

“We Took 50 Years to Prepare this Earthquake.”

China Uncensored



There is a monument in Nan-guan-chun Niuping, a county town in Dechang, Sichuan Province, built by the locals with donations in the late 19th century. Carved on the monument are many virtuous deeds of a local town magistrate Niu Shumei (1791-1875).

The monument was very cleverly saved by the locals during the madness of the Chinese “communist cultural revolution”.

To avoid it being smashed into pieces by the “red guards”, locals put a cement overcoat on the monument, and wrote Mao’s slogans on the surface. After communist party declared “communist revolution” is over, locals took off the cement coating. There is still a little cement left on the corner of the monument.



In the town history book, there is an event recorded by Niu Shumei:

On the night of 12th Sep. 1850, a major earthquake struck Xichang County, with magnitude of

7.5. The whole city rocked, houses collapsed, and there was also heavy rain. At dawn, the city was in ruins, crushed by wood and stone with countless dead.

Niu was also crushed in the rubble, fortunately alive, only his foot was injured, but his beloved son was crushed to death.

Seeing the city razed to the ground and people's homes destroyed, the grieving magistrate wrote an article questioning the temple God, Chenghuang (a magistrate in the “underworld” who collects and organizes souls in the afterlife.) accusing him of enjoying the people's incense, but not sheltering the lives of the people - so many people died, were they all evil people?

Besides, Niu, a magistrate himself, had always been clean, diligent and upright in his work, why did his innocent son also die? Niu Shumei suspected that Chenghuang's mind was muddled and that the heavenly path is unfair.

Record of people's sins

In the evening, Niu Shumei had a dream of going to Chenghuang's temple, and being treated as a guest of high honour by Chenghuang: "Sir. You righteously accused me, because you do not know the reasoning of Gods and Deities, so I invited you here, in order to relieve your suspicion and anger."

"It is no accident that all great disasters are caused by the accumulation of human sins. For the sake of this earthquake, the Underworld has been conducting 50 years of investigation and record keeping, and those who should not have suffered the scourge have already moved elsewhere, and recently created new sins, and moved them back. Even if there may be some changes or temporary differences, the underworld magistrate has record keeping to check, and is never careless, or wronging people's lives.

Niu Shumei said, "In this case, isn't there a good man in the whole city?" Me and my son deserved to suffer this, too?

"There are three families in the city, and it was really hard to move them away in a short period of time, but now they're all safe, " said Chenghuang. "One is in X street, a virtuous woman, widowed for 3 generations, raising a small grandson; one is a Doctor, never sold fake drugs, when people asked him to treat illness, even if it was late night and raining heavily, the road muddy, he would immediately attend to the patients; and another, is an old woman selling fried rice balls, her grandson, also did not die.

"If you don't believe this, you go back to check, you will find them." "As for your son, because he was so sinful in his past life, he could escape his doom, and thus pay off his debts." "Sir, you would have been included in this scourge, but because you are not greedy as an official, you are spared, with only minor injuries."

Rewards and punishment

"In short, the rewards and punishment of the heavens are handled very carefully and cautiously, never biased. There is no in justification for the troubled. Understand these causes and effects, I hope you will be a good official in the future, and you will certainly be promoted to the higher official position of inspector later on.

Niu Shumei immediately apologize, thanked Chenghuang and returned home.

When he woke up, he walked around the village, and indeed found the good widow and the doctor, and they were indeed safe and sound. But he could not find the old woman who was selling fried rice ball in her house. And her house was in rubble.

Niu went to the place where she usually cooked and sold her food and found the old woman and her grandson were trapped in the corner under wedged house beams - he removed the beams and freed them both.

The old woman told Niu that she was usually here to cook and sell rice balls, she would also offer food to old or young customers if they didn't have enough money to buy, and occasionally she gave them some more for free.

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A day or two before the earthquake, her customers suddenly increased a lot, so she took her grandson here to help her, and they had to work till late and stayed there for the night. After the earthquake, they were trapped in the corner under rubble, with nobody knowing where they were. Fortunately they had fried rice balls to fill the hunger, so survived.

Niu Shumei was greatly amazed, he blamed himself for lack of virtue, so he planned to help people rebuild their homes, and donated a large sum of silver for people to resettle.

From then on he was more convinced of cause and effect, cultivated himself with virtue, worked hard with integrity, upheld justice, cared about people's hidden hardships, and was hugely respected by people.

Soon, Niu Shumei was promoted to a higher position due to his famous integrity. He also wrote many books, historical records. After he passed away, local people donated money and built this monument for him.