

Martial Unity 701

Chapter 701: Philosophical Differences

The reason that Martial Apprentices did not gain much power from techniques of their creation or contribution that were highly individualistic versus techniques of another's was that their bodies were still shackled to human limits, barring their brain. Martial Apprentices also possessed nascent Martial Paths, thus even if a technique was highly synergetic with their Martial Art and body, it did not end up resulting in the kind of explosive power that the Void Pathfinder technique gave Rui by virtue of being synergetic.

The Martial Union had probably judged that while it would be truly ideal if Martial Apprentices did not use others' techniques and instead mostly created individualistic techniques that were compatible and synergetic with their strengths and weaknesses, it was an extremely difficult standard to hold them all to. The strength that they would gain would not be too much greater than if they mastered pre-existing techniques before slowly warming themselves up to the idea of creating techniques or contributing to them.

It was a pragmatic and rational approach that weight the pros versus the cons of the matter. However, it seemed that the G'aka'arkan Tribe was more idealistic surrounding the matter. Which Rui wasn't too surprised by, they were certainly not the most rational bunch.

However, it also meant that, to a degree, the G'ak'arkan Tribe valued dissemination viability to a lesser degree than the Martial Union. They would not aggressively spread the techniques that they would obtain from the Martial Union, most likely. They would probably keep using it as a stepping stone for creating new and more powerful techniques that incorporate elements of the Martial Art techniques that they would end up obtaining from the Martial Union.

"We encourage our Martial Apprentice to draw from existing techniques rather than using those same very techniques," She confirmed Rui's thoughts.

('It is probably because of this philosophy that the G'ak'arkan Tribe has developed unique techniques that even the Martial Union is lusting after,') Rui sighed inwardly with admiration.

From the very moment that he had been briefed about this mission, he had wondered something since.

How did a primitive tribe such as the G'ak'arkan Tribe develop so many unique, odd yet powerful techniques that even the Martial Union was willing to go out of its way to obtain them?

It didn't really seem to make much sense when one thought about it critically. After all, the Martial Union invested a huge amount of wealth and resources into funding research and development that optimized existing techniques and attempted to create new ones. This massive effort led to the research and development department of the Martial Union developing, or at least contributing to the development of nearly half of all the new techniques that the Martial Union happened to obtain.

The remaining came from Martial Artists like himself who submitted the technique for personal use and a license for propagation of the technique.

This was a significant influx of techniques with varying degrees of individuality that the Martial Union got in return for the tremendous amount of wealth.

Yet despite that, the G'ak'arkan Tribe had created numerous techniques that had attracted the greed of the Martial Union.

The reason for this was most likely because of the philosophy of the G'ak'arkan Tribe that allowed them to diverge from existing paradigms better than a Martial group of their size should have been able to, had they followed a paradigm of Martial Apprentice guidance that was quite similar to the one that the Martial Union.

('Maybe, the Martial Union should follow in the G'ak'arkan Tribe's footsteps,') He mused for a second, before shaking his head inwardly. He was getting distracted.

"Well, thankfully, it seems that that may be the only difference in our evaluation of the value of techniques," Rui nodded. "It isn't ideal, but it shouldn't pose too much of a problem."

At the end of the day, as long as neither side perceived the value of what they were giving to be less than that of what they were receiving, the deal would be acceptable to both sides. There were ways to ensure that this was the case even if both sides did not have the same appraisal of techniques.

For example, the Martial Union could offer techniques that with low dissemination viability in exchange for techniques that it would have valued more than what it was offering since it did care for dissemination viability. In this case, the trade would be acceptable to both sides since the G'ak'arkan Tribe did not care for dissemination value as much as the Martial Union and the Martial Union would have what it would consider to be a winning trade.

The same could occur in the reverse. The G'ak'arkan Tribe could give techniques with high dissemination viability in return for techniques that were even more valuable, to the tribe, since it cared less for dissemination viability than the Martial Union did.

Rui was confident that it was possible for both sides to come from trades that both sides found agreeable and acceptable.

"Hm..." She hummed as she considered Rui's explanation. "Even if that manages to work out, demonstrating the power of a technique is not that straightforward. After all, techniques do not exist by themselves, they exist in Martial Artists who can execute them. I think the evaluation of their power depends on the mastery of the Martial Artist, does it not?"

She raised a very good point. Even if a technique was powerful, if the person executing them had not mastered them properly, then the technique would not function properly and would produce shitty results.

On the contrary, a technique could be evaluated to be more valuable than it actually was if the Martial Artist had mastered it to an extremely high degree.

One example of this that immediately came to mind was his friend Hever and his trusty sole technique Meteor Swing. That technique was a grade-nine technique, however, Hever had mastered it to such a ridiculously high degree, that it had eventually obtained parity with a grade-ten technique.

Chapter 702: Mastery

Mastery of techniques, as well as the quality of the Martial Artist mastering them, were two variables that severely impacted the evaluation of the power and potency of a technique. It was impossible to separate the quality of a technique from the mastery of it when judging the results that a Martial Artist produced when executing that technique.

"Correct," Rui nodded. "However, we have accounted for this. It will require both sides to be forthcoming, however."

Rui was the one who had realized this problem a long time ago and had already thought of several solutions.

"What do you mean?" Senior K'Mala frowned.

"I mean that it is possible to gauge the power of a technique, as long as we have enough information on the Martial Artist executing them," Rui replied. "We can evaluate the competency of the Martial Artist at hand based on available information at hand, such as the time it took to train that technique, and the time that the Martial Artist has used that technique in combat. The speed at which that Martial Artist mastered other techniques and the general competency and skill of that Martial Artist."

"I see..." She realized his point. "You wish to understand the limits of the Martial Artist to gauge how much of the results of their execution of a technique is because of them and how much is because of the technique, correct?"

"Correct," Rui smiled. He was pleased that she was caught on to his intentions quickly, it was clear that even if she was uneducated by the standards of the Kandrian Empire, she was very intelligent, and furthermore, she had a great understanding of Martial Art as a Martial Senior.

This made his job much easier.

"However... that would require both sides to be honest..." Her eyes narrowed.

"Correct," Rui nodded.

This was an inescapable requirement. This gave both sides a lot of power since it was possible to deceive the other side by presenting false facts regarding the information that Rui suggested was needed to truly evaluate a technique's power.

"Then how can you guarantee that the trades will be fair?" She asked skeptically.

"Because such lies will inevitably come out and would trigger war," Rui replied calmly. "Would let the Martial Union get off lightly if and when it became clear that we have blatantly lied to oversell a technique's grade?"

"No..." She shook her head resolutely. "We would definitely annihilate all of you."

Rui felt his nerves tingle at the sight of a Martial Senior announcing their demise if they were to deceive the G'ak'arkan Tribe

That caught him off-guard. The intelligence that the intelligence team had gathered on Senior K'Mala suggested that she possessed a much more rational temperament compared to her brethren. Yet it was clear that she did not deviate too much considering she said something so undiplomatic in a diplomatic meeting.

Of course, considering how diplomatic the Martial Artists of the Martial Union have been, he still had to admit that she was doing a much better job than Senior Ceeran did.

"And that would be a highly undesirable outcome for us," Rui smiled pleasantly as though she just hadn't said what she had. "I can assure you that the Martial Union will be very infuriated if it turned out to be the case that you have deceived us, and I think we can both agree that a successful trade of techniques that will strengthen both sides is more desirable than an all-out war with no gains."

She did not deny that, simply considering his words.

There was a brief period of silence as Rui let her consider the matter.

"I cannot make a decision here and now..." She eventually said, shaking her head. "That being said, I am personally in favor of this successful trade. You have been reassuring in your replies to our concerns and issues. I can promise you that I will do my best to convince those that need to be convinced for this trade to go through."

"I see, that's good to hear," Rui smiled, he wasn't surprised. The moment he saw Senior K'Mala deliberating with him all by herself, he knew that he would not get a handshake on the deal today. A matter as important as disclosing their sacred techniques to outsiders was something only the chieftain could make.

The chieftain N'Kulu had chosen not to deal with Rui alone probably because his ego and pride refused to allow him to speak to Rui as an equal, regardless of if Rui represented an organization exponentially more powerful than the G'ak'arkan Tribe could ever hope to be.

He knew that she would have to take back his words to the Martial Seniors, although he was absolutely certain that the two Martial Seniors and several Martial Squires had been listening to their conversations. Their sharp senses would not be stopped by clay and stone.

They would probably deliberate, then approach Rui and give him their response.

"Please take your time," Rui smiled, getting up before Stemple and Zeyra followed suit. "We understand that this is an extremely important matter to you. Feel free to visit our village if and when you have any further queries or concerns or wish to proceed with the discussion. I can assure you that you will be treated with hospitality."

"Thank you," She replied straightforwardly, before turning to the Martial Squires in the room. "Please escort our guests."

And just like that, the second audience between Rui and the Martial Union came to an end. The three of them entered their carriage before it began taking them down the mountain.

"Submit the preliminary reports," Rui ordered his two assistants, speaking in the Kandrian dialect to prevent the scouts who were following them potentially listening from understanding.

"Yes sir, congratulations on succeeding,"

"We'll celebrate after the deal has been concretely established," Rui replied. "Let's not get ahead of ourselves, we are still some ways away from achieving our goal. Still... it is true that we have achieved preliminary success."

Chapter 703: Desired Technique

The settlement was in a good mood after having heard that Rui was successful in engaging with the G'ak'arkan Tribe in regard to his diplomatic efforts. Having achieved more than any diplomatic venture with the G'ak'arkan had ever achieved before, naturally, the many employees and Martial Artists that had been dispatched to the settlement were glad to hear that this tedious ordeal was at least making solid progress.

"Nice!" Senior Ceeran grinned when he heard the news. "Finally, I can get my hands on their techniques!"

Rui glanced at him. He knew that the man had been pining for their techniques for a long time. "

Just the fact that he, a Martial Senior had decided to not only serve as a diplomat but also decided to prolong his stay away from the Martial Union and the Kandrian Empire for this long.

This couldn't have been easy, considering his position and authority within the Martial Union. It was usually quite unusual for a Martial Senior to spend this much time away from the Martial Union for a mission that wasn't his own. Rui knew that Senior Ceeran was very motivated, he wouldn't have gone through all this effort if he wasn't.

"Which of their techniques are you most interested in, if I may ask?" Rui was curious.

"All of the unique ones that we've been looking to obtain, really," He replied nonchalantly. "They're all unique techniques that would definitely strengthen the Longranger Sect."

"I meant, which ones are you interested in for your Martial Art, if that's not too much," Rui probed.

"..."

Senior Ceeran was silent for a few seconds, before replying. "Currently? I'm most interested in their ability to create sustained long-range force over longer periods of time and manipulate it with a great degree of precision and delicacy. If I can just get my hands on that..."

Rui understood what he was referring to. A few Martial Squires of the G'ak'arkan Tribe had the ability to maintain constant force regardless of the angle at which they were being launched from range via the atmosphere, similar to telekinesis. They could hold objects mid-air from a distance via the air.

This was unusual because most long-range projectiles were singular, or a continuous emission in a singular direction. Even if Senior Ceeran could manipulate the trajectory of his attacks after having launched them, he wasn't able to maintain a constant stream of force that could be precisely adjusted as though he was using his very own hands.

"You would be able to use your power more efficiently and lethally..." Rui completed his sentence as he tried imagining Senior Ceeran with that kind of power.

He would have just straightforwardly crushed his two opponents where they were sky-walking in his previous battle.

"That's right, and once I master your Pathfinder technique and use the so-called ODA system along with the mechanisms of the techniques of the G'ak'arkan Tribe..." His eyes lit up in excitement. "Who knows just how absurd the end result will be? It may just help me take one step closer to becoming a Martial Senior."

"I see..." Rui remarked.

No wonder he was so pumped about the success that Rui had managed to obtain. He was one step closer to eventually obtaining their techniques.

"Well, I'll definitely do my best. It's just that..."

"Just what?" Senior Ceeran raised an eyebrow.

"It's just that there are a lot of issues that need to be overcome and a lot of work that will need to go in before we actually get those techniques," Rui sighed. "Honestly, it might be best if I request the Martial Union for specialized Martial Squires that have experience in training other Martial Squires..."

"Don't bother, that's not going to happen, don't even bother," Senior Ceeran shook his head.

"Why not?" Rui frowned.

Senior Ceeran turned to face Rui with a strange expression before realization dawned on him. "Ah, I see, you haven't been informed yet."

"Informed about what?"

"Had you been in the Kandrian Empire at the moment, you would have gotten the news without a doubt." Senior Ceeran nodded, with an understanding expression.

"I'm sorry, but I have no idea what you're referring to."

"Hmmm... Well, it's not confidential at all, so there should be no issue in telling you this."

"..."

"A new dungeon was discovered," Senior Ceeran told him straightforwardly.

Rui's eyes widened. "What? Really??"

"That's right," He nodded. "It's a Squire-level dungeon too, located not too far away from the Kandrian Empire."

"I see..." Rui processed the information with a lost expression. "That's what you meant when you said that I won't be able to have the Martial Union deploy any more Martial Squires here."

"That's right," He nodded. "In fact, you can be sure that once the deal is made, every non-essential Martial Squire here will be brought back to the Kandrian Empire."

"I'm guessing there's going to be a huge colonization war again," Rui remarked.

"Not, actually, that won't be happening." He shook his head.

"Why not?" Rui frowned.

"Because the dungeon is not habitable to ordinary humans. It generates a similar level of fear and pressure in normal humans as Martial Squires do, meaning they would be suffering from severe anxiety and panic attacks to even fainting," Senior Ceeran explained.

"So then... Only the Martial Squires of all nations will be sent with the hope of plundering and looting the dungeon." Rui realized.

Dungeons were land and subterranean structures created when the roots of flora came across highly rich and energetic esoteric mineral and compound reserves deep underground. The roots began expanding, pushing the land above ground by natural displacement as it expanded in size from having absorbed the esoteric mines bearing fruit, both literal and metaphorical, that were highly valued.

"Squire-level dungeons are different from the Serevian dungeon that you discovered. As I said, there's going to be no army to colonize you. You Martial Squires will be deployed in a much more independent capacity, and you will face the Martial Squires of other countries on your own."

Chapter 704: News

This sudden piece of news that came from seemingly nowhere threw him off-guard a bit. For half a second, he regretted taking this mission. After all, he could have been part of this exciting new adventure had he chosen not to accept this mission from Martial Commissioner Derun. Still, this mission was worth it on his own. It was a choice that was worth it, and it broadened his worldview even more and exposed him to new techniques that nourished his imagination and inspiration.

Hell, it could even potentially end up making him stronger.

"You said that Martial Squires would be dispatched independently, did you not?" Rui frowned. "What did you mean by that?"

"Unfortunately, the dungeon has fallen within the territory of the Shionel Confederation," Senior Ceeran sighed. "The nation is not on par with the Kandrian Empire or any of the other super-nations. But unlike most of the nations on this continent, it is not a pushover. It is a Sage-level nation, unfortunately."

"A what?" Rui raised an eyebrow.

"Oh, it's just a convenient way of categorizing the Martial prowess of nations. We put them into the category corresponding with the Realm that their most powerful Martial Artist is of," Senior Ceeran replied. "It gives you a rough idea of their Martial prowess very easily, after all."

"That means they have Martial Sages?" Rui sighed.

"Just one. But, just one is enough to prevent other powerful nations from straightforwardly trampling over them, our Kandrian Empire included."

"So... if the dungeon is part of the territory of another nation that isn't weak, then... why do the Martial Squires of the Kandrian Empire get to partake in delving into the dungeon?" Rui asked with a confused look on his face.

"Well, just because they're not weak does not mean they're strong enough to hoard all of it for themselves..." Senior Ceeran shrugged.

"They must have cut a deal or given some opportunity for other nations to make gains of the dungeon?"

"Exactly," Senior Ceeran nodded. "They cannot withstand the combined pressure of the nations in the geographic vicinity just because they're not weak. If they do not cooperate, then they will definitely get trampled eventually. They have agreed to open the dungeon to the outside world with the condition

that they keep twenty-five percent of the haul that foreign Martial Squires made from entering the dungeon."

"That's not insignificant."

"They originally tried to get more than fifty in a private diplomatic summit between the many nations, but were forced to hit twenty percent," Senior Ceeran casually revealed what was probably classified information.

"It must be because destroying dungeons is pretty straightforward, and is too easy to do for many nations," Rui noted as he shrewdly understood why they had made such heavy concessions. "Other nations pose far too much of a threat since they can just send a Martial Senior and ravage the dungeon."

"That's probably true, now that I think about it," Senior Ceeran noted with casual boredom. Since it was a Squire-level dungeon, he had nothing to do with it and didn't particularly care.

"So the Kandrian Empire will be officially deploying an army of Martial Squires, I imagine? Since they can't deploy the actual Royal army due to the extreme mental pressure?" Rui wondered.

"Not exactly, this is different from the Serevian Dungeon, as I said before," Senior Ceeran sighed. "All of the work will be done by Martial Squires themselves, and not a large colonization team that will be handing things in the background. It's a lot simpler, and the martial Squires inherently have a much higher degree of autonomy. Thus, the Martial Union has also relaxed the degree of control that it will exert on Martial Squires during the degree exploration. There is no official mission."

"What?" Rui's eyes widened. "Why not?"

"Because it isn't worth it in this case, the Martial Union has incentivized the Martial Squires to explore the dungeon and bring bang loot by alerting available Martial Squires of an attractive exchange rate for the loot that they will bring back from the dungeon. There are a lot of Martial credits and other rewards to be earned by being successful in the dungeon exploration and cooperating with the Martial Union.

"I see..." Rui nodded. "This certainly a way that lacks a lot of hassle, that's for sure."

By simply creating a powerful incentive structure, the Martial Union could get just the right number of Martial Squires heading towards the dungeon to take part in its exploration and plunder.

"Can foreign Martial Squires enter the dungeon without any official representation?"

"Martial Squires do not need any backing or serve as representatives, any and all Martial Squires can come and attempt clear the dungeon."

"That is remarkably open," Rui remarked.

"Indeed. Regardless, coming back to the main point. Martial Squires are already becoming scarce, thus you can forget about trying to get too many reinforcements to make your life easier. I bet that woman Derun is losing sleep with all the stress. Hehehe..." He chuckled lightheartedly.

Rui on the other hand, wasn't even listening to him. Senior Ceeran's news was not immediately relevant to him at the moment, but, Rui wouldn't remain on Vilun Island forever.

Perhaps when he got back...

('That remains to be seen until after I've completed this mission,')

For now, he could safely put away what he had learned. The only important point surrounding it was the fact that Rui was a bit on his own at the moment.

('That's not too much of a problem, thankfully. I'm pretty sure that we can handle anything that the G'ak'arkan Tribe throws at us.')

Rui was sure.

The settlement had a solid foundation as far as Martial Artists went. Even without Squire trainers, it was not impossible for the training to be conducted smoothly. Of course, the language barrier and the relative inexperience of the Martial Squires meant that it was definitely not going to be easy, or quick. But Rui was willing to take what he could get.

Chapter 705: Second Meeting

A few days passed, and not much had changed. At this point, Rui could only wait for news. They had done everything that had to, and now the ball was in the G'ak'arkan Tribe's court. Rui just had to make sure that they were prepared for anything.

And he was when it did end up happening.

"Sir, a Martial Squire from the G'ak'arkan Tribe has arrived, announcing that Senior K'Mala of their tribe would be arriving at dusk," An agent of the diplomatic team rushed into the diplomatic office, announcing to Rui.

"Well," Rui stood up. "At least they had the courtesy to tell us ahead of time. Almost all of the preparations have already been prepared. Make sure they're all ready."

"Yes, sir," The man nodded, before rushing away to do his job.

"You heard that, Zeyra, Stemple?" Rui raised an eyebrow at his two assistants.

"Yes, sir, we'll ensure that we are ready by then," They nodded.

"Good,"

And the settlement was thrown into a bit of a hurry as they made preparations to welcome for the first time.

('I'm just glad that the K'ulnen Tribe has not postponed this moment,') Rui sighed.

It would have been a pain if they decided to go into an all-out war against the Martial Union. But unfortunately for them, they were far too busy trying not to get torn to shreds by the sharks in the geographic vicinity that smelled blood.

Thus, Rui could peacefully focus on receiving his guests.

They came precisely when dusk arrived.

Rui could sense a powerful Senior-level force approaching the Martial Union settlement at a slow pace, so as to not alarm them. She did not want to be blasted away with a powerful attack from Senior Ceeran if he interpreted a high-paced approach as a sign of an enemy trying to catch them all off-guard.

She even took the precautions of descending a good distance away from the entrance of the settlement, choosing to walk the rest of the distance.

"K'Mala," Rui smiled. "Welcome to the Martial Union village."

The G'ak'arkan Tribe did not have honorifics for Martial Artists, thus Rui had no choice but to call her directly by her singular name.

"Thank you," She replied shortly, reaching her hand out toward Rui.

It was a gesture that was not of the G'ak'arkan Tribe, but she had learned that that was how the outsiders greeted each other.

Rui smiled appreciatively as he shook her hand, before gesturing her in.

Once they entered the village, her attention was drawn to the sheer alienness of what she was witnessing.

The outsiders did everything differently, after all.

Their buildings were entirely different from the huts made up of clay and stone that the G'ak'arkan Tribe had. This was the first time that she had realized just how different from the G'ak'arkan Tribe, no, all the tribes on this island were from the outsiders.

She didn't even understand how they built such large structures that seemed so stable and solid. The structures that her tribe built were unstable beyond a certain height and size, thus they were forced to be constrained by their inability to build larger homes.

She looked at the various strange objects that they used that seemed to have a life of their own. They seemed capable of moving on their own and even giving out their own light.

She watched in wonder as the humans of this village sat inside some of them, and be carried around by them. It was a drastic culture shock and the first one that she had ever received in her entire life.

"We have arrived," Rui smiled, gesturing inside a conference hall. "Let us hold our talks in here."

"Now then," Rui began once they were seated. "We are glad to have received you this quickly after our previous talk, K'Mala. Please begin however you would like."

He left the stage open for her. After all, he truly had said everything that he needed to and everything that he could. Now it was time for the G'ak'arkan Tribe to issue their response.

She was silent for a few moments before opening her mouth and simply uttering:

"We accept the conditions of the trade that you have proposed."

Those words were delightful to Rui, yet he didn't allow them to impact his perfunctory smile one bit.

But inwardly, he was fisting the air yelling 'WOOOHOOO!'

"I have with me a list of the techniques that we are interested in trading with you," She brought out a rough parchment of somewhat thick wood-like paper. "I am willing to trade this with you as long as you provide us with the techniques that you outsiders are interested in."

"We accept that offer," Rui nodded as Zeyra immediately plucked a document from her bag of files, handing it to Rui wordlessly.

"In this," He gestured to the file he holding since the G'ak'arkan had no noun equivalent for the word file or document. "We have detailed the techniques that we desire in quite the detail, in the Vilun language, of course."

The two simultaneously exchanged their lists, before immediately going over the other's.

Rui raised an eyebrow.

At the top of the list was a description of none other than the time he used the Void Pathfinder technique in his debut battle.

It wasn't as though he hadn't expected this. He would be a fool not to expect them to want the technique that allowed him to maintain his facade of being a high-grade Martial Squire. Not that they knew that part.

Still, he didn't expect that it would be at the top of the list. That was, well, an honor in a way. That meant that despite the presence of so many long-range oriented Martial Artists, his Pathfinder technique still somehow managed to steal the spotlight from them all. This included Senior Ceeran, it seemed. His trajectory manipulation techniques were very next on the list, also earning the interest and greed of the Martial Artists of the G'ak'arkan Tribe.

Chapter 706: Techniques

Rui skimmed through the remaining techniques listed there.

They were within his expectations. Power, range, and accuracy were the cornerstones of the techniques that they sought. Based on what she'd just told him, their intention wasn't to just spread the techniques themselves across their entire tribe but to spread the elements of these techniques that they were lacking to their tribe to be incorporated into the techniques that Martial Squires would end up creating. This would allow them to fundamentally improve the quality of their techniques.

On the other hand, the techniques listed in the document that Rui gave Senior K'Mala were different. The techniques that the Martial Union sought were sought after due to their uniqueness.

Techniques that allowed them to exert sustained force in any direction with remarkable precision and accuracy as if the atmosphere was part of their body. Techniques that allowed them to project wide-area defenses; allowing a single Martial Apprentice to extend protection over many people simultaneously. Techniques that incapacitated opponents from a distance by depriving them of air, causing them to choke on the spot in the middle of a fight. Techniques that caused blood to tear out of their opponent's body because of a rapidly created vacuum causing the internal pressure of the body to momentarily overwhelm the flesh that was withholding it.

The G'ak'arkan Tribe was a formidable Martial tribe, and not without reason. It was for these techniques that the Martial Union wanted to engage in trade with them.

These were not techniques that were foundationally strong, but they were techniques that opened new avenues for the Martial Union to explore. Once the Martial Union got its hands on it, it could spread the technique to other Martial Artists while also spending a lot of funds and resources on improving and optimizing them.

Both finished reading through the other's desires, and it didn't seem as though either side was particularly surprised.

Rui wasn't surprised because this was part of his plan from the very start. Show them techniques that allowed them to push past their limits. For the G'ak'arkan Tribe, however, it was only natural that the Martial Union would want techniques that it didn't already have. Thus, when that logic was applied to their repository of techniques, it wasn't particularly surprising that they had managed to predict many of the techniques that the outsiders would want.

Once both of them had digested what the other side wanted, they provided each other with basic information about the techniques that they wanted, as agreed. They would later also have to look at demonstrations and the competency of the Martial Artists performing those techniques as agreed, after all.

Once they reached the basic degree of familiarity, they could resume the negotiations.

"This so-called Pathfinder technique that you wielded in your first battle on this island, we strongly desire this technique. Tell me more about it," She told him.

As per their agreement, the Martial Union would take the first step when it came to both providing information and techniques, thus Rui obliged her request as Stemple passed her a document detailing some data on the technique. None of it was confidential information regarding the mechanics of the technique, but it gave them a good idea of what it was capable of.

"The Pathfinder technique is a technique that I created. What it is, is a technique that allows one to aim accurately without relying on the inherent accuracy of the marksman, but a more calculated accuracy," Rui explained vaguely.

He did not want to give them any specific information, just very vague and general information on what they could expect if they wanted to master the technique.

He did not hold back in explaining the difficulty of mastering the technique. It was a grade-ten technique for a reason, after all. Furthermore, these were primitive people when it came to science, which is what the ODA system of the Pathfinder technique was based on. So the difficulty for them was perhaps even higher than that of the Martial Artists of the Kandrian Empire.

Then again, Kandrian Martial Artists were also generally quite scientifically uneducated, thus he didn't think that there would be too much of a discovery.

"As I said, it is an extraordinarily difficult technique; what we consider to be a grade-ten technique, the highest level of difficulty a technique can be classified to have," Rui concluded.

"...How difficult are grade-ten techniques, exactly?"

"Grade-ten techniques are the kind of techniques that one, or perhaps a few people at the very most, master every generation despite a huge number of people trying to master it," Rui replied.

Grade-ten difficulty was a bit different from the other grades that had upper limits to their difficulty above which there was a higher grade of difficulty. A grade-ten difficulty technique was open-ended as far as the upper limit of difficulty went.

After all, difficulty in and of itself did not have a limit. A technique could be difficult such that only one in ten Martial Artists could master it, or one in a hundred, or a thousand, or a million, or a billion and so on and so forth, there was no end till infinity.

In practice, however, there was very little meaningful difference between a technique that was so difficult that only one in a million could master it, and one that only one in a billion could master it. The distinction between these two was not worth making. Nor was it possible to distinguish between the two unless one had a billion Martial Artists.

Thus, grade ten was an open-ended group for all techniques that were so difficult that generally, only one Martial Artist in a large Martial-rich country like the Kandrian Empire could master it.

Thus, sometimes Rui felt that grade ten undersold the Pathfinder technique, he suspected that his technique could potentially be on the higher end of the grade.

In which case, he wasn't sure that anybody in the G'ak'arkan Tribe could possibly master it.

The worst part was that he was going to have to train them to master it.

Chapter 707: Difficult

This was the disadvantage of being the creator of a grade-ten technique. The very next person that mastered the technique would most likely need to be trained by the creator.

"So it is extremely difficult to master, hm..." She considered his words. She didn't seem very surprised to Rui, which was understandable, it was very rarely the case that a technique's power was not proportional to its difficulty.

"I want to see demonstrations of the technique. As well as the relevant information of Martial Artists who have mastered this technique as agreed," She demanded.

"No problem," Rui sighed. Since he was the only Martial Artist to have mastered it, he would need to divulge a lot about his own personal competency. This would probably dampen the value of the

technique since she would quickly discover that he had a powerful mind, something very relevant to his execution of the Pathfinder technique. "I suggest, however, that we complete all the demonstrations of techniques and the exchange of the relevant data on the mastery and competence of the Martial Artists that have mastered these techniques, in one go. Rather than having to do this every time we want to discuss a new technique. This way we can smoothly proceed once this process is done in an orderly manner."

She considered his words, before nodding. "Alright. Please provide us with all of the information on your techniques, since you have agreed to go first."

"No," Rui resolutely shook his head. "We have already gone first when I provided you with information regarding the Pathfinder technique. It is your turn to show some sincerity by giving us information on the technique on our list."

She narrowed her eyes mildly before nodding. "Alright, we'll do that in the next meeting. For this meeting, however, we would like to confirm our willingness to proceed with a trade of Martial Art techniques under the conditions that we have laid out."

"That is great to hear," Rui smiled. "Then let us draft the agreement on paper then."

"What for?" She frowned.

Written contracts were unheard of in the G'ak'arkan Tribe. Verbal promises meant a lot within their culture.

"Just to ensure that neither side forgets, or tries to back out of the deal, or tries changing one of our agreements. Writing it down and signing on it makes sure that there isn't any possible way to break them sneakily," Rui explained.

"Signing on it?" She tilted her head in confusion

"You just have to write your name at the bottom of the parchment," Rui explained patiently.

"Alright, I don't really understand, but if that is what you want," She nodded.

Stemple quickly fetched two thicker parchment-style sheets of paper detailing the terms and conditions of their agreement that would be able to weather a lot. Since it probably was the case that the G'ak'arkan Tribe would probably not store their copy of the contract as prudently as they perhaps ought to, Rui wanted to make sure that there was no way they could damage it unless intentionally.

"Just so you know, in the Martial Union, these mean a lot, just as much as verbal promises mean to the G'ak'arkan Tribe," Rui warned her before she could sign it. "Once you sign this, it will be considered binding, and we cannot be content with allowing you to break it. The Martial Union that sent me here will not be pleased, and will most likely take action. So, please ensure that you are certain about this."

"I have already given you my word in the name of my tribe," She casually replied. "I have no intention of breaking it unless you outsiders do, this piece of paper is for your comfort, that is all."

"That's fine too," Rui smiled, amused, as he signed both documents before passing them onto K'Mala.

"Well, the agreement has been set, we look forward to trading with you," Rui smiled as he offered his hand to her once she signed the document.

"When should we conduct the demonstrations of the techniques that both of us are interested in, as well as the exchange of information surrounding the Martial Artists?"

"We can do that in a week," Rui nodded.

"Why so long? Can't we do it today?" She frowned.

"No, unfortunately. We need to transcribe and translate the information to the Vilun dialect, and that cannot be done in just a few days. We will inform you when we are ready, rest assured we will try to get it done as soon as possible," Rui offered.

"I understand," She nodded, realizing how convenient the outsiders were making it for this trade to occur. She would have expected that communication with outsiders would have been quite difficult

even after one of the outsiders was successfully taught the language, but apparently that was enough for dozens of outsiders who spoke the language fluently to show up.

They made it look easy.

That in combination to carry many people across the vast seas, and build a remarkable village unlike anything anybody had seen, she realized that she, and her brethren, had probably only seen a small drop of the power of this so-called Martial Union.

"..."

Rui raised an eyebrow at her. "Is there anything else that you wanted to discuss in this meeting?"

"...I was just curious."

"About what?" Rui asked with a hint of curiosity.

"The world that you come from, what is it like?" She wondered.

"..."

"So, I was hoping you could tell me more about it," She said.

Rui had to weigh his options here. On one hand, information was power. The more he revealed about the Kandrian Empire and the Martial Union, the more information he was providing to her. On the other hand, this could serve as a good way to strengthen his relationship with her and ensure that the likelihood of them falling out with the G'ak'arkan Tribe was low.

Besides, it wasn't as though she was asking for strategically important intelligence or confidential information. What she was asking for was basic knowledge that even the most uneducated person on the continent would know.

Chapter 708: World-building

"Zeyra, Stemple, the official negotiation is over for today. Begin the due process," Rui told them.

"But sir..."

"Just do it,"

The two bowed before taking a leave.

They were his official assistants and advisors, but this wasn't an official meeting from this point forth.

He loosened his tie a bit before drinking some water.

"Now then," He began. "You wanted to know about the world we came from? I can tell you. Well, we come from a faraway place, it took us quite some time before we got here."

"How far away?" She asked.

"I cannot reveal that, unfortunately," He shook his head. "But the distance is much greater than the size of this island, I can tell you that much."

Revealing the distance between the Kandrian Empire and the G'ak'arkan Tribe would increase the, albeit low, probability that they could run into the Kandrian Empire someday. If hostilities ever broke out, then this would become yet another headache for the Kandrian Empire.

"What is your world like?" She asked once more.

"...What is our world like, eh? There's so much to say that I don't know where to begin." He paused for a moment, before starting. "Our world is large. Very larger. Larger than you can probably imagine."

"Large?"

Rui nodded. "The number of people, the size of the land that we come from. The territory, everything is magnified."

"I see..." She muttered. "How many tribes are there in the world that you come from?"

"About that, we don't have tribes." Rui smiled wryly. "We have something called countries. You can think of them as very large tribes, that are much easier to enter and exist. Most countries are bigger than this entire island, you know?"

"What?!" Her eyes widened. "Those must be gigantic tribes!"

"You can think of them in that way," Rui shrugged. "But countries are not as tightly bound as your G'ak'arkan Tribe. Usually, most people can enter and exit them with some ease."

"What?" She frowned. "That sounds horrible, why do these tribes allow anybody to enter??"

Rui scratched his head, her question was so fundamental that he needed a moment to gather what he had always taken for granted. Not just in this life, but in his previous one as well.

"Principally, it is because countries hold that people have the right to freedom to leave the country if they want to. Practically, it's because the vast amount of trade that happens between and through countries would be impossible if people weren't allowed to leave their countries and join other countries."

She just stared at him, too confused to even know how to respond to that.

"Er, countries and people of those countries trade things with other countries... Kind of like how we just have agreed to trade Martial Art techniques with all of you," Rui explained.

"Oh, I see! You all trade Martial Art techniques with each other, correct?"

"Well, not really. We mostly trade many kinds of things, ranging from food to resources, technological pro-"

He paused when he saw confusion creeping into her expression, before shifting his explanation. "You see all the various objects of all sizes and shapes that you see our people using"

He gestured out the window.

She nodded. "Like those strange moving ones that have people in them."

"Correct, people exchange those things from other countries, among other things," Rui explained.

"I see..."

Rui continued helping her understand what the Panama continent was like bit by bit. The G'ak'arkan Tribe was so vastly different that she didn't have even the slightest bit of familiarity with concepts that would have otherwise been ubiquitously known back on the Panama continent.

The G'ak'arkan Tribe lacked an economy. The tribe satisfied everybody's needs to the best of its capabilities, and it did a well-enough job. If there was something that somebody in the tribe wanted from another one of their members, they needed to simply ask, and they would oblige. People naturally did everything they could to help their tribe. Boys and girls who had the potential for Martial Art dedicated everything to it, becoming the new generation of Martial Artists that would protect the tribe from the hostile enemies on the island, while the remaining children would take on more ordinary roles befitting their capabilities.

This is why she was unable to comprehend the very concept within a country. She still fallaciously attributed the values of a tribe, but on a larger scale, to countries.

"People do not give each other what they want just because they want it, that kind of behavior is limited to within families. Outside of family, If you want something, you need to offer something worth its value. A fair exchange, similar to what we are trying to do between us."

This was technically true since money counted, but it still sounded like the barter system which existed prior to the invention of the concept of currency. But he hadn't even gotten to the concept of currency yet. She still had far too incomplete a worldview for him to even broach that topic yet.

Slowly but surely, she began gaining a somewhat clearer yet blurred view of what the continent was like.

"Do these countries fight the way that the tribes on this island do?" She asked, curious.

"Well, some of them do. But largely, most countries do not fight with each other like the way the tribes of this island do with each other."

Of course, war was by no means gone. There was plenty of conflict that occurred across the entirety of the continent. Yet the countries did not fight each other as intensely as he had seen the tribes of the island do with each other.

They knew nothing else but war, they were born in it, molded by it. There was no diplomatic cooperation between any of the tribes for the most part.

This was something that surprised her the most.

"They are so big, yet they do not use their size to fight with each other?" She wondered aloud.

Chapter 709: Desired

An entire hour passed as Rui helped her gain a crude understanding of the outside world. In the span of the discussion, K'Mala had her mind blown more times than she could count. By the time, the discussion ended and she left, she was left in a little daze with the information overload.

Rui hoped that their discussion hadn't gotten her to forget the official negotiation talks that they had had.

Rui immediately sent a request to Martial commissioner Derun for the confidential information that was required as per the terms of the agreement. He immediately set the entirety of the translators in the diplomatic team into translating the data into the Vilun dialect so that they could comprehend.

Of course, things weren't that simple, there was also the need to, to a certain degree, simplify the data and spell out the conclusions that could be inferred from it. The G'ak'arkan Tribe lacked the personnel that could analyze and process the data in its raw form. This was why Rui had requested a week, it was needed.

A week passed soon enough, and the day for the exchange of information and demonstrations had arrived.

The demonstrations would include many techniques from both sides, at the Squire and even Senior level, they could not be conducted within the settlement or the village. In the end, Rui and Senior K'Mala decided to hold the demonstrations in one of the barren patches of the island where their demonstrations would not harm the natural environment of the island.

"You're a little late," She tapped her feet as Rui and the others arrived at the location that they had agreed upon.

"You never specified a time in the first place," Rui sighed, amused.

"I said the first crack of dawn," She snorted.

"You do realize that the timing of dawn depends on altitude, right? You guys are on a mountain, we're on a hill, therefore we'd see the light of dawn after."

"Excuses," She snorted, unconvinced.

Rui sighed with resignation. "Regardless, we're all here. Let's begin."

Rui looked around.

Numerous Martial Artists had gathered here, among which were two Martial Seniors and many Martial Squires. On Rui's side, there were several normal humans as well, they were to serve as translators for the Martial Squires, each tending to one Martial Squire.

"Alright, as agreed, you will begin the demonstrations," She told him.

"We'll go alternatively, in the order of the techniques that we listed," Rui added. "...And the first technique on your list was... me."

"That's right," She nodded with impatience. "It's your turn to begin. Demonstrate that technique in any way you wish."

Rui sighed, as the many Martial Squires looked at him in interest and anticipation. Even Senior Ceeran, who had resolved to stay silent in fear of getting in Rui's way, was smiling. Rui looked around as he spotted a suitable target for demonstration.

There was a larger boulder in one direction that was just at the right distance from Rui.

"That will work,"

He opened his mouth and launched a Sonic Bullet at the boulder.

THWOOM!

BANG!

A foot-wide crater emerged. Rui had reduced the power of the attack to the standard of a mid-grade Martial Apprentice since the reason this technique was sought after was because of the aim, not the

power. He also did not want to destroy that large boulder with a single attack, since that would miss the point of the demonstrations.

WHOOSH!

He immediately took off into the air, lashing around zig-zagging within a constrained area, all while firing many Sonic Bullet techniques in the direction of the target.

THWOOM THWOOM THWOOM!

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Each attack he launched in the middle of rapid and non-uniform flight, landed exactly where he had launched his first shot. Not a single attack deviated by even an inch, maintaining the perfect crater that only grew deeper with each attack.

The many Martial Squires on both sides stared in wonder as Rui nailed the bullseye that he had created with his first shot, from more than a kilometer away from the target. For Martial Squires, such accuracy from such a distance away with such a small projectile, that demanded greater precision, was pretty much impossible!

Even Senior K'Mala's eyes widened as Rui casually fired many attacks rapidly one after the other and they all traveled a great distance before hitting perfectly on the already deep crater.

BANG!

The Sonic Bullet broke through to the other side as a clean hold had passed from one side to another. Rui landed on the ground before launching a final attack that passed straight through the hold, hitting another rock that was behind it without ever touching the drilled boulder despite going through it.

"That should be enough for a demonstration," Rui remarked nonchalantly as he casually glanced at Senior K'Mala.

"...Yes, that's good enough..." She managed to squeeze out.

The Martial Squires of the G'ak'arkan Tribe moved over to the boulder to take a closer look at Rui's handiwork. They studied the hole that his repeated Squire-level attacks had made.

"The hole is not that rough," one of the G'ak'arkan Martial Squires mentioned as they rubbed their palms along the inside of it. "What incredible accuracy!"

None of them were concerned regarding the lacking power of the attack, they knew that he had limited himself since the entire bould would have been reduced to smithereens with a single attack or two had he used his full power.

"This technique, we definitely need to get our hands on this technique!" The Martial Squires' greed for this technique only grew deeper. They had long heard about this technique when Rui had first used it in his debut battle against the K'ulnen Tribe. It had been hard to believe back then, but seeing it in the flesh was almost harder to believe.

It took a while for them to get over their fascination, to the point that Senior K'Mala needed to drag one of them back herself with force!

Chapter 710: Domain

"We have taken the initiative as promised, now it's your turn to follow up," Rui calmly reminded her.

"We do not intend to go back on our word... The first technique on your list was the Sacred Lotus Blooming Gale, correct?"

"...Yes," Rui sighed.

The names of the Martial Art techniques of the G'ak'arkan Tribe were overly metaphorical and figurative. They offered no insights onto the techniques themselves.

The differences in philosophies of both sides were entirely evident in the way they handled the naming of their techniques. The Kandrian Martial Union and most Martial Artist organizations of a similar nature usually took a more pragmatic approach to name techniques. Techniques usually alluded to their purpose and their capabilities. Although it wasn't as though they were entirely literal themselves, it was also true that they were grounded in reality.

To Rui, Sacred Lotus Blooming Gale was an unnecessarily ostentatious name that accomplished nothing.

A Martial Squire stepped forward from that G'ak'arkan Tribe. Rui recognized her. She was the one that they had seen use the technique that they sought.

Senior Ceeran, in particular, was quite impressed with this technique and wanted to use elements of the technique with that of his own techniques to strengthen them, Rui could sense that he was paying greater attention to her ongoing demonstration.

"Uhm... My technique is a wide area technique, so I cannot demonstrate it here..." She nervously said as she notices Senior Ceeran's intense stare. This was quite a lot for her to bear even if Senior Ceeran was suppressing the pressure that he was exerting since the G'ak'arkan Tribe placed a lot of weight on Martial power when it came to their social hierarchies.

Once she took her place in the distance. She closed her eyes, focusing, as she raised her arms. She inhaled and exhaled in a pattern while her body swayed smoothly yet swiftly in a particular matter. Rocks, stones, and soil rose from the ground slowly as they began swirling in a circle, forming a dome around her.

The intensity of the mini sand storm continued increasing until it reached a peak before suddenly freezing. She breathed in and out rapidly as she continued with her gestures. The sand and rocks flew inward before compressing into a smooth sphere in her hand, that smoothly crumbled into dust that the wind dragged away.

Senior Ceeran's eyes had lit up in excitement at the sight as she continued to demonstrate the manner in which she could apply her technique.

('She is able to maintain a directed and controlled stream of force by reducing the amount of power that she was exerting per second,') Rui noted in interest.

Usually, with long-range techniques, there was a rapid discharge of power in a brief amount of time to create a powerful singular impact or a decently strong barrage of impacts, or forceful streams of attacks. However, what she was doing was reducing it even further where she could exert continuous force over a much longer period of time. She was able to control the angle and locations of force to a much higher and more precise degree while also having a much greater degree of control over how she exerted her force.

('In exchange, her power is lacking compared to long-range techniques, but she makes up with her control and flexibility.') Rui remarked.

It meant that she would be a real menace to deal with in a battle of attrition because she would be able to go on for a long longer than most Martial Artists. In a battle of attrition, she would brutally squeeze her opponent, metaphorically and literally like an anaconda.

It was a particularly clever application of force, and Rui could see why Senior Ceeran would want it. It could help him last much longer in battles of attrition like his latest battle against the leaders of the K'ulnen Tribe. He would be able to apply his force much more efficiently in longer battles.

"Next," Senior K'Mala broke Senior Ceeran out of his reverie.

"I believe your trajectory manipulation is the second on the list of techniques that they desire, Senior Ceeran," Rui offered.

Senior K'Mala directed a cautious look toward the Martial Senior. She had witnessed his power and knew for a fact that if a fight broke out here, she stood no chance of surviving against him, let alone beating him.

Senior Ceeran wordlessly rose to the air. His energy was lethargic, but everyone present grew more tense yet excited. It wasn't every day that they got to witness the power of a Martial Senior being demonstrated for them at close range, without their life being on the line.

Everyone watched with hawk eyes as a dense and opaque breath escaped Senior Ceeran's mouth. It immediately split into several directions as Senior Ceeran harnessed the wind currents that it generated, directing them diagonally downwards as Senior Ceeran skillfully manipulated the trajectories in all kinds

of directions. He made sure to demonstrate his ability to alter techniques at all speeds. Even at the highest of speeds of his attack, he could make relatively sharp curves across the air, showing everyone that nobody could juke his attacks even if they tried.

And everyone believed him, of course. They had not forgotten how even the matriarch of the K'ulnen Tribe was not able to cleanly avoid the attacks of Senior Ceeran for more than a short time. If not for the patriarch of the K'ulnen Tribe intervening at the right moment, she may very well have died then and there.

The long-range pressure and suppression that Senior Ceeran was able to exert were quite impressive and was clearly why the G'ak'arkan Tribe sought after his techniques. Even if heavily restricted almost all of his power, people could feel how oppressed they would be if they had to fight him even with his highly restricted attacks.

"Incredible," Senior K'Mala's eyes widened as she stared at the power that Senior Ceeran effortlessly demonstrated to all of them without breaking a sweat.