

The Quest 394

Chapter 394: Draw the Line (1)

The connection with the Earth Divine Thought lasted only for an instant,

Before it completely severed.

In that mental image, the vast earth disappeared, the phenomenon of all things withering and flourishing, the blooming and falling of flowers, all receded.

That understanding of the Earth's "Dao" was no more than a fleeting epiphany.

Mo Hua himself benefited greatly, but when he looked back, he discovered the "Taoist Stele" had turned gray.

Mo Hua was startled.

Done for, had it been overused?

Mo Hua frowned in thought.

He had borrowed the Taoist Stele to meditate on the Earth Divine Thought.

The one that directly endured the ancient and vast Divine Thought of the earth was the Taoist Stele. While the Taoist Stele was indeed peculiar, it was not to the extent that it could connect to Earth Divine Thought and remain unscathed.

Of course, there was another possibility: that Mo Hua's own Divine Sense was too weak.

Therefore, as the mediating Formation media, the Taoist Stele had to bear tremendous pressure.

Otherwise, he would not have been able, to successfully communicate with the Dao of the Earth and connect with it.

"It could be that the load was too heavy, so it stopped working..."

Mo Hua felt a twinge of distress.

He touched the Taoist Stele, worriedly saying, "You'd better not have any issues..."

The Taoist Stele remained silent, unresponsive, with only the surface of the stele turning gray.

Mo Hua tried to draw a Formation Pattern on the Taoist Stele.

The Patterns were intermittent, flickering on and off.

Mo Hua breathed a sigh of relief.

The Taoist Stele was still valid, it was just that the Divine Thought load was overdone, and so it was "temporarily out of contact," needing some time to rest.

Mo Hua then sighed again, taking a lesson to heart.

With his own realm too low, trying to communicate Divine Thoughts and meditate on the Great Dao was something he shouldn't do next time without certainty.

Even if he hadn't hurt himself, damaging the Taoist Stele was also bad.

Mo Hua felt somewhat guilty and patted the Taoist Stele again, saying,

"You've worked hard, take a good rest."

The Taoist Stele still had no reaction, seemingly uninterested in dealing with Mo Hua.

...

Exiting his Sea of Consciousness, Mo Hua was invigorated and began Drawing the Thick Earth Formation again.

This time, his experience Drawing the Thick Earth Formation felt completely different.

Having meditated on Earth Divine Thought and contemplated the Dao of the Earth, his perception of the Earth's essence was now incredibly clear.

Even without the aid of the Taoist Stele and only relying on his own Divine Sense, he couldn't gain further insight.

But with his clear perception, Mo Hua could easily draw the Thick Earth Formation on the ground.

And he did it with considerable ease and mastery.

Previously, even with the ability to use Divine Sense to connect to the Earth's essence and draw the Thick Earth Formation on the ground,

The Patterns he drew were like those in the mud.

The Patterns didn't fit well, and the flow of Spiritual Power was obstructed.

But now, Mo Hua could truly treat the "Earth" as "Paper", with the Patterns drawn clearly and steadily, becoming one with the earth.

It seemed as if the Patterns he drew were inherently part of the earth.

Where the brush fell, there was the land, the Patterns were there, and the Formation was there.

That is the benefit of contemplating the Great Dao.

But the consequence was that the Taoist Stele had "gone on strike."

For the time being, it seemed that the Taoist Stele couldn't be used for further Formation practice.

"No other way..."

Mo Hua felt a bit helpless.

For now, he had no choice but to furtively slack off in a righteous manner.

The next day, Mo Hua went to seek Mr. Zhuang again.

He had mastered the Thick Earth Formation, so he wanted to confirm with his mentor whether there was any problem with what he had drawn.

But upon entering the courtyard, Mo Hua found that Mr. Zhuang was staring at him intently.

Not just Mr. Zhuang, Old Kui was also looking at him.

They gazed at him as if he were some rare curiosity, with bright, piercing eyes.

Mo Hua was a bit confused and asked softly,

"Master, what are you looking at?"

"You..." Mr. Zhuang hesitated several times, searching for the right words, and asked, "Did you sense something last night?"

Mo Hua was somewhat surprised.

Indeed, nothing could be hidden from Mr. Zhuang.

Mo Hua simply told of last night's event, but he omitted the part about the Taoist Stele.

He mentioned only that while learning the Thick Earth Formation, he had realized that one needed to use Divine Sense to connect to the Earth's essence to draw Formations on the Earth. But after connecting, he had a fleeting perception of an ancient and tremendous Divine Thought, and couldn't sense anything afterward.

Mr. Zhuang's eyelids twitched as he listened.

Connecting to the Earth's essence and perceiving the Earth Divine Thought were worlds apart.

Like climbing a mountain, one at the base, having taken just two steps, cannot see the mountain's entirety,

While the other who has nearly reached halfway up the mountain has glimpsed the zenith.

The perception of these two are entirely different.

They sound similar, but there's a massive chasm between them, a huge rift.

This chasm is the Divine Sense; this rift is the Great Dao.

Even Old Kui, with his wooden expression, showed a clear sign of shock.

Seeing their reactions, Mo Hua felt somewhat uneasy and asked,

"Is this a good or bad thing?"

Mr. Zhuang sighed and said, "It's a good thing, but it could also be a trouble."

"Trouble?"

Mr. Zhuang said with a half-smile,

"At your young age, being able to contemplate the Great Dao, if others knew, they would surely want to catch you, dissect your Sea of Consciousness, and see what's inside..."

Mo Hua was taken aback, subconsciously covering his little head.

"So remember," Mr. Zhuang patiently cautioned, "mention this only here, this one time, and beyond this, tell no one!"

"Mm, mm!"

Mo Hua nodded repeatedly.

Mr. Zhuang quietly sighed to himself.

His little disciple seemed to be accumulating more and more secrets that must not be disclosed.

Mo Hua, however, expressed his confusion and asked:

"Master, what exactly is the divine thought that I sensed? Is it the divine thought of the earth? Why does the earth have a divine thought? Is it alive too?"

Mr. Zhuang's eyes flickered slightly as he explained to Mo Hua:

"All things between heaven and earth possess thoughts, and where there's thought, there's consciousness."

"Humans have divine sense, monsters have monster sensing, and other beings, whether they are birds, beasts, insects, fish, or flowers, grass, and trees, also have something akin to 'divine sense'."

"This kind of 'thought' is primal and simple, less complex than a human's divine sense."

"But once such 'thought' becomes vast to a certain extent, due to its singularity and enduring nature, returning to simplicity and truth, it often comes closer to the Dao than a cultivator's divine sense, which is filled with personal desires."

"The earth's thought is exactly like this."

"We usually refer to the immense divine thoughts in all things between heaven and earth that contain Daoist Meaning as 'Taoist Meaning'!"

Mr. Zhuang said slowly and with emotion.

"Taoist Meaning..."

Mo Hua was deeply shaken in his heart.

The divine sense he perceived with the help of the Taoist Stele, the Great Dao he contemplated, was... the Earth Dao Meaning!

Mr. Zhuang then silently watched Mo Hua, "Remember what I just said."

Mo Hua quickly nodded, "Don't worry, Master, I won't tell anyone!"

Only then did Mr. Zhuang nod his head.

Mo Hua quietly asked, "Master, does that mean that if one comprehends the Earth Dao Meaning, one can draw the Thick Earth Formation?"

Mr. Zhuang shook his head.

Mo Hua was startled, "No?"

"No."

Mr. Zhuang said, "As long as one can slightly sense the breath of the earth, one can draw the Thick Earth Formation."

"If it were necessary to comprehend the Earth Dao Meaning, then hardly anyone would be able to draw this Thick Earth Formation..."

Mo Hua stroked his chin and pondered:

"Doesn't that mean my enlightenment was a bit of a waste?"

Mr. Zhuang couldn't help but tap Mo Hua's head lightly.

"Don't pretend to be aggrieved when you have an advantage."

"Oh."

Mo Hua rubbed his head and smiled sheepishly.

Mr. Zhuang appeared somewhat helpless, but a slight smile also appeared on his lips, as he said:

"To comprehend the Daoist Meaning is not just for drawing the Thick Earth Formation on the ground, but to be able to draw any formation on the earth."

"As long as the ground where you draw the formation exists, then the formation exists."

"This is also an extremely profound technique of a Formation Master."

Mo Hua was taken aback, and after pondering a bit, he gradually understood.

"The soil falls under the Daoist Meaning, and initially it does not allow cultivators to draw formations.

"Because there is no recognition, the Taoist Meaning won't give you face."

"Now that I have 'seen' it, as if to say hello, gotten a bit acquainted, everything becomes convenient. The Taoist Meaning then allows me to draw formations on its turf."

"Master, is that what you mean?"

Mr. Zhuang was bewildered by Mo Hua's explanation. After a lengthy silence, he finally said quietly:

"If that's how you want to understand it... Well, sure."

Mo Hua felt elated in his heart.

To be able to draw any formation on the ground!

That also means that anywhere in this world, as long as there is soil, there is formation media.

And under the vast heavens, there is no shortage of thick earth.

What's more important is,

From now on, he would save money on paper when drawing formations!

In other words, he could save quite a lot of Spirit Stones!

Mo Hua thought to himself:

"Seems like sustaining a bit of damage to the Taoist Stele is worth it after all..."

Then Mo Hua quietly asked Mr. Zhuang, "Master, this Thick Earth Formation doesn't have a simple origin, does it?"

It is an Ultimate Formation that connects with the breath of the earth, and through it, one might even contemplate the Earth Dao Meaning.

Although contemplating the Taoist Meaning is mainly the contribution of the Taoist Stele,

But to serve as a mediator between a cultivator and the Taoist Meaning, this Thick Earth Formation is pretty extraordinary as well.

Mr. Zhuang also whispered back:

"It's the Ultimate Technique of the Earth Sect; don't spread this around."

Mo Hua whispered,

"What if someone discovers it?"

"You learned it secretly; just don't worry about the origins."

"Is that really okay?"

...

Old Kui watched the master and disciple duo whispering to each other with some speechlessness...

Mr. Zhuang continued to speak to Mo Hua:

"Once you got here, you 'accidentally' saw it, 'unintentionally' learned it. It's neither stolen nor forcibly taken, completely legitimate; how could they fault you for that? Even if they argue until the end of time, you are in the right."

"Besides..." Mr. Zhuang added, "if you don't say anything, they might not even know that what you drew is the Thick Earth Formation."

"How could they not know?" Mo Hua was puzzled.

"Because their own Formation Masters might not be able to learn it."

Mo Hua was slightly surprised, "Can they not learn their own things?"

Mr. Zhuang corrected him: "It's not their own thing; it's merely handed down by their ancestors, and they are just basking in their ancestors' glory."

"Moreover, it's an Ultimate Formation, one of the ultimate techniques of formations. Even though it is only a first-grade, it contains Dao Laws and is not something that ordinary Formation Masters can comprehend."

"You say this formation is yours, can you draw one to show me?"

"If you can't draw it, what gives you the right to claim it as yours?"

"Though the Earth Sect was founded on formations, the majority of its cultivators are not likely to know Ultimate Formations."

"If they themselves can't do it, what right do they have to accuse you?"

Mo Hua said timidly, "Isn't this, maybe, a little... thick-skinned?"

"No matter, at times, being thick-skinned is what solves problems."

Mr. Zhuang had an unflappable demeanor, ready to face the collapse of Mount Tai without a change in expression or take scolding from ten thousand people indifferently.

Mo Hua looked up at Mr. Zhuang, full of admiration, and then he couldn't help but touch his own cheek,

"It seems I need to thicken my skin a bit more..."

Old Kui, standing to the side, couldn't help but sigh involuntarily.

A perfectly good child, is about to be led astray again...