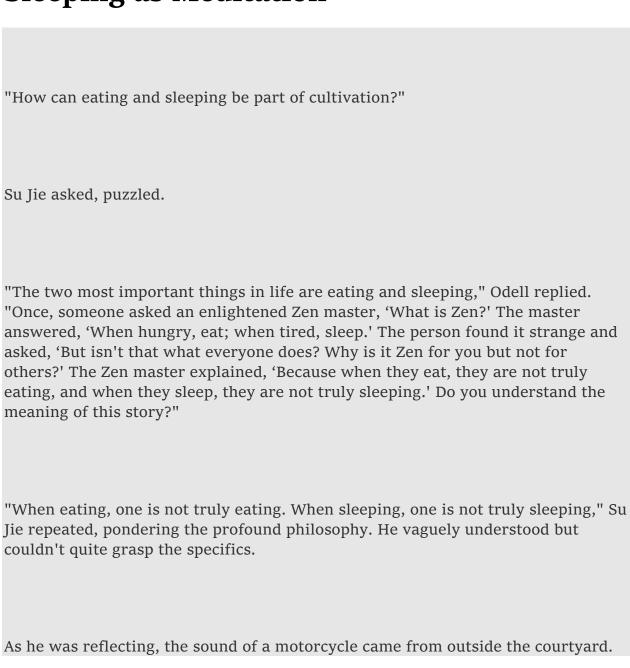
#### THE WAY OF RESTRAINT

### Chapter 6: Subtle Perception Eating and Sleeping as Meditation



Odell opened the gate, revealing a food delivery worker.
Several large bags were brought in and placed on the table. The spread was extravagant: beef, chicken, fruits, dairy products, fish, and soup. It was clearly not ordinary takeout but custom-made dishes.
Once the delivery person had set everything up, Odell gestured to Su Jie, "Come and eat. This is private cuisine from the Nie family. It's said their ancestors were imperial chefs. I tried it once before and found it incredibly delicious. It also nourishes the body and replenishes vitality—suitable for all ages."
Su Jie's stomach was already growling, but a hint of embarrassment showed on his face. He felt like he was freeloading.  Odell seemed to see through his thoughts. "I'm conducting a physical fitness
training experiment. If you're willing to volunteer, I'll cover your meals and even pay you."
"Of course, I'm willing!" Su Jie nodded quickly. "Just covering my meals is enough—I don't even need the pay. Could you teach me more martial arts instead?"
"Then let's eat first." Odell pointed with his chopsticks.

Westerners are usually accustomed to eating with knives and forks, and many struggle to use chopsticks. Su Jie tried his best to handle the chopsticks but failed every time. Odell, however, was entirely different. He wielded the chopsticks with fluid ease, even skillfully picking up difficult-to-grab peanuts, selecting precisely how many he wanted.

Su Jie, famished, took a big bite.

Odell immediately stopped him. "Eating is your first lesson from me. You must chew thoroughly, breaking down the food completely before swallowing. While eating, don't think about anything else. Focus solely on the act of eating. But don't be too tense—maintain a mindset of enjoyment and relaxation. Remember, eating is one of the most relaxing and enjoyable moments of life. Grasp this moment, and you grasp the essence of life. This is what the Zen master meant by 'when eating, eat.' Most people—99%, in fact—aren't truly eating when they eat."

"Focus without distraction, yet enjoy and relax. Chew thoroughly," Su Jie muttered. He recalled what he had learned in biology class: thorough chewing helps secrete more saliva, converting starches into maltose and reducing the digestive burden on the stomach. The more you chew, the more facial muscle movement stimulates the cerebral cortex, enhancing brain activity.

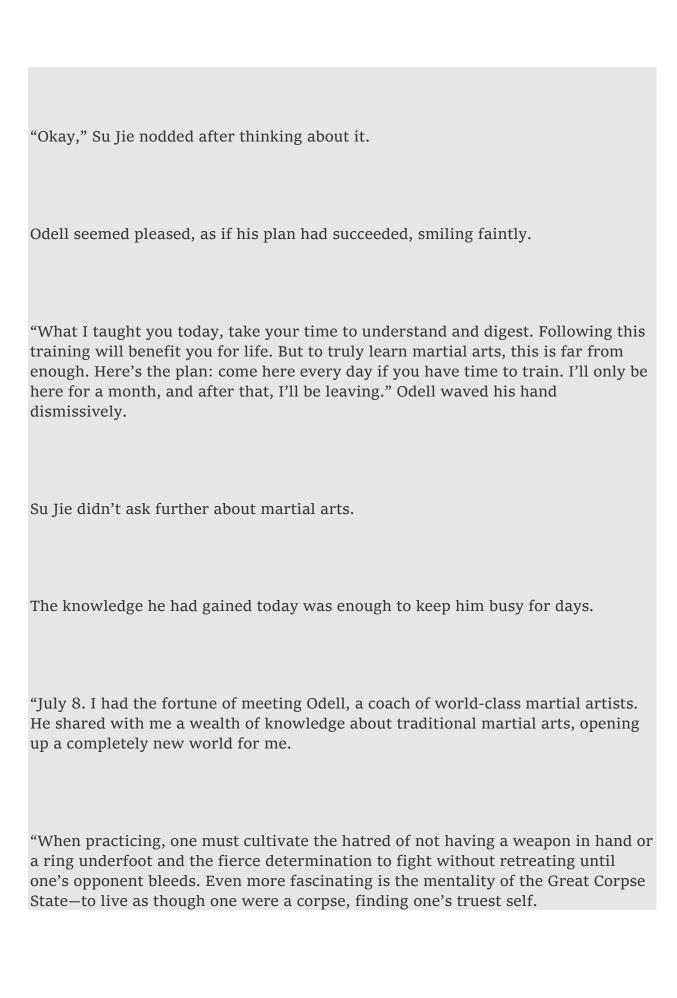
"Eating with the right mindset is crucial. If you think about other things while eating, blood circulation won't focus on your stomach and intestines, which weakens your digestion. At the same time, it reduces the brain's control over your taste buds. Over time, this can lead to mild anorexia. From an evolutionary perspective, this marks the beginning of species elimination," said Odell. "In my research, even professional athletes who eat without thinking outperform those who think while eating. Don't underestimate this detail—true physical fitness and body quality stem from such strict self-discipline and mental control. The devil is often hidden in the details."

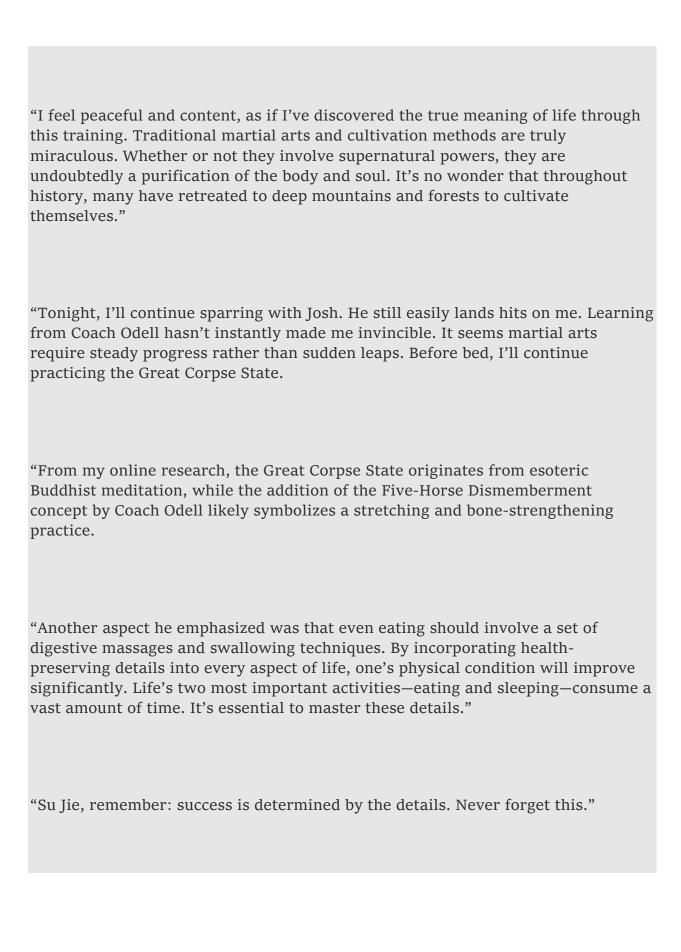
"The devil is hidden in the details." Hearing this, Su Jie seemed to grasp the concept. He wanted to think further but stopped immediately, focusing on eating and enjoying the food.
As he ate, he entered a state where he felt the aroma of the food spread throughout his body with each chew, leaving him slightly euphoric. The well-chewed food traveled down his esophagus into his stomach, bringing an overwhelming sense of satisfaction.
During this, he felt nature's gift to life.
Observing Su Jie's state and his expression change while eating, Odell looked as though he had discovered a treasure—like a teacher finding a highly perceptive student.
After finishing his meal, Su Jie instinctively wanted to stand up.
"Don't stand yet. After eating, sit for a while because your stomach and intestines are still digesting. If you disrupt this process by standing, your stomach might sag. However, sitting for too long can lead to bloating. In this case, you should drink something to aid digestion," Odell continued to share his detailed knowledge.

"A drink?" Su Jie didn't find any juices or similar beverages but had eaten some fruit at the table. "The best drink is your saliva," Odell said, gently massaging his abdomen in sync with his breathing. "There are several points on the abdomen. In Chinese medicine, these points are unique and fascinating. In our scientific terms, they are called sensitive areas where neurons concentrate. Massage these points—such as Zhongwan, Daheng, Tianshu, Qihai, and Daimai—gently and in order. While doing this, stimulate saliva secretion and swallow it. This helps your stomach and intestines digest more efficiently. It's one of the small details in Chinese martial arts and a health-preserving technique that aligns with scientific principles. Continue until you no longer feel bloated or sense any discomfort in your stomach and abdomen." Su Jie followed along, learning as he went. He hadn't expected something as simple as eating to involve so much knowledge. Instead of dismissing these details, he valued them deeply and resolved to implement them diligently. Once digestion was complete, Odell finally allowed him to stand and move. In the courtyard, Odell had Su Jie walk slowly around the yard. After an hour, when the food was thoroughly digested, he let Su Jie practice the "Hoe Strike" move again. This time, Odell gave meticulous guidance, correcting every incorrect detail on the spot. Only when Su Jie had mastered the move with precision and steadiness did he stop.

"It's time for a nap."
Seeing that Su Jie was somewhat fatigued, Odell guided him on how to rest. The courtyard had annexed rooms, a traditional architectural style specifically for hosting guests.
Odell instructed Su Jie to lie on the bed in a spread-eagle position, stretching his head and limbs as if being pulled apart.
"What I'm teaching you now is derived from ancient Indian yoga and Tantric lifedeath cessation methods, called the Great Corpse State. I've made minor adjustments to it. Lie flat on the bed with your head, hands, and feet stretched outward as much as possible. Imagine you're being torn apart by horses, at your limits, struggling to resist but eventually powerless. Imagine being quartered and feeling as though you've died. Though you're actually still alive, you'll feel an unparalleled calm. At this moment, you are like a corpse—your senses remain, but you experience life anew. By dying once and still being alive, you can let go of everything. Everything becomes serene, and you'll achieve ultimate relaxation."
Odell's voice seemed to carry a hypnotic quality. Following his rhythm, Su Jie stretched his limbs and head forcefully. Suddenly, it felt as though he had truly died. Yet, just like that, he fell into a peaceful sleep, breathing steadily and deeply.
"Among the students I've seen, this child has the best aptitude and intellect. He's calm, not impulsive, and has a strong sense of justice. But to get into the state so

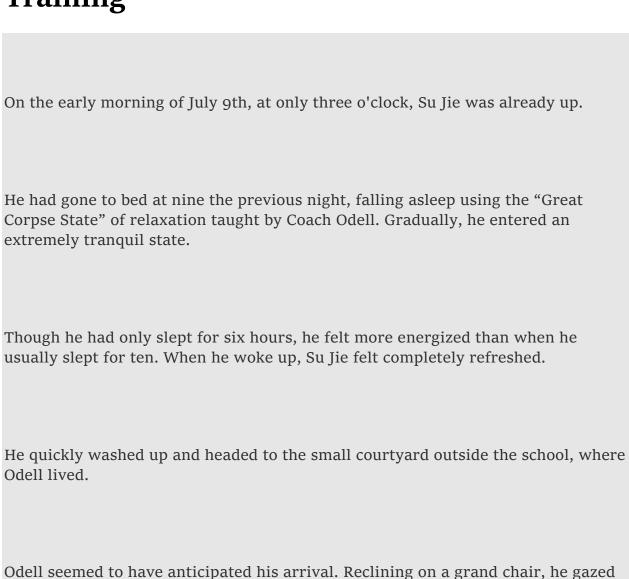
quickly Could he truly be a genius?" Odell thought as he observed the sleeping Su Jie. The reason Su Jie had caught his attention was due to the small incident of buying water.
This minor event fully showcased Su Jie's wisdom and sense of justice.
In their subsequent conversations, Odell discerned Su Jie's persistence, strong will, and comprehension. Ordinary people would find it difficult to persevere, even with guidance. Moreover, during their discussion, he realized that Su Jie was a person with strong execution and planning skills.
"Most importantly, someone who can enter the state of the Great Corpse on their first try is one in a million. Yet he managed it? He directly understood how to live in the state of a corpse. At this rate, he might achieve a state of transcending life and death—an extraordinary spiritual condition. This kind of mental training isn't something artificial intelligence can replicate." A smile appeared on Odell's face.
After two hours of sleep, Su Jie woke up naturally, feeling completely refreshed. He had never felt this comfortable before. His mind was light and carefree, as if he could let go of everything and be content with anything, enjoying a constant sense of ease and joy.
"There's one thing I need you to promise me," Odell said. "Don't tell anyone about my training for now. Set aside time every day to train secretly. Also, if the opportunity arises in the future, I hope you'll participate in a few martial arts tournaments and acknowledge me as your coach."





As per his daily routine, Su Jie recorded everything in his diary, reflecting and summarizing his experiences.

# Chapter 7: Three Training Methods Internal Training, Combat Training, and Endurance Training



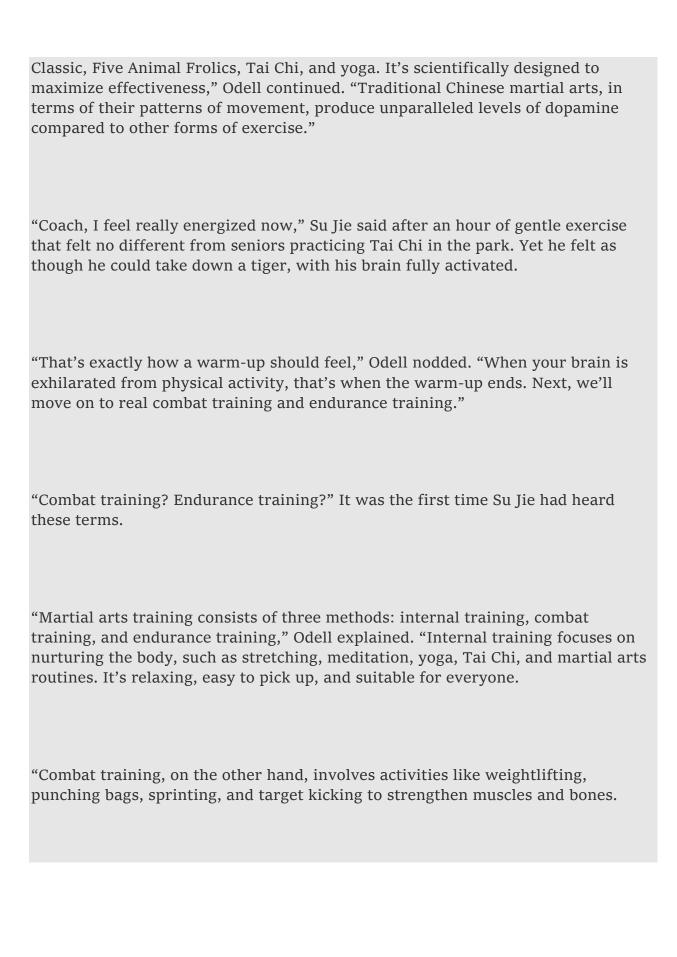
at the clouds leisurely drifting across the sky. The summer dawn was truly

insect repellent, was completely free of mosquitoes.

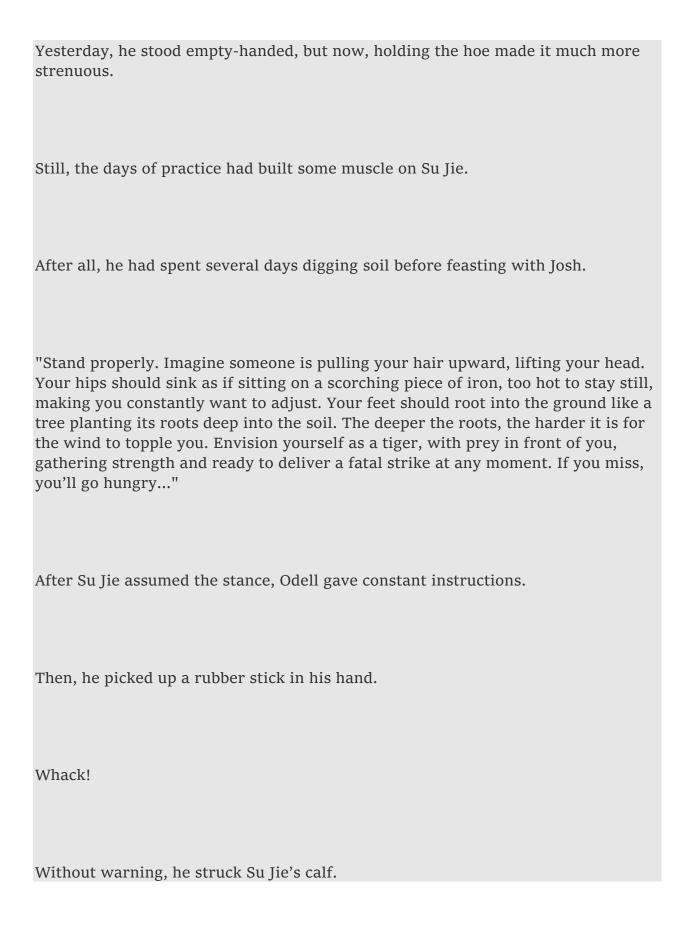
pleasant—a cool breeze swept through, and the courtyard, likely treated with some

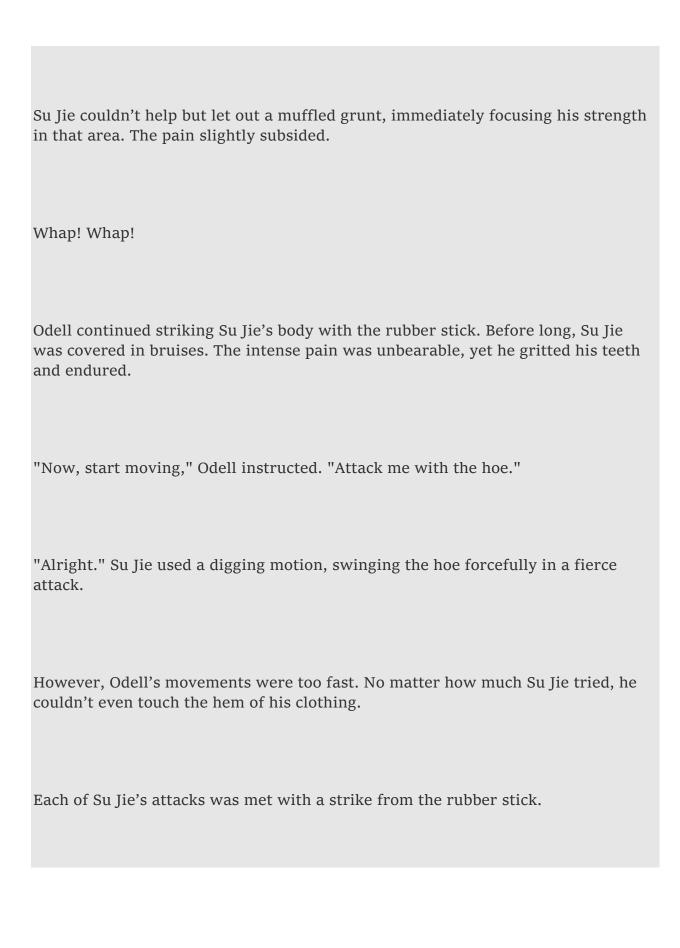
"You're here earlier than I expected," Odell remarked, a hint of surprise in his eyes. "I assume you slept well last night?" "I slept like a log," Su Jie said, feeling an abundance of energy coursing through him. "Coach, what are we learning today?" "I'll start by teaching you a set of joint exercises." Odell stood up and demonstrated a few movements. "Before any training, warming up is crucial. Among warm-ups, joint mobility is the most important. Of all the joints, the knees and wrists are the most fragile and prone to injury. Protecting them while strengthening them is essential. Boxers, for instance, always wrap their wrists to avoid wrist injuries while hitting the punching bag. They also use knee braces. Ideally, you should also apply a muscle-relaxing balm when doing joint exercises. The various medications from Minglun Martial Arts Academy are quite effective." Su Jie followed Odell in performing the joint exercises. The movements were smooth, gentle, and slow, resembling Tai Chi to some extent. "Coach, is this a new style of Tai Chi?" Su Jie asked as he moved. Gradually, his entire body began to heat up, especially his joints, which felt exceptionally comfortable. His brain even experienced a subtle sense of exhilaration. "All exercises share one fundamental benefit—they stimulate the release of dopamine and endorphins in the body," Odell explained. "Dopamine excites and motivates, creating a sense of accomplishment, while endorphins act as natural painkillers. Dopamine is particularly significant, as it improves the body's

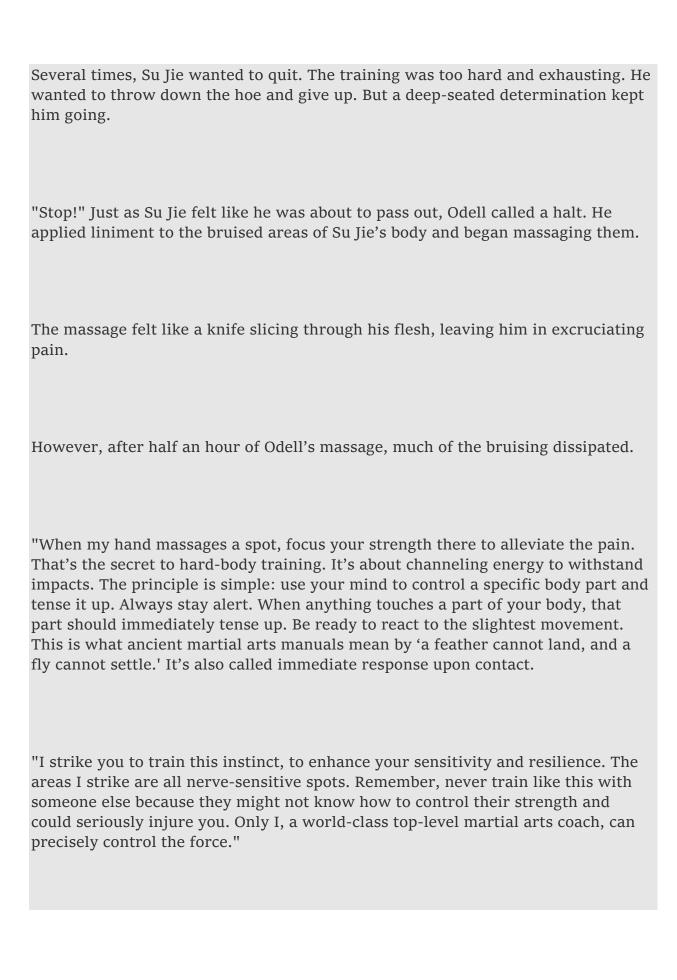
endocrine system and keeps a person in a state of euphoria. It can treat depression, anxiety, and various mental illnesses. That's why exercise is the ultimate stress reliever.
"I've studied all forms of exercise, and I've found that the slow, continuous, and aerobic rhythm of Tai Chi generates more dopamine than any other activity. People who practice Tai Chi often feel a profound sense of comfort. Over time, this can lead to an irrational confidence in their abilities, which explains why some Tai Chi masters get defeated in real combat. This phenomenon, described in Zen Buddhism as an illusory state, must be overcome to recognize one's true self and reach a new level of understanding."
"So that's how it is." Su Jie suddenly understood. "Ever since I learned that digging-and-hoe movement, I've practiced it day and night, thinking I was invincible, only to get beaten up by others. Is it because my brain produces too much dopamine during exercise, creating an illusion of omnipotence? Is this a good thing or a bad thing?"
"It's definitely a good thing. The fact that you can quickly get into an excited state indicates your natural talent for physical activity," Odell replied. "Many people feel more tired as they exercise, leading to a sense of laziness. But you get addicted to it, which shows your aptitude and understanding."
Seeing how quickly Su Jie learned the joint exercises, Odell became even more pleased.
"This set of joint exercises combines modern combat training systems with traditional Chinese martial arts, including the Shaolin Muscle-Tendon Change

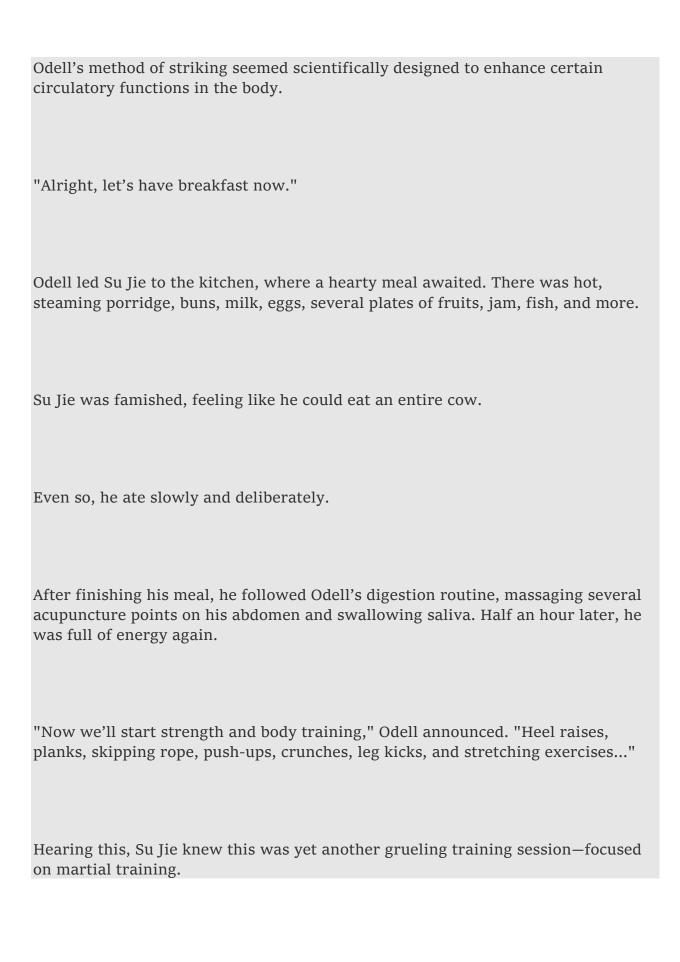


"Endurance training is the harshest. It includes sparring and actual combat, as well as grueling methods like stick-beating and body conditioning to enhance toughness and endurance. However, this method is only suitable for young people. Overdoing it after thirty can lead to injuries. The process must be carefully managed to avoid permanent damage. Nutrition and medicinal support are essential to prevent hidden injuries.
"This type of endurance training yields results quickly. Examples include Muay Thai, traditional Japanese karate, and Chinese hard-style practices like iron palm, iron finger, and hard Qi Gong. Today, only elite combat athletes and special forces soldiers undergo such training. Of course, I've developed the most scientific approach to endurance training."
At this point, Odell paused, his face showing an expression unique to a beast trainer. "The upcoming training will be harsh, even brutal. If you can't endure it, you can quit. However, if you do, I won't teach you anything in the future. Think it through carefully."
"I'm willing to accept it," Su Jie agreed without hesitation.
"There's a hoe over there. Go get it," Odell said, pointing to the side.
Su Jie quickly fetched the hoe and stood in position according to the stance he practiced yesterday. Holding the hoe in the middle, it seemed neither raised nor lowered.









In the morning, joint exercises served as soft training. The rubber stick striking was for hard-body training. What came next was martial training, aimed at building explosive power and physical strength.

By the end of the morning, Su Jie had trained from three in the morning until six. Only then did he rush back to the academy, just in time to join Gu Yang's training.

### Chapter 8: The Movement of Shouldering Like a Dragon's Coil

"Su Jie, where did you go this morning? You were up even earlier than me," Josh asked curiously.

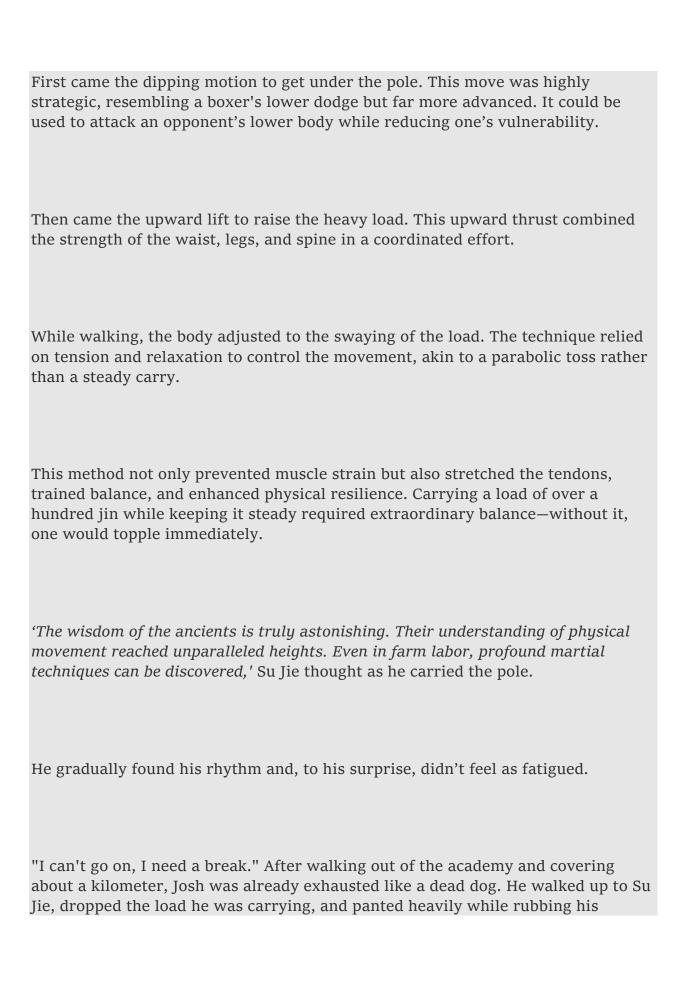
"I went for a run," Su Jie replied, not intending to deceive but simply following Odell's instructions to keep quiet.

"Today is the ninth day." Gu Yang gathered a group of people on the field and began his speech. "You came here to learn traditional martial arts. For the past seven days, I've had you dig soil, which you might think is useless. But in the future, you'll understand—this is the foundation of all martial arts. Today, I will teach you another genuine martial art!"

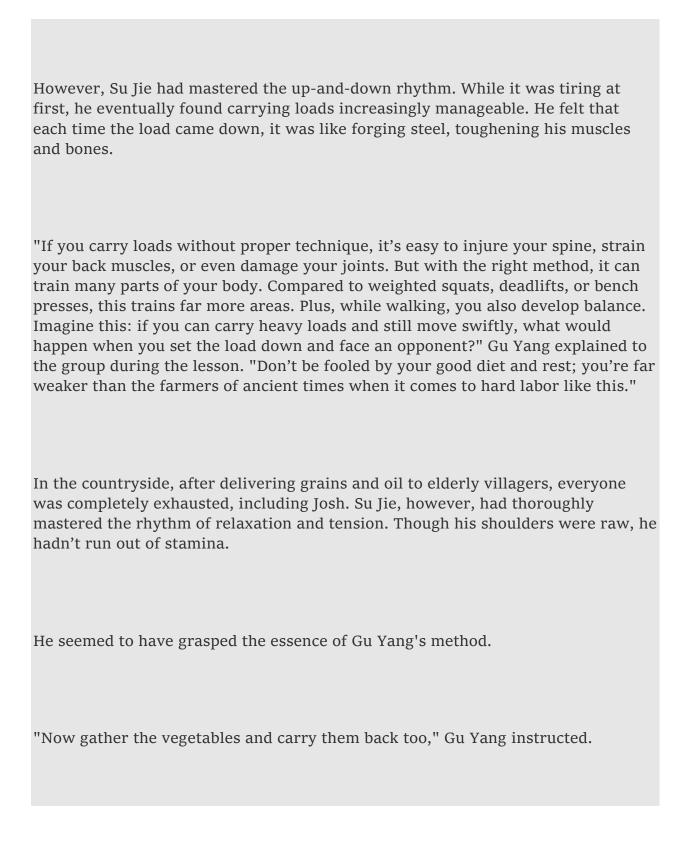
As he spoke, he pointed to a corner of the field where many baskets and carrying poles were placed.
The baskets were filled with rice, cooking oil, and salt, all heavy items. Each basket weighed about sixty or seventy jin.
"These supplies are for elderly villagers in need," Gu Yang explained, gesturing to the baskets filled with essentials. "Now, each of you will take a pole and follow me to the countryside. But carrying these loads requires skill; it's not just about brute strength."
He demonstrated by walking over to the heaviest pair of baskets, setting the pole across them, and slipping under it. With a smooth motion, his body dipped, and then with a flick of his waist, the pole and baskets rose steadily, producing a creaking sound. He carried the load effortlessly.
"This dipping, lifting, and thrusting contains profound technique. It's similar to the force used in digging with a hoe but with even greater upward strength, like a blade of grass breaking through the soil to overturn a stone," Su Jie observed, amazed. With his growing understanding of martial arts, he could see the deep martial technique embedded in the act of carrying a pole.
An ordinary person, attempting this recklessly, might easily injure their back.  "I'll try." Josh, being tall and sturdy, stepped forward confidently. He positioned himself under the pole and lifted the baskets with effort. However, as soon as he took a few steps, the load became unbalanced. The pole tilted, one basket heavy,

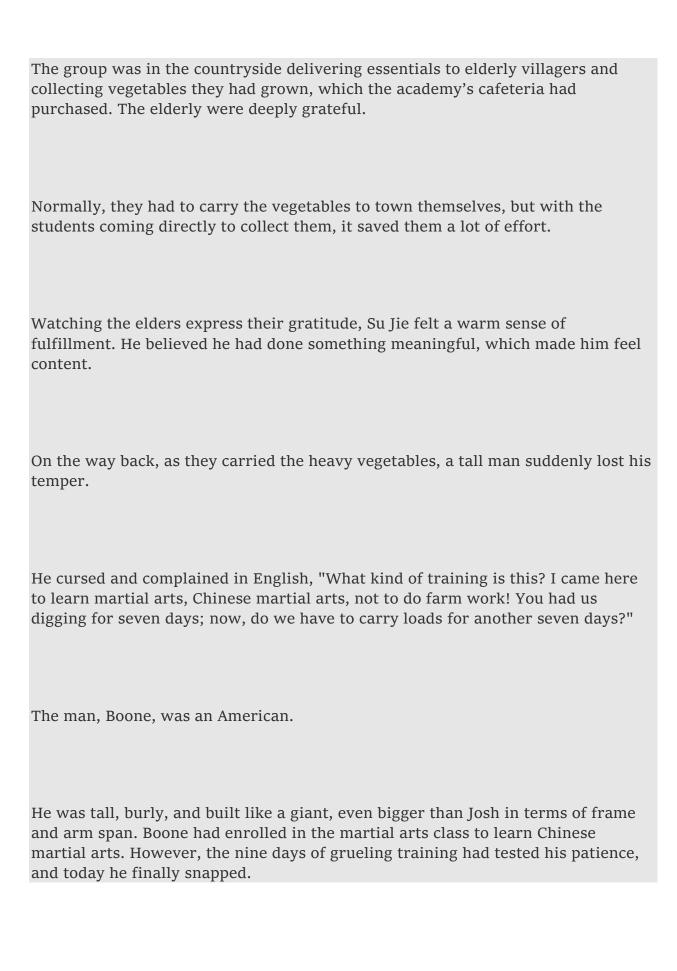
the other light, and everything slid off, spilling the contents.
Fortunately, the rice was bagged, and the oil was sealed in plastic containers, so nothing was wasted. Josh stubbornly rearranged everything and tried again. He managed to lift the pole and baskets but struggled to maintain balance.
He resembled the central beam of a scale, desperately trying to keep both sides level—a nearly impossible task. Standing still was manageable, but moving was a different story.
In the past, Su Jie might have dismissed the idea that carrying a pole had any value. But now, with Odell's teachings, he realized that carrying poles and digging soil were both forms of martial arts.
Gu Yang was genuinely imparting advanced techniques.
Odell's detailed explanation of "The Hoe Technique" had provided Su Jie with many insights. He watched Gu Yang's actions closely, comparing them to Josh's clumsy attempts.
Despite Josh's physical strength, his lack of experience in farm labor showed. Tasks like carrying poles and digging soil seemed simple but were incredibly demanding over time.

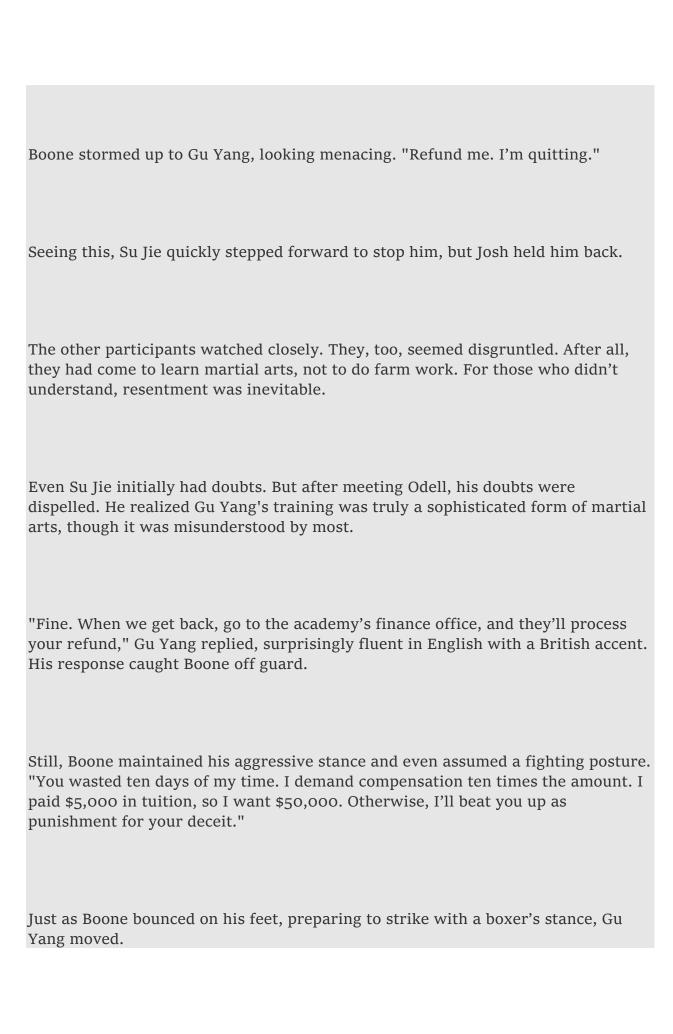
The students in the training program imitated Gu Yang, picking up poles and following him out of the academy.
After walking a kilometer, their faces twisted in pain, their shoulders rubbed raw, and their backs and spines ached unbearably under the weight.
This was far more difficult than digging soil.
"When carrying the pole, match your steps to the rhythm of your breathing. Move in a rise-and-fall motion, coordinating your entire body to toss the load slightly of your shoulders. This allows temporary relaxation. As the load comes back down, use your shoulders to absorb the impact, transferring the force to your legs. Watch my movements," Gu Yang instructed.
He moved with ease, his steps light and quick. The heavy load swayed gently on his shoulders, as if weightless, like a butterfly flitting about.
Su Jie, with his sharp understanding of martial arts, immediately grasped the secrets of the technique.
This was indeed a martial art.

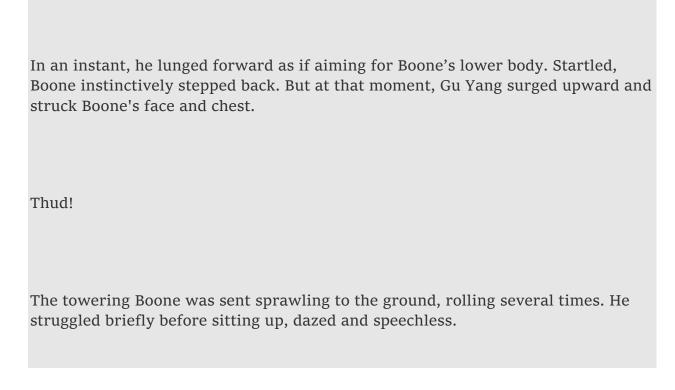


shoulders and waist. His gaze was peculiar as he asked, "Why aren't you tired? Have you done farm work before?"
"No, I haven't, but I've used some techniques," Su Jie replied, demonstrating to Josh by shifting the load. "The technique is about rhythm. When you lift the load slightly, there's a moment where your whole body can relax. During that brief second, you can regulate your breathing and relax your muscles. Once you master the rhythm, it feels like you're resting half the time."
This skill was something he had learned from Odell about balancing relaxation and tension.
"It's only been a day, and you seem like a completely different person. Did you learn some martial arts from someone, or were you given decades' worth of energy transfer?" Josh asked in clumsy Chinese.
"What are you talking about? Do you think I'm in a novel where someone transfers decades of skills to me?" Su Jie couldn't help but laugh at Josh. On the fighting stage, Su Jie wouldn't stand a chance against Josh, but when it came to farm work, he clearly had the upper hand.
The training class participants spent the whole day carrying loads.
Everyone's faces showed signs of agony. Even those with a martial arts foundation found it unbearable.







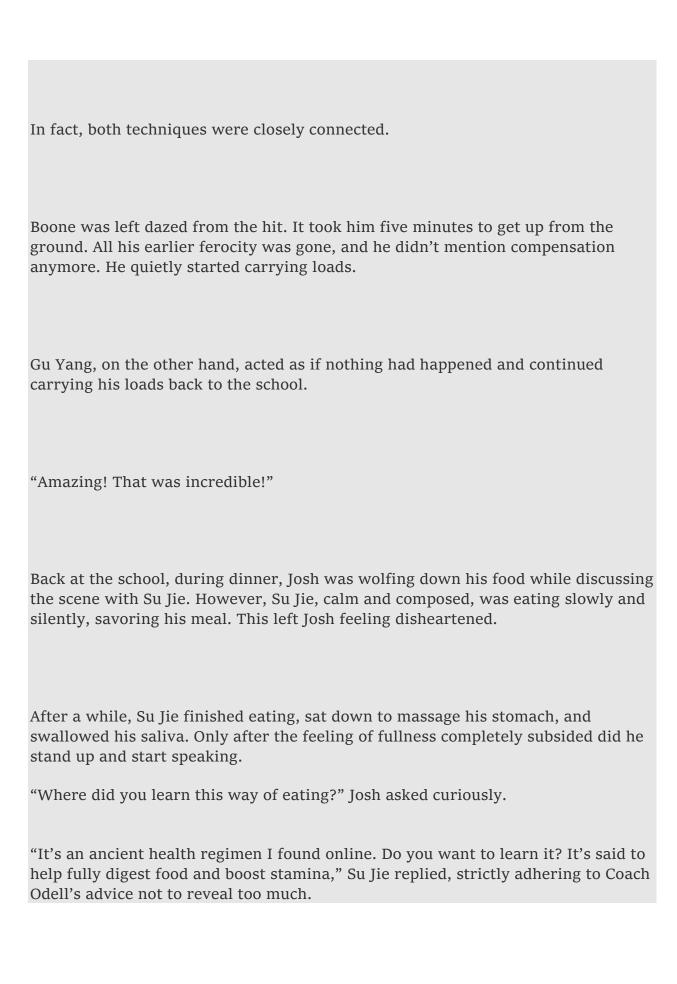


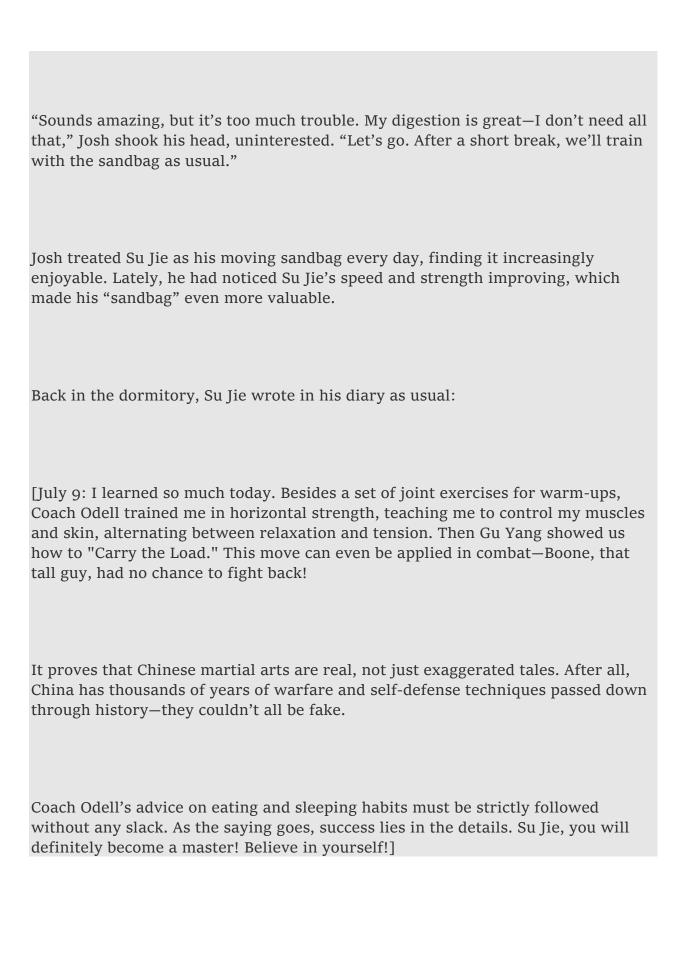
#### Chapter 9: Time Flies, Rapid Progress Achieved

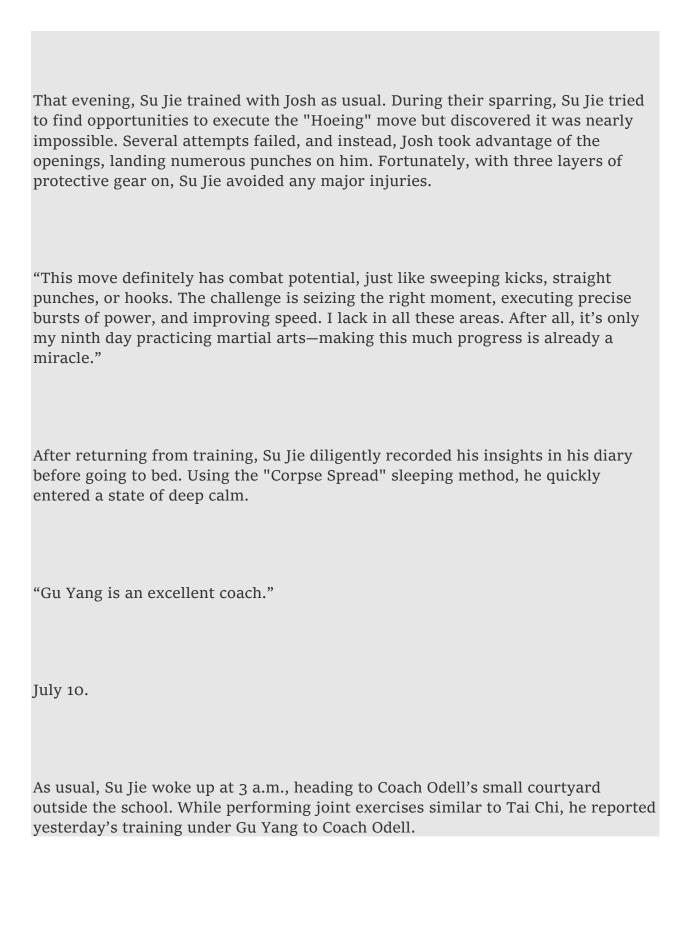
Almost no one could see how Gu Yang made his move.

They only saw Gu Yang's figure dart forward, instantly appearing in front of Boone, tearing through his defense, and sending him flying.

"Amazing! So that's how it's used," Su Jie thought excitedly. He had already figured it out—Gu Yang had just used the "Digging and Hoeing" move, while his footwork resembled "Carrying the Load." With the power of "Carrying the Load," the "Digging and Hoeing" move gained penetration, enabling him to send his opponent flying.







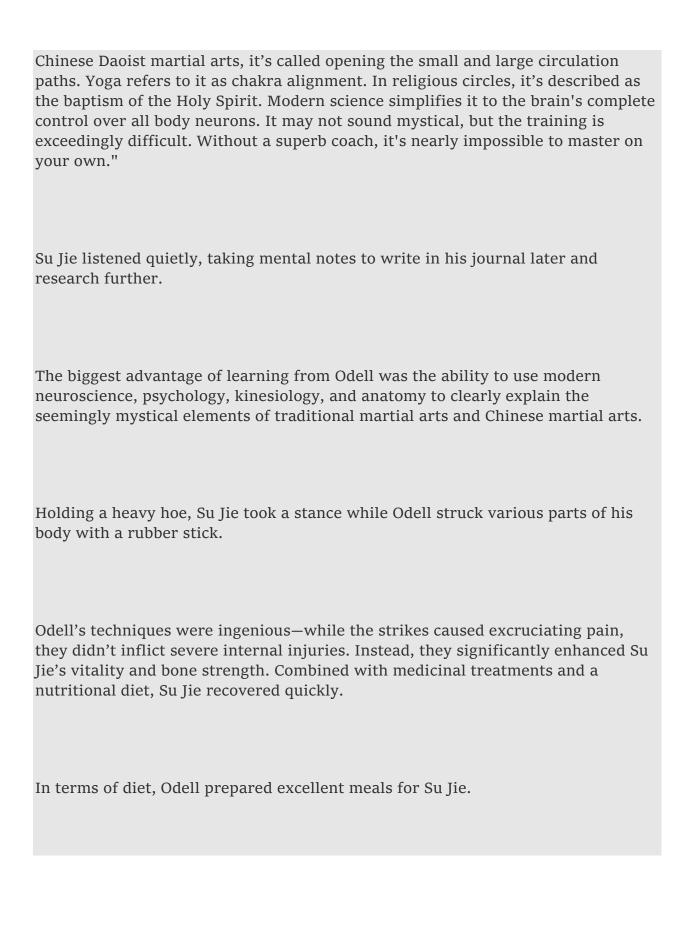
Odell nodded repeatedly after hearing this, "Starting with the posture of carrying a pole, this is the most crucial aspect of the martial arts fist techniques. Carrying a pole isn't easy; it requires strength and the coordination of the whole body to initiate the movement. On flat ground, it's manageable, but on rugged mountain paths or muddy terrain, the martial arts skill truly shines. If this technique is applied to combat, it would be terrifying. In traditional martial arts, this is called integrated power; in modern combat, it's referred to as full-body coordination. Whether it's Judo, Muay Thai, mixed martial arts, or free combat, all emphasize this principle. However, Chinese martial arts integrate this into farming tasks, making every movement in daily life an exercise—this is profound philosophy."

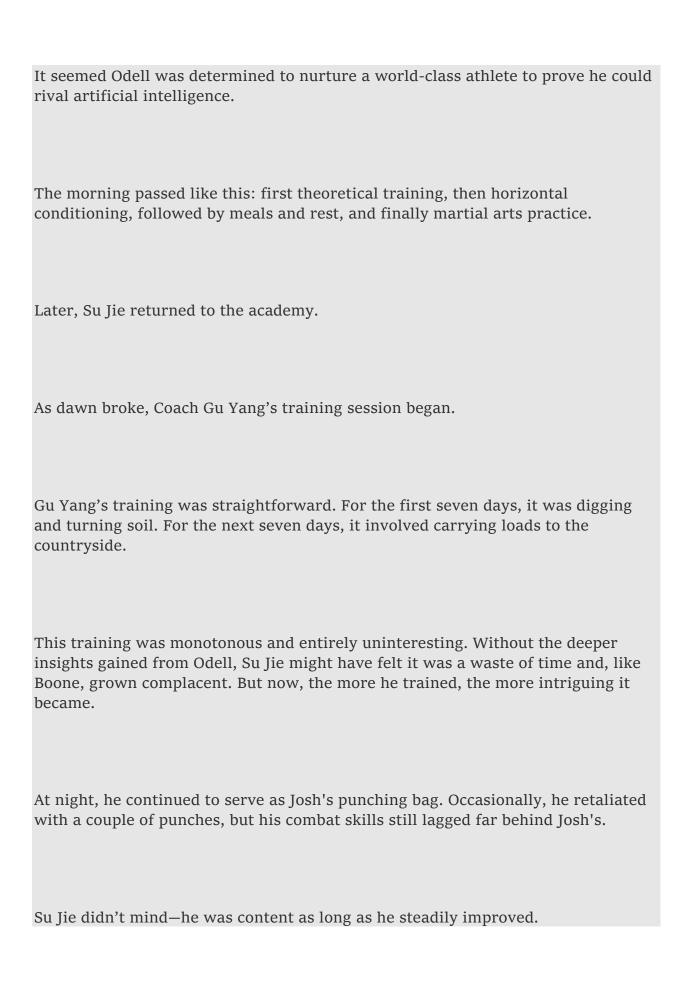
Odell continued, "The starting motion of the hoe-and-mattock move is like carrying a pole. You can experience it in detail later. But for now, start with warm-ups and proceed to horizontal conditioning!"

Smack!

A rubber stick struck Su Jie's back, leaving a burning pain that was almost unbearable. However, Su Jie remained motionless, using his willpower to sense the struck areas, training his muscles to tense and relax alternately.

While striking, Odell explained, "The foundation of horizontal conditioning is developing a sensitivity to your body's muscles, skin, and fascia. Your thoughts must trigger responses from every part of your body simultaneously—this is the sensation of Qi flowing through the entire body. Once you grasp this, you can train on your own. This will greatly enhance your physical abilities," Odell said. "Globally, every form of exercise—whether it's ancient yoga, Chinese martial arts, or even religious prayer and practice—faces this fundamental challenge. In





His journal documented his daily progress:

[July 10th: Training continued as usual—no significant changes, but it was tough. Thankfully, Coach Odell's breakfast was delicious and highly nutritious; I ate a lot. The breakfast was ordered from Nie's Private Kitchen in town, which is said to be very expensive and inaccessible to most people. According to Coach Odell, this city is full of hidden masters. He came here to learn traditional knowledge from some of them. There's a thousand-year-old temple in the mountains where many martial arts techniques originated. Even the hoe-and-mattock move I'm learning was created by generations of martial monks through farming work.

July 11th: Besides the usual training, Coach Odell taught me various unarmed combat techniques based on the hoe-and-mattock move. These techniques include launching attacks from different angles, slapping the opponent's face, grabbing, gouging eyes, and transitioning to elbow strikes, chest punches, and knee strikes to the groin if the initial move misses. These brutal and vicious techniques are unsuitable for combat sports but require extensive real-world experience to master.

July 12th: Today, Coach Odell added a new physical training method called "Crouching Tiger Skill," which involves crawling on all fours, similar to a plank exercise, and very demanding. Coach Gu Yang still had us carrying loads without introducing anything new. Odell's meals are getting even better. He genuinely seems committed to mentoring me, and I'm determined to repay his efforts in the future. It's remarkable that a foreigner is so dedicated to Chinese culture. As a Chinese, I must work even harder. Additionally, under Odell's strikes, I began to feel a resonance between my flesh and breathing, and the excruciating pain from before seemed to transform into a faintly comfortable sensation. Could this be an illusion?

July 13th: I seem to have grasped a breathing rhythm. During sparring with Josh, my muscles instinctively tightened when he punched me, then immediately relaxed, and the pain dissipated. However, this state is inconsistent, showing I still can't fully control muscle relaxation and tension. I need more practice. Odell said this inconsistency is called "Qi disruption" in ancient Chinese martial arts texts. When I looked up these old texts online, the language was too arcane for me to understand. I guess I need to improve my classical Chinese skills. At least the "Great Corpse State" for sleeping works wonders—I sleep soundly and feel energetic all day. But I'm using too much medicated oil, nearly a bottle a day.

July 14th: Looking in the mirror, I noticed I've grown muscle, gotten taller, and my skin seems smoother. Coach Odell said my excellent mental state and perfectly balanced hormones have revitalized my bodily functions. Occasionally, Coach Gu Yang observes me with a puzzled look. However, he hasn't given me any special treatment and continues assigning us to carry loads, even on increasingly challenging paths, such as mountain roads. This has given me a new appreciation for the hardships of farmers. Additionally, Odell taught me a massage technique to identify acupuncture points on the body, which has deepened my understanding of physical structure and exercise methods.

July 15th: Coach Gu Yang gave us the day off, so I spent the entire day training with Coach Odell. Josh, the maniac, continues his intense training daily and even secretly spars with people at local martial arts gyms. He told me about a bar in town that hosts nightly boxing matches where winners earn money. The city also has numerous boxing gyms and small competitions. As tempting as it is to test myself, I've only been training for half a month, so I'm not ready. Coach Odell will leave next month to visit Tibet and India in search of supernatural powers. I must seize the time to learn as much as possible from him. I still don't understand what supernatural powers are. How can someone as rigorous and scientific as Odell believe in such things? As for the saying, 'The end of science is philosophy, and the end of philosophy is theology,' I don't buy it. To me, martial arts are just the application of mental and physical strength. Mental strength enhances physical strength, and physical strength reinforces mental strength. That's all there is to it."]

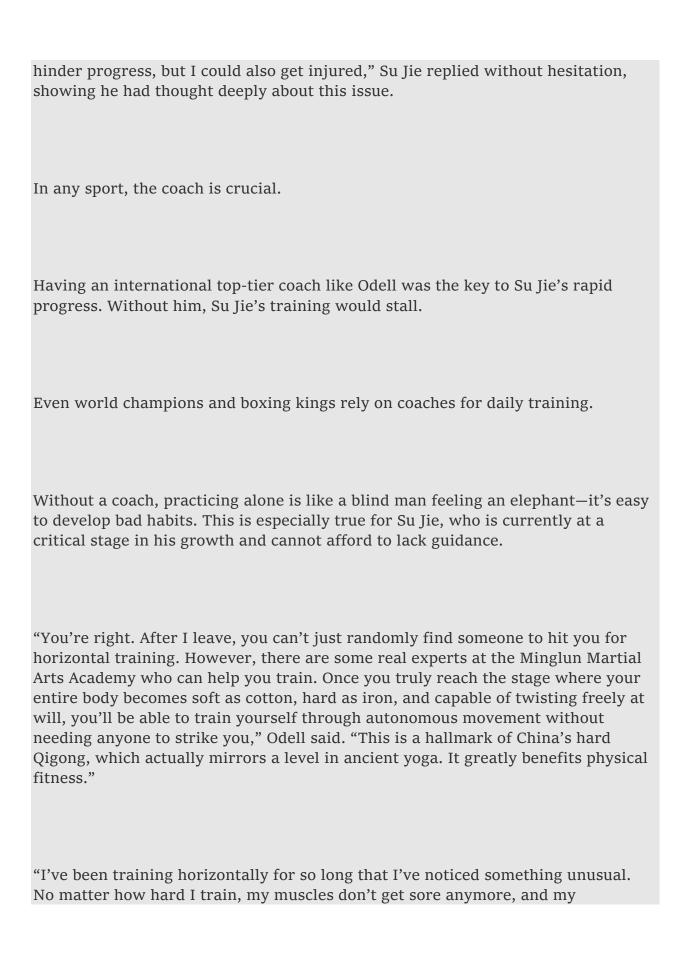
## **Chapter 10: Supercompensation True Science of Martial Arts**

Another eight days passed.
Su Jie had been studying at the "Minglun Martial Arts Academy" for half a month.
For most students, fifteen days would merely be a vacation filled with sleeping in, playing online games, and enjoying the air conditioning.
But for Su Jie, these fifteen days had brought about monumental changes in both body and mind.
Under the guidance of Odell, a world-class coach, Su Jie's understanding of martial arts improved by leaps and bounds. He had shed all confusion and was progressing boldly.
His physical fitness also reached a new level.

Though he couldn't yet compare with athletes who had trained for years, he was far stronger than the average student.
The most important gain was that he learned the correct training methods from Odell, ensuring he wouldn't waste time on detours. Even after Odell left, Su Jie could train independently.
This was critical.
July 16th arrived, the official start of summer break according to Guyang's schedule.
At three in the morning, Su Jie went to Odell's courtyard.
As usual, he enjoyed a hearty breakfast and began various flexibility exercises.
The warm-up routines resembled Tai Chi joint exercises, purely preparatory. However, as Su Jie's body developed and his muscles became more defined, Odell tailored additional movements for him. These included simple actions like leg presses, splits, waist twists, forward and backward stretches, and symmetrical exercises to loosen up key areas of the body. This thorough preparation ensured that the formal training session would yield maximum benefits and help him quickly get into the right state.
Warm-ups were essential and could not be skipped.

Odell's meals were top-notch, consisting of nutritious, high-quality ingredients specifically tailored to Su Jie's physique. This demonstrated the professionalism of a world-class martial arts coach. "Training is fundamentally about making yourself stronger, but if you don't understand the principles of becoming stronger, you can't grasp what true training is," Odell said, watching Su Jie finish his warm-up and begin the lesson. "When muscles are stimulated, glycogen is consumed. Afterward, the glycogen not only replenishes but also surpasses its original level. In science, this is called supercompensation, and it's one reason why consistent training makes you stronger. However, there's a limit—overtraining can deplete key substances in the body, causing permanent reductions in physical ability. Accurately gauging this balance is crucial, and even I can't do it as well as artificial intelligence." "Moderation in all things," Su Jie agreed. "This aligns with the Chinese philosophy of the golden mean—balancing yin and yang. Only by achieving an extreme balance between training and recovery can progress be both rapid and perfect." "You have great insight," Odell nodded. "Modern martial arts theory divides physical fitness into four key areas: the physiological cross-sectional area of muscles, the nervous system's regulation, the efficiency of bones acting as levers, and the composition of muscle fibers. All training revolves around these four aspects. For example, bone efficiency as a lever corresponds to the concept of unified power in Chinese martial arts, often called integrated force. Meanwhile, the nervous system's regulation ties to reaction speed, courage, hormone secretion, and inner calm—all of which are fundamental to internal cultivation methods in martial arts."

Su Jie asked, "I've researched martial arts materials online, and traditional Chinese martial arts often emphasize integrated force, with countless types of power and techniques. Even simple movements come with explanations that could fill essays or books. It all seems overly complex and hard to understand. Isn't there a lot of unnecessary mystification?"
"What do you think?" Odell countered.
"I think movements like the hoe strike—lifting, plunging, stepping, wrapping, stretching, releasing, exhaling, and retracting—do indeed involve deep principles. Writing a book about them isn't impossible. The more I practice, the more profound and expansive it feels," Su Jie reflected. "But once this move is mastered, it seems to encompass all other movements."
"Exactly. Your understanding shows that you're on the right path in martial arts," Odell said. "I've seen many martial artists waste decades pursuing the wrong methods, achieving nothing in the end."
"I'll be leaving soon. Tell me, what have I taught you during this time? Can you continue practicing on your own after I leave?"
"I've learned the true method of practicing and applying the hoe strike, the warm-up joint exercises you taught me, and the muscle and skin conditioning techniques for relaxation and tension. You also taught me how to manage my eating and sleeping routines with the 'Great Corpse State' method. If you leave, I can still practice the hoe strike, warm-ups, and maintain proper routines. However, continuing the muscle conditioning will be difficult without you. It requires precise striking techniques, and if someone else does it incorrectly, not only will it



endurance has increased significantly," Su Jie remarked, having long been aware of his peculiar situation.
"Muscle soreness results from prolonged tension and the accumulation of lactic acid under pressure. If not relieved through methods like massage or saunas, it can settle over time, leading to calcification. This causes frequent soreness in the soft tissues, eventually leading to numbness and loss of sensation," Odell explained in his usual scientific and medical style. "Typically, students studying hunched over or working at a computer for long periods face these issues in their shoulders, neck, and lower back. The same goes for those doing farm work. Severe calcification sometimes requires surgical intervention, using needles to peel it off. Traditional Chinese acupuncture often works on the same principle, extracting blocked calcifications from the muscles and skin. My horizontal training method ensures your body remains free of blockages, making it hypersensitive. Eventually, you'll reach a state where your skin alone can sense even the subtlest changes in the surrounding airflow."
Su Jie wanted to ask more questions, but Odell stopped him. "That's all I'll teach for now. Let's begin horizontal training."
Su Jie quickly stood still, ready to accept Odell's strikes.
Using a rubber baton, Odell struck him, producing varying sounds—sometimes crisp, sometimes muffled.
The crisp sounds indicated force concentrated on the surface, while the muffled ones showed deeper penetration of force.

