

Grand Ancestral Bloodlines

Chapter 66: Second Rite

Ryu's mind projected into his body. This was something those who had just begun on the cultivation path were unable to do, but Ryu could for two reasons. The first reason was because he could now be considered a Half-Step Spiritual Entrance expert. This title referred to the very first true step along the cultivation of one's Mental Realm. Due to the fact Ryu had partially opened his Spiritual Entrance Pulse owing to matters related to his various traumas suffered, he had managed to place a single foot in a realm he shouldn't have opened so early.

The second reason was related to his Origin Flame. Although this flame had no offensive or defensive abilities to speak of, and couldn't even be used as an alchemy flame, its supporting abilities made it so that Ryu didn't care about such disadvantages. Not only did it give him unmatched memory and recall, it made entering states of enlightenment far easier as well. To top this off, it gave passive boosts to its owner's Mental Realm.

Until now, both the Origin Flame and the Northern Heavenly Wind had been sealed within Ryu's dormant soul. But, now that he had successfully transcended the trial of the Phoenix Sky God, he had been given the advantages he gained in his past life as well.

A moment later, Ryu was opened to a startling sight. When he had Spiritual Foundations described to him as a child, or when he read about them in his studies, they were always referred to as a solid mass akin to the most precious metals in the world. Some cultivators had clear Foundations that could be seen directly through. Others had Foundations made of jade or gold, shimmering with beautiful rays of light. Ryu knew that his father described his Foundation as a slab of oppressive rubies, shining a crimson, bloody light.

However, Ryu's didn't seem to match any of these descriptions. Although he could tell that there was a solid mass hidden beneath, his Foundation was a sea of white flames. Not only did it not fit the description of the Spiritual Foundation, it also didn't perfectly align with what Ryu knew about Phoenix Flames.

As far as Ryu was aware, there were three flames of the Phoenix Clan. The first was the Ice Flame, the second was the Rebirth Flame, and the last was the Dark Flame. Respectively, these natural wonders colored blue, red and black. Ryu had never heard of a white flame.

There was another matter that was curious about his Spiritual Foundation as well. Depending on grade, one's Foundation varied in size. A Common Grade Foundation would be about a half meter across at awakening. This diameter became one meter for

a Black Grade Foundation, before increasing by one meter for every above grade until the five-meter diameter of the Ancestral Grade was reached.

One might think that these values were too small of a difference between grades, but do consider for a moment that these are the sizes upon awakening. According to the Mortal Realm, there were eight more Rites proceeding this first awakening! And now that Ryu had awoken his memories, he knew that there were actually thirteen Rites total!

For every so-called Rite a cultivator succeeds in, their Spiritual Foundation will double in size. One can see how these small differences in the beginning can very quickly become an insurmountable gap. It is also easy to see at this point why Ryu would be shocked that his Spiritual Foundation was ten meters across!

'This is the power of a Second Awakened Foundation...' Ryu thought.

He was exactly right. Every cultivator who awakened their Foundation for a second time experienced this immeasurable change. The problem was that Ryu was slightly different.

Usually, cultivators don't experience this Second Awakened until they're well along their cultivation path. However, Ryu awakened his at the very beginning! He could experience the sturdiest Foundation possible due to this. While an Ancestral Grade would have a Foundation of twenty kilometers across by the end of their thirteenth Rite, Ryu's would be forty kilometers!

'This mystery isn't one that I'll understand in the short term. Cultivation techniques are all identical until one completes the Pulse Opening realm, so I won't bother choosing one until I am about to enter the Qi Refinement realm. What I need to do now is focus on completing my Rites. Once I reach and complete the ninth Rite, it will then be appropriate to completely open my Body Pulses.'

Without hesitation, Ryu ignored the Memory Jades before him. Instead, he focused entirely on his Martial Forms and succeeding in his Rites.

The truth was that Ryu knew next to nothing about cultivating higher realms, but he had been drilled again and again about the so-called 'Perfect Entry'. This perfect entry referred to the best way to lay a Foundation for a young cultivator and was something Ryu learned as early as he could begin practicing his Martial Forms. This perfect entry was also the reason why Ryu delayed his cultivation to practice his Forms for half a year.

His first task was to reach the limits of his mortal body. On the Shrine Plane, he had accomplished this before he reached seven years old. It wasn't until after his Ceremony failed that he stopped and allowed his body to reach a frail state. Training with Granny Miriam helped this along, but it wasn't enough.

The reason reaching the limits of the mortal body was important was due to the fact that Rites weren't a simple matter. The more talented you were, the fiercer and more dangerous a Rite will be. For Ryu who had a Second Awakened Foundation, it was clear how much pressure he was under.

The next task was to begin Body Realm cultivation after reaching the ninth Rite. This was especially important because the mortal body was incapable of withstanding the Final Four Rites. Each of them was a Devil of its own... It was to the point that unlike the formerly unnamed nine Rites, the tenth, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth, all had monikers of their own.

To enter the Body Realm, one also had to open Pulses. Each of the Three Realms had their own set, combining for a total of thirteen. Those of the Qi Realm were known as the Six Heavenly Qi Pulses. However, they could not be opened until one completed their Rites. Once one opened a Qi Pulse, it was impossible to go back and finish Rites.

Pulses of the Mental Realm only totaled one, so it had its own namesake: The Spiritual Entrance Pulse. Finally, Pulses of the Body Realm were known as the Six Heavenly Body Pulses. It was the opening of these Pulses – two of which were located in the spine, and four of which were located in the heart – that allowed one to survive the Final Rites.

Even as he went over these matters in his mind, Ryu felt a surprisingly thin barrier shatter as cultivation qi surged toward him. He had begun his second Rite.

Chapter 67: Rites and Foundation

Ryu grit his teeth slightly as his body began to undergo another wave of refinement.

Why was the Spiritual Foundation so important? It was because it was through it that cultivators communicated with the Heavens.

When a human cultivator was born, they would be gifted with a set talent. But, how could a baby boy or girl withstand such valiant potential? Their bodies are too frail and their experience too thin.

As a result of this, humans evolved to have a sort of stop-gap measure. Spiritual Foundations were able to act as a lock and key, storing away a body's potential until it was ready to accept it. For Ryu, who was born with a seemingly impossible Ancestral Great Circle – a term used to refer to one born with Ancestral Grade talents in all Four Pillars – this was exceptionally important to him. At the same time, though, the pain he underwent was manifold that of his peers.

Ryu's Ancestral Grade meridians roared to life, accepting the baptism of his Foundation and sheering apart to rebuild themselves once more.

According to Ryu's parents, he was born with Chaotic Silk Meridians. If one peered into his body, it was possible to see his meridians being destroyed and rebuilt by lines of spinning black silk. As is known by practically everyone in the martial world, Neutron Star Core is both the hardest and densest mineral in all of existence. However, not only does Chaotic Silk rank third on a list of world's hardest materials, it was also exceptionally light! Even if one piled Chaotic Silk several kilometers high, it would still weigh as light as a single feather.

Chaotic Silk Meridians truly earned their title. Those blessed enough to be born with them had practically the whole cultivation world opened to them. On one hand, it was possible to move qi within one's body at speeds other cultivators wouldn't dream of. This was because while others would worry about rupturing their meridians, Ryu would never have to worry about such a thing. On another hand, if one preferred strength and defense, being born with Chaotic Silk Meridians made it possible to condense several times the qi of a normal cultivator.

The most important part of the Chaotic Silk Meridians was that... They were impossible to sever! To think that Queen Tor would attempt to use Meridian Severing Powder on an Ancestral Grade set of meridians. It was truly laughable. Even without being awakened, Ryu's meridians were far beyond the capability of a mortal to cripple.

Just as Ryu was finally becoming accustomed to the rampaging of his meridians, his dormant bones trembled. In that instant, Ryu's excruciating pain jumped to a new level. His blood surged, boiling away impurities even as his body collapsed in on itself to grow stronger.

Pungent impurities even more putrid than the Sect of corpses coated Ryu's body, but the pain continued to wrack him. No matter how uncomfortable he felt, he was forced to endure.

Much to his father's sadness, Ryu didn't inherit his Tyrannical Emperor bone structure. Instead, he inherited his mother's Ice Jade Crystal bones. It was for this reason that Ryu's body and features seemed carved of ice. He also had this bone structure to thank for his handsome features. If Ryu inherited from his father instead, even if Third Concubine Leilani was ten times more powerful, she wouldn't have been capable of breaking Ryu's ribs.

This aside, although Ryu lost in strength and durability, he gained greatly in recoverability and dexterity. Those born with the Ice Jade Crystal bone structure were blessed by heavenly energies. Not only did this allow them to cultivate faster, it also allowed them to heal much quicker as well. At the same time, this blessing by the Heavens made those with this body structure loved by nature. As a result, heavenly treasures that had gained sentience were less likely to be hostile or hide and beasts felt comfortable around you.

Hours later, Ryu collapsed. Even while covered by a thick layer of impurities, his body shone like a crystal. Maybe it was a good thing that his features were blocked by such grime, or else the improvement in his looks would be blinding.

Ryu chuckled bitterly. 'To think just the second Rite would be so painful...'

Pulling himself together, he discarded his now ruined beast fur clothing, inwardly praising himself for having put his cloak away ahead of time. Then, he began to bathe in the spiritual lake before him, something that the upper echelon of the Natural Order Sect would have coughed up blood seeing.

In the following three days, Ryu reaffirmed his foundation, practicing his Martial Forms to his peak abilities. Even after just the second Rite, their rate of improvement was astonishing. Just one example was his Ice Phoenix Martial Form. Before, he could only inhale the air within a meter of himself instantly, but now he could do so for five meters!

Like this, Ryu's bitter training continued. With his talent, if he had the mind to do it, he could complete all nine Rites in one fell swoop. He experienced practically no bottlenecks. The moment he communicated with his Spiritual Foundation and nurtured it, it seemed to jump forward eagerly on its own. But, he had to hold back to reaffirm his Foundation.

Luckily, because he had spent six months honing his Martial Forms, it only took him three additional days every time. In just one month, Ryu completed his ninth Rite.

Truth be told, he looked like an Immortal already. His features that were previously carved in ice became more perfect, his jaw strengthening and his nose sharpening. On the other hand, it was good news for Ryu that his Lightning Qilin and Fire Dragon bloodlines didn't allow him to become too feminine. Instead, his stature grew to just over two meters tall, his shoulders and back widening.

Because he had given up on making himself new clothes due to the constant growth and impurities, his body sparkled under the sun. He really did look more like an ice statue than a real man.

Now, Ryu felt like he was ready. He knew that entering the Body Realm would take more time not because he was lacking talent, but because the hurdles were simply higher. This was the perfect time to begin practicing Martial Techniques.

Ryu wanted to keep these matters simple, but he didn't want to choose at random either. He needed a movement technique to supplement his Heavenly Wind, a defensive technique to make up for his frail bone structure, and he needed to decide what offensive path he would take. Would he become a master of palms? Of the finger or fist? Or would he choose a weapon?

The whole world laid bare for Ryu, each path eagerly awaiting his decision.

Chapter 68: Nature's Love of Symmetry

Ryu's breath became peaceful, yet cyclones of visible wind entered his lips and nostrils before beaming outward in a strong stream. The more he thought about which path to take, the more confused he became.

First, there was his Grandma Kunan. She was an absolute master of the palm. It was rumored that she could blot out the skies with a single strike. The power she showed in crippling the Third Grand Elder wasn't even 5% of her true strength.

However, Ryu's Grandpa Kunan was a God of the Bow. Even during Ryu's lifetime, he would often hear stories about how he used to stand on the clouds like a God of the Skies, his blue hair whipping about violently as he passed judgement with a single pull of his bow string. His grandpa treasured his bow almost as much as his wife.

Then there was the Tatsuya Clan. Ryu felt that his father and grandfather alike would be more disappointed than words could describe if he didn't master the three Tatsuya Sainly Weapons. Of course, these referred to the Dragon God Weapon: the halberd, the God Emperor Weapon: the spear, and the War God Weapon: the glaive.

Ryu's Grandma Tatsuya was a master of the saber. Fire Phoenix Clan women were usually taught the whip, but Merula disdained to follow suit. Instead, she forged her own path. In fact, legend of her shimmering rose-gold saber didn't lose out to Grandma Kunan's palm at all.

Last, but not least, there was his mother. After Himari was born, her mother and father thought it would be a shame if she couldn't make full use of her bone structure. Although she had great potential along the palm and bowman paths, they allowed Himari to forge her own. In the end, Ryu's mother chose the most difficult of the weapon paths.

This so-called most difficult path didn't refer to a specific kind of weapon, or weapon length, or weight. Instead, it referred to a particular Form. This path was known as the dual wielding path. Because of the dexterity gifted to her by her bone structure, Himari became the Twin Sword Demoness, neither one of her blades fell behind the other in either speed or power.

Obviously, Ryu couldn't choose all of these paths. No matter how much he wanted to pay homage to his lineage in its entirety, attempting to become a master of all always ended in becoming a master of none. In a world where comprehending the Natural Order was so important, Ryu needed to maximize his talent, not dilute it.

The first choice Ryu made was to take a first step along the path his mother chose. Since they shared the same bone structure, he would be wasting his talent if he didn't make use of it.

There was a reason dual wielding was so difficult. Even for Immortals, one would be born with a dominant hand. Not only would this hand be less awkward to use, but it often had wider and more robust meridians as well. Training one's off hand would require a lot of effort that didn't always bear fruit. Even for Ryu's grandmother who practiced palms, the strike of her right palm had always been more powerful than her left.

However, all of these problems disappeared into the ether for Ryu and his mother. Their bodies were born with perfect flexibility and dexterity. Now that Ryu had gone through nine Rites, he could feel the flawless balance of his body... It was this symmetry that nature loved so much.

Still, even after picking this path, Ryu remained undecided. Should he learn the twin swords as his mother did? Was it even possible to dual wield something that wasn't a sword or saber? But, he was a Tatsuya Clan Heir at the end of the day, how could he disappoint his father and grandfather? Although his grandpa was a very quiet man, he always showed his love by his actions. Ryu didn't like the idea of letting him down. He had already done so once... He couldn't do it again.

Ryu's jaw clenched. 'Even if it's impossible, I must try. Dual wielding two, two-handed weapons is a fool's dream. But, I, Ryu Tatsuya, will do it.'

With a thought, Ryu's body flashed. Even without a movement technique, his speed was blinding. Since his body was far stronger now, it of course followed that he could use his Heavenly Wind in a more unbridled fashion.

Moments later, Ryu reappeared within the Human Pavilion, scanning a large room filled with weapons.

Weapons followed the same Grading system as treasures. There were seven divisions which were each broken into lower, middle, higher and peak sub-divisions. From what Ryu could see now, most of this first floor was filled with various Common Grade weapons. Lowers were found at the front, while Peaks were further toward the back. There were also a set of stairs that led to floors with better weapons. However, Ryu didn't go there just yet.

When one was within the first two cultivation realms, the Awakening and Pulse Opening realms, it was only possible to use Common Grade techniques. Following this line of logic, it was also impossible for one of these two realms to pull out the full potential of a weapon above of the Common Grade. Until Ryu entered the Qi Refinement realm, using a weapon of too high a Grade would only serve to drain his stamina more quickly. At the same time, using a weapon of too high a Grade before one was ready would also hinder one's comprehension of the Natural Order.

Ryu remembered that the first weapon his father gave him was a wooden stick. Of course, this wooden stick was still of higher quality than even the Peak Common Grade weapons here, but it still served to ingrain the concept within Ryu's mind.

Without feeling any doubt or regret, Ryu immediately chose two mass produced Lower Common Grade halberds, and repeated the process with two spears, and two glaives.

Truth be told, this was a blessing in disguise. Because these weapons were inferior to the point of being mass produced, Ryu didn't need to worry about imbalances. The pairs of weapons were more or less the same weight, balance and length.

After completing this task, Ryu appeared within the Pill Storage rooms of the Natural Order Sect. Taking a moment, he ignored the Qi Realm pills to find a set of Body Realm ones known as 'Blood Congealing' pills. These pills agitated one's blood and forced it to coalesce. Doing so pushed out impurities and also made attacking Body Pulses much easier.

Of course, Ryu didn't need these pills for forcing out impurities, his Rites could do that. Plus, his bloodline was of the Ancestral Grade and thus was near a realm of perfection already. These mere 40% pure pills couldn't hope to refine it. But, they could help him enter the Body Realm.

Chapter 69: Basic Stances

Ryu sat in meditation, adjusting his state to its peak level. Before him sat six pill bottles, each with twenty or so Blood Congealing pills. There were far more of these, several thousand, in fact. However, Ryu had no interest in them. The truth was that he was reluctant to take such impure pills to begin with.

Unless a pill reached an almost unheard of 100% purity, it would leave behind ill-effects within its taker's body. There were some exceptions, but they were incredibly rare for obvious reasons. Unfortunately, Ryu had no alchemy skills, so he was unable to make any of his own, nor did he want to waste any time learning. The only reason Ryu was willing to accept these pill impurities into his body was because he planned to rely on the Final Four Rites to force them out.

The good news was that Ryu didn't plan on relying on pills forever. The Origin Grade Incubator that fused with his Heavenly Pupils had travelled to this life with him as well. Therefore, he would be able to make use of its ability to refine heavenly treasures into pure energy in the future. The only reason he wasn't using this ability now was because there were certain limiters on what he could absorb due to the fact the Natural Order Sect was lacking in Body Realm type spiritual plants.

There was another method of improving in the Body Realm as well, but it was far more dangerous.

In the martial world, beasts of this Era evolved differently from humans. Instead of being born with Spiritual Foundations, they were born with Spiritual Roots. These Roots gave beasts all sorts of hidden abilities from birth and was also where they stored their cultivation. Essentially, the Spiritual Roots would absorb qi and dispense it to the body via its various connections to the beast's meridians, blood vessels, muscles, etc.

When one killed a beast, drinking or soaking in the blood of the Spiritual Root was highly beneficial to cultivating the Body Realm. It was also possible to directly refine or eat this Root, although the process would be far more dangerous and taxing on the body.

Ryu suddenly stood, swallowing a Blood Congealing pills. Although these were just Lower Common Grade pills, Ryu immediately felt his blood begin to boil. Following the teachings of his father, he picked up a halberd and began to practice. Titus Tatsuya had always said the Body Realm relied on using the body. One couldn't simply sit and meditate like they could for the Qi and Mental Realms.

Much like every other aspect of cultivation, comprehending a weapon was all about the firmness of one's foundation. Therefore, Ryu didn't hurry to choose a domineering technique. Instead, he practiced the basic stances his father and grandfather taught him from youth. Unlike his Martial Forms, there was nothing special about these stances. They were taught everywhere, whether it be the mortal or Immortal Planes.

When Ryu asked why he had to learn such boring stuff, his father had replied with a hearty laugh.

'Do you believe that things last forever, Little Ryu?' He had said. 'Of course not. Yet, somehow, from the Chaos Era to our Golden Era, these same basic stances have weathered the test of time. Little boys and girls your age, whether it be here, or in the smallest martial school, they all learn these same stances. Do not look down on something that has survived so long, because chances are, you'll perish before it does.'

After that day, Ryu no longer asked his father questions of why and continued to practice with his wooden stick. His father could tell that he still didn't have his heart in it, but there was nothing more to be said. Whether Ryu grasped their importance was up to himself and himself alone.

Ryu smiled lightly at this memory. Never had he been so thankful to have the Origin Flame. With it, it felt as though his father was right in front of him.

Of the basic stances, there were two categories. The first entailed attacking and defending with the weapon, and the second relied on foot movement in attack and defending. Where the difficulty lay in mastering the Tatsuya Saintly Weapons was that whether it be the halberd, glaive or spear, their basic stances were identical! What a Tatsuya was tasked with was understanding the nuance of the weapon and where their character differed even in executing the same movements.

Ryu began with the first category. He allowed his instincts to carry his foot placement while executing the three basic attack stances. These were: sweep, slice and pierce. He would then continue to the three basic defense stances: push, pare, and skim. Finally, he began to slowly incorporate the proper foot placement denoted as: advance, retreat, sidestep, lunge and steady.

As he carried on with his practice, he almost forgot about his burning blood. The aching in his muscles and lungs took priority as he pushed himself to his limits. Unlike during his childhood, Ryu put his everything into these movements, copying the image of his father to the best of his abilities.

When Ryu felt that he had gained a basic understanding, he flipped his stance, practicing steadily with his left hand as his dominant. Although he ignored dual wielding for now, he planned to train both halves of his body equally, only in that way would he be prepared for future steps.

Although Ryu was only faintly aware of it now, the Origin Flame was making its presence felt. With a thought, he had slipped into the first meditation stage, simply known as Meditation State. Once he began to fuse the proper footsteps into his movements, he slipped into the second state, Breath of Earth.

If Ryu had been conscious now, he would be in awe. Breath of Earth was a state he could only maintain for a few seconds at most in his previous life. Yet, he had already held it for thirty minutes already!

Ryu's congealed blood raged, and his Ancestral Grade talent began to shine through. Even after just a single pill, his blood surged, attacking the first Body Pulse within his heart.

In that moment, Ryu's body reddened. Combined with its original ice sculpture-like appearance, Ryu looked like a piece of heavenly glass being refined by a holy fire. His body glowed fiercely, the speed of his blood reaching such a height that it could be heard from several meters away.

His heart thumped. Then, an audible breaking sound snapped through the air.

Ryu remained in an enlightened state. What should have been a very painful process was akin to a breath of fresh air to him.

Impurities of his body forced themselves out, but Ryu didn't notice as his arms continued to swing without pause.

He lunged forward, piercing through the air. A moment later, he seamlessly retreated, pushing the butt of his halberd away from himself and he sunk into a stance immovable as a mountain.

An ancient aura seemed to seep from his body. He had touched upon the first barrier to mastery.

Chapter 70: Limitations

Almost a month later, Ryu continued to practice the same basic stances. Other than to eat, he never stopped. Although his Qi Realm cultivation wasn't deep enough to go without sleep, his Mental Realm cultivation was, despite only have a half-foot into its first step. By relying on this, Ryu was able to stay awake for weeks at a time, something that shouldn't have been possible until he became a Qi Refinement expert.

However, this month wasn't without its problems. For techniques, their level of mastery was denoted by the so-called Four Levels of Mastery. These were: Small Success, Large Success, Great Success, and Circle of Perfection. For someone with Ryu's talent, especially with the help of the Origin Flame, he should have already reached the Circle of Perfection after a month of training the same movements, especially since these basic stances couldn't even be considered of the Lower Common Grade. Yet, he was stuck at the barrier to Small Success. This realm was so pitiful that it wasn't among the Four Levels of Mastery and was simply known as the Entry Level.

That said, with Ryu's intelligence, he also understood the reason why his progress was so slow. For the past few weeks, he hadn't been trying to perfect the basic stances using his own interpretation of them. Instead, he was relying on the images of his father and grandfather. What a Tatsuya man would denote as Small Success wasn't something those of the lower Planes could fathom. This was especially so for Ryu's grandfather whose level was even beyond that of his father.

This sort of Visual Training was impossible for others, but for Ryu who had a perfect recall of events thanks to the Origin Flame, he could rely on the comprehension of his family to improve himself. The only drawback was that the requirements for himself were also of an otherworldly level.

For perspective, if Ryu were to use the standards of this Higher Mortal Plane, he had already exceeded their Circle of Perfection realm by more than two times! The strokes of his halberd, spear and glaive were already comparable to a perfected Higher Common Grade technique.

Ryu's movements began to slow. Soon, the blade in his hand inched forward at such a snail-like pace that it seemed he wasn't moving at all. However, the beads of sweat that fell from his perfectly sculpted body told a different story. He focused his everything into understanding the smallest of twitches. Every time the image of himself and his father didn't align, he adjusted. Repeating this again and again for hours on end.

Another month later, Ryu emitted a heated breath, causing the ten-meter radius around himself to become filled with a scorching fog. Although he still hadn't breached the Small Success barrier, he had opened four of the Body Pulses within his heart. Now,

only the two within his spine remained – however, these were even more dangerous to open than the previous four. Ryu didn't dare casually attack them with these mere 40% pure pills.

'It's a shame that I hadn't awoken to the true abilities of my Heavenly Pupils when father and grandfather taught me these stances...' Ryu lamented to himself. 'If I used their ability to see through all things, I would have already reached Small Success by now.'

Ryu shook his head. He had reached the limit of what he could do here. If he wanted to improve any further, he needed practical experience. Only by putting his life on the line would he be able to reach what he sought. He couldn't be more aware of his lack of practical combat experience. No matter how much of a so-called genius he was, if he couldn't bring out his abilities at the crucial time, it was all useless.

After practicing his Ice and Fire Phoenix Clan stances to help himself recover, Ryu finally got to choosing a movement technique. If he wanted to go out and seek experiences, he didn't want to rely on the North Heavenly Wind. He wanted to set a firm foundation first. Only then would it be appropriate to use.

The range of techniques the Natural Order Sect had was quite impressive. Aside from their attributeless and second profession related techniques found in the Human Pavilion, they had a whole host of Pavilion specific techniques among their other Peaks.

Common Grade techniques were the most abundant, numbering at just over seven hundred. For Ryu, who hadn't entered the Qi Refinement realm yet, these were the techniques he was limited to. But, surprisingly, there were also just over eighty or so Black Grade techniques and this small Sect actually had six Earth Grade techniques. Although, these Earth Grade techniques were all monopolized by their Upper Echelon.

As expected, the reason there were so many Common Grade techniques was because most of them were Lower Grade, making them practically trash. If Ryu focused on just the Peak Common Grade techniques, there were less than thirty. Of which, only three were movement techniques.

The trouble with Common Grade techniques was that they were the most prone to having imperfections. Many were created casually by pseudo experts and were riddled with potential potholes for Cultivation Deviation. Usually, the largest Sects would weed out the most dangerous of these techniques and leave behind those that would do the least harm. However, small Sects had no such choice. This left their disciples playing a game of Russian Roulette with their meridians.

Although Ryu's meridians were inseverable, one had to understand that meridians acted much like blood vessels. They were interconnected with many important organs of the human body. Even if his meridians didn't suffer, his far more fragile innards would.

Luckily, Ryu had a cheat. With his Heavenly Pupils, he was able to see through the flaws of techniques. Coupling this with the added enlightenment given to him by the Origin Flame, creating novel solutions to these flaws would only be a matter of time.

In the end, Ryu chose a technique titled [Gliding Cloud Steps]. He chose this because it not only matched the concept of his Heavenly Wind, but it was also had great hidden defensive capabilities. It wasn't just a technique about speed, but also contained concepts of the wind. One that reaches the Circle of Perfection in this technique could be akin to a feather in the sky, capable of dodging attacks simply by making use of their air pressure.

Ryu didn't rush to begin practicing this technique. Instead, he sat upon a large rock he had been using as a meditation stone and calmed his breathing. In the next moment, a strong 'WENG' sound emitted from his dantian as a holy light began to emit from his body.

Unlike the previous nine Rites, the Final Four were a monster unto themselves. Each were given their own namesake, allowing geniuses who surpassed their trials to puff out their chests in pride.

After surpassing the fourth Pulse of the Body Realm's Pulse Tempering realm, Ryu had finally decided it was time to attack the Rite of Limitations.