

Young Zhang Bishi

Zhang Bishi (1841-1916), also known as Zhenxun, was born into a poor family in Meizhou, Guangdong. He was the third of four brothers. Father Zhang Lanxuan is a kind-hearted teacher, traditional Chinese medicine practitioner, and geographer at a mountain village monastery. Zhang Bishi's nickname is Zhaoxie, and he was called Xiezi when he was young. He only studied with his father who taught private schools for three years.

According to legend, Zhang Bishi exhibited excellent qualities such as being ambitious, following the rules of propriety and filial piety, and being kind-hearted when he was young, which laid the foundation for him to become a famous red crowned businessman in the future.

Speaking of Zhang Bishi's youthful past, let's first talk about the old house of the Zhang family. It is said that behind the old house of the Zhang family at that time were fields, rivers, and green mountains, with water like jade belts and mountains like screens, and infinite scenery. The green mountain is like a flag inserted behind a general in ancient costume dramas, known as "Ling Qi Mountain". From a distance, it looks like a tiger lying on its side, with its head and body a few miles away, and its huge tail in close proximity. The feng shui pattern is like a tiger lying on its back, and the geographer said that in the future, "big people" will emerge from the old house. In addition, the clear Zhangxi River next to it also confirms the Feng Shui theory that "there is water in front and mountains behind". It is said that relying on mountains and water leads to prosperous financial and official luck.

Young and ambitious

It is said that when Zhang Bishi was a child, his family was poor and he had been herding cows by the river. He once made a bet with his friends, saying, "If I make a lot of money in the future, I will build the largest and most beautiful house on the riverbank, and treat you to eat for three years and three months." As a result, his friends all laughed at him for being a dreamer. However, after decades of hard work in the Nanyang region, Zhang Bishi's youthful ambition was finally realized in 1908. This once poor cattle herder, Zhang Bishi, spent a huge sum of money to build a large estate covering an area of 100 acres, with 99 rooms, on the banks of the Zhangxi River and at the foot of Lingqi Mountain, where he used to herd cattle. He did indeed invite his childhood cattle herders to eat for three years and three months. A remarkable young man's promise of making a promise to a thousand gold coins gave later generations a thumbs up.

Every inch of grass shines with spring sunshine

A great businessman needs to have both high intelligence and high emotional intelligence.

When Zhang Bishi was 18 years old, in order to make a living, he had to leave his hometown and venture alone to Southeast Asia. Before leaving, he looked at his parents, thinking about their earnest teachings and strong love for him. Then, he looked around at the familiar smoke, clear rivers, and beautiful mountains, which made him very sad, with tears in his eyes. He stopped for a long time without saying a word, never willing to leave, afraid that taking this step would lead him to all corners of the world. He couldn't please his parents, nor could he fulfill his filial piety in front of the house, which was very sad.

When he finally walked with heavy steps to a hill, he found his old white haired father

leaning against the door and staring. He waved to his father repeatedly, feeling a sense of separation in his heart. It took him half a day from morning until noon to slowly leave.

Later, Zhang Bishi's father said to his family and friends around him, "My son's reluctant appearance when he left is a true expression of his true nature. He is so concerned and attached to my family. When he reaches great success in the future, he will definitely come back.". A wise son is like a father. Years later, his father's prophecy came true.

Hanging lantern upside down

Zhang Bishi came from a poor family and started herding cattle for one of his brother-in-law at the age of 13. Due to their small size and ferocity, it is inevitable that accidents may occur at times, such as when a cow eats, steps on someone else's food, crops, and so on. And Zhang Bishi's sister-in-law is very stingy, often getting angry over these small things, causing a lot of unpleasantness. One afternoon, Zhang Bishi saw that the cow had almost eaten, so he fixed the lead rope on the grass with a wooden stake to tie the cow and wanted to sit down and take a breath. In the blink of an eye, the cow broke free from the wooden stake and ran to the manor's land, trampling and gnawing on it. The owner of the land caught it on the spot and led it to Zhang Bishi's brother-in-law's house, causing him great embarrassment. At this moment, Zhang Bishi was searching for cows everywhere until it was dark and there was nowhere to find them, so he returned home.

Unexpectedly, as soon as I entered the door, I was slapped by my brother-in-law. Zhang Bishi knew he had made a mistake and remained silent, letting his brother-in-law beat him.

But after his brother-in-law finished fighting, he kept cursing and even scolded Zhang Bishi for not being even as good as the dead, saying, "Even the dead can hold onto four

coffins, but you can't even control a cow.". Zhang Bishi couldn't bear it anymore, so he immediately stood up and said, "Alright! I'm better off dead than dead! You bullied me because I was young and poor. When I grew up, one day I will make a fortune and show you what I want." "How are you?" Zhang Bishi's brother-in-law sneered, "Poor little boy, what will happen when you grow up? If you were Xiezi, you would make a fortune, and even the salted fish would turn over. My brother-in-law's lantern would hang upside down!" From then on, Zhang Bishi would rather starve than let his brother-in-law herd cattle. Later on, Zhao Xie went to a bamboo workshop in the mountain village to work, chopping bamboo strips and weaving baskets every day. At the age of 18, he ventured into Southeast Asia alone and became very wealthy in less than 10 years, becoming the leader of overseas Chinese. One year, when Zhao Xie returned to his hometown, his brother-in-law did indeed hang the lantern upside down in front of the door. When Zhao Xie saw it, he quickly asked his sister to turn the lantern over and sincerely said to her sister and brother-in-law, "The past is over. If it weren't for the encouragement from her brother-in-law's ridicule back then, I might not have been where I am today. Moreover, the people in the village are all surnamed Rao. If you hang the lantern with the word Rao upside down, wouldn't you offend the whole village?" Zhao Xie said to his sister and brother-in-law, immediately reversing the hanging lantern upside down.

Wuzhi Hall

The mansions and villas built by Zhang Bishi in some major ports in Nanyang are all engraved with the three characters "Wuzhi Tang" in marble. There is a saying that this name is used to commemorate his father Zhang Lanxuan. Zhang's father, Lan Xuan, was

originally a mountain teacher in Dapu. When he returned home from a walk, he found a package left by a passerby in the mountain pavilion. Upon opening it, he found a heavy bag of silver. He waited in the pavilion for the owner to come and collect it, until the sun set in the western mountains. When he saw the owner return, he returned the original package to the other party. Seeing that Zhang's father had returned the money, he wanted to offer 20 taels of silver as a reward, but was refused by Zhang's father. The owner thought he was too young, so he added 20 more taels. But Zhang's father spoke seriously to the owner, saying, "A gentleman has a solid foundation. As a scholar, I am not greedy for unexpected wealth. If I have greed, I will not guard your silver for most of the day. If I carry your silver and leave, although no one knows, there are still heavenly knowledge, earthly knowledge, divine knowledge, ghost knowledge, and human (self) knowledge." This is the origin of the "Five Knowledge Hall". There are many theories in society about the meaning of Wuzhitang, one of which refers to Zhang Bishi's way of doing business: benevolence, righteousness, trustworthiness, courage, and strategy. In his will, Zhang Bishi also asked his descendants to build a Five Knowledge Hall for him. "Set up a temple called the Five Knowledge Hall, which will be commemorated by my descendants." The Five Knowledge Hall is located in Medan Port, and the regulations are listed below: manage the temple to allocate funds for worship; According to Chinese scriptures, my descendants, whether already born or to be reborn in the future, will all focus on reading and strive for evolution; Regardless of who the child is, regardless of the same ethnicity or gender, if there is poverty without notice, or if the facial features are incomplete, this court

may consider providing assistance and demonstrate good deeds; Due to disasters such as floods, fires, famines, and earthquakes, it is necessary to consider providing relief

In 1904, Zhang Bishi founded a Chinese language school in Penang, Malaysia - the Confucius Temple Chinese School. The Confucius Temple Chinese School was the first school in Malaysia to replace Chinese dialect teaching with Mandarin, and it was also the only overseas Chinese language school recognized by the Qing government in China. In addition to investing in the construction of the Wuzhi Hall during his overseas residency, Zhang Bishi also built a Zhang Xiaoyou Hall on Cuifu Street in Mishi Road, a Zhang Yu'an Hall on Jinghai Road, and a Wuzhi Hall mansion with three halls and two horizontal sections in Xinzhang Village, Henan, Guangzhou. These halls are all carved beams and painted rafters, which are very gorgeous. In his later years, Zhang Bishi was very concerned about the highest academic institution in his hometown - Lingnan University (later known as Sun Yat sen University). He has always had a wish to donate funds to build a school building as a Chinese language tutoring school for overseas Chinese children in Southeast Asia. In 1916, his wife Zhu Lanzhi and son Zhang Zhijun donated 70000 silver yuan to build a four story small building at Sun Yat sen University in 1921, named "Zhang Bishi Hall". It is now the location of the School of Sociology and Anthropology at Sun Yat sen University (formerly the archives of Sun Yat sen University). Among the architectural relics of Sun Yat sen University, "Zhang Bishi Hall" is the earliest fully funded donated building named after a Chinese individual, and is now listed as a "cultural relic protection unit in Guangdong Province".