddha Temple."

"Right, Shenxiu that little troublemaker has a significant reputation; bring him out to be the stepping stone for Wu Gou Monk."

Chapter 639 - Refining the Bodhisattva, Zhen Family Treasure Ship

All the provinces in the Northern Land knew that because the Devil Concubine Yuan Mingzhen was trapped in the old site of Han Mountain Temple, a struggle for her ensued, causing a surge of chaos within Qiantang Province, with warlords and strong people gathering from all around.

Many famous people, Great Cultivators, and great warlords had stepped into this province with various motives.

And on this day, yet another rumor began to spread throughout Qiantang Province:

"Eh, have you heard? Yesterday at Yinping City, an ancient Buddhist treasure was unearthed within the centuries-old Treasure Vase Temple which revealed an Ancient Secret Realm. No one knows the exact rank of the treasure, but upon its appearance, it was accompanied by Ten Thousand Feet of Buddha Light, celestial flowers falling randomly, and Earth Bursting Golden Lotuses, even calling upon All Saints to witness it. It must be a true treasure."

"So what? It still ended up in the hands of the monks at Demon Buddha Temple, as if an outsider would even get a chance."

"Heh heh, this time you're wrong. The one who seized the Buddha Treasure was a monk from the South Sea known as Master Wu Gou. Dressed in pure white, uniquely handsome and untainted by dust, apart from being a Hidden Cultivator under Qingjing Zen Master, his Divine Skills are outstanding."

"Ah, I thought it was something significant; just some villager from the South Sea, after all! How could a foreign Buddhist practitioner compare to the high monks of the Central Plains?"

"You're wrong again! Master Wu Gou is incredible. Do you know from whom he seized that Buddha Treasure?"

"Who?"

"That day, there was also a Free Buddha Son present, known as Master Shenxiu. It is said that even among the current generation of Buddha's sons at Great Freedom Temple, Shenxiu Monk ranks in the top three. He is proficient in supreme Demon Suppressing Skills like 'Thundering Buddha Flame,' but even so, he was defeated by Master Wu Gou, who then took the Buddha Treasure."

"Sss! Is he really that powerful?"

This somewhat exaggerated dialogue and rumored information, with the help of the monks at Demon Buddha Temple, spread throughout Qiantang overnight.

Master Wu Gou became famous overnight!

Even the mortals who were well-informed knew: a powerful monk had come from the South Sea.

In Steamed Buddha City, which was temporarily closed off by the Gao Family, the news had also been received.

The three Ultimate Happiness Realm True Monarchs of the Gao Family had mixed feelings. They felt secure having allied with Qingjing and Master Wu Gou, forming family ties, taking the True Lord of a Hundred Demons as a powerful ally.

As for Jade Demon True Monarch Gao Zhan, he clenched his teeth in fury, hating those bald monks and their disciples even more.

As for Gao Buxi, he was squeezed daily by the Joyful Demon. Whenever Duan Yuhong beckoned him westward, he dared not head east.

The Gao Family's secrets were hardly hidden from Duan Yuhong's eyes.

...

Speaking of Tao Master, who had become famous in Qiantang and seized the Great Transcendence Bodhisattva, he bid farewell to Shenxiu Monk and took Lady Yunrong with him to a certain place.

That territory was naturally not chosen at random, but rather directed by the mysterious guiding force of Human Dao Destiny within him.

Why had Tao Qian invited Shenxiu for a gamble, coaxing him to join their group?

The reason was not that he was idle and felt that Qiantang was not chaotic enough, but rather in that instant, he had received an inspiration, knowing how to quickly resolve the disaster in Qiantang.

At the same time, it also aided his own enlightenment and self-liberation.

Midway there, Tao Qian received a transmission from his master.

Before any serious conversation could occur, a laugh of satisfaction emanated first from the Golden Radiance Token:

"Ha ha ha... Good disciple, you have finally grasped the true essence of the Duobao Lineage."

"If it weren't for Kongchan, that old fool, trying to calculate and probe our roots, I would not yet know of the deeds you've done. That Great Compassionate and Merciful Transcendent Bodhisattva I've already predicted, and indeed it is a fierce weapon. If we can collect all of them and forge a Nirvana Demon Buddha, it would be considered a treasure to safeguard our Sect's fortune."

"If such a precious item is in our hands, how could we possibly give it up?"

"Good job on this matter, my disciple."

"Rest assured, I've already fooled Kongchan from Demon Buddha Temple. Not only are there no repercussions, but that group of foolish monks will be eager to help spread this fake identity of yours."

After saying all these, Tao Qian thought that was the end of it.

Yet the Golden Radiance Token trembled once more, and Duobao added:

"By the way, if that old monkey suggests using souls from All Heavens Demons to replace the Human Clan souls to refine that Bodhisattva, don't listen to him. That old guy is gathering resources for the reconstruction of the Secret Demon Sect."

With this statement out, Tao Qian could guess what would come next.

Indeed, the statue in his arms trembled, the voice of Master Yuan came saying:

"Pah! Shameless Duobao, spouting nonsense."

"Gathering resources has nothing to do with me; that's all on my brothers and sisters."

"Besides, even if it's true, so what? Tao Qian is a disciple of the Old Ape and naturally counts as a Secret Demon Child. Rebuilding the Secret Demon is his unavoidable duty."

Master Yuan was just about to have a back-and-forth with Duobao for three hundred rounds.

But after Duobao's reminder, he closed the Golden Radiance Token himself, not giving Master Yuan a chance.

Having been splashed suddenly with dirty water, Master Yuan was hard put to it and, to clear himself of suspicion, straightforwardly said to Tao Qian:

"Good disciple, pay no mind to Duobao's slander."

"Though as your master, I do think if these fierce Bodhisattva artifacts could be compiled into a set and forge a 'Nirvana Demon Buddha,' it would be very imposing placed before the Mountain Gate after rebuilding the Demon Sect."

"But as the foremost Demon Sect, why would we need a Demon Buddha for decoration?"

"Why don't you refine that treasure however you want, and just don't bother me about it."

After these words, Master Yuan spoke no more and closed his statue, no longer planning to advise Tao Master.

This back-and-forth between the two masters left Tao Qian quite speechless.

Both were senior experts, yet their disposition was quite like that of children.

However, how exactly to refine the incomplete Bodhisattva weapon, Tao Qian indeed had a plan in mind.

The Secret Demon Method seemed suitable but was actually impractical.

The Record that had emerged upon initial contact had already hinted at something.

[Name: Great Compassionate and Merciful Transcendent Bodhisattva.]

Chapter 640 - Refining the Bodhisattva, Zhen Family Treasure Ship_2

[Record Type: Alien.]

[Record: This entity belongs to an alien species, part mechanical and also a living being. It is created using the Demon Buddha Secret Method to absorb the flesh and blood of a massive number of extraordinary beings, forging a Bodhisattva Image and merging it with the Outer Realm Mechanical Seed which originates from the Great Abyss Origin Sea. This Mechanical Seed can animate life and evolve marvelously. Once the four necessary conditions are met and the Bodhisattva is refined, whether it be its Dharma Body or its Divine Skills, thousands of Buddhist Treasures and Mechanical Weapons can be transformed from illusion to reality. When it manifests its Merciful Dharma Form, it can subdue beings from the Ultimate Happiness Realm.]

[Note One: Since the "Wisdom Mother", a key component, is missing, this entity has not yet been refined. Although it is not branded, it responds and relates to the other seventeen Transcendence Bodhisattvas. Once the other Bodhisattvas are refined, this one will fly to merge with them out of thin air.]

[Note Two: Besides using at least tens of thousands of souls from the Human Clan, long tainted by the wisdom of the Demon Buddha, as the Wisdom Mother, it is also possible to find other replacements to complete it, such as: an equal number of Outer Realm Demons tainted by the Demon Sect Heart Method, or similar Dharma causes. The so-called Wisdom Mother is actually referring to the core of wisdom that governs the Dharma Body.]

[Note Three: Regardless of the method used to complement the refinement, there is a risk of it being taken away, because the Mechanical Seed was originally one and was split into eighteen by the Namu Nirvana Demon Buddha to refine the treasure. When the treasure is completed, they must become one again, and ownership will belong to the one with the strongest Wisdom Mother.]

[Note Four: Because this object originates from the Demon Buddha Secret Method and the Mechanical Seed, whether refining or using it, it will be invaded by these two sources, gradually being assimilated... there is a waiver for this cost!]

[Note Five: Due to the extraordinary marvel of this object, excessive use will foster a sense of reverence, affection, and finally an abnormal dependence on it, as if it were a friend, a lord, or even a spouse... There are many possibilities, but there is a waiver for this cost.]

It's fortunate that Tao Qian could waive all the costs, otherwise, even just the fifth condition would be enough to keep Master Tao at bay.

I have the True Bodhisattva, why would I need a fake one... Master Tao thought to himself.

After reviewing the Record, Tao Qian then handed the Great Transcendence Bodhisattva over to Lian Jing'er inside the People Species Bag.

Specialization leads to proficiency!

Since it's a Mechanical Weapon, a cybernetic Bodhisattva, it undoubtedly wouldn't pose a challenge to Lian Jing'er, who was becoming more difficult for Tao Qian to comprehend.

Indeed, the answer didn't take long to arrive.

The mechanical voice of Lian Jing'er came through clearly:

"Accessing the secret repository... Generating plan."

"After excluding the method of sacrificing tens of thousands of souls to create the Wisdom Mother, there are still two methods to forge this object."

"The first is to cultivate the 'Great Wisdom Heart Sutra' from the Free Temple scriptures, which, once mastered, makes it possible to condense a Wisdom Seed by reciting the entire sutra. Accumulating tens of thousands of these seeds can completely refine this treasure."

"The second method is a brute force approach. Brother Tao could communicate with the [Outer Heaven Flame Essence]. These Outer Realm Elves are naturally intelligent and possess the divine power to refine all things. If he could summon tens of thousands, this entity could be refined."

"However, if the second method is used, be cautious and ensure a harmonious connection of minds. The Flame Essence is fierce, and a single one can burn everything. Gathering tens of thousands will result in extraordinary power. Unfortunately, the sophisticated and sensitive prohibitions within the Buddha Treasure and the natural disaster-avoiding traits of the Mechanical Seed, if care is not taken, can result in the self-destruction of the Buddha Treasure and the escape of the Seed."

...

"Combined with what Lian Jing'er mentioned and the Record, the answer is clear."

"The Secret Demon magic seems feasible but is actually not because, in the end, the Outer Realm Demons would likely not be able to compete with the methods of the Demon Buddha Temple."

"Instead, the Free Dharma as told by Shenxiu might work. After all, unlike the declining Secret Demon Sect, the Great Freedom Temple is flourishing and, with the advantage of the Buddhist True Dharma, it might be possible to subdue the other seventeen Great Transcendence Bodhisattvas just like Shenxiu did with the demon monks in Yinping City."

"Additionally, there's my method using the Outer Heaven Flame Essence. Those little things are quite adorable, one by one, but they are infamous in the Outer Realm. When the time comes, they just might overpower the Demon Buddha Secret Method."

"Well then, let's use this method and first refine a Thousand-Handed Guanyin Bodhisattva."

As these thoughts settled in Tao Qian's heart,

He was already standing with Yunrong on a bustling pier teeming with people.

This place was Lingyun Pier, just outside Lingzhi City, hundreds of miles from Yinping City.

Qiantang Province has many waterways running through it from east to west, and naturally, there are many piers. This one was just one of the larger ones.

Although the Demon Buddha Temple belongs to the Demon Path, it is still a Great Sect and, due to the particularity of the Buddhist Dharma, it is comparatively tasteful.

The common masses are seen as providers of Incense Fire Wish Power, and it would be imprudent to sever them off all at once.

Just like Shan Jiu, they need to be harvested in intervals to sustain perpetually.

Therefore, the surreptitious control by the Demon Buddha Temple has made Qiantang Province even more prosperous, or at least it appears so on the surface.

The scene at "Lingyun Pier" reminded Tao Qian of the Seeking Immortal Pier from before. Compared to the former, the latter was ten times more bustling.

But even amidst the hustle and bustle, ninety-nine percent were mortals.

Even though Tao Qian and Yunrong deliberately concealed their aura and even disguised their appearance somewhat,

They still attracted many suspicious glances on the waterfront, especially from Cultivators. Even those in the Energy-Introducing Realm, positioned by the pier, could not ignore the two.

Unable to discern their true identities, everyone still felt the same impression.

What a divine couple!

Ordinary Cultivators envied them.

Evil Cultivators hatched perverse thoughts.

In today's Qiantang, the latter were in abundance.

Thus, as the two began looking for a boat at the pier, stating they wanted to go to Suzhou City, at least a dozen lower-tier nefarious Cultivators in the Energy-Introducing and Qi Refining Realms quietly advanced, harboring malintent.

Tao Qian and Yunrong, both Great Divine Power Cultivators.

If they really wanted to discard their Cultivation and pass as commoners, not even Ultimate Happiness Realm True Monarchs would be able to tell.