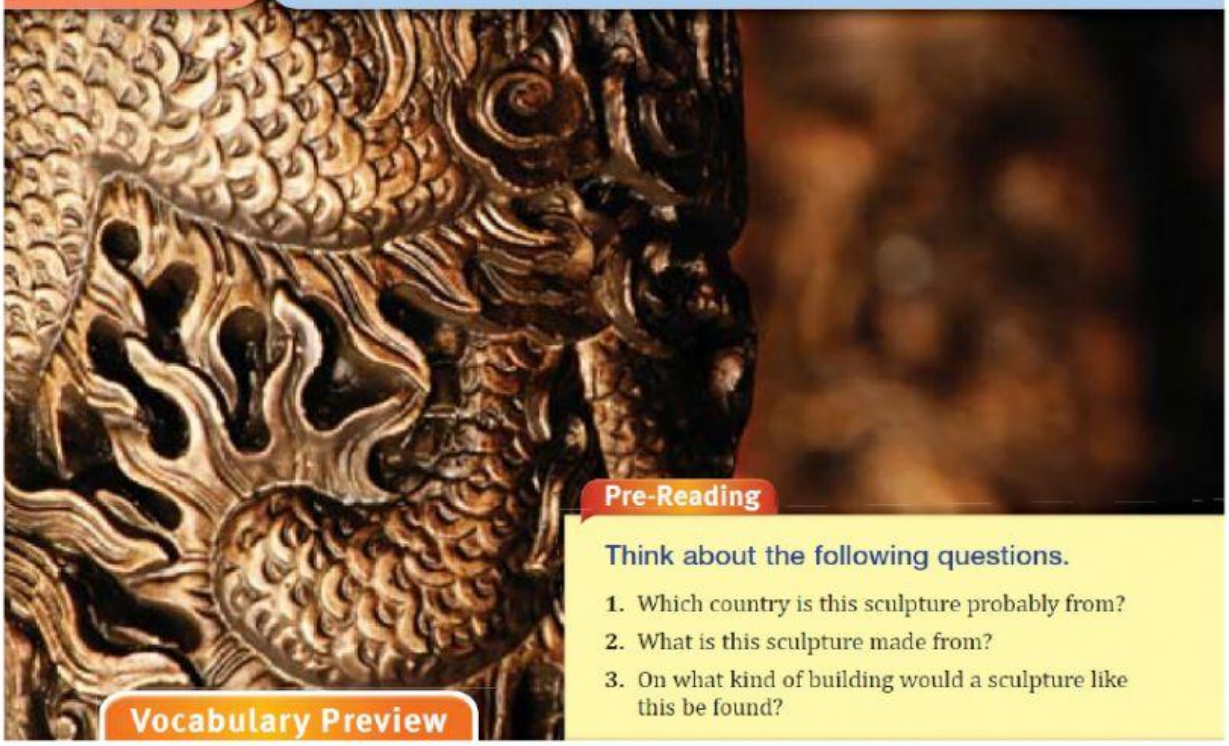
6 Rescuing Relics



Pre-Reading

Think about the following questions.

1. Which country is this sculpture probably from?
2. What is this sculpture made from?
3. On what kind of building would a sculpture like this be found?

Vocabulary Preview

1. Write the letter of the word or phrase with the same meaning as the underlined word.

a. big; important
b. collected; gathered
c. showed; put out for viewing
d. changed; took away to put something new in
e. related to today
f. succeed in doing

1. ___ He visited a museum that displayed postage stamps from around the world.
2. ___ I like ancient sculptures more than modern sculptures.
3. ___ The city replaced the old brick street with a smooth new street.
4. ___ My friend has accumulated more than 2,000 comic books in his collection.
5. ___ The country went through major changes during the 1960s and 1970s.
6. ___ We won't be able to manage to see the whole museum in one day.

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2. Vocabulary

relic: a valuable, ancient artifact or work of art
sponsor: to support with money
folk art: works of art usually made by non-professional artists for decorative purposes
architectural: related to man-made structures like buildings
decoration: a thing used to make something or a place look nice
capital: the city where the government is located
pier: a post or pillar that gates hang on
carve: to cut or chip into a certain shape or design
demolition: the act or state of being destroyed or torn down
economic: related to money or the economy
reform: a change that is meant to improve something
temple: a building dedicated to religious worship
luckily: by good fortune

Have you ever wondered where museums get the works and **relics** that they put on display? If the museum is **sponsored** by the government, then the relics were probably collected under special laws that protect historical treasures related to that country. However, not all museums are sponsored by the government. Sometimes a private collector decides to set up a museum so that the public can view the works or relics in his or her collection. Since the 1990s, more and more of these museums set up by private collectors have sprung up in China. Typically, these private museums are small, but they give visitors the chance to see works and relics not found anywhere else.

Songtang Li is one such collector who has put part of his private collection on display for the public. In 2001, Li opened his museum in an old 18th century house in Beijing. The museum displays some of the best examples of Chinese **folk art** he has collected over his lifetime. Many of the pieces in the collection are actually **architectural decorations** from old houses and buildings around China's **capital**. Whenever an old building was being torn down, Li would visit the site to see if there was anything from the building worth rescuing. In this way, Li managed to accumulate thousands of folk art pieces, some of which are over 1,000 years old.

Li began collecting folk art sculptures when he was young. The first pieces in his collection were two gate **piers** that stood in front of his house. The stone piers were **carved** with historical designs, and Li thought of them as his two friends. During his childhood, he would sometimes even sit beside them and tell them stories. When Li was seven, the city told Li's family to get rid of the piers so that the street could be rebuilt.
Rather than throwing them away, Li's father allowed his son to keep them.

Thus began Li's lifetime hobby of visiting **demolition** sites and collecting pieces of sculpture or decorative architecture. Anything that he was allowed to take away would end up in his collection. In the late 1970s, China underwent major **economic reforms.**
At that time, Beijing started widespread demolition and rebuilding across the city.
According to Li, more than ninety percent of the old houses and **temples** in Beijing have since been torn down and replaced with modern buildings.

Luckily, all of old Beijing's architectural folk art has not been lost. Visitors to the Songtangzhai Folk Sculpture Museum can view some of the best relics Li rescued over the years.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

3. Choose the best answer.

1. What is another possible title for this reading?
a. "A Man and His Museum"
b. "Beijing's Best Museum Designer"
c. "Changes in Chinese Architecture"
d. "The Largest Museum in China"

2. Where is the Songtangzhai Folk Sculpture Museum?
a. In a city near Beijing
b. In an 18th century temple
c. In China's capital city
d. In Songtang Li's house

3. What would a visitor NOT see in the Songtangzhai Folk Sculpture Museum?
a. Carved wood and stone
b. Folk art from 1,000 years ago
c. Paintings that Li made in childhood
d. Pieces of decorative architecture

4. What can be inferred about most of the pieces in Li's collection?
a. He paid a lot of money for them.
b. People took them from demolition sites and gave them to Li.
c. The government was not interested in them.
d. They came from his childhood home.

5. According to Li, what is true about modern Beijing?
a. Ninety percent of it needs to be torn down.
b. Few parts of it are very old.
c. Folk art can be seen in most of it.
d. Not much of it was rebuilt.

4. Find these idioms in the reading.

- **set up (something)** [to establish or create something]

After she moved in, the girl set up her bedroom how she liked it.

- **take (something) away** [to remove something to some distance away]

My mother would take my toys away if I left them in the living room.

- **tear down** [to destroy; to break (a building) into pieces]

My father tore down the old dog house in our backyard and built a new one for our dog.

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5. **Fill in the blank with one of the above idioms. Change its form if necessary.**

1. When he finally arrived, he discovered that there was nothing left to _____.
2. The teacher needed to _____ her classroom for the new school year.
3. The government will not allow anyone to _____ the building because it is a historical treasure.

6. **Read the sentences from the reading passage. Paraphrase the sentences to create a summary of the passage.**

a. Sometimes a private collector decides to set up a museum so that the public can view the works or relics in his or her collection.
b. Since the 1990s, more and more of these museums set up by private collectors have sprung up in China.
1. a + b: _____
_____, a trend that began in the 1990s in China.

c. In 2001, Li opened his museum in an old 18th century house in Beijing.
d. The museum displays some of the best examples of Chinese folk art he has collected over his lifetime.
2. c + d: _____
_____ in an 18th century house in 2001.

e. In the late 1970s, China underwent major economic reforms.
f. According to Li, more than ninety percent of the old houses and temples in Beijing have since been torn down and replaced with modern buildings.
3. e + f: _____ from the time that Beijing began undergoing major economic reforms in the late 1970s

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