

The Fake Sculptor

(Busshi)

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Shyster

Country Man (CM)

CM I am a resident of this neighborhood. We have built a six-foot square temple for the area. The temple was completed according to plan, but as yet we have no suitable sculpture for it. I have decided today to go to the capital and obtain a sculpture. I must hurry on my way. Truly, the countryside is a most inconvenient place. The temple is completed, but as we have no sculptor, there is no way for us to obtain a sculpture. Wah! Wah! It looks like I am

near the capital as all is in a bustle. And as one would expect of the capital, different from the houses of the countryside, the eaves are built right up against each other as though they are all the best of friends. Well, I must say, how lively it is here! Ah, I just remembered something I had completely forgot. I have no idea where a sculptor may live or what sort of person he might be. I should have inquired carefully about this before I set out, but now that I have come this far, there is no way I can go back to inquire. Just what am I to do? Huh? Huh? Huh? (Laugh.) Just as one might expect of the capital, it appears that people go about shouting out the things they want to sell or buy. If that is the case, I will also go about shouting. Here, here, I say! Is there a sculptor living there? I want to buy a sculpture. I would like to buy a sculpture. Where is there a sculptor? I want to buy a sculpture.

I would like to buy a sculpture. I say, I say! Is there a sculptor living there? You say there's non? I want to buy a sculpture. Where is there a sculptor? I want to buy a sculpture. I would like to buy a sculpture.

SHYSTER I am a resident of the capital with a most deceitful heart. That looks like a country man over there, and he is yapping about something or other. I think I'll just try to strike up an acquaintance. Here, here! I say, I say.

CM Is it me to whom you speak?

SHYSTER Indeed, it is you to whom I speak. What is it you are yapping about in the middle of this broad highway?

CM As I am a country an, I spoke without knowing
yapping is prohibited.

SHYSTER No, no! There is no prohibition against
yapping. I am simply asking you what it is you want
as it may just be that I can provide you with it.

CM For that I would be most grateful. As I desire a
sculpture, I am seeking for a sculptor.

SHYSTER And would you recognize a sculptor if
you saw one?

CM Well, as a man of the capital, you should know
better. If I could, I would not walk about shouting
out like this. It is because I do not know one that I
seek for one.

SHYSTER Then I was very wrong. In that case,
 you are a man of good fortune.

CM You speak of good fortune, but these clothes
 clearly show the extent of my fortune.

SHYSTER No, no. The way you dress is not the
 sort of fortune of which I speak. I mean that you
 meeting me is your good fortune.

CM And just what do you mean by that?

SHYSTER In the capital are many people, but the
 one you seek is I, a bona fide sculptor.

CM Oh, how frightful! Stay away from me!

SHYSTER What is wrong with you?

CM Ever since I was born, I have had a strong dislike of boa constrictors.

SHYSTER You have simply heard wrong. I am not a boa constrictor. I said I am a bona fide sculptor.

CM So you say you are a sculptor?

SHYSTER Most certainly.

CM If you are a sculptor, you should have simply said you are a sculptor. What do you mean by bona fide sculptor?

SHYSTER Your doubt is understandable. In the past, there were Unkei, Tankei, and Annami: three separate sculpting lines. Unkei and Tankei both

languished and died out, and of the line of Annami, I am the sole survivor. Thus I am a bona fide sculptor.

CM Now that I hear your reason, I understand completely. So as I desire a sculpture, please show one to me.

SHYSTER Oh, no. Of all the types of merchandise, sculptures alone do not come readymade. Tell me whatever kind you want, and I will make it for you.

CM As I am a simple country man, I have no way to know exactly what I want. Please make for me some suitable sculpture.

SHYSTER If that is the case, just what shall I make for you? Shall I make a Deva King for you?

CM Is not the thing you call a Deva King, a
 sculpture that stands inside a temple tower gate?

SHYSTER As you say, it is just such a sculpture.

CM They are too ferocious looking. Please make
 me some other sculpture.

SHYSTER In that case, shall I make you a celestial
 imp?

CM Is that not a sculpture that is always being
 trod upon?

SHYSTER You call yourself a simple country man,
 but you are a clever man indeed. You are right. It is
 that sort of a sculpture.

CM They seem so uncomfortable that such a one would be no good. The sort of sculpture I was thinking of is shaped most mildly and helps one and all to have a happy life in this world and the next. Please make me such a sculpture.

SHYSTER In that case, just what would be vest? Oh, I know. There is a younger sister of Bishamon known as the Goddess Kichijo. She is shaped most mildly and she helps one and all to have a happy life in this world and the next. Shall I make you a sculpture of her?

CM I have indeed heard of the Goddess Kichijo. Please make me a sculpture of her.

SHYSTER Well, then how tall shall I make it?

CM This matter as well, I leave up to you.

SHYSTER If you wish to leave it up to me, how
about fifteen yards and thirty inches?

CM That is much too big. Please make me a small
one.

SHYSTER If you want a smaller one, how about
one and a quarter inches?

CM What is this? When you say fifteen yards and
thirty inches and I say it should be smaller, you say
one and a quarter inches. That would be so small
that it would fit in the palm of my hand. We have
just built a temple six feet square. Please make one
of the proper size to fit inside.

SHYSTER Haa, a temple six feet square?

CM That it is.

SHYSTER If that is the case, how about one about
my size?

CM Let me see, let me see. You are indeed a clever
sculpture. One about your size would be just exactly
right.

SHYSTER If that is the case, I will make you one
about my size.

CM And when will it be finished?

SHYSTER Well, it will likely take around three

years, three months, and ninety days.

CM That is far too long. Please make it a little sooner.

SHYSTER If you want it sooner, I'll make it by tomorrow about this time.

CM What is this? When you say it will likely take three years, three months, and ninety days, and I say it should be sooner, you say tomorrow about this time. What is the meaning of this?

SHYSTER As I told you before, as I am of the line of Annami, I have many apprentices. Different ones, I order to carve different parts, one the head and another the arms. Then I assemble all the parts together, prepare the glue to just the right

consistency, and spread it here and there, and all around. Thus it will be ready by tomorrow about this time.

CM Haaa!

SHYSTER But if I carve it all by myself, it will likely take around three years, three months, and ninety days.

CM Now I see what you mean. While I would very much prefer having you carve it all by yourself, as I am a country man, I cannot stay in the capital for so long. So please give orders to your apprentices and make it for me by tomorrow about this time.

SHYSTER I understand, and I agree to make it for you by tomorrow about this time.

CM And what will be the price?

SHYSTER Ten thousand gold pieces.

CM That is much too high. Please give me a discount.

SHYSTER On sculpture alone, I can give no discount. If you do not like the price, cancel your order.

CM I will take it anyway. I will pay you at the Daikoku Shop on Third Avenue.

SHYSTER I know the Daikoku Shop well. I will receive it there.

CM And where will you deliver the sculpture to
me?

SHYSTER Go one block straight down this street,
then turn sharply to the left and you will find a rush
mat hanging there. I will make it for you behind the
rush mat. Also, as I will be close by, call to me for
anything that you may need.

CM If that is the case, I will come there tomorrow.
Now I will be on my way.

SHYSTER You say you are going on your way?

CM Most certainly.

BOTH Fare you well, fare you well.

SHYSTER That country man, I have succeeded in duping, but since the day I was born, I have never carved so much as a toothpick. Even so, it is because I have a clever plan that I suggested that the sculpture be about my size. Here I have a festival dance mask. I will put it on and become the sculpture myself. And as soon as I have his money, I will wneak away. Now the time of my appointment with the country man has come. I will now become the sculpture.

CM Now the time of my appointment with the sculptor has come. I will go receive my sculpture. First, I am to go straight down this street for one block, turn sharply to the left and find a hanging rush mat. This must be the place. Now I will lift up the rush mat and have a look. Oh, I must say, what a fine job he has done. A sculptor is indeed a skillful

man. It is hard to believe that such a thing as this could be made in only a day and a night. Why this part here looks as though it is alive indeed. What is this? It is warm. I don't know what to think of this. Also, I do not like the position of its hands. The sculptor said that he would be near by. I will call him and have him fix it for me. Here, here. Is the sculptor here? Sir Sculptor! Sir Sculptor!

SHYSTER I am here.

CM I say, Sir Sculptor.

SHYSTER I say, country man.

CM Well, I must say, you have made it quickly.

SHYSTER And did you have a look at it?

CM Indeed I did have a look at it.

SHYSTER And does it suit your taste?

CM There is something a bit strange about it.
When I reached out my hand and touched it on the
neck, I found that it was warm. What is the meaning
of that?

SHYSTER Until the glue dries, it will be warm. But
as a mere layman, what do you mean by touching
such a sacred sculpture?

CM Also, I do not like the position of its hands. If it
is possible, please fix it for me.

SHYSTER Until the glue dries, I can fix it any way

you like. I will fix it for you. Go around that way.

CM With all my heart. He said that until the glue dries, he can fix it any way I like. I wonder how he has fixed it. Fix it he has indeed, but now it looks like it is about to smash something to pieces. This is no good. I'll have him fix it again. Sir Sculptor! Sir Sculptor!

SHYSTER Here I am, here I am.

CM Now it looks like it is about to smash something to pieces. That is no good. Please fix it for me.

SHYSTER If it does not suit your taste, I will fix it as many times as you like. Go around that way.

CM With all my heart. Well, I must say, what an

agreeable sculptor. I wonder how he has fixed it for me this time. What is this? Now it looks like it is drilling a hole in its hand. This is no good. I'll have him fix it again. Sir Sculptor! Sir Sculptor!

SHYSTER Here I am, here I am.

CM Now it looks like it is drilling a hole in its hand. That is no good. And on top of that, something seems to be fluttering about. This time I want you to come along with me so that I can show you exactly the parts that are wrong, and you can fix them on the spot.

SHYSTER That I would really like to be able to do, but the traditional sculptor etiquette prohibits our fixing a sculpture in front of a worshipper. If it does not suit your taste, I will fix it as often as you like.

CM If that is the case, fix it for me quickly.

SHYSTER Go around that way.

CM With all my heart. Traditional sculptor
etiquette is most bothersome. He says it prohibits
sculptors from fixing a sculpture when a
worshipper is near by. I wonder how he has fixed it.
This time it looks like it is begging for something.
This is no good. Sculptor! Sculptor!

SHYSTER Here I am, here I am.

CM Now it looks like it is begging for something.
That is no good. Please fix it for me.

SHYSTER Go around that way.

CM With all my heart. I wonder how he has fixed it
this time. Now it looks like it is all tied up. This is no
good. I'll have him fix it again. Sculptor! Sculptor!

SHYSTER Here I am, right here I am.

CM That is even worse.

SHYSTER Go around that way. I will fix it for you.

CM Nothing seems to be going right. Huh? This is
the sculptor!

SHYSTER No, it's the sculpture!

CM It's the sculptor!

SHYSTER It's the sculpture!

CM So you have tricked me, have you?

SHYSTER Oh, forgive me!

CM What do you mean forgive you?

SHYSTER Please forgive me!

CM What a hateful rascal!

SHYSTER Please forgive me.

CM You lazy rascal, you'll not get away.

SHYSTER Oh, forgive me, please forgive me.

CM I'll catch you yet, I'll catch you yet.

SHYSTER Oh, forgive me, please forgive me.

CM I'll catch you yet, I'll catch you yet.