

The Quest 16

Chapter 16: The Third Level of Qi Cultivation

After Mo Hua entered the Tongxian Sect, a new year of sect life began.

The Tongxian Sect is a first-grade sect, which is the lowest in the hierarchy of the cultivation world.

The rankings of sects in the cultivation world are strictly hierarchical.

At the founding of a sect, its grade must be determined, which is audited and adjudicated by the Dao Court.

The criteria for setting a grade are stringent, evaluating the sect's assets, the mountains it occupies, the depth of its heritage, the virtue of its sect leader, the cultivation level and number of its elders and instructors, and the number of disciples it can accommodate, among other things.

Promoting a sect's grade is even more rigorous, requiring several high-level cultivators to preach and establish themselves for a set number of years before applying for an upgrade at the Dao Court's Tian Shu Pavilion.

Upgrading is a major event for any sect, requiring years of preparation and the need to cultivate relationships with the Dao Court, consuming considerable manpower and financial resources.

In the Tongxian Sect, only the old sect leader is a Foundation Building cultivator, far from meeting the conditions for a second-grade sect. Moreover, it's estimated that it will not qualify for an upgrade within a century.

Moreover, the Tongxian Sect owns just three peaks: Tongling Peak, Tongxuan Peak, and Tongming Peak.

In the external sect of the Tongxian Sect, early Qi cultivation disciples, i.e., levels 1-3, practice and learn on Tongling Peak, middle Qi cultivation levels 4-6 disciples are on Tongxuan Peak, and very few late Qi cultivation levels 7-9 external sect disciples are also on Tongxuan Peak, due to their small numbers, they are simply accommodated there.

Meanwhile, the inner sect and personally transmitted disciples, including the sect leader, elders, and instructors, are all on Tongming Peak.

It was said that there was originally another peak, Tongxian Peak, specifically for the sect leader and elders to live and cultivate. However, due to poor management of the sect and insolvency, they tearfully sold it off.

Without Tongxian Peak, how could it still be called Tongxian Sect?

Generation after generation of Tongxian Sect leaders have aspired to redeem Tongxian Peak, but unfortunately, this great ambition has yet to be fulfilled.

Each peak's disciples in the Tongxian Sect are divided into four classes: A, B, C, and D, with the quality of disciples decreasing from class A downwards, as does the sect's focus and cultivation efforts.

Class A generally only recruits so-called "children of heaven", who need good spiritual roots, high aptitude, and fast cultivation.

Of course, if you have connections with the sect's elders or are willing to donate a significant amount of spirit stones, you can also enter class A.

In short, either you have talent, connections, or spirit stones.

Class B includes disciples with average spiritual roots but good aptitude and diligence, and their overall performance is also commendable.

Class C's disciples have average spiritual roots and aptitude, and their performance is mediocre, while class D's disciples generally have poorer spiritual roots and performance, and are essentially just getting by.

Mo Hua was placed in class B, belonging to those with average spiritual roots but who are diligent and perform fairly well in their studies.

Mo Hua, at the second level of Qi cultivation, therefore lived and practiced on Tongling Peak, the mountain with the most disciples in the Tongxian Sect.

After entering the sect and greeting familiar fellow disciples, Mo Hua began a year of study and cultivation.

Even the poorest cultivators gather some spirit stones to let their children enter the sect for cultivation, at least to lay some foundation and not be too ignorant about the various aspects of the cultivation world, so the early Qi cultivation disciples in the Tongxian Sect are the most numerous.

As for the mid-Qi cultivation phase, whether one can continue cultivating depends on the cultivator's own talent and family wealth.

Some loose cultivator families simply cannot afford the spirit stones and have to let their children drop out, help others refine tools, do odd jobs, or learn to hunt demons in the mountains, just to scrape by. An annual tuition fee of a hundred spirit stones is not a small sum; otherwise, the family would starve before the child could become skilled.

And those who can continue to cultivate in the sect until the late Qi cultivation phase are even fewer.

Mo Hua found that several familiar fellow disciples were no longer around. Upon inquiry, he learned that several of them had dropped out due to poor family circumstances and encountering difficulties, unable to afford the tuition.

The path of cultivation is both broad and profound, and without guidance, one could wander aimlessly. Dropping out in the early Qi cultivation phase means it's very difficult to make any further progress in cultivation unless one

encounters an extraordinary opportunity.

Mo Hua sighed slightly, feeling pity, but his own situation was not much better, leaving him little time for such thoughts.

Mo Hua spent his days attending classes and cultivating, using his free time to draw array formations, leading a busy and fulfilling life.

A few months later, almost without realizing it, Mo Hua broke through to the third level of Qi cultivation.

Qi cultivation progress relies heavily on persistence and accumulation; daily consistent cultivation and accumulating over months and years. If the spending on spirit stones is on point, breakthroughs naturally occur.

But what loose cultivators lack the most is always spirit stones.

Small realm breakthroughs rely on accumulation, mid-realm breakthroughs encounter bottlenecks. These bottlenecks require some special heavenly and earthly treasures, or pills to aid in the breakthrough.

As for major realm breakthroughs, such as from Qi cultivation to Foundation Building, it's more a matter of fate, something that many lower-tier loose cultivators will never achieve in their lifetime.

Every advancement in realm brings great benefits to a cultivator.

At the third level of Qi cultivation, Mo Hua felt his spiritual power was more abundant, and his spiritual sense naturally strengthened.

Previously, drawing the Blazing Fire Array was strenuous, but now it had become effortless, and he hardly needed to rest after completing it.

Despite the anticipation, Mo Hua was still pleasantly surprised.

No wonder so many cultivators endure the tedium of cultivation, focusing on advancing their realms. The unadorned joy that comes after such tedium is truly genuine happiness.

At ten years old, being at the third level of Qi cultivation, Mo Hua was considered above average in class B.

And now at the third level of Qi cultivation, Mo Hua needed to choose a cultivation technique.

One day after class, the instructor, Yan, asked several third-level Qi cultivation disciples to stay, including Mo Hua.

Instructor Yan, taking over for the unwell Elder Zhou, got straight to the point:

"The most important thing for a cultivator is spiritual power, whether in physical cultivation, spiritual cultivation, drawing arrays, refining pills, or crafting talismans, all require spiritual power. Strong spiritual power puts you a level above, weak spiritual power puts you a level below. The fundamental difference between cultivators is the difference in spiritual power."

"Spiritual power is determined by the cultivation technique, and the technique is determined by the spiritual roots. What kind of spiritual roots you have dictates what cultivation technique you can practice, and what technique you practice determines the abundance of your spiritual power."

"Spiritual roots are innate, predestined at birth, and cannot be changed later. You can't choose your spiritual roots, but you can choose what cultivation technique to practice."

"Choosing a suitable cultivation technique is greatly beneficial for future cultivation. If you have poor spiritual roots but practice the right technique, you may have a relatively long cultivation path. However, if you have superior spiritual roots but practice the wrong technique, you are essentially cutting off your path to longevity."

"No matter the quality of your spiritual roots, choosing a cultivation technique must be approached with the utmost caution..."

"Cultivation technique, huh..." Mo Hua pondered silently.

Mo Hua has a mid-grade lower-tier Five Elements spiritual root, which is considered below average among his peers in Tongxian City.

It was uncertain what kind of cultivation technique he could learn with his spiritual roots.