

Keep One's Word and Maintain One's Integrity

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Mr. Zhao Rou lived in Jincheng Town in the Beiwei Dynasty (396-535 A.C). He was very well known for his knowledge and integrity in the Hexi region when he was young. He was very kind and trustworthy, and worked as a government compiler and Henei County Official.

Once Mr. Zhao Rou found a gold bead on the ground. He quickly called the owner, and returned the gold bead to him.

On another occasion, Mr. Zhao Rou went with his son Shanming to sell a plow on the market. He was about to sell the plow for only twenty rolls of silk. Another merchant saw that his asking price was too low, and was willing to pay 30 rolls of silk for the plow. Mr. Zhao's son Shanming wanted to sell the plow to the higher bidder, but his father Zhao Rou said, "We already made a deal with the other person. How can we change our mind just because there is more profit?" They sold that plow to the first buyer.

Folks heard about that and admired Mr. Zhao very much.

The ancient people taught us that a noble person must possess integrity, and act according to moral principles in the face of profit. "Keep one's word and maintain one's integrity" is a merchants' treasure, and is also a basic virtue. If a merchant gives up his integrity for profit, he will lie and deceive his customers for petty gains; therefore, he will not have any repeat customers. It is also true with inter-personal relationships: no one wants to be friends with a deceitful person.