

NEO-ORIENTAL FANTASY STORY

황제의 검

皇帝之劍

THE SWORD OF EMPEROR

검

Vol.2

BR COMICE

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World of Murim

Murim: The Korean world of Martial Arts. Also Known as Gang Ho, or even Gang Ho Murim.

The three factions:

- **Jung Pa:** (Lit. Justice Faction). As the name suggests, the faction promotes righteousness, justice, fairness, *etc.* (in name at least)
- **Sa Pa:** (Lit. Evil Faction). The “dark” side of Murim, promoting violence, strength, *etc.*
- **Magyo:** (Lit. Demon/Devil School/Sect). More or less the same as Sa Pa

The two paths (related to the three factions):

- **Jung Do:** (lit. Justice Path/Way). More or less the same as Jung Pa. People from the Jung Do are referred to as Jung Do-in (lit. Justice Path/Way Man).
- **Ma Do:** (lit. Evil Path/Way). People from Sa Pa or the Magyo (different novels use different factions, and it looks like SoE uses Magyo rather than Sa Pa... or at least so far it does). Similar to Jung Do, people from the Ma Do are referred to as Ma Do-in.

Murim’s Hierarchy:

- **Nine Great Schools (九派一幫):** The nine huge schools representative of the Jung Pa Murim. It refers to the nine schools of the greatest authority. Of which, the Shaolin School, Wudang School, Emei School, Kunlun School, Huashan School, Diancang School, and Gae Bang are always included. The other three schools are chosen by the author of 6 names (which I am too lazy to put here for now). Additionally, Gae Bang is a school made up of beggars.
(note: the above information is straight out from a Murim wiki. I’m still slightly confused about how there’s 10 schools in a group called “nine”.)
- **The Noble Clans (世家):** Usually next in authority to the Nine Great Schools.
- **Minor Schools*:** Pretty much all the small/minor schools that’s not part of the above two.

(note: 군소방파; I couldn't find the Chinese or any wiki for info, but it pops up quite frequently. If anyone knows a more accurate translation or more info on this, message me!)

Sword of the Emperor Volume 1 Chapter 1

Ch 1: From Emperor to Martial Artist

The first emperor and founder of the Myung Dynasty, Ju Wonjang, had 26 sons and 16 daughters. On the 25th year of the Hongmu Calendar, April, Empress Ma's son, the Crown Prince Pyo, left the world from an illness. Even before the crown prince's death, Ju Wonjang was considering Ju-Tae, son of a Goryeo concubine named Juk-Bi, to be his heir. He had exceptional potential as a king, was an outstanding tactician, and was a fierce general. Accordingly, it was with little doubt that Ju-Tae, the King of Yeon, would become the next emperor.

{TN: roughly 1393 give or take a year}

However on that year, the royal scribe, Yu Sam-Oh, pleaded to the emperor: "the peace of the imperial court has been maintained by respecting the traditions of the past. It is proper that his majesty's grandson, the heir by blood, succeed the throne." At this time, Ju Won-Jang was 65 years old and his grandson, Yun-Mun, was only 10.

In September of that year, Ju Yun-Mun was declared the Crown Prince. His character, according to the imperial records, was described to be gentle and of an exceptionally brilliant mind. How must Ju Won-Jang have felt seeing his 10 year old grandson? Alas, a man's fate could not be altered by mortal power. In May of Hongmu Calendar's 31st year, the Founding Emperor Ju Won-Jang left the world of old age. He was 71 years old and Ju Yun-Mun was 16. Following Ju Won-Jang's will, Crown Prince Yun-Mun succeeded the throne and became the Gunmun Emperor*.

{TN: Emperors were given a name/title upon enthronement different from their birth name. Ju Won-Jang's was Hongmu, thus the Hongmu Calendar. Yun-Mun's title is Gunmun}

However, this was the start of a tragedy. The day after the death of the founding emperor, Minister Tak-Gyung appealed to the new emperor: “the power of kings must be seized to extinguish future sources of opposition.” At this time, there was a rumor that secret envoys were relaying messages to the kings who supported the King of Yeon. In the end, Hwang Ja-Jung and Jae-Tae were chosen to carry out the order of suppressing the kings. Their first victim was Ju-Suk, the King of Ju. He was the half-brother of Ju-Tae, King of Yeon.

Subsequently, many kings were either exiled or killed, including Ju-Pyeon, King of Min, and Ju-Baek, King of Sang. Finally, the world turned its eyes to the King of Yeon Ju-Tae in the North whose army was the strongest of all the kings. The emperor immediately formed an expeditionary force to conquer the North with Kyung Byung-Mun as its imperator. Following the expeditionary force’s failure, the emperor created an army of 600,000 with Lee Kyung-Liung as its commander. This, too, ended in failure. After several years of fighting and facing many difficulties, the Northern army conquered the Southern army.

In the heated summer of July, year of 1402, the King of Yeon ascended the throne and became the Young-Lak Emperor. It was the most unfortunate event for the Gun-Mun Emperor, who was at this time only 20. With the help of several loyal retainers and his father Pyo’s teacher, Song-Ryum, Yun-Mun was able to escape through a secret underground tunnel. The King of Yeon was notified that the Gunmun Emperor set the palace on fire and committed suicide. The Gunmun Emperor, Yun-Mun, wearing nothing but a conical hat and straw shoes, departed in search of two powerful hermits who had been personal guards of Ju Won-Jang.

[TN: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asian_conical_hat]

“Huk huk”

‘What great sins have I committed to go through such hardship? It’s too tiring. I would rather just fall asleep here... but... all those who died to save my life alone... their tragic screams won’t allow me to give up here.’

The young man’s appearance could not be put to mouth. His tattered robe was

smearred with blood and his unwashed face was filled with all sorts of filth. He walked dragging his barely moving feet with ragged straw shoes. The tips of his fingers were split and uncomfortable to look at. He was crying. The mixture of blood and dust flowed into his mouth and he swallowed it, unable to shake it off.

‘I’m still alive. I can’t give up here. Even if I die in the process, I will continue. Only then, will I be able to show the world that my life has value.’

He was already in despair. Under his uncle, the Yung-Lak Emperor, the world was being ruled as if nothing had ever happened. On his way to Mt. Tae, he heard of many rumors. Rumors of his death and rumors of the new emperor. While hearing all this, he came to realize that it was all too late to turn back. But the path of his journey was indeed strange. If he was trying to run away from his uncle, he should have gone to the west or south. Instead, he was heading for the north where his uncle’s home was.

“If I am to rise to power, blood will sweep the heavens and earth once again. I cannot sacrifice my people for the sake of my greed... I will stay in the mountains and learn the ways of nature.”

He was remembering the last words Song-Ryum said to him.

{Your Majesty, when you reach Mt. Tae, there will be a small stone monument on the Biha Peak. On that monument, leave the founding emperor’s Hwang-Gak emblem. Behind the Biha Peak, in a place called Mangjook, there are two hermits who served the founding emperor. More than likely, they will protect you if you place the emblem on the stone. I, your unworthy servant, must leave you now. Your Majesty, I pray for your safety.}

The Hwang-Gak emblem was a tag the first emperor Ju Wonjang created when he left his brothers at home. He had always carried it with him as he journeyed to a temple called Hwangak in search of a way to live. It is said that he often would take it out to remind himself of the past hardships. Tears yet again filled Yun-Mun’s eyes. What a weak emperor! Even so, he was gentle and kind-hearted.

Strength had left his hands and feet. His legs were shaking and he limped as if he was crawling. His sight dimmed and his conscious flickered on and off. He bit his tongue and shed blood. He fell down numerous times and rolled on the

ground. However, he never stopped.

Whoosh

‘Is that it?’ While forcing his eyes to stay open, he stared at the stone monument in front of him. On that small stone, a poem was written with densely packed words.

Although the people are comparable to a grain of sand under the vast Heavens

Not all will know and understand the will of Heaven

If one raises his body and rules his mind with conviction

He will fully understand when to retreat or advance.

He will sense his own self with the Will of Heaven and build a nation with the people’s will.

There is truly only one treasure under the Heavens

And that is the people

I will cut my own flesh to feed them

And I will break my bones to build the foundations of their home

For I proclaim this conviction to the Heaven and walk the path of an emperor

Nothing shall stand in my path

‘Could it be that my grandfather, the first emperor, wrote this himself?’

He crawled using his tattered elbows to push himself forward. He was unable to feel any pain as his body continued to shake. This was not because of pain, but because that place contained the breath of his grandfather. At that moment, he thought about a time when he played in the palace garden with his father. He touched the rough texture of the rock with his own hands. Whether it was due to the moss or the breath of his grandfather, the stone monument felt warm.

-leave the Hwang-Gak emblem there—

Song-Ryum’s words urged him on.

Using his trembling hands, he took out the emblem and placed it on the stone monument. Afterwards, as if he had completed his task, he fell on his back.

'I've finished what I had to do. Why is the sky so blue? I can't fall asleep here...'

'Father...'

"This is the Gunmun Emperor?"

In front of his eyes, faces of two men appeared and disappeared. Unable to endure any longer, he found himself falling asleep.



"It's been three days and it seems he won't be waking up any time soon. What's wrong with him, We-Noh?"

The man named We-Noh who was watching the flame in the cauldron in front of him casually responded.

"His mental stress was huge and his physical body deteriorated significantly. As such, it is only obvious."

He manipulated the flame's strength with skillful hands.

"There should be no lasting scar, right? If there is even a scratch on the emperor's body, I will personally scoop off your flesh."

"Do whatever you want!"

"He has to be fine. He is his grandson after all..."

"It's already a miracle he made it this far... since his will has been so strong, it is only natural that we take care of the following problems."

"For once you said something right! Just wait and see, I will definitely put him back on the throne."

"But who could it be? Could it be the his majesty the King of Yeon or the King of Ju? It could be the King of Min or even the King of Sang... though more than likely, it is his majesty the King of Yeon."

"His majesty my ass. Call him Ju-Tae, that bastard."

"He is Sun-Hwang Emperor's son, you know... mind your words."

"Haven't I told you before? That something like this would definitely happen."

"Mm... mm..."

“Huh? It seems his majesty is about to wake up.”

The two men hurriedly ran to the Gunmun Emperor’s side. Their expressions were filled with nervous light. The old-man named We-Noh closed his eyes and checked his pulse.

“How is it? Do you think he’ll wake up?” asked the other, impatiently.

“Mm! He’s gotten much better. He should wake up in a few hours. Hwan-Noh! You stay here. I need to fetch his majesty the medicine he needs to take as soon as he wakes up.”

“Alright, move it.”

This place seemed to be a cave. Ordinary people had no idea that Mt. Tae had a place like this. The deep cave’s insides were big and hollow, and its thousand year old rocks were carved to form various furniture. The cave seemed to be at least 30 meters long and wide, and all necessary tools for living were present.

Hwan-Noh stared down at the emperor with eyes full of worry.

“Mmm.”

‘Am I dead? I can’t see anything. I don’t feel any pain either. I must be dead! Hm? These men are the ones I saw briefly in my dreams. Or perhaps that wasn’t a dream?’

“Your majesty, your humble servants greet you.”

The two men simultaneously threw their body on the ground and bowed.

‘Your majesty, they said? Where am I? I was in front of the stone monument... ah, this place must be where grandfather’s secret guards live...’

As his eyes became focused, he could more clearly distinguish the two men’s figures.

“You are*?”

[TN: Said in a formal tone/manner]

He talked as he always had, not remembering that he was no longer the emperor.

“We are the Founding Emperor’s secret guards Hwan-Noh and We-Noh.”

“Mm, secret guards? Were you the ones who saved me?”

“That is indeed the case, your majesty.”

“I do not quite understand why I am here, but only that I was told to come find you two.”

“Your majesty! There is only one true emperor. The owner of these lands can only be the rightful heir of the Founding Emperor. We will reclaim your throne, please believe in us.”

...

“The Founding Emperor has left us here for this exact situation, and we have also prepared ourselves for a long time. No matter how long it might take, we swear that the Great Myung Empire will return to your hands.”

“No, it does not belong to me. That... was my misunderstanding. This land belongs to my people... I only served to briefly lead them... since that role has been fulfilled, it is only natural that I now stand down. That is what the Heavens and the Times decided! I fully understand your sentiments but we are unable to defy history. It might be hard but it is time to live the life of an ordinary person.”

Why did his words sound so sorrowful? The two old men were crying while kneeling down. What could the old servants be feeling, while facing the young emperor with such tears?

“I must live a different life! A more ordinary life! Perhaps, the real meaning of being human lies within such a life. Huhuhu.”

He was laughing...! The emperor who should be crying tears of blood was laughing.

The three men were facing each other. The Gunmun Emperor... no... Yun-Mun had ordered so. Thus, they reluctantly faced the emperor and chatted.

“Why do you two think I should do? I would like to just spend my time here...”

“That won’t do. How could your majesty stay in such a shabby place?”

“Cough. I already told you, there’s no need to address me as such any longer... you may call me Lord instead. If you two must insist on being my servants, then calling me as such will be the best. Understood?”

“How could we... Yes, your maj... lord!”

“Haha. See, does that not sound great? I would like to change my name as well... In fact, let’s take this opportunity to change everything! Even this useless memory...”

“My Lord!”

Hwan-Noh called Yun-Mun with a serious face.

“What’s wrong?”

“Do you really wish to forget the past?”

“Haha. I was just throwing that out there. Such a thing cannot be possible... indeed, a dream-like wish. Even knowing that this is part of my punishment... yes, this must be the opportunity granted by the Heavens to pay for my sins. Hahahaha.”

Yunmun laughed for no clear reason! But how must his heart be? It must be so tattered that not even a trace of its existence might remain.

“Your majesty, that... might not be impossible at all... if that is your majesty’s wish, then it may be so.”

The Gunmun Emperor was astonished by his words. But there was another who was even more surprised.

“No, Hwan-Noh, could you be talking about... that cannot be allowed.”

“You stay out of this. If this is the emperor’s wishes, how could we not grant it? I would be willing to do things even more demanding than this. If possible, I would overturn the entire Heavens to achieve his majesty’s desires.”

“I understand... but that’s...”

“Your majesty, is that what you truly wish?”

His words contained a hint of anticipation. The two men were both staring at the Gunmun Emperor’s lips. The one in question hadn’t the faintest clue, but he had to ask himself. What if this was indeed possible? He asked himself that question. Would that truly be what he wants?

“Are you sure it’s possible?”

“Yes.”

“Alright... then do so.”

Du-dum.

He has spoken. With it, the emperor's command had been given. At least to them, the youth in front of them was without a doubt the emperor. They were ready to jump into a pool of lava for his commands.

“Yes, your majesty. I will change everything. Not only your appearance, but also memory, personality, and habits. Everything will be changed.”

We-Noh was silently listening to Hwan-Noh from his side!

“Whoo... is this also the will of Heaven?”

“Your majesty, what person do you wish to be?”

“???? What do you mean?”

“We can change the appearance ourselves... but it is best that you tell us what person you wish to become...”

“Are you saying you will turn me into whoever I want?”

“That is indeed the case.”

What an absurd thing to say!

“If it is a historical figure, anyone is possible. However, it cannot be a living person.”

“Could it be someone like Confucius or Buddha?”

“I am not so sure about those two.”

“What about Qin Shi Huang or Genghis Khan?”

“Of course that's possible.”

“Can I become a woman? What about Yang Guifei or Xi Shi*?”

[TN: The two are among China's Four Beauties;
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Beauties]

“It's a bit complicated... but it's possible.”

“Haha, is that so?”

Yun-Mun was deliberating carefully.

‘Who should I choose? I don’t want to be a King, so what about a scholar? I can leave a teaching for the people of this land to follow for generations. Or how about a merchant? That’s not a bad idea either. I can help those in need whenever I want! Or perhaps a general? An ascetic? I can’t believe how hard it is to choose. Ah! let’s become a martial artist so that I can wander the Mid-Lands freely!’

“Can I become a martial artist? A Murim-in*, I mean. I hear they are able to soar through the skies like an immortal and perform all sorts of miracles!”

[TN: Murim-in (lit: Murim-man); All ‘-in’ means “a man from ____”]

Yun-Mun was excited. He had heard about martial artists from his father, Pyo. Back then, his stories sent electrifying chills through his spine. He couldn’t believe such a world existed.

“A martial artist? Yes, it’s possible, but who...”

“I’m not so keen on history of martial artists. But since you two are martial artists, you must know something. Who should I be? I would prefer it to be someone famous.”

“Someone famous... that would be the founders of various sects. They are Murim’s legendary figures...”

“Ah, I think I know someone like that.”

Yun-Mun’s voice sounded ecstatic.

“How about Dharma?”

“Dharma? Mm... do you wish to be a monk?”

“Huh? Ah, I see... if I became Dharma, I would probably become related to the Shaolin Temple. Is there anyone else known as the strongest in all of Murim’s history?”

“I can’t say for certain. Other than Dharma... well I guess someone comparable to him would be... Chun Ma.”

After saying the name, Hwan-Noh was surprised at himself. Chun Ma? We-Noh gave Hwan-Noh a menacing look.

“Chun Ma*? His name is cool, and he is that strong? Alright, I’ve decided. I’ll become Chun Ma.”

[TN: Chun Ma = Heavenly Demon]

Dudum.

The entire cave seemed to crumble down. No, it might even be the Heavens. A careless statement had piqued the interest of the emperor.

“Your majesty, please reconsider...”

“Why? What’s wrong with becoming Chun Ma? Is it not possible?”

“No, that is not it. But Chun Ma is known to be cruel and savage...”

“Really? But you must realize, history does not always tell the truth. Even the story of me and my uncle will not be passed down truthfully. That is how the human history works... the truth is distorted and covered up by deception. Without experience, one cannot ascertain anything.”

“Mmm....”

“Mm.”

The two old men could only grumble in response.

Who is Chun Ma? Rather than history, he belonged in myth! At the same time, he was definitely someone who was once alive. Although no one knows exactly when he was alive or what he did, the tales of his feat suggest that he is a demon, rather than human. It is said that he is the origin of all of evils. Furthermore, he was undoubtedly one of Murim’s strongest expert!

“Alright, I shall turn you into Chun Ma.”

“Kuk”

“Uhahahahaha. Great, this is great! Just thinking about it makes me excited! I can now freely wander the world of Murim! I never thought I’d even see the Mid-Land’s sky again.”

Due to the emperor’s joyous tone, the two servants could forget about the

weight on their hearts for a bit. If it makes the emperor this happy, they wouldn't hesitate to make him his own grandfather much less Chun Ma!

Like so, a new ChunMa was about to descend into the mortal lands. Chun Ma with all of his abilities, personality, and memory!!!

Sword of the Emperor Volume 1 Chapter 2

Chapter 2. Calling forth Chun Ma

“Huhu, is everything ready now? We are about to perform a unprecedented feat in all of Murim’s history! How many years have we spent in order to perfect this skill? I was afraid it would never see the light of day but it seems my efforts will finally pay off. Huhu.”

“Don’t be relieved just yet. Remember that this will be the first time we’re using this technique. Although it’s perfect theoretically, there’s no guarantee it’ll work.”

“Stop trying to rain on my parade. Start the operation. If he really gets reincarnated as Chun Ma, an operation or anything of the sort won’t be possible anymore.”

“Haa... I still don’t know if this is a good idea.”

“You’re still having doubts? Hurry up before he wakes up from the anesthesia.”

“Mm... fine. I will leave everything up to the Heavens.”

“You and your Heavens...”

We-Noh approached Yunmun covered by a white cloth. Taking off the cloth, he could see the gentle face washed clean with antiseptics. It recalled to him that he would never see this face again.

There were two things that had to be done. First, Yunmun’s face had to be torn off and sculpted. Second, his body must be made capable of withstanding Hwan-Noh’s techniques. Neither was easy. He first readied various medicines. The Clear Void Stone Milk, Amitabha’s Holy Water, ten thousand year old Fleece Flower, ten thousand year old Snow Ginseng, ten thousand year old Rock Fungus, etc... the place was filled with medicine hard to acquire even by the

royalties. They had spent all these years trying to collect these medicines, while perfecting their technique and secretly raising a force per the first Emperor's orders. They had completed these tasks magnificently.

‘First, I have to peel off the epidermis from his face and begin sculpting the bones. Then, I need to insert a piece of ivory in his nose and re-transplant the epidermis. Only, peeling off the epidermis without a single scratch would be extremely difficult.’

He took out a small jade bottle. The transparent bottle was completely filled with a blue-colored solution. This was an acid harmful to the human epidermis, but its toxicity had been removed by mixtures of several kinds of medicine. Additionally, its beneficial effects had been amplified. If inserted under the skin, the epidermis will start to peel off in less than an hour.

He grabbed hold of Yunmun's facial lines, all the way from the bottom of his chin around to his ear and up to his forehead. He started to inject the unnamed blue solution in four different places. Then, he took out an acupuncture case of 240 golden needles and 120 silver needles, and started to pierce Yunmun's blood veins at different depths. All the meanwhile, he used his skills with the needle to awaken Yunmun's in-borne Qi. A full hour passed. White, black, and red colored mist that surged out from the needles were flowing around the bed.

‘Amazing! Your medical skills are truly unrivaled. It's thanks to you that the Soul Binding Technique could be completed.’

As time passed, the surge of mist stopped and the needles slowly started to get pushed out. At the same time, Yunmun's face began to swell up. Countless amounts of unsightly bubbles started to form on his face. We-Noh was wearing a pair of gloves made out of internal organs of a goat. This was in order to minimize any bacteria from getting inside. His hand held a small knife with a sharp blade made from the Golden Cold Iron, a material swordsmen cannot even hope to obtain even in their dreams. A rock that contains the Cold Iron will slowly turn golden over time, eventually becoming the Golden Cold Iron. Swords and weapons made from this material is said to have unsurmountable advantages in its efficacy. This priceless treasure is said to be able to cut Cold Iron easily. While the Golden Cold Iron is rare, smelting and forging it into a blade is said to be a 100 times harder than smelting and forging a Cold Iron.

[TN: All uses of Cold Iron and Golden Cold Iron technically should have “ten thousand year old” modifier but it’s too clunky and unnecessary that I took it off. Just a minor detail.]

Using the small knife, We-Noh started to cut off the facial line he had already marked out. Performed without a single mistake, the thin layer of epidermis seemed to almost be transparent. Carefully, he bathed the peeled epidermis in the antiseptic he prepared.

“The first stage is done. It’s time to mold his bones. Go fetch the sketches I made earlier.”

“Damn you! Are you trying to boss me around?”

“Hurry up, we don’t have much time.”

“Fine...”

While murmuring inaudible words, Hwan-Noh retrieved a large sketchbook. Opening it, he saw a big and well-defined face. With clearly outlined lips, broad forehead, straight black hair, pointy nose, and masculine jaw line, the man in the sketchbook was undoubtedly handsome. Next to the sketch were operation procedures for the peeled off epidermis. Following the notes, We-Noh began his work.

“This is the Bone Transforming Medicine. Applying it will cause a person’s bones to become malleable. In less than 15 minutes, the medicine will penetrate the skin and travel to the bones.”

His hand held a light-pink liquid. Just like all the others, this strange medicine was something he had created after decades of research. We-Noh applied the light-pink Bone Transforming Medicine on Yunmun’s face, focusing on the cheekbone and the jawbone.

“Whew. Alright, in 15 minutes, I’ll begin molding his bones.”

“You’re really amazing, We-Noh. I’ve been with you for decades, but your medical skills have always been beyond my scope of understanding. If you chose to make money with it, wouldn’t you have made enough to afford a castle by now?”

“Cut the chitchat. Now’s not the time. Hwan-Noh, start brewing the infusion. The directions are here, so all you have to do is follow it.”

“What did you say? ...Ugh, since I’m the older one here, I’ll let you off this one time.”

츙

[TN: this was in the RAWs]

He snatched the note with a force and started to read it carefully.

“Ho, so this is the Attribute Altering Pill?”

“...”

“Those fake monks from the Shaolin Temple would faint if they found out about this. I can’t imagine the face they’d make if they ever found out someone could easily make a pill they would only be able to make once or twice in centuries. Huhu.”

“I have to concentrate now, so keep it down, Hwan-Noh.”

“Here you go again! You’re too sensitive! But since this is related to his majesty’s safety, I’ll keep quiet.”

Hwan-Noh walked towards the infusion. He put in the different medicines as instructed in the note and started to build a fire. While watching this scene, We-Noh stared at Yunmun.

“Here I go. Huh. Gotta focus. Not a single mistake is allowed. Just a single mistake can cause an irreparable damage.”

He started to prepare several finger-sized tools. Screw shaped, broad ended, pincer shaped, *etc.* All sorts of tools were being prepared. With the gloved hand, he carefully touched Yunmun’s chin. Every time his hand moved, Yunmun’s jawlines reacted, giving it a rubber-like feeling. He used a thin, needle-like knife to drill a few holes. Using these holes, he let something flow inside. After another 15 minutes, he started to make incisions using a flat blade. His nimble hand motion that avoided all nerves and blood vessels could only be described as godly.

After inserting a piece of ivory into the nose, he was finishing up the

procedure.

“The hard part is over. At first, I was troubled over how to reattach the epidermis. No matter how well-done, stitching up the epidermis would have left a mark. The solution I thought of was to use naturally seal the skin with this wonder drug. Huhu, this is truly the ultimate solution.”

He immediately mixed the sap of ten thousand year old Fleece Flower and Snow Ginseng into the Amitabha’s Holy Water. Next, he thoroughly rubbed the mixture on the submerged epidermis and Yunmun’s endodermis.

“Huhu. The Amitabha’s Holy Water is a wonder drug of extreme yin element. Ten thousand year old Fleece Flower and Snow Ginseng are wonder drugs of extreme yang element. Mixing these two properties together creates a wonder drug of an entirely new power, producing an extreme heat. The resulting drug is capable of cleanly merging the epidermis and endodermis!”

He placed the epidermis on top of the endodermis with precision. However, because shape of the bone had changed, it seemed somewhat unnatural. After a while, he began to mix the Clear Void Stone Milk with the ten thousand year old Stone Fungus.

“Applying this on the face will create a brand new skin. The old skin will be absorbed through the pores until everything fits the bones.”

Once the blood vessels are pierced with a needle, the operation will be over. We-Noh completed the procedure without a hint of hesitation. His superhuman determination and concentration allowed him to carry out his plans without a single error. Finally, he let go of the needle. He proceeded to melt the Attribute Altering Pill in the liquid Hwan-Noh brew, and made Yunmun drink the liquid. With this, the procedure was over. All that was left to do was leave Yunmun’s body in mineral water for day. Once this was over, Yunmun’s body would be akin to a body having finished the Bone Cleansing procedure and his old bones would be exchanged for new. The two servants immediately placed Yunmun’s body in a stone tub of black mineral water. The water had collected vital energies of the earth and soil for thousands of years. We-Noh had placed over 3500 kinds of medicines inside, and heated the entire stone tub whenever possible. As if this was not enough, Hwan-Noh and We-Noh started to heat it once again. Using

only their inner Qi, they took turns heating the stone tub for 24 full hours.

“Alright, Hwan-Noh, it’s your turn! You can call forth Chun Ma or the devil for all I care.”

“Don’t be so petty now... good work, We-Noh. The deceased emperor would have been happy as well.”

Their two faces looked incomparably aged than the day before. If someone said 10 years had gone by, no one would dare question it.

Even so, look at the face of Yunmun lying on that bed! How could it belong to a person? Its sheer perfection gave off a sinister aura. His body overflowed with milky vapor. With 360 lit candles, Hwan-Noh sat next to the bed, holding a strange bell engraved with figures of demons on all four sides. Wearing a black robe and holding colorful prayer beads, he began to chant a sutra. Its sinister sound could easily confuse the place for hell.

Hwan-Noh came from a school of apostates. Although he was the next in line to be the head, he broke the school’s laws and ran away. At the same time, he stole centuries’ worth of research from the school, and that was the Soul Binding Technique. Unlike the common soul summoning techniques, this technique could tie the summoned soul to a host. The soul would then dominate the memory, personality, habits, and abilities of the host, turning him into someone else entirely. For this technique to succeed, a special magic pill made by the school of apostates was needed. There were only two such pills in existence. Fortunately, they were both in the hands of Hwan-Noh. Consequently, in order to capture Hwan-Noh, the enraged school of apostates came into the Mid Lands. This was when Ju Wonjang found Hwan-Noh and saved his life. Following this chance meeting, Hwan-Noh became a secret guard along with We-Noh who had been serving the emperor already. Together, they completed the Soul Binding Technique. We-Noh’s contribution was significant to say the least, as his medical skills, potentially never able to appear again under the heavens, allowed the unstable technique to be perfected.

Hwan-Noh continued to chant unrecognizable words while a black mist started to form around him. Although they were deep inside the cave, sounds of wind and thunder began to ring. Despite the disturbance, the candle lights did not

seem to waver at all.

“Huhuhuhuhahaha. Who dares to call upon me?”

“Are you Chun Ma?”

“Me? I am the King of Four Souls.”

“Tsk. Wrong one. Get lost!”

“What, you dare?”

“Hama Hamarai Hasdo Remista.”

“Aggggh.”

It became quiet. He had been sent back. But he said he was the King of Four Souls?

“That was a big fish. He was a man of incredible strength as well.”

It was We-Noh who had commented. The King of Four Souls was an infamous king 500 years ago, a demon said to have killed 740 people in a single day! Even so, Hwan-Noh remained indifferent. No one knew why he was so dissatisfied... but still, Hwan-Noh had never before looked so serious!

“Hohoho. You called me?”

“An evil spirit? Hwan-Noh, what are you doing?”

“Hama Hamarai...”

“Kuk”

There were more than just a few failures. Instead of Chun Ma, many unwanted souls had come and gone. Even so, they were all great figures of Murim who left a mark in its history... Four hours after the initiation of the Soul Binding Technique, Hwan-Noh’s face was covered in sweats. His stamina was also nearing its limits as he had already spent quite a bit of Qi.

“Mm... Huhuhu.... Mm”

Another strange laughter sounded. It didn’t sound particularly sinister, nor did it sound loud and excited.

“Who is it now?”

It was at that moment that a clear voice never heard before resounded!

“Who the hell are you two? How dare you wake me up from my sleep! Your consistent call is just too damn annoying!”

“A-Are you Chun Ma?”

“Chun Ma?... Haha, yeah, I was once called by that name.”

“I can give you a new life.”

“A new life? Hahahaha, funny. So what?”

“In front of you lies a host ready to receive you. All you have to do is enter him.”

“Ha. I refuse.”

“Why would you!”

“Why? Is that even a question? Why would I want to be a human? Are you telling me to endure those days of boredom and loneliness again? Hell is much more exciting in comparison! If you dare call me again for such things, I won’t hesitate to kill you.”

“Ho... Hold on.”

“What? Got anything else to say?”

Damn it. I never thought something like this could happen. What do I do?

“Look closely at this host. He is the most perfect host in the entire world.”

“The most perfect? There is no such thing. He is only superior relative to others. Besides, I’m not interested. I’m leaving now.”

“Fool.”

“What?... What did you just say?”

“If you really are Chun Ma, I just said you are a fool.”

“Do you have a death wish?”

“Huhu. You might have been the strongest in your era, but do you still believe that is the case?”

“What do you mean?”

His tone contained a tremor different than before.

Huhu. To fall for such tricks. What a simpleton.

There is an ascetic by the name Jang Sam-Bong in this era. It is said that his strength is far above Dharma himself!”

“I do not know who this Dharma is.”

“Hmm... and they say that no matter how strong Chun Ma is, he wouldn't last a second against Jang Sam-Poom....”

“W-What? Not even a second? Who dares to utter such blasphemy?”

He's falling for it. Huhu. A typical case of all brawn and no brain. Wait! Doesn't this mean his majesty would become just like him? That's a bit problematic...

“There has been much advancement in martial arts since your time. This era is filled with countless number of experts. What was your inner Qi level when you were alive?”

“Me? Mm, 12-cycles when I was active... and 36-cycles before I died.”

[TN: 1-cycle is usually equivalent to 60 years of training.]

W-What? Is this bastard lying? Such a thing can't be possible!

Hwan-Noh's heart still pounded from hearing this.

“Ha. In this period, you would still only be considered an expert. I can think of at least a thousand people who are stronger than you.”

“What?... I don't believe you... I can't... There is a limit to how strong a human can be...”

“Haha. Afraid already? I'd be scared too! I thought you were the strongest in all of Murim's history, but I'm disappointed.”

“Shut it! I am Chun Ma, the unrivaled expert in all of history and the master of all arts. No one is able to surpass me.”

“I see. Well, you can continue living in your delusions. Can you leave now?”

Please fall for it. Fall for it, you idiot.

“Let me ask you something. How old is he?”

“He’s now twenty.”

“Then I should be able to live at least a 100 years. Fine. I will take over his body. If everyone is as strong as you make them out to be, I will continue to train and prove that I am the strongest even in this era.”

“No, it’s fine.”

You gotta reject him at least once.

“Mm... there’s no choice then, I guess. I, Chun Ma, can’t possibly beg someone.”

Eh? What! Doesn’t he understand what I’m trying to do? He has no hopes in romance... shit, he’s really trying to leave.

“However... your will is admirable. With your determination, you might indeed become the strongest expert even in this era. Of course, you would have to sweat for it...”

Please please.

“Thanks. I’ll buy you a dinner sometime.”

Yes! It worked! Even though he might be an idiot...he doesn’t seem like a bad person. Well, that’s something he can work on.

“Alright, let us begin right away. Go lie down into the host.”

“Got it.”

Whisssssh.

Jet black smoke rushed in and covered the Gunmun Emperor, Yunmun. Standing up, Hwan-Noh placed a magic pill in Yunmun’s mouth. Using his Qi, he led it into his stomach and waited for it to dissolve. He then sent We-Noh a signal with his eyes. We-Noh approached Yunmun’s face and took out his acupuncture case. All that was left to do was to adorn the finale with needles.

The strongest expert in all of Murim’s history was about to be reborn as the unfortunate Gunmun Emperor, Yunmun, turned into a martial artist!

Sword of the Emperor Volume 1 Chapter 3

Chapter 3. Success or Failure?

“Have you come to your senses, my Lord?”

“Yeah, but I have a splitting headache.”

Yunmun was shaking his head in pain.

“Do... Do you recognize who we are?”

“What do you mean, Hwan-Noh. Are you messing with me?”

What? Did I fail?

“What’s wrong, you two.”

The two of them stood stupefied. To think they would fail after all that trouble... the Heaven is too cruel.

-Hey, can you hear me?

“Ugh”

“What’s wrong, my Lord?”

When Yunmun crouched down holding his head in pain, the two of them yelled out in surprise.

-You bastard. I said, can you hear me?

“Ugh, where is this voice coming from?”

“Voice?”

“Someone dares to insult my name...”

-If you can hear me, why don’t you answer, you f*cker?

“Agh. Who is it?”

“M-My Lord, you said you could hear a voice... could it be?”

The two exchanged a glance. We-Noh quickly measured Yunmun’s pulse but other than slightly fast heartbeat, nothing seemed out of the ordinary.

“Move.”

Hwan-Noh stepped in, grabbing Yunmun’s hand and flowing his Qi inside.

“Huh?”

“What? Did we succeed?”

Hwan-Noh’s face became pale.

“H-How could this have happened...?”

“What?”

“It seems he entered, but was unable to overtake him. He’s been set aside in his mind.”

-Hey, host-boy. Are you going to answer me or not? You’re the one who wanted me in here and now you’re just going to put me aside and ignore me?

“Shut it!”

“Yes?”

“Ah, not you, We-Noh. I was talking to Chun Ma.”

“Chun Ma? Your highness! Please repeat to us exactly what Chun Ma is saying.”

-Shut up, you bastard.

“Shut up, you bastard.”

“Yes?”

This time, Hwan-Noh was the one to reply in surprise, only understanding the situation when We-Noh poked him.

“What is this? I take it back!”

“Let me out, right now! It’s too stuffy in here!”

Yunmun furrowed his brows and repeated Chun Ma’s words.

“Quit repeating after me! You cheating bastards.

What do you want from me? Did you just want to steal my powers? If that’s so, you already have it.”

“W-What did you say?”

Hwan-Noh yelled out in surprise.

“Chun Ma, can you hear me?” asked Hwan-Noh.

“I can. Why?”

Yunmun responded in his stead.

“It seems the technique failed.”

“I already know that, you fool.”

“I don’t know why it failed, but is what you said just now true? Your powers have been transferred to his highness?”

“Why don’t you ask this bastard?”

“Is he telling the truth, your highness?”

“It’s true.”

“Your highness, you can stop repeating after him.”

-I already said it’s true. Why don’t you believe me?

“It seems he’s really telling the truth. My head is filled with things I’ve never seen or heard before.”

“Ha. Isn’t this even better than we hoped for?”

Such was We-Noh’s opinion, but Hwan-Noh disagreed.

“No, this is a failure.”

“A failure? How?”

“Chun Ma got suddenly quiet...”

-I’m listening to you two.

“Hwan-Noh, what do you mean?”

“If Chun Ma completely takes over his highness’s mind, then there’s no problem. But if this continues, it is likely that his mind will split to two. In worst case, it can drive him to insanity. Imagine what would happen if a psychopath with Chun Ma’s powers was let loose into the world.”

“Is that true?”

“Yes, your highness.”

“Then is there a solution?” said We-Noh while staring at Hwan-Noh.

“Can’t we just send Chun Ma back?”

“I don’t know if that’s possible...”

-What, I can’t go back? You goddamn bastards. I’ll kill you all. Agghhhhhhhh

“Shut it. Ugh...”

Holding his head, Yunmun rolled around in pain.

“Your highness! Your highness!”

“Damn it. It seems Chun Ma is causing him to have a seizure.”

“What should we do? Well, for now, let’s put him to sleep.”

We-Noh held Yunmun up in his hands, and his head quickly bent backwards. Drops of sweat continuously formed on his forehead.

How could we have made such a mistake... what do we do? ‘

“Is there really no way?”

“For now, no...”

“Is there a way to restrict Chun Ma from causing more seizures?”

“Mm, that might be possible. But it still doesn’t offer a permanent solution. If we leave it like this, his mind will start to split in less than 6 months.”

“But how could Chun Ma’s power have transferred to his highness so nicely?”

“I don’t know... but it must have been caused when the Chun Ma’s demonic attribute and his highness’s mind collided during the fusion. This is the only possibility I can think of.”

“Then is watching his highness go insane all we can do?”

“...Mmm...”

The two of them had a gloomy expression. Suddenly, Hwan-Noh’s eyes sparkled.

‘Ah, that’s it!’

“What? Have you thought of something?”

It seemed like their role switched places. Hwan-Noh and We-Noh’s personality reflected each other’s.

“It’s worth a try at least.”

“What is it...? Tell me already!”

“Ahem... listen closely. I have one more magic pill. In other words, we can use the technique one more time, and we’ll use it to suppress Chun Ma’s demonic attribute.”

“How?”

When did this guy get so dumb? Could it be Chun Ma entered him as well?

“What do you mean how... someone who can suppress Chun Ma’s demonic energy... if we can find someone capable of doing this, then their two attributes will neutralize each other.”

“I-Is that... possible?”

“It is.”

“What if something goes wrong again...?”

“It can’t be worse than this. Let’s give it a try.”

We-Noh hesitated.

If this can really turn his highness back to normal...it wouldn’t hurt to try.

“Fine.”

Thus they once again began the Soul Binding Technique.

They performed the exact same ritual as before. This time, however, Hwan-Noh wore a white robe and held a flower-patterned bell. At a glance, it looked like a stage play than a ritual for a great technique. This, only Hwan-Noh would

know.

“What is your name?”

“I am Dae-Ma.”

“Dae-Ma?”

“Dae-Ma and not Dharma?”

“Sorry for the trouble, but can you go back?”

“Tsk. You were the one who called me, and now you tell me to leave? That pisses me off.”

“Is he really someone from the Jung Do*? Dae-Ma, my ass.”

[TN: Lit. the path of justice. Here, referring to someone from the Jung Pa]

Four hours passed without any sign of success.

“Dharma might be too tough... is there anyone else?”

The exhausted Hwan-Noh threw the question at We-Noh.

“What about Huineng or Huike?*”

[TN: Wikipedia them if you're curious]

“Those Shaolin Temple Monks?”

“Yeah. Huike is Dharma's disciple anyways, and Huineng was the great sixth patriarch.”

“Who do we choose then? Wouldn't Huineng be slightly better?”

“Let's try it first.”

Another two hours passed.

Whisssh.

“Who are you and why do you seek me?”

“Are you the sixth patriarch Huineng?”

“I may or may not be. Does wordly names matter so?”

“No, you're right. The reason I called for you was... so and so.”

“Ho, so that’s why you called me.”

“So and so?”

Hearing this, We-Noh was dumbfounded. These two were too similar.

“If that is the case, then I shall sacrifice myself for the good of mankind. This must be part of my training, so for what reason must I refuse?”

“Then, you accept?”

“Yes. However, even I may not be able to completely suppress Chun Ma.... But I shall teach you a sutra. This sutra contains laws of nature. It can help to ward off evil. Write it down.”

“Yes, I understand.”

“One begins that has no beginning.... This is the [Scripture of Heavenly Code](#). Although its forefathers originate from a small country of the East, they are the ancestors of us all. Have you finished copying it down?”

“Yes, I have.”

“Then shall we start?”

“Right away.”

Whiisssh.

When Huineng lied down on Yunmun’s body, it started to trash about violently. Black smoke started flowing out of Yunmun’s nostrils, trying to prevent Huineng from entering. Seeing this, Hwan-Noh hurriedly fed Yunmun the magic pill. Immediately, We-Noh started his acupuncture, while Hwan-Noh began chanting the sutra. As a result, the energy that tried to push the needles off was suppressed and Huineng’s energy started to flow into the body. After a little, the needles started to push themselves out.

The two stared at Yunmun’s face from above, waiting for him to open his eyes.

“I hope nothing went wrong this time.”

“It should be fine. I can feel it.”

Blink blink.

Yunmun opened his eyes and stared blankly at the two of them. Oh no, could he have turned into an idiot?

“Your... highness.”

They were afraid to call him. After sitting unresponsive for a bit, Yunmun suddenly stood up and grabbed his stomach.

“I’m hungry! Nohs, is there anything to eat?”

“Yes!”

“Success!”

The two of them embraced each other in joy.

-Success, my ass. F*ck. How can you throw in a monk in a narrow place like this?”

=Are you Chun Ma? You’re more handsome than the rumors make you out to be.

“Tsk. What’s this? Can you guys quiet down? It’s getting annoying.”

-Huh? You’re okay?

“What do you mean?”

-You don’t feel anything when I talk?

“No, but you’re still annoying.”

-Aggggggggh

“I said, shut it.”

-This doesn’t work either... this is all your fault, you stupid monk. Because you entered...

=I had no choice. This was for the good of mankind.

“Good thing you have someone to talk to now... at least you won’t be bored. So Nohs, what’s going on? Why is there another one inside me?”

“His name is Huineng, the sixth patriarch of the Shaolin Temple and the one who led Zen Buddhism its peak of fame.”

“What? You summoned someone like that? So is everything fine?”

=Yes, Shizhu*.

[TN: Shizhu is the title that monks call people with.]

“You’re Huineng? Thanks*, it’s a pity I can’t buy you a dinner as compensation.”

[TN: He says this in an unusual way, as explained below]

‘T-Thanks?’

The Nohs started at each other in disbelief. They couldn’t believe the well-mannered Gunmun Emperor would speak in such a lowly way... the emperor had changed.

“Ah yeah, so I’m hungry. Got anything to eat?”

“Yes? Oh, right away.”

The two ran outside to find something to eat, deciding to worry about the consequences of the Soul Binding Technique later.

Yunmun asked while chewing on a piece of meat!

“Oi, Nohs. What should my name be?”

Oi Nohs? This is serious.

“Name? Are you referring to his highness’s title?”

“Title? No, just a name. Plus, didn’t I tell you to call me Lord? Hey, Huineng, you got any name for me?”

=A name? Does a name really matter?

-You shut up and stay in the corner. Hey, host-boy, don’t you think a name has to sound cool? I’ve got just the perfect thing. How’s Chun Ma Reincarnate? After all, that’s who you are.

“You stay out of this, Chun Ma. Huineng, you must have some ideas, right?”

=How does Mu Sang* sound?

[TN: 無想. It means no thoughts, no brain etc.]

-Mu Sang, my ass. That sounds like shit... What if you die a meaningless* death like your name suggests? This is why your name has to sound cool.

[TN: 'meaningless' here is Mu Sang (無常). Note the different Halnja.]

-How does Iron Blood Asura sound?

“Chun Ma, a name, not a title! Do you know what I’m saying, you idiot? I don’t understand how someone like you could be the mighty Chun Ma.”

-What did you just say? You wait right there, I’ll show you my strength firsthand.

“As if you could. Stop screwing around.”

“So? Nohs, what should I do? Do I just go with Ju Yunmun? But what if rumor spreads and uncle comes to find me?”

... The two of them were speechless.

“Mm, I probably can’t use the same surname, Ju. I need a new one. Jegal, Peng, Dang, Jung, Lee... what do I go with?”

-How’s this?

“What?”

-Pa Chun. Not bad right?

-Pa Chun? As in ‘Breaking the Heavens’? That’s pretty good! Sadly, it doesn’t go well with any surnames. Ju Pa Chun, Lee Pa Chun, Jang Pa Chun...”

-Screw that. Just go with Pa Chun.... All my skills contain the word ‘Pa Chun’ or ‘Chun Ma’.

“Oh yeah, I was thinking of changing that too.”

-No, anything but that! You can do whatever else you want. Please, I beg you. You can change the other parts, but please leave the ‘Pa Chun’ or ‘Chun Ma’ in. Please, I beg of you.

“Well, I’ll think about it.”

Yunmun talking to himself made him look like a lunatic. Even though the Nohs knew who he was talking to, it was still confusing. What if someone else heard

it?

“Excuse me, my Lord. When do you plan on leaving here?”

“When? After finishing this meal. Why?”

“What? So early?”

“What, is there a reason I should stay?”

“W-Well... shouldn't you take some time to practice and master your skills?”

“Geez, wake up, Hwan-Noh! You're the one who made this technique. I already have full understanding of their skills. I just have to activate them when I need them... nothing more.”

-If you're going out, go visit the Chun Ma School first.

“The Chun Ma School? Is that even there anymore? Ah, I guess it should be. That's not a bad idea, Chun Ma. It's always good to have as many minions as possible. Even better, should I just take this chance to take over Murim? What do you guys think?”

No one knew for sure who he was talking to. Even so, the barrage of answers rained down.

-That's good to hear.

=Shizhu, don't lose yourself to your desires. That is the shortest path to self-destruction.

“My Lord, that's outrageous!”

“Are you serious?”

It was easy to tell which answer belonged to whom. Even so, listening to so many people at once made it confusing.

“Hey, Nohs. Do you know how to put these guys to sleep?”

“Ah, try chanting this.”

“What's this? One begins that has no beginning...”

-Agh, stop! Please!

“Oh? Now, this is interesting. Are you in pain?”

-You bastard!

“One begins that has no beginning ...”

-Argggggh.

“That’s right. You should know your place, got it?”

“Oh, no answer? One begins that has no beginning ...”

-Aagh, got it. I got it...

“One begins that has no beginning. One parts to three crowns...”

-What is it that you want? I’ll do anything you want, so just stop!

“That’s right. We’re buddies now, aren’t we? Doesn’t it feel great to cooperate? Hey, monk!”

This was absurd! To think his highness has changed so much... he’s a complete street thug!

=What is it?

“You don’t seem affected at all. There must be a way to hurt you as well, though I doubt you’d tell me. Well, you’re not that loud anyways, so I guess it’s fine. Since I’m tired, I’ll sleep and take my leave tomorrow.”

With this said, he fell on his back.

“Huhu. Murim, just you wait. I’m coming to see you. Hahahaha.”

Is this really okay? Can we allow this walking bomb to wander Murim?

The two Nohs’ heads began to ache.

Alas, what’s done is done....

Sword of the Emperor Volume 1 Chapter 4

Chapter 4: Setting Out to Murim

Yunmun opened his eyes. Although he was deep inside a cave and had no way of knowing what time of the day it was, he could feel that morning had come. Even though it was pitch-black inside the cave, the outlines of all the objects were clearly projected into his eyes. The only sound he could hear was the regular breathings of Hwan-Noh and We-Noh. It seems they really tired themselves out! The light in his eyes was no longer gentle and innocent as before. It was full of mischief and curiosity, looking to cause some trouble! As soon as he got up, he stared at the Nohs.

Huhu, they're still sleeping. This body is breaming with energy, ready to burst out at any time! This is great! I feel like I can accomplish whatever I desire! Not bad at all! I wonder what kind of a place Murim is? According to Chun Ma's memories, it seems it's an exciting place... how about Huineng's? A troublesome place! Well, it doesn't matter. From now on, I'll be the one to shape Murim... huhuhu. Ah, but it looks like I haven't yet fully absorbed their memories. I'm sure it'll come around.

-Hey, what are you spaced out for?

"What do you mean?"

-I'm asking why you're just staring at nothing! It's stifling.

"Huh? You mean, you're seeing what I'm seeing?"

-Fool! We are already of one mind. Ah, I guess it's better to say we share the same body. Even though you're the one moving it, all my senses are connected to yours.

=He is right, Shizhu! Everything you see, everything you feel, we are able to do so as well.

“Really? That’s quite interesting. So, Chun Ma, about your martial arts. Are you sure they work as intended?”

-What? What do you think my martial arts are?

“There’s no use talking about it. Let’s go try them out.”

-Do whatever you want. But remember, your Inner Qi is still not at the level required to fully use my skills.

“I know that.”

Step step.

Yunmun was on his way out of the cave when he suddenly halted his steps.

No, I should try them out now. From today onwards, martial arts must be ingrained into my daily life. I will do everything with martial art techniques! I must make Chun Ma and Huineng’s skills into my own as soon as possible.

Yunmun began to spin the Inner Qi in his Dantian around his body. He was using Chun Ma’s special Inner Qi Method, called the Heavenly Demon Qi Method*. This Qi Circulation Method allowed its practitioner to circulate his Qi while sitting, standing, lying down, or even sleeping.

[TN: ‘Chun Ma’ (天魔) means ‘Demonic’ (in Chinese), but I’m going to use Heavenly Demon the majority of the time, since that’s usually how Hanja works and I think it sounds cooler. I might change it to Demonic for certain skill names, so note that that also uses the word Chun Ma.... Similarly, ‘Pa Chun’ will be translated as Heaven Breaking]

In Yunmun’s Dantian, the various medicines put in by the two Nohs had been stored and converted into Inner Qi. Starting from the lower Dantian, the Inner Qi passed the 14th, 16th, and 18th Conception Vessels, up to the Upper Star Point on the forehead. Because the Twin Governing Veins of his body were already opened and joined, the Inner Qi stretched through the 17th, 10th, and 4th Governing Vessel, finally arriving at the 1st Governing Vessel. The fireball inside Yunmun grew bigger and stronger, coming to the point where he could no longer control it. After circulating around his blood vessels a few times, the Inner Qi changed direction. This is the reason why Chun Ma’s Qi Circulation Method was

given the name Heavenly Demon. Unlike other Qi Circulation Methods, there was no set path for the Inner Qi. Even though the Inner Qi hits 365 blood vessels of the body both vertically and horizontally, the blood vessels do not get blocked; instead, the opposing flow of Inner Qi works together to greatly amplify its user's strength. In Yunmun's body, Inner Qi endlessly flowed in and out from the Gushing Spring Meridian in the foot, the Yang Pool Meridian in the Wrist, and the Toil Palace Channel in the palm. Although the soft and electrifying pain could be felt at first, soon it changed to a calming feeling, making Yunmun feel refreshed. Yunmun's body slowly started to rise from ground.

[TN: What a pain in the ass paragraph. These are all a bunch of acupuncture points http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_acupuncture_points. On another note, opening/joining of the Twin Governing Veins signify the state of Hwan Gol Tal Tae (those who read The Breaker will have heard of it), which basically means changing out your bones for new/stronger bones.]

Whish.

Yunmun stood firmly in mid-air, immediately bursting forward from his position. This was the Heavenly Demon Flying Technique, one of Chun Ma's Profound Movement Skills. Able to be used from any position, it ignored the user's strength and freely moved the body using only the Inner Qi of its user. Yunmun's forehead was covered with sweat as he flew through the dark, curving path of the cave. Although he was a beginner, Chun Ma's memories allowed him to slowly become accustomed to flying.

Shwoosh

The sound of air being cut resounded in the cave. Unexpectedly, the path to the exit was rather long.

“Uk.”

After finally arriving outside, Yunmun flinched.

He had suddenly become afraid. The cave was situated in the middle of a cliff and his body was floating in mid-air. His slight hesitation caused his Qi to scatter.

“Ah... ah...”

Shwoosh.

Yunmun started to fall down!

-Wake up, idiot! Concentrate and grab onto your Qi.

Was it because of these words? After falling for a distance of 30 Jang*, Yunmun slowly came to a halt. Still upside-down, he stared below, realizing the height he was in as the distant forest looked tiny.

[TN: 1 Jang = 3.03 m]

-You idiot... My Heavenly Demon Qi Method never allows the Qi flow to be severed, but you dare show such a sorry state... wake up and do it properly.

“Grr... fine. It was my first time, mistakes happen. Were you Chun Ma from the start?”

-Talking back as always.

“What?”

If a Murim-in saw this scene, he would be struck dumb. How could a man stand still in mid-air and talk? Although Sky-Walking Techniques exist and are used by select experts of Murim, who would believe that a beginner could use such an exquisite and complex skill?

In any case, this was the start of Yunmun’s martial arts practice.

“I want to first try out some sword skills, but what do I do without a sword?”

Yunmun had already flown down to the ground. Although he was surrounded by strange trees and rocks of all kinds, not a single sign of life could be found.

-Stupid. Just use a tree branch. You could even use your hands.

“Do you have a problem with me? Your tone is starting to get on my nerves.”

-Haha, what problem would I have with you? I’m just saying.

Cheeky, aren’t you? You better realize you’re completely under my control. And is the monk sleeping? Why is he so quiet?

“Huineng, you asleep?”

=No, Shizhu. I’ve just been thinking about your future actions...

“Why are you worrying about that? Know your place.”

-Hey, that's the nature of his job. Don't be too hard on him.

Oh? Look at this guy. Acting friendly, isolating Huineng in the process... trying to be clever, I see.

-Are you going to try it or not?

"Tsk, this is a historical moment. Isn't it boring without even a single spectator?"

-Stop screwing around.

Grr, I should really read the Scripture of Heavenly Code again. No, today's just one among many. I can just pick another day for it.

"Alright, go break off a tree branch."

Yunmun opened his hands and a branch broke off from a pine tree 10 Jang away, flying towards him. As he laid his hands on the branch, twigs from the same tree fell in abundance. Seeing this, Yunmun showed an indifferent, serious face. His stance seemed a bit odd, as his feet were less than his shoulder width apart and his butt was stretched back. And the words that came out of his mouth:

"Three Swords of the Heavenly Demon, First Form: Demonic Ascent."

Shwoosh.

Boom.

Gyah.

Yunmun's jaw dropped, staring back and forth between the stick on his hand and the destruction he had just caused.

"Huhuhu... I... I did this?"

Not only was a long, clean path carved through the middle of the forest, but a 3 Ja* deep pavement had been made through it.

[TN: 1 Ja = 30 cm]

-Don't tell me this is enough to surprise you.

=Amitabul

“Good, very good, Chun Ma. I like your skills very much.”

-Haha, so you think so as well.

“If the first form is like this, the second must be amazing as well. Alright, since we’re here, might as well try out the other ones. Haat!”

With a loud shout, Yunmun leaped into the air.

“Three Swords of the Heavenly Demon, Second Form: Demonic Yang Volt.”

Crash.

“Three Swords of the Heavenly Demon, Third Form: Heaven Breaking Desolation.”

Boom boom boom.

“Fuhahaha. Now, for the Palm Techniques.... Heaven Breaking Asura Palm.”

Boom.

“World Stunning Flare.”

“Blood World Destruction.”

“Fuhahaha, Heaven Breaking Blood Jade Finger.”

“Banishing Cyclone.”

[TN: someone kill me]

...

Yunmun was laughing with joy while using heaven shattering moves. The quiet forest was quickly breaking apart.

Whisssh

Landing on the ground with a cool pose, Yunmun smiled with satisfaction while looking at the destruction he caused. The forest had practically disappeared. Even the huge rock that lied next to the cliff had been pulverized to dust. Many gaping holes could be seen on the bottom part of the cliff and it was also blackened by blaze.

“Fuhahaha. Amazing. Your skills are mazing, Chun Ma! Damn, I have a new found respect for you.... You created all these?”

-You shouldn't say that just yet. My best techniques are sword techniques. The third form, Heaven Breaking Desolation, is only the beginning of the Qi Controlling Sword. If you are able to fully use Heaven Breaking Desolation's mysteries, you can use the Hand Sword, the Eye Sword, and even the Heart Sword. The Nature Sword and the Cosmic Sword that I was unable to surpass could even be performed. Only then will you be the strongest under the Heavens!

"Haha, I'll admit it. No matter how you behave, I'll admit that you are amazing."

=Amitabul. Shizhu, why don't you try out some of my skills?

"Eh... sorry to tell you, but your skills in comparison to Chun Ma's... the difference in strength is far too great. But I'm not saying your skills are lacking... I will try them out in time."

-Haha, you really have an eye for things. Of course, how strong can a silly monk be in comparison to me?

This guy, just because I praised him a little, he knows no limits. Did I compliment him too much? Well, I'll let it go for today. Hehe.

Looking around, Yunmun once again smiled happily.

"You want to leave now?"

"Yep."

"Whew. I know I can't stop my Lord's ambitions, but it is best you not rush it."

"A sword is best pulled in one try*. Since I've decided, there's no use waiting."

[TN: Korean idiom. It basically means don't hesitate once you've decide on something.]

"In that case, please head down first. We will follow you shortly."

"Why? Do you have something left to do? Why don't we just all leave together?"

"No, we must prepare something for you, so please go on ahead without us. Also, take good care of the Hwang-Gak Emblem. It should serve well in the

future.”

“Really?”

“Yes, if you show this to the Golden Frog Exchange, scattered around the Mid Lands, you will be allowed to withdraw any amount of money you need. Also, don’t forget to find Gae Bang* if you happen to stop by Gae Bong. If you show this to its former inn keeper, Poong Chun Ho, he will treat you accordingly.”

[TN: Gae Bang is apparently the Beggars Gang, “one of the oldest and largest group of martial artist in china and is usually equal to the 8 great groups and mountains (wudang, qingcheng, shaoling, kunlun, and so on) and big clans.” Credit to leafyromster!]

Ho~, I didn’t know it could be used like that. This coming from the crafty first emperor, I’m not surprised. It’s better to have as many useful things as possible. Great, I wonder if there are more. Don’t you hide anything if you do, Nohs.

“Alright, I’ll put it to good use.”

After carefully examining the Hwang-Gak Emblem once more, he put it around his neck. A hole in the upper part of the emblem allowed for a golden thread to be tied to it.

“Then I’ll see you again in the Mid Lands.”

Ssssss

“M-My Lord.”

“He didn’t give us a chance to pay our respects.”

Using the Heavenly Demon’s Stealth Technique, Yunmun disappeared from their eyes.

Murim! Does thou know? An atomic bomb that will shake the era has been thrown in thy arms!

Sword of the Emperor Volume 1 Chapter 5

Chapter 5. Mt. Tae's Bloody History

To the people of the Mid Lands, Mt. Tae was a famous sacred mountain. With its rugged and beautiful terrain, it definitely deserved its name as the [Eastern Sacred Mountain](#). As such, it was the tradition for newly enthroned emperors to climb to its peak and pay their respect.

Whish whish

As soon as he left the cave, Yunmun headed straight down the mountain using the Heavenly Demon Flying Technique. Traveling close to a 100 Jang with every flash of movement, his appearance looked akin to a nimble swallow. Without even laying a foot on the ground, he traveled on top of the forest using the tree branches.

If anyone had been looking, his blurry figure would only be regarded as a gust of wind. As he traveled, not only did more and more Inner Qi surge out from his body, but his movement also became increasingly natural. The amount of Inner Qi he had was nearing 4 cycles. Though it did not amount to much in the eyes of Chun Ma, it would belong to an ultimate expert in the eyes of an average Murim-in. In fact, the number of people that could surpass him in Inner Qi level could be counted in one hand. Adding Chun Ma and Huineng's martial art techniques, it was virtually impossible for anyone to take a blow from Yunmun.

"Haha, this feels great! What about you, Chun Ma? How does it feel to see the world after so long?"

-I've seen it more than enough. Why would I care?

"It's a completely different time than when you were alive. The scenery must have changed quite a bit."

-The scenery is still the same, but the people should have changed.

“Eh? Ah, that makes sense I guess.”

-Hold on, what’s that sound?

=Shizhu, please stop for a moment.

“What’s wrong?”

-Idiot. Can’t you hear that sound? We’re hearing from the same ears... how can you be so dense? You better not taint my name.

“Sound? What sound! The sound of leaves falling, cries of wild animals, flow of water, and... *clang*? Is that an iron sound?

-Stupid, that’s the sound of a battle.

“A battle? There’s a battle nearby?”

-Ugh, what a complete fool. I understand since you have no experience in Murim... but thinking about bringing you around gives me a headache.

Do you think you’re the one bringing me around? It’s the opposite! This guy’s talking back too much. But if there really is a fight, I must go see it.

-Hey, why are you blindly running towards it?”

“Then what?”

-Did you learn the Concealment Technique for fun?

“Ah, you should have said that earlier.”

It feels like I’m getting dumber. It must be because I’m distracted by these two idiots in my head. Yep. Who am I? I’m the one who will become the Emperor of Murim!!!

Sssss.

“Fuhahaha, remnants of Jung Pa! No matter what you do, you will never break our spirits!”

“Everyone back off.”

“Impressive, Blue Faced Demon, Ha Gun Pyo! As expected of the Demon King that once dominated these lands. But your luck ends here today. Now that we, the North Swords, have stepped in!”

“Haha. You should’ve done that that earlier. Aren’t you bastards all talk, only relying on the backing of the stronger powers behind you? Although the North Swords are the dominating clan of the North, I too was once a leader of a clan! I will never surrender to the likes of you! Go tell your leader. I, Ha Gun Pyo, will one day come to take his head!”

“Still daydreaming? You won’t have the chance ever again. In order to capture you and the others of the 7 Kings of Ma Do*, the main Clan has sent 2000 men and the Nine Justice Alliance has laid down a net of 500 men! A great display for the likes of you, don’t you think?”

[Ma Do: lit. the path/way of Evil. Opposite of “Jung”, or Justice.]

The one talking was a middle aged man with a goatee and eyes slanted slightly upwards, a stereotypical representation of a schemer! After looking around at the bodies of the dead men with flashing eyes, he once again fixed his sight on his opponent. His entire face was covered in hair and his height neared 8 Chuk*! As his title suggested, his face shined with a bluish light. He tightly held a heavy sword with his bloodstained hands, and his body covered in wounds suggested that he had gone through numerous battles already. Even so, his spirit was still alive, as he intimidated his enemies with menacing eyes.

[TN: 1 Chuk = 30 cm]

“If you’re going to start, just start already. Think of the person waiting for you.”

“Huhu, your strategy has truly been outstanding. I will praise your bravery for creating an uproar to allow your brothers to escape. However, you met the wrong opponents.”

Piiiiiiiiiii

“Hm? What do you know? It looks like your brothers have gone ahead to the afterworld. Who knows, if you hurry, you might meet them on their death bed.”

It looked like the whistle noise was their signal.

“Chet, now that it’s come to this, I’ll be taking at least one more with me. You Jung Pa bastards must have set your eyes on ending the seeds of Ma Do, but it will not go as you wished.”

“Huhu, so you still believe in the leader of Ma Do... now that the Beihai’s Sword King and the Qinghai’s Grim Reaper have turned their backs, you can’t possibly think Hyuk Wujong alone can accomplish anything? He didn’t even send any men to save you siblings. Can’t you tell that he’s looking out for his own safety first?”

“Shut it. He will never do such a thing. Soon, he will shed blood to revenge the brothers of Ma Do!”

“I talked too much. Kill him!”

Haat

The surrounding swordsmen made their way towards the Blue Faced Demon while using a strange sword draw technique that stabbed or slashed from all sides. Facing these attacks, the Blue Faced Demon, seemingly tired from the previous battles, dashed forward with every ounce of his strength.

The Blue Faced Demon skillfully parried a swordsman’s attack and slashed at the attacker’s neck. Noticing another sword aura behind him, he quickly stopped his tracks and instead, rolled on the ground and slashed at the attacker’s feet.

Uwak

The attacker whose legs had been cut in half rolled in his own blood. However, there was no time to admire such things, as numerous sword auras once again struck at the Blue Faced Demon.

“Haha, fine. Today will be the day I die.”

“Thunder Clap Swords – Cruel Demon’s Form.”

Holding the sword with both hands, he spun his sword like a pinwheel at his waist level, causing it to sweep an area of 3 Jang. Those standing near were unable to dodge and could only block with their swords. At the same time, the swordsmen standing further back all distanced themselves further. Hitting away the swords or breaking them in half, the Blue Faced Demon cut down the nearby swordsmen. It was partly due to that fact that they were caught by surprise.

Uwak.

Kuk.

Sounds of gruesome screaming continuously rang out, as the swordsmen's upper body rolled on the ground separate from its lower body. The sight of their struggle as they drew their last breath further frightened the onlookers. The Blue Faced Demon did not let this chance go to waste. Rushing at the ones running away, he was breaking out from the siege.

“Thunder Clap Swords – Final Form: Endless Thunderbolts.”

Kwaang

“Dodge, these are Strengthened Blades.”

Although the swordsmen scattered in all directions, the Blue Faced Demon's Strengthened Blades were too fast for them to dodge.

Clang

When one swordsman tried to block it with his sword, it easily shattered into pieces.

Uwak

Kuak

Swish.

Having grabbed the chance, the Blue Faced Demon rushed out of the broken-down siege line.

Kwang

“Kuk.”

Blue Faced Demon suddenly stepped back wobbling. He spat out blood and intently stared at the man who had just arrived.

“Y-You are the Three Swords of the Tianshan Mountains!”

“Haha, impressive. You still had enough energy left to use Strengthened Blades.”

Upon the arrival of these new men, the nearby swordsmen bowed in salute. From this, it was clear that they were in a position of high rank. A middle-aged man who looked like the oldest among the Three Swords of Tianshan Mountains stepped out.

“Of the Demon King Clan’s 7 Kings of Mado , you are the last one alive... with your disposal, today’s hunt will end. Struggle as much as you want. That way, we won’t be so bored either.”

“You... you motherf*ckers! If I let you live, I won’t be able to die peacefully. Die!”

Without worrying about his body, Ha Gun Pyo charged at the Three Swords of Tianshan Mountains. It was clear that he did not have enough energy left over to use Strengthened Blades, as he only used Sword Qi that neared 3 Ja.

Clang.

Clang.

He easily blocked the Blue Faced Demon’s swords, while fiercely attacking his openings. Against the barrage of attacks, the injured Ha Gun Pyo could only struggle to dodge them. With his current state, it was just too hard to fight one of the Three Swords of Tianshan Mountains.

-So? Are you just going to stand by and watch?

[What, you want me to help?]

-It looks like he’s from the Ma Do, but you won’t help him? How can you call yourself the descendant of Chun Ma?

[What are you talking about? Why would I be your descendant? Plus, I have no reason to help him just because he’s from the Ma Do... I am not affiliated with the Ma Do nor the Jung Do. I only walk the path of an emperor.]

-All the more reason you should interfere. Are you going to miss this chance of letting the world know your name? If it were me, I would kill those bastards and save that pitiful guy.

[Shut it. I’ll be the one to decide whether I help him or not. You stay out of this]

His attacks seemed extremely odd. Their fight only looked like a cat toying with a mouse. If there was strong resistance, he would back up, and attack again once he saw another opening. The Blue Faced Demon also started to slow down from exhaustion. He had feeling in the hand holding the blade and he had lost too much blood. His eye sight started to dim with only death left follow after. Even

so, he withstood tenaciously that the spectating Jung Do-Ins secretly praised his bravery.

“Elder brother, let’s end it now. We should go back and rest.”

Having heard this, the first of the Three Swords of Tianshan Mountains, Tianshan’s First Sword Jung Dae-Hyo, raised his swords, as if to tell him the end has come. Looking at the Blue Faced Demon, he gave a light grin.

“I will give you the honor of experiencing the final move of Tianshan Mountains’s 27 Swords. Its name is the Invisible Sword.”

Swish

Piiiiiring

12 swords flew at him, pressuring all parts of his body. When it closed in within 3 Ja, just its aura was enough to tear apart his skin. Having felt the power of this sword technique, the Blue Faced Demon clenched his teeth.

“Endless thunder-bolts.”

Whoosh.

The Strengthened Blades he used with the last of his energy contained some power and directly clashed with the Sword Technique of Tianshan’s First Sword. At that moment, something no one had expected occurred.

Whish.

The two swordsmen stood still after having crossed each other. But who had one?

“Wha... What absurdity is this?”

The two stood frozen in shock, not to mention all the onlookers. The swords that should be in their hands were gone. They had both wagered their lives on that attack and the tension had been at its greatest, so how could their hands lack their swords? What had they done during their exchange? Just where did their swords disappear to?

“Haha, pathetic. You don’t even realize that your swords had been stolen... and you call yourselves martial artists?”

Everyone had turned to look at the source of this voice, but they couldn't believe their eyes. Was this man really human? Everyone's expressions were completely frozen. Why? A man sometimes blanks out in the presence of a beautiful woman. However, they were looking at a man of about 20 years old, a man that was extremely handsome! Furthermore, what he was spinning in his hands were the swords that had been in the hands of Tianshan's First Sword and the Blue Faced Demon. Finally realizing what was in his hands, Tianshan's First Sword glared at him in anger. With his face reddened, he yelled at the mysterious man.

"You bastard! Who are you to mess with us like this?"

Having said these words, Tianshan's First Sword still could not believe what had happened. Was his strength so weak to be played around by this man? However, no one present could understand what had happened either. Of course, how would they be able to comprehend the skill of Yunmun who possessed all of Chun Ma and Huineng's skills?

"Fools! Having one's weapon stolen should be the greatest shame of a warrior. Kill yourselves!"

...

Tianshan's Second Sword who had been standing quietly in the back stepped out with respect.

"Who might you be? Could you please tell us your title?"

"I-I am..."

Shit, what do I say? Come to think of it, I hadn't decided on a name!

Unable to think of a name, Yunmun could only decide on the first name in his mind.

"I am Chun Ma's disciple, Pa Chun."

-Hahaha! I knew you secretly liked that name. How can you hide this from me as a man?

Damn it, why?

[Would you shut up?]

-Being this shy isn't like you. Just go with the flow, eh?

"One hath beginning and no beginnings."

-Agh. Alright, I get it.

"Yes? Ah, your title is Lord Chun Ma's disciple, Pa Chun One hath beginning and no beginnings."

"What? You idiot..."

-Ahahaha.

=Amitabul. Pfft. Amita.. pfft.

"Will you guys shut up?"

"Sorry?"

"Damn it."

Unable to watch this sight, Tianshan's First Sword stepped out.

"Just because you know some techniques, you dare look down on us? Treating us like jokes... you cannot be forgiven. Since you said something about Chun Ma, you must be from the Ma Do as well. Everyone, capture him."

-What a cocky brat. Are you still going to hold it in?

Damn, I was going to let this go, but it looks like I'll have to make my first kill here. Fine, this was bound to happen one day.

Sword of the Emperor Volume 1 Chapter 6

Chapter 6. Chun Ma's Disciple, Pa Chun! Debuting in the Gae Bong Prefecture

According to the order of Tianshan's First Sword, the nearby swordsmen formed a surrounding net around Yunmun. These swordsmen were warriors of the outer court, the bottom of the North Swords' hierarchy. The North Swords took pride in its strict ranking system, which placed emphasis on individual skills rather than background or lineage. Because of this, most disciples come from the Noble Clans and the Minor Schools than from the traditional Nine Great Schools*. Many of them were even from nameless clans.

[TN: This is on the structure/hierarchy of Murim. Go read about it in the "Murim" section]

The current state of Murim was chaos itself. Of the Nine Great Schools that serve as Jung Pa's pillars of support, all except Gae Bang has joined to form the Nine Jung Alliance. There is also the Five Clans Union, focused around the Nangong Clan of the Noble Clans. There is also the South Blades*, made up of blade-using warriors, and the North Swords, who only uses swords and nothing else. With the main powers of Murim concentrated around these 4 Jung Pa Alliances, it was no wonder why the Ma Do is in chaos.

[TN: Blade (刀); Sword (劍); Technically it's a double-edged sword and single-edged sword respectively... I don't really see the difference but apparently there is.]

It was about ten years ago that the Ma Do Alliance was born from the 32 Noble Clans of Ma Do. Its main forces consisted of powers from the Lulin Clan, the Demon Army Clan, the 18 Strongholds of Cave Hall, the Five Elements Clan, the Hidden Assassins, the Demon Flower Palace, the Sun Palace, and the Black Tiger Clan. Even so, it barely sustained itself under the command of its head. The

current age was dominated by forces of Jung Pa, and people of Ma Do had to be careful to stay out of trouble. If a Ma Do clan not affiliated with the Ma Do Alliance caused trouble with a clan of Jung Pa, all of Jung Pa Alliance joined in to exterminate the Ma Do clan in question.

This was precisely what was happening with the 7 Kings of Ma Do. Although they were highly respected within the middle-ranks of Ma Do, they were not part of the Ma Do Alliance. Because of this, even the Minor Schools of Jung Pa harassed them, sparking a major conflict. When the upper-ranks of Jung Pa got a wind of this, they came to deal with the 7 Kings, resulting in the current situation. Even in the face of such grave danger, the Ma Do Alliance did not involve themselves with the 7 Kings, as helping them could be considered rebelling against the 4 Powers of Jung Pa. They knew that as long as they did not provoke them, the 4 Powers would not come to seek trouble.

“I do not know what mercy is, but that doesn’t mean I enjoy killing people meaninglessly. I will simply cut down anyone who dares to oppose me.”

Yunmun’s confidence caused a moment of hesitation within the attackers, but it soon disappeared as the Tianshan’s First Sword instigated them once more.

“Kill him!”

Although they began charging in attack, they were filled with unknown fear against this mysterious man.

-It’s party time, Pa Chun! Kill them all!

“Who are you calling Pa Chun?”

Yunmun retorted in an annoyed voice.

“F*ck, I can’t believe I have to kill these flies.”

=No, Shizhu! Taking another’s life is a greater sin than any! You will be the one that has to wash out your own sins.

“Is that so? But what else can I do? They’re coming to me to die!”

Ssssss.

His figure started to shake. It was the Heavenly Demon’s Domineering Steps, a foot technique stemming from Heavenly Demon’s Concealment Skill. The

attacking swordsmen could not keep up with Yunmun's figure as it appeared and disappeared at will. Before anyone realized, Yunmun was in the middle of them, moving around with no resistance. The sword and the blade in his hand continued to spin, causing something to soar into the air upon contact. This something was of course the heads of the swordsmen who were charging at Yunmun!

In but a moment, Yunmun leaned back on a tree and stared at the Three Swords of Tianshan Mountains. Along with the Blue Faced Demon, they stared back at him with blank expressions. If they were not present, it would not have been wrong to call this place hell.

-You've got talent, kid. I wouldn't believe you haven't killed before. You killed 1, 2... 37! All without a hint of hesitation! The final product is a work of art as well, hahaha.

"Shut it. If you say anything one more time, I'm going to read that scripture for an entire day...."

-....

"You three... no, four. Come here."

No answer. No movement. The sword and the blade continued to spin around in his hand, and only the Blue Faced Demon complied.

"Kneel!"

Like a child following instructions, the Blue Faced Demon performed each of his commands, knowing he had no power to resist. Not only that, he had already been mesmerized by this man's strength that so effortlessly toyed with the warriors of Jung Pa.

"Are you guys looking to die?"

Just these few words were the most frightening words the Three Swords of Tianshan Mountains had ever heard....

"Listen up. I could have gone my way without killing anyone, but you... you forced me to kill your men. I'm in a terrible mood right now. So? Should I kill you? Or do you want to kill yourselves?"

“.... That is going too far. Even if you are strong, we the leaders of the North Swords will not bow to a man of Ma Do. We may die by your hands now, but you will not be able to escape this place. We already...”

“Ah, stop there. I don’t want to listen to any more of your bullshit.”

-‘Well said. You’re fit to be called the disciple of Chun Ma.’”

“Alright, I will kill you. It doesn’t matter whether you are from the Jung Pa or the Ma Pa. What matters to me is whether you are someone to be killed or someone to be ruled! Unfortunately, you’ve been chosen to be killed. So how should I kill you? Should I break you like this?”

Pssssssh.

A boulder 5 Jang away scattered into the air.

“Or should I split you in half like this?”

Swish.

Crack.

A huge tree at least 2 Ja in diameter split in half.

“Or should I crush you into nothingness like this?”

Crash.

The Three Swords of Tianshan Mountains hurriedly knelt down. The huge boulders behind them split into pieces and scattered everywhere.

‘H-He isn’t human.’

“Make your decision!”

Impossible. How can such a powerful man just pop out of nowhere? How can a top-level expert like him be so young? Their hearts were beating at an unbelievable pace. At this moment, their pride as members of the North Swords and their trust in the swords in their hands had completely vanished. It was total despair. The only thing they could see was death itself.

“M-My Lord, please calm down.”

Swish.

“Uwaaaak.”

There was no blocking or dodging. Without knowing when this man had attacked, the arm of Tianshan’s Second Sword was already separately from his body. Along with his arm, the sword that was in his hand had also fallen on the ground. The face of the other two turned yellow in fear.

“You talk too much. If you can’t decide, I will decide for you.”

He lifted his arm up, and the sword and the blade in his hands began to quiver. Seeing this, the Three Swords of Tianshan Mountains began fleeing in terror. The only thing on their mind was joining forces with their allies.

“Huhu. Go!”

Pyuuuuuuu.

The sword and the blade flew at their backs in a straight line. It was as if he shot two arrows, but their speed was unbelievably fast.

Hit.

Hit.

Two heads exploded as their bodies continued to fly forth, falling on their sides soon afterwards. Tianshan’s Second Sword was the only one that escaped.

“I will let you live, since that was my plan all along.... Hey, you!”

“Yes, sir!”

“You may go now.”

With these few words, Pa Chun passed by the Blue Faced Demon toward the direction Tianshan’s Second Sword ran to. Whether he likes it or not, Pa Chun will be his name from now on.

“S-Sir! Please take me with you.”

Murim was in a state of complete chaos. 2000 Swordsmen of the North Swords and 500 experts of the Nine Jung Alliance killed 6 of the 7 Kings of Ma Do. This was the first news. But the second... no one could believe the second news....

Chun Ma’s disciple, Pa Chun! It was the appearance of an unknown expert!

By his hands, 528 men of the North Swords and 127 men of Nine Jung Alliance met their deaths.

With a single move, he caused even the sun to lose its light. He was no human, but a demon! Hell's yaksha wearing a human face! He will turn Murim into a sea of blood.

The rumor spread like wildfire and was even more exaggerated. However, the only one who knew his appearance was Tianshan's Second Sword. Anyone else who saw him had already been killed and those who opposed him died without even leaving their body behind.

He had already changed his clothes, but his body still smelled of blood. Two days had passed since he came down the Tianshan Mountains. He wandered around aimlessly, resting wherever his feet took him. The only thing he heard on the way were rumors of Chun Ma's disciple, Pa Chun. The previous concerns of how much longer the head of Ma Do Alliance will stay out of conflicts or when the North Swords will attack the Ma Do Alliance were all but gone. The only concern people had now was of Chun Ma's disciple, Pa Chun. Where was he from? What was his goal? Where is he now? Both the 4 Powers of Jung Pa and the Ma Do Alliance began organizing its internal structures to prepare for anything that might come in the future. This tension strongly heated up the lands from North to South.

The Gae Bong Prefecture*! It is a famous prefecture in the Mid Lands, located north of Henan Province and south of the Yellow River. The dynasties of Warring States Period's Wei, the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdom's Liang, Jin, Han, Zhou, and Northern Song Empire all used this place as its capital. Upon the fall of Wei, it became dilapidated. After the fall of Han, it continued to exist as just a provincial city until the time of Sui and Tang Dynasty, when they redeveloped the area. Now it was the Holy City of Henan Province. Because of this, there was not a single place within the prefecture that did not carry history with it.

[TN: so they gave the Chinese here finally, and the Gae Bong was revealed to be the Kaifeng, but I guess I'll leave it alone. Also, forgive me if I f*ck up Chinese history/geography.]

As expected of Henan Province's Holy City, lofty and stately buildings lined the

streets as it bustled with people. A youth walked alongside this group. While it wasn't an uncommon sight to see a youth walking by himself through this crowd, the story would be different if this youth had been the cause of recent rumors. Wearing a beautiful white garment and a headband, he tread through the crowd in a majestic form. This was not the only reason why people could not take their eyes off of him. His face did not lack a single feature, seemingly perfect from all angles. His eyes carried an immeasurable depth, his eyebrows were thick and well-defined, his nose was pointed up high like a mountain, his closed lips carried an aura that could attract anyone, and his jaw lines looked tough yet tender. He was a man any woman could only dream of. Not even Pan Yan or Song Yu* would have received such eyes of adoration.

[TN: some famously pretty Chinese women... I think.]

-Everyone's mesmerized by your appearance. Tsk tsk. They don't realize it's just a well-done surgery...

=There's more than what meets the eye. Poor ignorant souls. Amitabul.

It's too hard to ignore all these gazes. Am I that handsome? We-Noh, it seems you've made me too good-looking. It'll be a pain in the ass if this happens everywhere I go.

He caught sight of a sign that read China Inn, a well-known place in the Gae Bong Prefecture. Without hesitation, Pa Chun walked into the inn. Immediately he was greeted.

"Wel...come."

The eyes of the guests inside turned to see this man without showing any signs of retreating. People filled the main hall that was at least 100 Ja in area. Even though it was middle of day, men filled the floor to drink and eat, forcing Pa Chun to go upstairs leaving the eyes of women yearning for him.

"What would you like, sir?"

"Get me an appetizer and a drink to go with it."

"Yes, sir. Umm... are you from around here?"

"Why do you ask?"

“I know it might be rude, but it is the first time in my 10 years of working here that I see someone as handsome as you.”

“Really?”

“Hehe, hold on just a moment. I’ll bring you your food immediately.”

He felt people’s gazes of admiration and envy to be rather annoying. If he were to reveal that he was the infamous Pa Chun, would people still look at him the same way?

As the waiter had said, the food came out almost immediately. Eating the tasty appetizer, his mood turned for the better. When he was the emperor, he did not enjoy alcohol very much. The few that he drank were exceedingly rare, but even those he only drank a cup or two at most. It was clearly that his body had changed. Rather than making him drunk, the drink stuck to his throat with a popping sensation. He had emptied an entire bottle, asking for more. After getting another bottle, he started looking around the inn. Those who met his eyes smiled back or pretended like they weren’t watching him. A few women even sent back seductive gazes. These must be what they call whores.

I can’t believe the looks I’m getting. Do they really think I’ll be seduced by such a thing?

His eyes that had been looking around suddenly sparkled conspicuously. His eyes fell on a group carrying all kinds of weapons. From this, it was obvious that they were warriors of Murim. Not only that, the group consisted of 4 handsome men and 4 beautiful women, all very young. They seemed to be talking about something with a few staring at the direction of Pa Chun. Soon, one of them got up and started walking towards Pa Chun.

“I am Dang Jungwoo from the Sichuan Province. If it’s alright, would you like to join us for a drink?”

Pa Chun hesitated at the sudden question.

“Sure, it was lonely drinking by myself. I’m glad, let’s go.”

His expression turned bright at his unexpected acceptance. While Pa Chun got up and moved his seat, the rest of the guests could not take their eyes off of him.

“Haha. Everyone, I brought him over. Why don’t we introduce ourselves?”

Immediately, everyone stood up to give their introductions.

“I have been given a title called White Sword Dragon, and I am called Nangong Hyuk Ryun.”

He seemed to be about 25 years old. His tall height, tidy clothes, and handsome face gave off an amiable aura. Next to him, a young girl also gave her introductions.

“I am Nangong Ah Yeon. It’s an honor to meet you.”

An eyes sparkled as she looked at Pa Chun. Wearing red all around, it seemed she was Nangong Hyuk Ryun’s sister.

“I am the Iron Blood Fist, Peng Jung Hu.”

He had a solemn expression and a pointy head. With his seemingly huge hands, it was no wonder why he was called the Iron Blood Fist.

“I’m...”

As they gave their introductions, Pa Chun cuffed his hands together in respect. However, what he was thinking was completely different....

Haha, I see. They were from the Five Clans Union. But why business do they have in Gae Bong? No matter. They’re soon to become my underlings anyways... ah, but they sure know how to greet someone. How cute. Be careful how you act from now on. Leaders must be careful so that no one may find fault in their actions.

Like Pa Chun thought, they were indeed people from the Five Clans Union. The Five Clans Union was formed by the members of Murim’s Noble Clans, and acted much more justly in comparison to North Swords or South Blades. Because of this, they had more friends than they had enemies.

“Haha, it seems everyone comes from Murim’s Noble Clans... I thank you for treating an unknown man like me so well. I am a wanderer named Munyun. I am honored to be in the presence of the most renowned people of Murim.”

From the respectful attitude and words, who would suspect this man to be the infamous Pa Chun? The name Munyun was only his real name said backwards.

The background of these 8 men and women was nothing to scoff at. The Five Clans Union's core clans were the Nangong Clan and the Sichuan Clan. Beneath them, the Hebei Peng Clan, Jinzhou Clan, and the Moyong Clan were prominent. Beneath these were the Jangwui Clan, Doryong Clan, Jungwui Clan, Jangbak Clan, and Shaanxi Clan. The western side of the continent was dominated by the forces of the Sichuan Clan and the Shaanxi Clan. Because the headquarters of the Sichuan Clan was located near the schools of Nine Jung Alliance, the relationship between the Five Clans Union and the Nine Jung Alliance was rather close. These 8 were high ranking members of Nangong Clan, Sichuan Clan, Peng Clan, and Moyong Clan.

“What brings you here to Gae Bong? It's quite a distance from the Sichuan Palace.”

Pa Chun asked this question carefully as he pretending to be unknowledgeable about the world of Murim.

“Haha, that is something you would not understand even if we told you. It's a matter related to Murim, you see.”

To add to the answer of Iron Blood Fist Peng Jung Hu, Nangong Ah Yeon's sister, Nangong Hemi, spoke out. Among the group she was the youngest, but it was without a doubt that she was the most beautiful.

“As we told you before, we are part of the Five Clans Union. Gae Bong has the headquarters of Gae Bang, but the head temple of the North Swords is also located here. The North Swords is planning on holding a banquet soon. Because of this, many people of Jung Pa has gathered back to Gae Bong to attend the banquet. Since we left our home a bit early, we had some time to spare. Do you have any other questions?”

“Haha, what question would I have? I didn't even know Murim was split into so many forces.”

His words were enough to change the expressions of many nearby people, as it could be misconstrued as calling the people of Murim trees*.

[TN: Yeah... I don't know. That's what it said!]

“As you said, Murim has a lot of fierce competitions. Today's friend could be

tomorrow's enemy and yesterday's enemy could be today's friends. Right now, Murim is divided into two major forces, the Jung Do and the Ma Do. Never before in the history of Murim was there such a clear cut division. If you are from Murim, you have to choose either the Jung Do or the Ma Do. Those who haven't made a decision will be considered enemies by the two forces. The people of Jung Pa earnestly believe that oppressing those who are on Ma Do's side is what keeps the spirit of Murim alive. It is truly frustrating. I feel like we're becoming more like Pae Do than Jung Do*.

[TN: Pae Do *militant*; Jung Do justice]

Not a single person disagreed with Nangong Hyuk Ryun's words. Not only that, those listening nearby began to nod their head. He had unknowingly gained the approval of people around him.

White Sword Dragon Nangong Hyuk Ryun! He was the son of current head of Five Clans Union's leader, the Sky Sword God Nangong Hui. Not only that, he was the heir of the Nangong Clan! He made his first appearance in Murim 5 years ago, making a name for himself with his sword skills. Among the latter generation of Murim, he was easily one of the top ten experts!

Sword of the Emperor Volume 1 Chapter 7

Chapter 7: North Swords' Law Enforcement Corp

The main discussion was centered around Chun Ma's disciple, Pa Chun, who announced himself as Munyun. Everyone present expressed great interest in Pa Chun, especially the four flower-like beauties whose intents could be seen clearly. It seemed they had known each other from a young age, as they showed no formalities with each other.

"You mean the state of Murim is really in such chaos?"

While staring at him intently, Nangong Hyuk Ryun answered.

"Indeed. Although it may differ slightly depending on the region, it is characteristic in Murim for the strong to dominate the weak. Many combine their powers to protect themselves and with enough strength, they will conquer the nearby powers, often leading to bloody conflicts. This vicious cycle is the history of Murim. To not become the weak, we train ourselves and strengthen our powers. Currently, the leading powers of the era are the 4 Powers of Jung Do, including us, the Five Clans Union."

He nodded his head to signal his understanding.

"Pardon my rudeness, but in the current Gang Ho Murim, who is the strongest?"

"The strongest...? I'm sure people's opinions might differ, but it will either be heads of the 4 Powers, the head of Ma Do, the Baihai's Sword King, or the Qinghai's Grim Reaper. But since Gang Ho is such a huge place, it is filled with unknown masters. So it is possible that someone stronger than them can appear."

"Also, from what I've heard, Murim-ins possess something called Inner Qi and that they call it something like one or two cycles... how many cycles would the

ones you just told me about be?”

-I see you're questioning them about the current situation of Murim... quite crafty I must say.

[Shut it, Chun Ma! I'm trying to find out about my future enemies from these guys.]

“Inner Qi level? That is something only they would know. But since most experts of Murim have 2 cycles of Inner Qi, these master-level experts... they must have 4 or 5 cycles of Inner Qi.”

“I've heard a single cycle represents 60 years of training. It's hard to believe they have such a high Inner Qi level.”

“Haha, that is the old standard. As you said sir Mun, in the early years of Murim, that was the standard. But as time passed, many Cultivation Qi Methods were developed and medicines begun to be used to increase one's Inner Qi level. Descendants of old clans will use medicine and Cultivation Qi Methods from young age, allowing them to surpass the 1 cycle level easily. Since Qi-practitioners are powerful weapons, every clan started to research new skills and methods. The current Murim has made great progress as Murim-ins now have incomparably higher Inner Qi levels than the past. Because of this, many secret skills that have been passed down in theory are now performed by descendants of various clans. Without enough Inner Qi, it's impossible to fully utilize any martial skill.”

4,5 cycles are master-class? Then I should be considered one of them as well. From what I hear, it seems there aren't many of them either... I should be free to roam Gang Ho as I please.

-Progress? Progress my ass. In my times, there were at least 10 people with more than 10 cycles of Inner Qi.

[What? Is that true, Chun Ma? How can that be?]

-These fools! Sure cultivation speed may be slow at first, but past a certain level it becomes much faster. Once you surpass that, many bottlenecks will appear, and by breaking through those bottlenecks, martial artists gain infinite progress of Inner Qi. These Cultivation Qi Methods may seem fast at first, but in

the end it will hinder their progress. Truly foolish! I can't believe I fell for Hwa-Nohs trickery.... If I knew the current circumstances, I never would have agreed with him... that Jang Sam-Bong or Jang Sam-Poong guy he mentioned must be same.

Jang Sam-Bong?

"If I may, how skilled is Jang Sam-Bong?"

Having heard this, everyone could not hide their shocked expression.

Nangong Hemi stared at Pa Chun with an ugly expression. What she said next directly showed how she was feeling.

"Sir! I understand you know nothing about Murim, but Lord Zhang Sanfeng is worshiped even amongst civilians. How can you ask something like that? Even the young masters of famous clans bow in respect for him; how can you call his name like calling a neighborhood kid?"

Huh? I didn't think he was this famous. It seems I made a huge mistake. I must leave them with a good impression of me...

"Ah, my apologies. I did not know any better. If I've hurt your feelings, I am deeply sorry."

"Haha, Hemi. You're quite sensitive when it comes to him. He didn't know so forgive him."

"Hmph. Fine, since he didn't know, I'll let it pass."

Interesting. Their reverence towards this man is actually this great. Is he that strong? But how different could he be from the other guys?

"I'm not sure exactly how to begin. I guess it's best to say he's someone everyone from both the Ma Do and Jung Do respects even in this turbulent time. He's a legendary man revered even by the civilians. There are a lot of mysterious stories about him..."

For example, in an area bordering Sichuan and Qinghai, there is a big town called Udun. Every summer, many residents would die from an unknown disease, so the chief hired men from the Mid Lands to come investigate. This news spread to the Temple and Lord Jang Sam-Poong himself came to investigate.

After seeing the town's messenger giving off an Evil Aura from their bodies, the Lord deduced that there was an object or a mystical creature giving off the Evil Aura. Bringing the messenger with him, the Lord reached Udon in a month. As he expected, Udon was a volcanic area and a 2000 year old Fire Dragon was living in the crater. As it missed its timing to ascend to the Heavens, to vent its anger in the hot days of summer, it would torment the people by fuming poisonous gas."

"And?"

"The Lord tried to calm the Fire Dragon... but not only did it not listen to him, it also tried to swallow him. He had no choice but to summon the Legendary Peng from the skies and swallow the dragon alive."

"Huh... you can't possibly believe that story?"

"People do believe it. It shows how much he is respected and revered by the civilians. Even my father, the leader of the Five Clans Union, bows down to him at first sight."

-Interesting. He is this great? I really want to fight him... tsk, but what's the use? I can't show him the glory of the past Chun Ma.

=Amitabul. A great news for this monk.

-Hey, would you stay quiet? I could probably finish both you and him in a single blow.

"How is he in comparison to Shaolin Temple's 6th Patriarch, Huineng?"

"Since he is from well over 700 years ago, it would be hard to compare the two. But I believe the future generations will respect Lord Zhang Sanfeng more."

"Is that so?"

-Hahaha! Looks like that's it for you. Oi, Pa Chun, ask him to compare him with me.

"I have one last question. What is he like compared to Chun Ma?"

"Haha, quite curious aren't you? Looks like you aren't completely unknowledgeable about Murim. You know quite a lot of people! Chun Ma you ask..."

He looked around for help, but no one spoke out.

“There are only mythical stories about Chun Ma! Not only are his martial skills lost, but just the stories are too absurd... it is hard to tell what’s true and what isn’t. But if they were true, Chun Ma would undoubtedly be the strongest in all of Murim’s history.

It is said he could soar through the skies for the entire day and have enough strength to make a mountain disappear with a single move. He simply isn’t human. There are rumors that the twin-headed rocks of Mt. Tai were split by just his single finger.”

-Bastards, it’s all true! It’s all been simplified though. The twin-headed rocks was not split by my finger, but because I kicked a pebble at it.

[You want me to believe all this?]

-Come on, even the gramps from the Heaven Over Heavens knows about this...

A name Chun Ma has spoken before. Heaven Over Heavens! But Pa Chun was not particularly paying attention to him.

As the group continued to have idle chats, the sun started to set, quickly becoming night. Dinner time had passed, but the inn was still full of people. The late autumn wind was chilly to say the least, and many had come into the inn in search of warmth. Many of them were Murim-ins, most likely those that came to participate in the Jung Do Banquet.

“Kyaa.”

Crash.

“Stop right there!”

The sound of a girl’s screaming voice and hurried footsteps of several men filled the room.

The girl looked to be about 14 years old. She was skinny and was rather tanned; she had tears in her eyes and the hem of her clothes around her legs was ripped.

She rushed to the second floor, running away from her pursuers. She looked around with despair clearly on her face as her pursuers also arrived on the

second floor. These men were clearly Murim-ins, as they were all wearing red clothing that read 'Sword' in the middle.

"Where do you think you're going, bitch? To think you'd run away leaving your old man to die."

"Capture her."

"Yes, sir."

The man that seemed to be the leader commanded his men with a voice of authority.

"S-Save me."

The girl was screaming. Her disheveled state caused all the onlookers to clench their fists in anger.

"Hold on a moment."

Someone approached them, unable to bear the sight any longer.

"What?"

The swordman retorted as if he was a bother.

"Hmph, men from the mighty North Swords dare to bully a young girl like this? If there is a reason, you should state it right this instance."

His words persuaded those watching, and others spoke out in agreement. The man seemed to have noticed the pursuers were men of the North Swords, which was why he tried to draw the crowd into his favor.

"How dare you interrupt the North Swords' business! Do you think you can get away with this? Men, capture him as well."

His attitude was truly deplorable. As much as he was flaunting his authority, he was gathering the hostility of the crowd.

The crowd that favored the man who spoke out began to shout at the leader. With the opinion of the crowd turning sour, the leader began to sweat.

"Dear citizens of Murim! Have you ever seen the North Swords breaking the law? We have a perfectly good reason for doing this, so we would appreciate your cooperation."

He tried to control the situation from further getting out of hand, but it was too late. His attitude caused the crowd to yell out in anger.

“You think you can do this because you’re from the North Swords?”

“What madness is this?”

“Since when was the Gae Bong prefecture a place of such disorder?”

The crowd only got louder as more people joined in.

“Damn it, I’ll handle the consequences. Capture them both.”

He yelled as if he’s given up on controlling the situation. However, no one stepped out to stop them in fear of the name of North Swords.

“Halt.”

Whish.

Using the Wyvern Turn Movement, a beautiful young lady blocked the swordsmen’s path. It was Nangong Hemi, the younger sister of Nangong Hyuk Ryun. At her sudden appearance, North Swords’ swordsmen had a look of surprise, which soon turned into a ugly expression.

“What is this? A woman dares to hinder the business of the North Swords? You must be mad.”

Nangong Hemi frowned at his words, becoming even more enraged.

“Hmph, the North Swords may scare the others, but it will not scare me, Nangong Hemi.”

Chatter chatter.

Realizing who she was, the crowd began to watch even more attentively. Even if these men were from North Swords’ Law Enforcement Corp, their opponent was a girl from the core clan of the Five Clans Union. In addition, there was a rumor that she was the favorite child of the head of the Five Clans Union, the Firmament Divine Sword Nangong Hui.

Her status caused fear in the hearts of those watching. Not only that, if Nangong Hemi was here, it could very well mean her older sister and brother was present as well.

The spirit of the Law Enforcement Corp's leader, the White Tiger Sword Ga Duk-Sam, quickly died down.

"Miss, it is the unspoken rule of Gang Ho to not interfere with matters of other schools. Not to mention, this conflict between us may cause unnecessary trouble between the good relations of our two schools."

"Hoho, of course. I am not so foolish to not consider the possibility. Even so, I will not stand back and watch such injustice! This business you speak of looks like a simple kidnapping to me!"

It was a heated argument. Glaring at Nangong Hemi, Ga Duk-Sam had no choice but to explain their cause.

"Her name is Sul Ju-Bong and the bitch is related to Gae Bong's Ma Do Clan, the Demon Border Clan. In fact, she is the daughter of the clan leader Sul Kyung-Ik, the Thousand Handed Snow Tiger. We have been ordered to arrest the members of the Demon Border Clan."

"Can you expand on the reason?"

"We have no reason to tell you. If you still refuse to back down, we will consider it an act of hostility against us and must resort to force."

"What did you say?"

A voice that overwhelmed hers rung out.

"Hahahaha.... Since when did the Law Enforcement Corp of the North Swords become so arrogant? You dare say you will use force?"

It was Nangong Hyuk Ryun, and behind him followed 4 other men and women. Naturally, Pa Chun had joined amongst them.

"I'd like to see you try."

"Young master! I am the Law Enforcement Corp's vice-leader, the White Tiger Sword Ga Duk-Sam. Are you threatening us?"

"Threaten?"

The crowd couldn't help but gasp at the situation. A mere vice-leader of the Law Enforcement Corp dared to talk back to the young heir of the Nangong Clan.

“And if I am?”

It was obvious he was extremely enraged. Although he did not show it on the outside, anyone could tell his anger had reached the point of no return. The others who knew what could happen grew increasingly nervous. In any case, they were in Gae Bong where the headquarter of North Swords was located. If they caused trouble here, they knew it was become troublesome.

“If that is the case, we would have no choice but to report this matter to the higher ups.”

“Shut it! The Law Enforcement Corp never retreats.”

“L-Leader!”

“Greetings, Leader.”

The swordsmen wearing silver hurriedly bowed to the man wearing gold.

Who is he? The 17th ranked of the North Swords, the leader of the Law Enforcement Corp, known as Smiling Sword, Wu Hyun-Choong.

Though he was only 30 this year, his cruel and meticulous way of handling his work caused many to dislike him within the North Swords. From his outer appearance, it was easier to believe he was from the Ma Do than from the Jung Do. The scar the crossed across his left eye caused him to look even more fearsome.

“Young master Nangong, isn’t this going too far? If the head of Five Clans Union found out, he would surely rebuke you.”

“What?”

“Why, am I wrong? If you caused the relationship between the North Swords and the Five Clans Union to turn sour, would you take responsibility?”

“Why don’t you shut up?”

This time, the voice did not come from the young master of Nangong, but rather from the Iron Blood Fist Peng Jung-Hu standing behind him.

The situation was growing worse and worse. What started out from a young girl asking for help had turned into a conflict involving two great powers. The

relationship between the North Swords, the South Blades, and the Five Clans Union was never good. The only reason they did not openly clash was because they were faces of the Jung Do. The Nine Jung Alliance usually acted as their medium, but it was a known fact that they preferred the Five Clans Union. In terms of influence, the North Swords has the most power, and the Five Clans Union was strongest in raw strength. The South Blades held the greatest amount of territory while the Nine Jung Alliance was the greatest in amount and knowledge of martial skills.

“Ho, and who might you be? Shut up? Do you think someone of your age has the right to command me? If I recall correctly, you are the heir of the Peng Clan.”

“Y-You...”

“Hahaha, truly absurd!”

Without even batting an eye, he clearly spoke to Nangong Hyuk Ryun’s group.

“I order to the men of the Law Enforcement Corp in the area, do not let a single person leave this place.”

“Yes, sir.”

A swordsman of the North Swords ran out, as tension continued to build up.

“So what are you going to do now, young master?”

Peng Jung-Hu wanted to slap the smile off this man’s face. However, as everyone else was holding in, he did not dare to perform his thoughts.

-Ho, what a cocky bastard.

[Damn it. What should we do? My identity will be exposed if I use any martial skills.]

-Who cares? You can always just kill all the witnesses... oh, what about Huineng’s martial skills? Come on, shouldn’t you figure out simple solutions like this on your own?

[Yeah yeah, glad to know you’re so smart. Why are they doing? If they’re going to fight, they should get on with it.]

-They’re more or less family. It’s obvious they wouldn’t fight so openly.

=Amitabul! It is truly shocking how much has changed over the years.

-Please, it's always been like this. You Jung Pa people are all hypocrites, pretending to be weak sheep while hiding all sorts of evil thoughts inside. Oppressing the Ma Do while claiming it to be for the benefit of Jung Do, it's the usual trick.

[How would you know? This would have never happened to you.]

-Well yeah, but I still know how the world goes around.

As these two continued to talk internally, neither side backed down. Even so, the leader of the Law Enforcement Corp had already captured the girl, holding onto her hands tightly.

Sword of the Emperor Volume 1 Chapter 8

Chapter 8. Shaolin Temple's Ultimate Expert

“Hand over the girl.”

“Hahahaha.”

The Smiling Sword's laughter rang out within the inn. After laughing for a while, he suddenly stopped, slightly grinning and his eyes twitching. It was a sign he had a strong urge to kill someone.

“Huhu, you really look down on my Law Enforcement Corp too much. You act arrogant based on the glory of your clans; try and take her from me!”

“Fine, you can have her. But we'll be accompanying you in your investigation. You wouldn't dare refuse this, would you? It does not matter whether her father is from the Ma Do or is the enemy of the whole world. If you refuse, we won't just let this go.”

Nangong Hyuk Ryun's words showed just how carefully he was handling the situation. His willingness to uphold his decision to save the girl was clearly shown, while he did not want to go against the law. Even so, he had already conceded quite a bit.

“That is for us to decide. Since when did the Five Clans Union become so interested in the internal affairs of our North Swords? Sorry to tell you... but I won't be able to comply. Let's go, men.”

He turned around, heading towards the stairs. However...

Whish.

The 8 excluding Pa Chun surrounded him – a clear message that they were unwilling to give up.

“You... do you really want to continue this farce? 200 of the Law Enforcement

Corp's 500 swordsmen are waiting outside. You want to oppose us for this bitch? Truly foolish."

He grabbed a hold of the girl's hair, who had previously been in the hands of his vice-leader.

"Kyaa."

Clang.

Shoosh.

The 8 people from the Five Clans Union brought out their weapons.

"How's this? I will kill the girl right here. Hahaha."

"You fiend! You dare call yourself a Jung Do-in? Let her go right this instance."

"Make me if you can. Try and kill me with that sword of yours."

While his attitude was completely brazen, Nangong Hyuk Ryun was overly agitated.

"What about this?"

"Kyaa!"

The girl finally started crying, as the Law Enforcement Corp's leader put his hands inside the girl's clothes. The hand of the Smiling Sword, Wu Hyun-Choong, reached the girl's breasts. Nangong Hemi, unable to watch any further, abruptly charged at him.

"You bastard! Take that hand off of her!"

As expected of the Nangong Clan's descendant, her attack was fierce and powerful. However, her sword was stopped in the mid-way, unable to go on any further.

Clang.

It was the Law Enforcement Corp's vice leader. His hand that was holding onto the girl was now holding onto his sword, as he faced off against Nangong Hemi. Nangong Hyuk Ryun shouted watching this scene.

"Kill them!"

As the young masters of the Five Clans Union charged, their hands and weapons were covered in their Qi. Even with 200 swordsmen supposedly surrounding the area, they did not hesitate in the slightest. They were only doing what they believed to be just. Nangong Hyuk Ryun stretched his swords to the Smiling Sword in a quick and flowing motion.

Whish.

“Huhu.”

Still fondling the girl’s breast, Smiling Sword brought her forward in front of him.

“Ah.”

Nangong Hyuk Ryun had no choice but to pull his sword back and retreat. His body blurred as he used the Soul Shadow Steps, trying to move behind Smiling Sword to attack. However, Smiling Sword continued to face him as he turned his body to face Nangong Hyuk Ryun.

“Everyone stop! One more step and I’ll kill this bitch.”

With his open hand, he took out his beloved Snake Sword. Its twisted blade resembled a slithering snake, and its edge was giving off a dazzling light as it pointed at the girl’s neck. Naturally, everyone froze.

“Y-You bastard! Such a dirty act...”

“Hahaha, that’s how I’ve survived ‘til now. To complete a task, you have to be ready to use whatever means necessary! Do you understand the situation now? You are powerless. I know you are the sons and daughters of the Five Clans Union’s clan leaders, but I won’t let you off so easily... look forward to it.”

[Brother Nangong! What should we do?]

Iron Blood Fist Peng Jung-Hu whispered.

[No matter what we must save that girl. Even if we have to rely on the forces of our Five Clans Union.] [If he returns, who knows what he’ll do to the girl... but we have no other choice.]

“Looks like you understand the situation now. Men, we’re leaving.”

Following his orders, the Law Enforcement Corp's swordsmen started making their way downstairs. In just a short while, only the vice-leader remained with Smiling Sword.

Confirming their men have left, the two leaders started making their way downstairs. Nangong Hyuk Ryun and his party followed behind and the crowd hurriedly followed in their steps.

-Pa Chun, you're just gonna let them go?

=Shizhu, you must save the poor girl. Amitabul.

Their thoughts agreed for the first time, but Pa Chun was still reluctant. The girl really had nothing to do with him.

But at that moment, Pa Chun saw the eyes of the crying girl in the hands of Smiling Sword. Her anger and shame was clear as Smiling Sword's hand was still on top of her bosom.

Damn it! Those eyes are bothering me!

The memory was still fresh in his mind. The eyes of the palace maids as they committed suicide in front of him! The eyes of the elders as they kowtowed to his departure! He could never forget those eyes.

F*ck it! That bastard, he's dead!

Pa Chun had already lost his composure. His painful memories urged him on, and his rage was directed at Smiling Sword.

No one could detect the man standing behind Nangong Hyuk Ryun disappearing. Even the people looking directly ahead behind him was unable to realize he had disappeared. It was truly a mysterious technique.

Smiling Sword had finally made his way downstairs and mocked the young masters of the Five Clans Union.

"Haha, proud young masters! I'll see you later."

He was heading for the door, but no one was able to stop him. At that moment, his smiling face became ugly.

Clang.

His Snake Sword that had been pointing at the girl's neck dropped onto the floor.

"I wasn't planning on interfering, but your actions are too vile for me to ignore."

There was a man standing mid-air. Everyone's attention became focused on the mysterious man. They soon realized; it was the handsome young master that had been standing back just now! Nangong Hyuk Ryun and others in the room had their jaws dropped in surprised.

"Ce... Celestial Sky Ladder."

"It's the Shaolin's technique."

Celestial Sky Ladder, one of the secret Celestial Techniques. Using this technique, Pa Chun slowly walked down from the air.

"You..."

Smiling looked at his hand. Before he could notice, a small coin-sized hole had been made on his wrist. Through the hole, his blood poured down, completely dousing his and the girl's clothes. Seeing the mysterious man use one of Shaolin's secret techniques, Smiling Sword could no longer act as he wanted. He could very well be one of Nine Jung Alliance's mysterious experts.

"Who might you be, my lord?"

The change in his way of talking caused many people to frown. The way he cowered in face of the strong could only be disdainful in the spectators' eyes.

"Let the girl go. Otherwise, you will see what slaughter truly means."

-Ha! Slaughter? You made your first kill not too long ago and you think you know what slaughter is? Tsk, look at the admiration in their eyes.

=Amitabul.

"Why are you doing this? I'm the North Swords'..."

"I know that. I've heard more than enough of you being the dog of the North Swords, so shut up and let the girl go."

"No, but this girl is..."

“Are you testing my patience? Let her go now, or you’ll be forced to do so after I cut your hand off.”

-Fuhahaha. Now that’s more like you.

His temper instilled fear on the spectators; not caring in the slightest, Pa Chun was making his move. No one could catch his movement as he used Buddha’s Immortal Cloud Steps. His hand pierced Smiling Sword’s abdomen, causing his hand to drop from the girl’s bosom. Smiling Sword’s head dropped at the same time, and Pa Chun kicked it up in quick succession.

Uwaak.

Smiling Sword yelled out loud in pain, flying three Jangs before he crashed in the corner. From his mouth, streams of blood flowed down. Because everything happened so fast, the spectators were unable to understand what happened. The technique he used was called the Demon Conquering Chain Hammer, Shaolin’s ultimate technique. Without at least 10 years of careful study, it was impossible to show the might that Pa Chun had displayed. Swinging, pressing, or smashing attacks were chained together as they focused on the enemy’s blood veins. If just one connected, one’s defense would falter significantly.

Smiling Sword picked his body up. It seemed that his wounds weren’t light as he shook, unable to stand still. His eyes were filled with rage, and he shouted with a mouth full of blood.

“I command the Law Enforcement Corp to kill them all!!”

Crash.

Clang.

The door burst open as several tens of swordsmen rushed inside with swords in their hands. The girl was already in the hands of Nangong Hemi, but she was still shaking in fear. Nangong Hyuk Ryun did not stay still either as he readied himself for battle. As the obstacle blocking his way no longer existed, he had no reason to hesitate. But they didn’t know that they would not be fighting.

Pa Chun rose up in the air once again using the Celestial Sky Ladder technique. From his hands, endless number of Shaolin’s secret skills pours out.

Bamboo Leaf Hand, Celestial Palm, Man Catching Skill, Bodhisattva's Palm, Vigorous Vajra's Palm, 12 Separation of the Golden Dragon, Light Bound Finger. People stared in awe as legendary techniques of the 72 Shaolin Secret Arts were performed one by one.

Kwang.

Uwak.

Puush.

Crack.

Crash.

Furniture inside the inn broke apart as endless screams erupted.

As soon as the swordsmen ran inside, they were sent flying back. Even going inside seemed to be impossible.

In an instant, the mysterious man suddenly disappeared, appearing near Smiling Sword.

His hand was already holding Smiling Sword's neck.

[Listen up. With my current mood, I'd much rather kill every single one of you. I'll give you one more chance. Retreat and forget about this incident. If you don't obey my orders, you will face a fate worse than death... understood?]

As Pa Chun's back was facing the crowd, no one was able to see his facial expression. Because he was speaking through his mind, no one could understand what they talked about. The only thing they could make out was the pale expression of Smiling Sword as he nodded his head in fear. He was indeed madly nodding in fear that he would be killed otherwise. As their leader was held captive, the swordsmen of the Law Enforcement Corp were unable to do anything. They could only stare at the vice-leader, seeking help. But even he did not have a good solution.

“Haha, alright. Let's stop and tidy up.”

His jest-filled tone caused the room to fall silent. No one could understand what he was thinking. Nangong Hyuk Ryun's thoughts were especially in disarray. Someone he thought to be a scholar was actually a master-class expert, not to

mention he was from the Shaolin Temple. His immeasurable power made some people feel betrayed. Why would someone like him act so humble and lie? At the same time, it was true that they felt endless admiration to this Munyun's noble martial arts and many wondered who he really was.

Sword of the Emperor Volume 1 Chapter 9

Chapter 9: Huineng's Disciple

“Haha, what are we standing around for? Let's take a seat.”

Looking at the chairs and tables thrown all over the place, Pa Chun shrugged and pointed to the second floor. Pa Chun turned to Smiling Sword who was still holding onto his injured wrist and lightly tapped his shoulder.

“Brother! Why don't you join us? It'll help loosen the tension. Hurry, let's go up.”

Pa Chun basically dragged Smiling Sword to the second floor. Watching this scene, the 8 young masters of the Five Clans Union let out an awkward laugh and followed him. Sul Ju-Bong followed as well, still tightly embraced in Nangong Hemi's arms.

Their table was filled with awkwardness. Pa Chun was the only one cracking jokes and trying to liven up the situation. Laughing aloud, he offered alcohol to everyone. However, they did not know whether to put it through their mouth or nose. Smiling Sword who was seated next to Pa Chun seemed especially uncomfortable as he rolled his eyes in anxiousness. Of course, he accepted offers of drinks from Pa Chun and drank reluctantly. Everyone else on the second floor had their attention focused on this table, whispering to themselves about this odd combination of people.

“I apologize for having to hide my identity from you all for reasons I cannot disclose. Don't blame me too much. But it is true that I am new to the world of Murim. My debut has been pretty recent. Sir Nangong, you wouldn't be bothered by this would you? Haha.”

“...Sir Mun!”

“Yes? Is there something you need...?”

“What is your true identity?”

As everyone had been curious about this, they focused their attention on Pa Chun, waiting for his answer.

“Mmm... I’m afraid this isn’t something I can so easily disclose... but it must have been fate that brought us together. I guess there’s no need for me to hide it. I am Shaolin’s...”

“I knew it.”

“Ah.”

“Mm.”

“I am someone who received the direct teachings of the 6th Patriarch of the Shaolin Temple, High Priest Huineng.”

“What?”

“Huineng, you said?”

“!!!”

In front of shock of great magnitude, people can’t help but become dumbfounded or act in a way that they usually would not. Their reaction was exactly so. Many could only stare blankly as they blinked in surprise, and some even drooled with their mouths open. One person started drinking alcohol madly.

-Hahaha, such improvisation... amazing. Simply amazing! Looks like you’ll avoid yet another danger like this.

=Amitabul. What a blatant lie... though, in some ways, it might not be completely wrong either.

“Direct teachings of monk Huineng? How could that be possible?”

At Nangong Hemi’s words, they remembered one detail. The renowned 6th Patriarch, Huineng, was a person from the era of Tang Dynasty. To be exact, he was a High Priest born on the 11th year of Tae Jong, having passed away on the first year of Hyun Jong. He was the Great Successor of the legacy of Dharma and 2nd Patriarch Huike. It was him who brought Shaolin to the top as the greatest

Buddhist temple of the Linji school*. As the current Chief Priest of the Shaolin Temple was the 27th in line, their suspicion was only natural.

[TN: Linji school is a school of Chan Buddhism. Wikipedia if you're curious.]

“I know what you all are thinking and of course, I have not directly met him. I've never left Mt. Tae my whole life. But one day on a secluded mountainside, I was able to find his trails and teachings. It has been over 10 years since then. High Priest Huineng had once wandered across the world, and he had stayed in Mt. Tae for about 2 years. I was lucky enough to have found his legacy, and although I am lacking, I have come to follow in his footsteps.”

The faces of the listeners had a hint of understanding in it. At the same time, their expressions were filled with envy and admiration.

“Ahem... so this is why I unwillingly had tricked you all. I hope you can find the heart to forgive me.”

“Of course of course! This is a joyous occasion for us Jung Pa Murim. It seems we must address you with greater respect from now.”

“No, what do you mean?”

“Honor is something the people of Murim care greatly about. How could we so carelessly treat the one who succeeded the teachings of Shaolin's legendary High Priest? Do you not agree? Haha.”

Hahaha.

Hohoho.

Laughter erupted from the table, but one person stayed quiet with an uncomfortable expression on his face.

[Watch it. What are you unsatisfied with to make a face like that?]

At Pa Chun's mental message, goosebumps appeared on Smiling Sword's body. Not only did he suffer under his boundless martial techniques, but he also just found out about his identity. Thinking about the possibility that such a character might be a murderous fiend made his hair stand on its end. He still could not forget Pa Chun's eyes from back then. Evil, destructive, and domineering – eyes that he had never seen before. Pa Chun's mental message once again wrung out

in his mind.

[You know what will happen if you dare tell anyone about me, right? ...Oh? No answer?] [N-No... my lord! I will not speak about this with anyone. I swear.]

With those final words, Smiling Sword's body was shaking in fear. Pa Chun was still heartily speaking with the others, yet he was able to send a mental message during that time. This advanced type of mental message was impossible without fully grasping two secret techniques. One was the Shaolin's Intelligent Light Speech and the other had to be the Two Mind Separation Technique* only heard of in legends. This was a technique that allowed you to perform two different actions by separating the mind in two. Seeing this man perform such techniques with ease, Smiling Sword could only shudder in fear. Even his pride as the head of the Law Enforcement Corp or the protection under the name of North Swords seemed to be nothing in the presence of this man.

[TN: Desolate Era anyone?]

Tension began to fall. Jokes began to be exchanged here and there, and the table could not seem any friendlier. As Sul Ju-Bong was still terrified, Nangong Hyuk Ryun asked his sister Hemi to send her off to a rest room. Even though she knew she had to stay with the poor girl, Nangong Hemi looked reluctant as she wanted to spend more time with this man named Munyun. Seeing Sul Ju-Bong leave the table, Nangong Hyuk Ryun faced Smiling Sword and asked.

“Sir Wu, I trust there won't be any further trouble?”

“Of... of course. There will be no trouble. I will make sure of it.”

Listening to his response, Pa Chun grinned at Smiling Sword. Seeing this, Smiling Sword looked as if he stepped on poop.

“You can probably leave now, sir Wu... you have wounds to tend to after all.”

“Ah... yes, of course. Thank you for your patronage.”

He did not even know what he was saying in response. His previous cruel and proud demeanor had already disappeared completely. The time had already passed 11 PM. Everyone had finished drinking as they talked happily, and they were now ready to go back.

“Alright, you may leave now. Let’s meet tomorrow as fellow Jung Do-ins.”

“Yes, I’ll catch you all again tomorrow.”

Standing up, Smiling Sword clasped his hands in respect. His face full of relief would cause anyone to feel sympathetic. How tormented must he have been on the inside for him to change so much in such little time? Pa Chun didn’t forget to watch scurry by as he hurriedly left the inn.

“Sir Mun, do you know where you are staying tonight?”

It was the Moyong Clan’s second young master, Moyong Jung-Geol, that asked the question. Looking rather thin, he had a habit of twitching one of his eyes. Even while he was asking Pa Chun where he would be staying for the night, his eyes were incessantly twitching.

“No, not at all. I’ve only just arrived in the Gae Bong prefecture.”

“That’s great! We will be staying in the Zhenchen inn nearby. You should come stay there as well.”

“Yeah, sounds like a great idea.”

Nangong Ah-Yeon had not once taken her eyes off of him while she was drinking. Both Moyong Jung-Geol’s sister, Moyong Hwa, and Dang Jung-Wu’s sister, Dang So-Yoon, were entranced by him, but they only occasionally stole glances of him. Just these were enough to allow Pa Chun to get a glimpse of their personality.

He was the youngest in the current group as he was now 20. Nangong Hyun Ryuk was the oldest at 25, then Peng Jung-Hu at 24, Nangong Ah-Yeon and Moyong Jung-Geol at 23, Dang So-Yoon at 22, and Moyong Hwa at 21. Nangonog Hemi who left with Sul Ju-Bong was 19. Since they were all young and were from Jung Pa’s famous clans, they were able to easily become close. However, as they had no clue of Pa Chun’s real identity, the future would be a sight to see.

Zhenchen Inn was located in the center of Gae Bong, and was rather high class in comparison to the others. It had single-rooms for special guests, allowing Pa Chun and the others to have a comfortable stay. Other than Hemi who stayed together with Sul Ju-Bong, everyone else had gotten their own room. The girls

had gathered in one room to talk as did the guys. Only Pa Chun had left for his room after saying he was tired. When he entered his room, a strong fragrance of tulip filled the air, engulfing him. Pa Chun took a deep breath, smelling this fragrance. Someone had placed tea on his table while he was gone, and he took a sip looking around the room.

It was a well-done room, with expensive Persian carpets and furniture from Zhejiang Province's Yoo Gu-Hyun. Of course, compared to what they had in the imperial court, it was a difference between heaven and earth, but normal commoners would not be able to look at these furniture so easily. Staying a single night in this inn cost 10 silver coins, which normally would be enough for a family of three to live as they wanted for half a month. Pa Chun started to wonder if all Murim-ins lived such a glamorous life. Where did they get all these money from? His curiosity piqued as he still had no idea about the lives of Murim-ins.

He was wondering whether to just go to bed or take a bath first. After seeing the dust on his clothes, Pa Chun decided to brush the dust off his clothes and take a bath.

After a while, the door opened slightly, and he could see a glimpse of someone's clothes. Pouring water over his body one last time, he wiped himself off with a towel.

"Who's there?"

He hurriedly covered his important place with the towel.

"You're?"

"Sir! Please accept me."

"Huh... you followed me all the way here? You're quite tenacious."

"If you do not accept me, I have nowhere else to go. I will follow your steps until I am accepted."

"Do as you like!"

The one who appeared in his room was precisely the Blue Faced Demon Ha Gun-Pyo, the man whose life he saved in Mt. Tae. He had hidden himself and

continued following Pa Chun, even coming into his room. Although Pa Chun knew Ha Gun-Pyo would ask him to be taken in, he had not yet said anything. It's not that he did not want to, but rather that he was not ready for such a thing yet. His loyalty and bravery from back then had left Pa Chun with a great impression of him.

“Sir, I’ve already died once. I will offer my life to your cause.”

Ha Gyu-Pyo kowtowed immediately. Although he was a little pushy, Pa Chun quite liked this about him.

“Fine, I will take you in under my command.”

“Thank you, my lord.”

“However... with your current strength, you will only be a burden. You are to head to a certain place and train until you get stronger.”

Taking out a brush and an ink slab, Pa Chun fully drowned the brush in ink. He then started writing with one stroke what seemed to be basic martial art techniques. What he wrote were techniques that he wanted Ha Gun-Pyo to learn. Pa Chun then told him location of the cave of Mt. Tae’s two Nohs, telling him to go to them for help. Not including the Nohs, Ha Gun-Pyo had become his first subordinate. After receiving the writing, he once more kowtowed to Pa Chun before leaving.

Finally, Pa Chun turned the lights off and lied down to sleep when Chun Ma started talking to him.

-Pa Chun, what are you planning on doing from now on?”

“Don’t worry, I have everything planned out. I’ll just have to adjust it a little if I run into problems... I will become Murim’s emperor, and establish a Murim Empire that no one has ever done before.”

At that moment, his eyes were filled with fiery passion.

-To accomplish that, you should focus on making our memories into yours completely.

=Shizhu, think about what is right. Everything flows in their right order. Understand how foolish it is to go against the world’s order for personal

achievements. Why bet your body and mind for something that will mean nothing in death? Let go of your ambitions and live for the good of the people. It will be following the will of God who gave you such strength.

“God? What God?”

-Just ignore him. Besides, if nothing matters after death, that’s all the more reason to live your life to its fullest. Humans’ greatest pleasure come from their desire to rule. The power to rule over everything! That is what a man should seek.

“Quit it, both of you! My life decisions are mine to make! Neither of you can make me change my mind. But tell me, why is my memory of you two imperfect? Your martial art techniques have been transferred over safely, but I don’t have much of other memories. What should I do to make them mine?”

-It will happen naturally once your Inner Qi level rises. Once it gets to 10 cycles, not only can you completely combine with us, you’ll be able to do all sorts of other tricks.

“Tricks?”

-Yeah. For example, if you make yourself dead for a short time using the Turtle Breath Technique, we’ll be able to control your body. You can even free us from your body.

“Free you two?”

-Yep. We can go wherever we want, whether to the netherworld or to another body.

“I see. Okay, I’m tired right now... so don’t talk to me anymore. I’m going to bed. I have to wake up early tomorrow to go somewhere.

-Alright, sleep.

=Good night, Shizhu! I will chant a sutra for you as a lullaby.

“Kuk... can you just shut up? Hey, Chun Ma, do something.”

-Got it.



“Father, it’s me, Yunmun... can’t you recognize me?”

Why can’t he recognize me? Father’s face was turning strange. His eyes were getting torn, his nose sunken, and his mouth disappearing. He was clawing himself apart as if he was constricted by something.

“Father, what’s wrong? Father!”

Tears! He was shedding tears... tears of blood! His eyes were filled with sympathy.

“Hahahaha. Good bye, brother!”

Swish.

“Kuk...”

A man slashed Father from behind. Yunmun charged at this man with full strength but his body did not listen. The man laughed showing his white teeth, his face shrouded in darkness. Father’s shredded body slowly disappeared as the man with a devilish face approached.

“Un...uncle?”

It was his uncle, the king of Yeon. But why?

“Uncle, what is the meaning of this?”

“Hahahaha. I’ve attained it all. I am now the emperor!”

“Uncle!”

Yunmun’s scream was tearing the air apart.

“Pa Chun.”

“Pa Chun!”

“Ukk”

Was it a dream?

-Pa Chun, just what the hell were you dreaming about that you’d scream so loudly?”

It was the sound of Chun Ma calling me.

“Thanks.”

-For what?

“Nothing... but why did you wake me up?”

-Lie back down! Someone’s coming here.

[What?]

Concentrating his Inner Qi, Pa Chun used Heavenly Demon’s Hearing Technique and a faint sound of someone’s footsteps could be heard. The footsteps stopped in front of his room’s door, walking back and forth in hesitation. What is it? An assassin? Who else could it be? Blue Faced Demon should have headed to Mt. Tae by now...

Pa Chun silently lied back down on his bed, once more concentrating his hearing at the door.

-Light footsteps... it’s a woman’s.

[What?]

-Ha! I see, that’s what’s going on.

[You what? Who is it? Why would anyone come visit me at such an hour?]

-I’m sure there will be loads more in the future! I don’t know who’d be so daring though...]

Sword of the Emperor Volume 1 Chapter 10

Chapter 10. Who is she?

Ssss.

It was the sound of a door opening. A faint womanly silhouette could be seen in the darkness. Pa Chun opened his eyes slightly. To him, darkness did not mean anything at all.

Wait! That woman is...!

He closed his eyes again hurriedly, pretending to be asleep. He had trouble finding the right breathing tempo, as he waited nervously.

The woman walked towards Pa Chun silently, stopping next to his bed. After staring at him for a moment, she took a step backwards.

Sssss.

Drop.

[What the hell is she doing?]

-Keke, isn't it obvious? We can have some fun thanks to you too.

=Amitabul. How would that be fun? Shizhu, please tell the girl to leave.

From Huineng's trembling voice, Pa Chun could tell how flustered he was.

Placing a hand on the bed, she lowered her head and entrusted her weight onto the bed. Pa Chun was taken aback by this sudden move.

What should I do? Pretend to wake up? Or just stay still?

But it wouldn't make sense for an ultimate expert such as himself to not notice a trespasser. Pa Chun knew that the woman knew this as well, as her movements became bolder.

Squish.

The feeling of bare skin could be felt on his body, making all the cells in his body focus on this feeling. He unknowingly twitched, and immediately, soft lips attacked him.

The woman's soft lips sent a shiver down his spine, as her tongue pierced through his lips and entered his mouth.

"Mmm."

Pa Chun turned his body the other way, but the woman would not let her lips depart from his own. Because of this, the woman's body fell deeper into his bed...

-Uhuhuhu, this is f*cking great...

=Amitabul. Amitabul.

Huineng was busy chanting a sutra.

Is this woman crazy? How is she so persistent?! Pa Chun turned his body away several times, but the woman still did not separate herself. She was not secretive at all. She pushed one of her hands on top of his chest, and the other on the back of his neck.

In the end, she was fully on top of Pa Chun's body, and he could fully feel the curves of her body. She was skilled. Her lips seemed to suck in Pa Chun's soul as her hands undressed him unceasingly. As this happened, Pa Chun grew more frantic. He had to make a decision. Either refuse her respectfully, or accept the situation and be more forward....

As Pa Chun was contemplating, his clothes had been fully undressed with only his underwear left on him.

-This woman's amazing. Fuhuhuhu.

=Amitabul, Shizhu. What are you doing? Amitabul, make up your mind.

Pa Chun could see Huineng was on the verge of falling into depravity.

Agh, I can't let this continue. What face will I have after letting a girl force herself on me?

With both his hands, he tightly grabbed onto her hands.

“Miss, what is the meaning of this?”

The hell am I saying, I know exactly what she means by this.

“Sir! Ever since the first time I’ve seen you I... I thought I’d lose you if I did not summon the courage to embrace you. I’m sorry.”

Sorry? No, I’m grateful~~

“No, it’s not that I’m reprimanding you. It was just a bit unexpected, that’s all.”

She was still on top of Pa Chun, staring down onto his face, slowly taking her hands out from his. She placed them on his face and caressed it gently.

“Hoho, you are too handsome and charming. Please don’t think too badly of me for behaving in such lewd ways. I’m simply more honest about my feelings than others. I have no choice if you do not want me, but otherwise, please don’t stop my advances.”

“Mm.”

Temptation engulfs me like a flowing river and my internal struggle makes me unable to think clearly. Ah, what am I supposed to do? I had decided to live like a lone crane.

-Cmon, Pa Chun. What are you waiting for?

=Please, shizhu. Find a way to refuse her, amitabul.

[Can you two ever shut up? I can’t do this right now. We’ve only just met today. I can’t have her thinking I’m easy to get.]

“Mm, miss. This isn’t proper, so I must ask you to leave. It’s not that I want to treat you harshly. If it’s your feelings alone, I will accept them gladly. Now, please get dressed and return to your quarters.”

He swallowed down the words ‘Today isn’t the only day’ from coming out.

“Hurry.”

He slapped her butt, and she threw herself onto him, seemingly unperturbed.

“Alright, fine. I will return for today. But don’t think I’ve given up on you. I won’t let you go so easily.”

How cute. I’d like that as well.

Climbing down from his bed, she started dressing herself in front of him, and Pa Chun watched this scene attentively.

-You idiot! You threw away your own bloody fortune. Are you crazy?

=Amitabul, shizhu. Please turn your head the other way. This is... embarrassing.

-Please. You’ve already seen and felt everything. Huineng, if you are a lofty High Priest, shouldn’t you treat women with an iron will? How can you be so flustered just because you touched some skin?

=Mm...m.

Having finished dressing up, the young miss lowered her head slightly and gave Pa Chun a peck on his cheeks.

“Hehe, good night then. I’ll head out now.”

Sigh... if that guy found out about this, he won’t just let this go.

“Take care, miss. I apologize that I cannot see you out.”

She looked even more adorable as she sauntered out the door. Her swaying hips were just too enticing.

Ah, what the hell did I just do? I’m an idiot!

As soon as the girl disappeared past the door, Pa Chun grabbed his hair and rolled around in regret.

“Guess I’m not sleeping tonight... should I just barge into her room? No no, calm down. Calm. Down.”



Pa Chun was leaving his room. It was already past 6, but it was still dark outside. He used the Heavenly Demon’s Concealment Skill to go over the inn’s walls, and upon confirming that there was no one out on the streets, he started to use the Heavenly Demon’s Flying Technique.

In the outskirts of Eastern Gae Bong, there was a giant shrine. This was the headquarters of Gae Bang, in control of one hundred thousand martial artists across the Mid Lands. The ironclad rule of Murim was to not make Gae Bang an enemy. Not only did they have an incredible number of followers, but becoming enemies with them also meant becoming the enemy of the whole of Murim. Their connections were spread across the entirety of Murim. It would be hard to find a clan or Murim-in that did not receive help from Gae Bang at least once. From this, one could see the importance Gae Bang had in the world of Murim.

However, their headquarters was rather loosely guarded. Not only that, but the Shrine was rather small for headquarters of a hundred thousand men. This is only what it seemed like on the surface. The headquarters lied mostly underground. It contained over 900 stone rooms and over 5000 people stayed at any one time.

Pa Chun appeared from the darkness. His light baggage made it seem as if he was out on a stroll. However, he was heading straight towards the Shrine.

“Halt.”

Two beggars wearing one and two knotted belts respectively spoke out. Their outer appearances were haggardly, befitting that of beggars, but their eyes shone with a certain light that ordinary beggars would not have. The statuses of men of Gae Bang were originally determined by the number of bags on their backs. However, 20 years ago, their head at that time, King Gae, found the bags to look cumbersome and changed the rules to wear knotted belts around their waists. Three knotted disciples were at least at the level of Division Leaders*. This place was the headquarters of Gae Bang! No one knotted disciples were here.

[TN: Traditional Gae Bang hierarchy: White-clothed Disciples à Division Leaders à Elders à more probably]

“Who are you and what business do you have here?”

Although polite, the question was strict and straightforward.

“My name is Munyun. I am here to visit the previous head, King Gae Poong Chun-Ho.”

Pa Chun answered politely.

“Mun...Munyun you said? Could you be Lord Munyun, the Jade Faced Divine Dragon...”

Jade Faced Divine Dragon? When did I get such a title?

“I am indeed Munyun, but this is the first time I’m hearing this title.”

“Could you be the one who had a conflict with the North Swords at China House yesterday...?”

“Yes, that is me.”

“Ah, as I thought. Welcome. It is a great honor for us to receive the Jade Faced Divine Dragon to our place.”

Although Pa Chun was confused at the title, the circumstances seemed to favor him. It looked like his feat at China House last night had spread throughout the entire Gae Bong Prefecture. Since Gae Bang should have been the first ones to have heard about it, he wasn’t too surprised.

“But why are you looking for head Tae Sang?”

Pa Chun took out a small emblem.

“Give this to King Gae and he’ll know why I’m here.”

“Understood. If you don’t mind, please come in and wait. We’ll deliver the message to the Master as soon as possible.”

Pa Chun then followed them into the reception room. As he walked, he couldn’t help but be amazed at the complex defense mechanisms and strict guards. It was designed so that even a small number of people defend against many.

The reception room was rather desolate, with a table, two chairs, and a cup of tea only. Pa Chun waited leisurely since he knew it would take some time for Master Tae Sang to get ahold of the news. About three hours had passed.

Tang!

With an ear-piercing sound, someone barged into the room. It was a white-haired old man with a rope around his head. Around his waist was a belt with ten knots. This was the supreme master of Gae Bang, King Dae Poong Chun-Ho. His

face was filled with wrinkles and age spots. His crooked nose and thick lips gave an amiable impression. As soon as he entered the room, he started shaking, finally letting out some words carefully.

“Sir, are you the one who... brought this emblem?”

“Yes, it was me.”

Sword of the Emperor Volume 1 Chapter 11

Chapter 11. Is this the Divine Sword?

Plop.

“sob I... Poong Chun-Ho... greets the Gunmun Emperor... please forgive my inability... to serve you in your time of need.”

His chicken-poop like tears and trembling shoulders showed the emotion swelling up within him. Pa Chun was amazed at this scene. Although he had expected it to some extent, he didn't expect the Chief Master of Gae Bang to be a vassal of the first emperor as well.



Pa Chun moved to the Chief Master's room to talk.

“Are the two Nohs doing well?”

“Yes, they are doing fine.”

“Please, talk freely.”

“No, this is good enough. I'm no longer the emperor so treat me as you would any other.”

“Then I shall abide your majesty's wishes... the twin Nohs and I are the only powers the Founding Emperor left in Gang Ho Murim. I believe the Nohs have been gathering their forces as they trained in secret. The Founding Emperor has told us something like this would happen... but to think it'd actually come true... I still can't believe it.”

“It's all in the past now. Besides, I am more than content with my current lifestyle. There are many ways a man can live his life, and this is certainly one of the best. I can freely wander this open world as I wish... how can this be anything but a great fortune? I just never realized because I lived my whole life in the

palace... the world is a vast and mysterious place.”

“ ...”

“The road I walk from now on will be decided by me... this is the true way to live one’s life. My grandfather achieved his ambition and founded a foundation of a great empire. Although his fame is respectable, I have no use for his legacy. I will no longer involve myself in the government. My uncle... is a hero. I do not wish to struggle against him for something I no longer care about. So please do not speak of it again.”

“What will you do from now on? No matter what it may be, I will support you with all that I can do.”

“Then... what if I were to tell you to create a blood bath in the Gang Ho?”

“Then it shall be done with no questions. The reason I had not joined the Nine Jung Alliance was precisely because I did not know our future plans. My job was to make Gae Bang into a force completely under my control. The higher ranking officials have been chosen so that no matter what kind of orders I give, they will follow without questions. Naturally, we are yours to command.”

‘The Founding Emperor had such good vassals. With such a deep loyalty, grandfather must have been thankful. The reason that he was able to achieve his ambitions must have been because of their help.’

“I don’t have any concrete plans for you to follow... but I will definitely be in need of your services one day. When the time comes, please come to my aid.”

“Yes, of course. But from what I hear, your fame has already reached the corners of Gae Bong. What is going on? Also, I heard that you are able to use Shaolin’s martial arts. Is this true?”

“It’s a long story, but you can ask the Nohs about it. I’ll be going now. Oh right, are you participating in the Jung Do Banquet as well?”

“A student of mine will be. Though if you will be there, I’ll have to go.”

“Then I’ll see you then.”

The two of them stood up together.

“Ah, my lord, I have something to give you.”

“Hm?”

“Please follow me.”



“Ho, what an amazing place.”

Pa Chun stood amazed the scene in front of him. He was in a secret weapon storage behind the Chief Master’s room. It was filled with weapons giving off bone-chilling aura, as they were all treasures that had once shaken the world.

The entrance was about ten jangs wide, its walls holding hundreds of sparkling weapons. Poong-Gae brought Pa Chun into the inner most area, lifting up a red cloth covering a metal box. The metal box had several Concealment Pearls* imbedded into it.

[Author’s note: as the name suggests, it’s a pearl that prevents dust from invading what it’s protecting.]

“Here it is. Try opening it. It is something the Founding Emperor had acquired and handed down to me to preserve it. There are two of them, so choose one of your liking.”

Pa Chun calmed his excited mind and stepped forward to the metal box.

Creak.

The lid opened with an ear-screeching noise, as Pa Chun’s face grew brighter after seeing the content inside the box.

-Ho, this is?

=Oh, amitabul.

Chun Ma and Huineng were the first ones to react.

It was a sword. Probably about three jas and five chis (1.35m)? Its sharp double-edges sparkled with a red tint while the blade carried a jet black color. An image of a dragon rising to the heavens was inscribed on its hilt, and its end was embroidered with a golden thread. The sword sheathe was also decorated with an image of an ancient dragon embroidered onto it with a golden thread. The sword and the sheathe lied side by side, and next to it lied another sword. Its

blade, however, could not be seen as the blade was inside its sheathe.

“Which of the two would you like?”

-Pick the black one.

=No, shizhu! Pick the white colored sword next to it.

What are these two getting all worked up for? Why do they care what I pick?

Pa Chun reached for the black sword hesitatingly. As King Gae Poong Chun-Ho watched this scene, his forehead was covered with droplets of sweat. Why?

Pa Chun then reached for the white sword. Though its sheath had no patterns on it, the sword still carried a mystical aura. Pa Chun stopped his hand once again! Every time he would do this, Poong Gae’s face changed.

-No, no, yes, yes.

=Yes, shizhu. No, not that...

Both Chun Ma and Huineng were going crazy. Pa Chun moved his hand back and forth in quick succession, just to play around with the two. Their voice continued to rise, and in the end, Pa Chun backed his hands out.

“Poong-Gae... how about I take both of them?”

“Both? Haha, of course, go ahead. They are yours to begin with, my lord.”

-Tsk, what a greedy bastard!

-Amitabul. Just one would be would be hard to handle...

‘Just what are these swords to make these two act like this?’

Pa Chun’s curiosity was at its peak.

“Poong-Gae, do you know anything about these swords?”

“Yes, I do! The black one is... the legendary Heavenly Demon Sword... said to have been used by Chun Ma himself.”

“Chun Ma!!”

“Yes.”

[You were in an uproar because of your old sword?]

“Nothing has been confirmed of course. It is only my speculation. It seemed to exactly match the details of Chun Ma’s sword described in the Murim Biographies...”

-It’s mine.

“Chun Ma confirmed it’s his...”

“Pardon?”

“No, no, continue.”

“The other is one of the three legendary holy swords – Yu Chang, Gan Jang, and Mak Sa. This one is the Gan Jang Sword.”

“Gan Jang Sword?*”

[Note: Gan Jang can mean soy sauce.]

Why not call it Miso?

“Yes. This sword was forged by the legendary swordsmith, Gan Jang, who lived during the Chaotic Warring States Period. Of his two last pieces – Gan Jang and Mak Sa – this is the former.”

“I see.”

“There are many stories involving this sword, but they’re only stories. It is also known as ‘the sword carried by the emperor.’ Because of this, many emperors have sought out in search of this sword.”

“I’d like to hear some of these stories.”

“I’ve only heard about it from another, so it’s nothing special.”

The story was as such.

During the Warring States Period, there was a blacksmith by the name Gan Jang, who had a wife named Mak Sa. One day, the queen of their country became pregnant and gave birth; yet what she had given birth to was not a child, but raw steel! After many days of contemplating, the king ordered the greatest swordsmith of the era, Gan Jang, to melt the steel and forge the greatest sword he has ever created. Gan Jang separated the steel into two, making two swords – Gan Jang and Mak Sa. He gave one of the two to the king, but was unable to

return home. In fear that he would make another sword of its equal, he ordered Gan Jang to be killed. Unfortunately for the king, another sword of equal strength had already been made by Gan Jang. His wife, Mak Sa, who had been pregnant at the time, gave birth to a son. She hid from the king in an isolated mountain house, teaching her son martial arts every day. When the son had come of age, she handed down the sword Mak Sa and ordered him to take revenge for his father. However, whether he had succeeded or not was never recorded.

‘Alright, I’ll be taking them both then.’

‘Ah, to think another one of Founding Emperor’s prophecies would come true. He had once said that someone will appear who will wield both swords and unify the lands under one. In fact, his words suggested that this man would unify the entire world... does this include the authority of the emperor?’

Pa Chun placed the two Divine Swords around his waist. The two swords together with his handsome appearance gave him a divine look.

While talking about all sorts of things, the two of them stepped outside the Shrine. Seeing the Chief Master personally see someone off, the men of Gae Bang watched the two with suspicious gazes.



After arriving back to the inn, Pa Chun did not go to his room, as he found the others having breakfast at the inn’s diner. When Pa Chun walked in, everyone rose up from their seats and asked where he had gone.

“Haha, I got a bit stuffy so I went out for a morning stroll.”

Their gazes had focused on the two swords around Pa Chun’s waist.

“Ah, these are swords I happened to come across... is there a problem?”

“No, just that they don’t seem to be any ordinary swords. In fact, they seem to be treasured swords.”

Nangong Hemi had a look of surprise at this statement.

“Is that so? Hm... then someone like me must be unworthy of such swords, no?”

“Of course not. If there is something Sir Mun cannot possess, who under the heavens would claim that he could? Don’t embarrass us with such jokes.”

“Haha, let us sit down and finish our breakfast first.”

At his words, everyone sat back down. Ever since the incident last night, the way they treated Pa Chun had changed significantly. Although he was younger, they treated him with respect one would towards his elder.

‘Mm. Why is she staring at me so much. It’s only morning...’

Who was the one staring at Pa Chun? It was Nangong Ah-Yeon. Naturally, she was the one who paid a late-night visit to Pa Chun. She was staring at Pa Chun with eyes full of love and regret. Without caring for it in the slightest, Pa Chun dug down at the food he had just ordered. However, as she did not show any signs of stopping, Pa Chun couldn’t help but to continue noticing her gaze. But he could not show it on the outside. If the others found out, it would lead to troublesome things.

“Cough, have you slept well last night, miss Nangong? You look worried about something. Is something wrong?”

“Yes...?”

She panicked once everyone had turned their attention towards her. But within a moment, she regained her composure and said with a smile.

“Hoho, what worries? I slept well... it was a satisfying night.”

When she answered with a hint of precociousness, the gazes of the others turned flashed strangely. The three other girls especially gave her a look of questioning, only to be met with no answers. After a bit, the conversation topic had moved to the Jung Do Banquet that was to be held today.

The usually silent Moyong Jung-Geol explained while his eyes twitched as it had done before. Because it seemed like he was trying to seduce him, a man, Pa Chun didn’t feel too comfortable.

“Sir, your fame has already reached the ends of Gae Bong. It looks like you will receive quite a bit of attention at the Banquet.”

It was only after they woke up that they heard about how famous Munyun

(the name they knew him as) became. He had even been given the nickname Jade Faced Divine Dragon. Since they had personally witnessed his prowess, they did not think it was an overstatement in the slightest.

“It’s honestly a bit too much for me. I am honored that someone like me is seen with such respect.”

-Hmph, your fame is spreading across Murim at an exponential rate. Who would believe you only just debuted in Murim? You can even announce that you are Chun Ma’s Disciple. No one here would believe you. The world is yours to take.

[The world is mine to take, eh? I like it... I’ll remember it.]



After finishing up their breakfast, the group headed outside. The Yun Hyun Road that went across the north to south of Gae Bong Prefecture was packed with people. The group of 10 including Sul Ju-Bong was all riding on horseback. The importance of this group could be clearly seen as the owner of the inn personally came out to see them off. The Jung Do Banquet which would start in the afternoon would continue for three days. Murim-ins who came to participate could be seen everywhere, and people who were acquainted greeted each other. People especially recognized men from the North Swords. Those that recognized Pa Chun also couldn’t help but to start talking about him with the others in crowd.

Following the Huang He that flowed to the north of Gae Bong, one could find the North Swords, one of the 4 Powers of Jung Do.

North Swords!

They were a militant group that unified the northern areas filled with martial art clans. Although they claimed to be part of the Jung Do, their actions could only be described as hostile and evil. Their way of doing things was clearly different from that of the South Blades, located in Hu Guang Province’s* Wu Chang District. It was also vastly different from the Sichuan Province’s Five Clans Union, or the 9 Schools of Jung Do’s Nine Jung Alliance.

[Author’s Note: split into Hubei and Hunan Province in 1667 with the Dong Ting

Lake as their border]

Of the 4 Powers of Jung Do, the North Swords had the greatest number of people. Their ranking from highest to lowest was as such: the Head, then three Protectors, then the Advisors, Generals, and Inspectors. Under the command of the three Protectors were the Guardian Palace, the Demon Sword Palace, the Blood Sword Palace, and the Heaven Sword palace. The Generals were in charge of the Armored Horse Regiment, and the Inspectors were in charge of the Law Enforcement Corp, the Assassins Corp, and the Information Corp. Besides these groups, the North Swords controlled an additional force of 15,000 men. They were undoubtedly the biggest of the 4 Powers.

What caused many people to raise concerns were the Blood Sword Palace and the Demon Sword Palace, under the command of the Protectors. The two groups consisted of famous Ma Do-ins that the North Swords recruited, and their viciousness was still the same. The South Blades and the Five Clans Union raised questions on several accounts but the North Swords always refused to take action, causing the Five Clans Unions to doubt the North Sword's motive.

The road leading to the North Swords was filled with Murim-ins. Some rode on horsebacks while some rode on carriages. Some moved in a group of considerable amount of people while some participated alone on their own merit. There were hundreds of minor schools that had not joined the 4 Powers of Jung Do. If a Ma Do's minor school had not joined the Ma Do Alliance, the people of Jung Do would seek and bully them. However, the Jung Pa did not care if Jung Do's minor schools did not join the 4 Powers. It was the North Swords that always stood in the front of oppressing Ma Do schools. The other 3 Powers only occasionally helped out.

Pa Chun started to see the North Sword's gigantic fortress in the distance. Its outer walls were 20 li tall, and another wall inside it separated the fortress into inner and outer parts. Several pagodas were scattered about the fortress, taking up large space around it. One particular one situated in the center of the inner walls invoked admiration of its spectators. This was the 9-layered Divine Sword Pavilion.

“Tsk, look at the money they spent on that.”

The people around Pa Chun’s horse gave a light snort.

“How much money did they spend to build this thing?”

Although the man was only talking to himself, another one had heard and answered.

“I hear they used ten thousand gold coins* just to build the Divine Sword Pavilion. Who could guess what the entire fortress cost?”

[Author’s note: About 500 million Wons in present day?]

“Where are they getting all that money from?”

At this question Nangong Hyuk Ryun looked around carefully before giving his answer.

“Their most important source of income is transporting goods. Besides that they own inns and bars, or work in mercenary groups. As they began to expand in these businesses, they found Ma Do-ins to be a hindrance, since these are what Ma Do-ins are usually involved in. It’s also why they’re going so far as to hunt down various Ma Do clans. If these clans fell, the North Swords would be able to monopolize these businesses.”

“Oho... indeed, if they could monopolize these businesses in all the Mid Lands, their profits will be immense.”

“Yes?”

Nangong Ah-Yeon asked after suddenly sticking to his side.

What’s up with her all of the sudden? Just leave me alone, will you? Can’t you see how the other girls are looking at us? Or are you purposely trying to show it off? I already hinted her to stop... is she dense? Or is she just tenacious?

Dudududu.

“Move over! giddyap.”

The clattering of a horse’s hoofs could be heard. Move over? Does he think anyone will be willing to make space for a horse to move through?

As Pa Chun expected, no one paid attention to this man.

Sword of the Emperor Volume 1 Chapter 12

Chapter 12: Start of the Jung Do Banquet

“Move over, I said!”

Whooo~oong

A Qi-filled noise rang out in the air. Those with weaker Inner Qi immediately fainted while others sat down and started Qi Recovery. Pa Chun’s face turned ugly. Not only did this person act so selfishly in a crowded place, but he also dared to cause such disturbance? He questioned who besides himself could be crazy enough to do such a thing. When he and his companions turned around to look, they caught sight of a black horse speeding towards them. A mushroom like smoke was erupting behind it, engulfing everyone there. This invoked Pa Chun’s playfulness. Snapping his horse’s rein, he made it turn around, running towards the black horse in a straight line. At this sudden turn of events, his companions opened their mouths in surprise. Nangong Ah-Yeon even screamed.

“Sir, it’s dangerous!”

But Pa Chun wasn’t the type to go back on his decision. His ugly expression became filled with smiles as the distance between him and the black horse lessened.

-What are you, a kid?

[Cmon, I’m helping out the others. Don’t you agree, Huineng?]

=Amita...

Before he could finish the ‘bul,’ the distance had already drawn closer than 3 jang. But instead of a *crash*, what happened was a *whoosh*.

The black horse just jumped over him!

In a daze, Pa Chun sat still, continuing to charge ahead.

-Ahaha, what an idiot.

From this, Pa Chun snapped back to reality, turning his horse.

Hiiiing

“What the hell kind of a horse is that? How embarrassing...”

Seeing Pa Chun blurt out such an awkward response, his companions pretended to be indifferent, as they held in their desires to burst out into laughter. However...

“Hohohoho.”

It was Nangong Ah-Yeon.

Following her,

“Hahahaha.”

“Hohohoho.”

Pa Chun became even more embarrassed. It's best to laugh together at times like these.

“Haha...hahaha.”

‘Even with a veil covering your face, I caught sight of it when you jumped over... a woman, eh... I'm sure we'll be meeting soon.’



The North Sword's front had a constant stream of visitors. One by one, they were registering their names and going inside. Although there were about 20 lines, it was still taking a long time. Reluctantly, Pa Chun and the others lined up at the end. From up close, the North Sword's headquarters looked even more domineering. With walls easily reaching 5 jangs, it was impossible to take a glimpse inside. On the top of the walls, spear-holding guards stood with fierce expressions. Even the guards standing outside the gates seemed to be trained exceedingly well.

They still are small fries in my eyes though...

At this rate, I'll be standing here until sunset.

“What a terrible reception after inviting so many people over...”

At Pa Chun’s disgruntled complaining, Nangong Hyuk Ryun smiled awkwardly. Although they had special rights to enter right away, they couldn’t just leave Pa Chun by himself. At the same time, a few middle aged men came out from the gate, one of whom Pa Chun recognized.

“Over here!”

It was the Law Enforcement Corp’s leader, Smiling Sword Wu Hyun-Choong. Of course, the one who shouted was Pa Chun. The face of Smiling Sword turned ugly, immediately running over to Pa Chun.

“W-Welcome, sir... I apologies, I should have come out to greet you. Please come in.”

“Haha, sir Wu, sorry for the troubles once again.”

“N-No, not at all...”

When will he stop stuttering in front of me? Well, such a miracle probably won’t happen in my life time.

Seeing the North Sword’s Rank 17th Smiling Sword personally come to see a group in, no one dared to block their path. Even so, their faces were filled with displeasure, as they’ve been waiting in the hot sun all day. Alas, the weak and connectionless could not voice their complaints.

Wu Hyun-Choong grabbed the rein of Pa Chun’s horse, thinking of how pathetic he must look right now. Of course, he didn’t show it on the outside; in fact, he was shining as if holding this rein was his life duty.

The interior was even more grand than he imagined. Several huge towers stood in a line, and the floors were all made with bluestone. Small gardens were placed here and there, and artificial fountains stood, its water shining in the sunlight. Rare fish could be seen inside the ponds and rare birds could be seen in the artificial mountains. The sight made Pa Chun question if he was in the imperial palace. No, in some ways, this place was even grander than the imperial palace.

Smiling Sword thoroughly guide them. A huge building that read Reception Building was situated in their path, but Smiling Sword simply ignored it and moved forward. Where he led them was the Guest Reception Pavilion, located in the inner court area. This was where the heirs of various clans stayed during their time in the North Swords headquarters. It could be seen that the treatment Pa Chun received was worthy of praise. Guest Reception Pavilion's Executive Manager, Chun Gong-Su, at first displayed a look of discontent, but because the head of the Law Enforcement Corp stubbornly insisted, he had no choice but to give Pa Chun and the others temporary residences.

The place picked for Pa Chun's residence was quite special, a handy-work of Smiling Sword. Its interior was the biggest of the entire guest residence with a bedroom, living room, bathroom, and a study. In addition, rare items, furniture, and decorations were everywhere. Even the bathroom's water pipe was made of ivory.

Pa Chun sat down on a chair, his weight pushing down on the cushion. It seems the seat was made filled with cotton. Pa Chun became immersed in his thoughts.

-Are you worried about something, Pa Chun?

[Do you remember the guy I let escape from Mt. Tae? Tianshan's Second Sword I think it was... you know, the guy whose arm I cut off. Anyways, he knows my face. Didn't he say he was the leader of something? I'm just concerned about that.]

-I doubt you'd run into him here... and what if you do? Just beat him up a bit and you're done. Right, Huineng?

=Amitabul.

-Is that your answer for everything?

=Amitabul.

-Agh! Forget I asked.

[I guess I just silence him.]

-How?

[I'll just need to find him before he notices anything and kill him.]

-It's a good idea, but don't you think you're thinking too much? He might not recognize you or he might not even run into you. Besides, even if you do run into him, you have an established background prepared.

[True. You're right, I'll forget about it for now. If he finds out, I'll just use my strength to shut him up.]

-Ha, great idea.

"Sir Mun! Let's go."

It was Nangong Hyuk Ryun.

"Alright, wait just a moment."

'Nothing should go wrong hopefully.'

Nangong Hyuk Ryun and the others were already waiting outside. They wanted to attend the opening ceremony for the Jung Do Banquet. As they weren't familiar with the North Sword's interior, they had to ask around quite a lot. The place was really humongous, not to mention the fact that all the buildings looked more or less the same. It really looked easy to get lost.

They had only gotten to the opening ceremony after getting lost for quite a bit of time when the ceremony had already begun. This was the North Sword's biggest military exercise hall, its length and width over 100 jang. It was a gathering of accomplished Murim-ins and they were all looking up at the platform where many people stayed seated. These men were leaders of the North Sword, and with them were representatives of the other 3 Powers of Jung Do. Directly below them, over 7000 North Sword swordsmen stood, surrounding the platform. Outside their encirclement, there seemed to be about 30,000 Jung Do-ins, truly an astonishing number. It also made Pa Chun question how many Murim-ins existed in the world.

One of the men who had been sitting stood up and began speaking with a voice carrying Inner Qi.

"The reason we invited everyone over to the North Swords was to discuss two matters. First is to suggest eliminating the threats to Murim's justice, and the

second is to pick a man capable of performing that duty. The current Ma Do is hiding quietly at the ever-strong power of Jung Do, but they will one day retaliate, causing chaos to befall Murim. As a representative of the North Sword, I declare that we must eradicate the Ma Do by the root to give way for foundations of a thousand year of peace. I ask for assistance of my fellow Jung Do-ins.”

‘So he wants to destroy the Ma Do and more or less take over Murim. Does he have to say that in such a roundabout way? Also, a thousand year of peace? People can’t even live for over a hundred, so who cares?’ Pa Chun frowned strongly and threw a question at Nangong Hyuk Ryun standing next to him.

“Who is that guy?”

“The North Sword’s Advisor.”

“Advisor? So he’s the one in charge of petty tricks. That’s good and all, but isn’t he making it too obvious?”

“It will still be hard to stop him. Most clans and schools have already joined, and this is only for formalities’ sake. The only uncertainty is how the other 3 Powers will react, but I don’t think they can openly oppose the plan. In the end, things will go as they planned.”

“I see...”

‘What do you know, this makes things easier for me... it’d be much easier to conquer Murim when it’s in a state of chaos after all. Yep, fight all you want with the Ma Do. I’ll be the one to swallow you all in the end.’

As the Advisor finished his speech, the crowd erupted in cheers, almost as if the entire thing was a well-staged play.

Then an old monk walked out carrying a dignified aura. He stature was small but his the light in his eyes showed that this was a man of great power.

“Who is he?”

“He is the Shaolin’s Religious Leader, High Priest Ji-Gong”

“The Shaolin Temple’s?”

[Yo Huineng, seems like he’s your successor.]

=I've heard, shizhu.

-Good for you, hmph. Where the hell are mine? Why are there no news of them?

What Chun Ma was talking about were the members of his school. It seems like he was looking forward to hearing about them. From what he told Pa Chun as he climbed down Mt. Tae, he probably thought the Chun Ma School he established was ruling over Murim. But not only are they nowhere to be seen, some idiots from the Jung Do were in power. It wasn't surprising that he would be mad.

"My name is Ji-Gong, one of Shaolin's monks."

"Ohh, so he is Ji-Gong the Holy Priest."

"The Religious Leader of the Shaolin's elders?"

"My way of thinking is a bit different from the North Sword's. I won't deny that the North Sword's suggestion stems from their desire to continue the peace of Murim, but we must not go against the laws of nature! The peace of Murim is kept by the balance between the Ma Do and the Jung Do. We must not think to destroy the Ma Do as it will only lead to the Jung Do's one-sided domination of Murim. And even if we did, the Ma Do or some other faction will rise to once again restore the balance. Such is the law of this world! The North Sword's excessive oppression is worrisome. We will not be able to eradicate the entirety of Ma Do. What will we do if their descendants come to avenge their ancestors two, three generations later? We must at least leave a way for them to survive. During the times when Chun Ma was alive, the Jung Do could continue existing because of the Ma Do's tolerance towards us. How can we, the Jung Do, forget to return the deed that the Ma Do has done? For this reason, the Shaolin Temple and I are against this notion, as is the Nine Jung Alliance."

=Amitabul. Seems like the will of my Shaolin is still alive.

-Haha, what a clever guy! He knows exactly why I kept the Jung Do alive. He understands my greatness.

'Would you guys stop messing around...'

"Ho, I didn't expect the Nine Jung Alliance to disagree. Since we, the Five Clans Union, will definitely disagree, only the South Blades are left to decide."

Isn't this going nowhere?

"What's going to happen then?"

"They will most likely end up following the majority opinion. The heads of the various schools present here will vote and the Jung Do will follow that decision."

Oh? It seems like there's still hope.

"More than likely, the end result will be pro-eradication and the North Sword's will get what they want. Even knowing this, we are going against it to delay the inevitable for at least a little longer. It's also to let the others know that some are against this notion."

"It seems like Murim is a complicated world."

"Murim is a place where humans' greed takes shape. Murim can thus be akin to hell."

As Nangong Hyuk Ryun predicted, the Five Clans Union fiercely opposed the proposal.

"... and as such, we, the Five Clans Union, will not agree with this proposal. Of course, the Ma Do is in the wrong for garnering the hatred of the North Swords. Why don't we just ask the Ma Do Alliance to change their business fields? I'm sure the North Swords will be content with this. I even considered useless thoughts as this: it is not the fault of Ma Do-ins that they were born of Ma Do-in parents. They walk the path of Ma Do because they were born to, not because they wish to. Of course, there are truly evil men in the Ma Do, but I believe for the majority, that they are more righteous than the men of our Jung Do. If this Jung Do Banquet ends with the decision to eradicate the Ma Do, the Five Clans Union hereby declares that we will leave the Jung Do Alliance."

Murmur murmur.

Clap clap.

The sound of both cheers and jeers filled the air. The speaker was none other than the Clan Leader of the Peng Clan, who was present as the representative and elder of the Five Clans Union. Now only the South Blades remained. If they were to oppose the proposal as well, it would become much harder to justify an

all-out attack against the Ma Do. Even if the vote of the majority supported the plan, if three of Jung Do's Powers were against it, the Ma Do's fierce resistance could easily deal with the Jung Do's forces.

The one representing the South Blades was their Head Elder, Phantasmal Sword Gu Ryun-Jin. Now over 80 years old, he was an expert of the previous generation. Once called Gangnam's strongest, he made his debut in Murim with a self-named sword technique, the Phantasmal Sword Technique. Using these strange sword skills, he gathered 286 victories in one on one duels. He joined the South Blades after losing their head 27 years ago, and was now their number one elder. At the same time, he was a master swordsman that anyone carrying a sword would like to fight against once in their lifetime.

He faced the crowd silently, his long coiling beard swaying in the wind.

"I... am personally against this plan... but the majority of our South Blades... support the North Sword's decision."

With these words, he stepped down from the platform, looking unsatisfied. An unexpected result had occurred. No one had thought that the South Blades, who along with the Five Clans Union disliked the North Swords, would agree with their plan. After sitting back down in his seat, he closed his eyes shut. It seemed he would nothing else about the matter. Of course, no one dared to ask him a question either. The face of the North Sword's Advisor broke into a large smile, as if things had gone the way he planned. The only thing left now was the result of the Jung Do schools' votes. The North Sword's ambition would soon come to fruition along with the end of the Ma Do!

Sword of the Emperor Volume 1 Chapter 13

Chapter 13 – Following the Night-Traveler!

The various Jung Do-ins began to scatter. Their only concern now was the result of the voting, which would be in the evening. The leading members of the 4 Powers of Jung Do gathered in small groups and started discussing the matter. Nangong Hyuk Ryun poked at Pa Chun's side.

"Sir, it's time we leave. The performance is over; why don't we wait for the next one?"

"Tsk, how boring... that was it? I was expecting something more exciting..."

"Exciting?"

"Right. For example, a duel with those who disagrees with you. Things like that you know?"

"Haha, Murim-ins are not so hardcore. If that was what you were expecting, then your disappointment must be great."

Even on the way back to the inn, Pa Chun laid out suggestions that seemed too absurd for Nangong Hyuk Ryun.

"Why can't the representatives of the schools just fight it out? If they're planning on fighting the Ma Do Alliance, won't they have to elect a leader for the Jung Do Alliance? The strongest can be the leader, and the rest can be his minions... now that sounds more like Murim. Don't you agree?"

Although he was half-joking, the other half was his honest opinion. After all, strength was what mattered the most in Murim. Humans are imperfect creatures; who could declare one side to be correct? Was it not the strong that decided the course of history? More often than not, these powerful people weren't righteous, often being shrewd and deceptive. But after grasping

strength to decide the course of history, who would dare to say their actions were wrong? This was reality. If the Ma Do dominated Murim, it would be the Ma Do that was the righteous path*. The extent that one side oppressed the other would surely impact how the future generation viewed them, but for the people of the present era, such things were meaningless. Pa Chun's head was filled with such thoughts. Knowing this, he did not hate or despise his uncle. As he had been powerless and inept, he saw what happened as the logical conclusion.

[TN: remember Jung Do means Righteous Path]

After returning to the Guest Reception Pavilion, Pa Chun started to deliberate on what he should do. First, he had to gather up a force. He currently had a few different identities. The first was his original identity as the Gunmun Emperor, but this identity no longer had any meaning, as he even had to hide it from the world. The second was as Chun Ma's disciple, Pa Chun. His plan was to unite the Ma Do under this name. Before doing so, however, he knew he had to first find the descendants of the Heavenly Demon School. His third identity was as the Jade Faced Divine Dragon, Mun-Yun. As Mun-Yun, Pa Chun wanted to overtake the Gae Bang, the Five Clans Union, the Nine Jung Alliance, and the secret forces gathered up by the twin Nohs. If he was able to take in the Beihai Ice Palace and the Qinghai* Four Emperor Palace, two of the 3 Outside Powers, it would make it much easier for him to take over the entire Murim. His goal was to rule and control the Murim in the background, creating a Murim Empire never before seen in the history of Murim.

[TN: I can't recall if I ever made note of this, but I try to leave the words in pinyin for words that denote an actual region of China.]

As Pa Chun was caught up in his future plans...

Whish.

'Hm?'

A faint sound was heard.

'A high-level Profound Movement Skill. By the sound of it, its users are moving extremely carefully as well.'

His curiosity peaked once again. He was currently in the Inner Court of the North Swords. Who could be moving about in secret in a place like this? While still lying in bed, Pa Chun's body began to dissipate into thin air.

About half an hour after Pa Chun disappeared, Nangong Hyuk Ryun and Nangong Ah-Yeon came into his room. Realizing Pa Chun was missing, they tilted their head in surprise.

“Where did he go? I wanted to have a drink with him. Let's go Ah-Yeon. We'll meet him at the banquet later.”

‘Tsk, where did he disappear to? I can't leave him be like this. I need to quickly turn him into my man. Otherwise, I won't be able to sleep in peace.’

With this, the brother and sister duo left the room.

.

‘Ho, they're something else alright. They're moving stealthily through the shadows. They should be stronger than Smiling Sword at the very least.’

The sky was slowly turning darker. As it was nearing the end of autumn, the day was getting shorter. A person in a black uniform and mask was moving closer and closer to the center of North Swords, nearing the Divine Sword Pavilion. In Murim, there were only two men using the title Divine Sword. One was the current head of the Five Clans Union, the Firmament Divine Sword Nangong Hui*.

[TN: mentioned in chapter 7; I changed the title in that chapter to what we have here.]

The other was the master of the Divine Sword Pavilion as well as the head of the North Swords, the Supreme Divine Sword Dok-Go Han-Chun. Some Murim-ins call him by the title Sword Emperor. His age was now 52, the youngest of the 4 Powers' heads. 20 years ago, he succeeded his father, the Concealed Dragon Emperor Dok-Go Jung, becoming the 3rd head of the North Swords. At that time, he was widely known as the young prodigy, making several legends as he wandered through the Gang Ho Murim. His feat of achieving a thousand victories in the Martial Tournament was unprecedented in history. The rumor is that the previous head, the Concealed Dragon Emperor, is still living, and that he

is teaching Dok-Go Han-Chun's only son, Dragon Flying Sword Dok-Go Mu.

Ssssss.

By the Divine Sword Pavilion, there was a small artificial lake. This was the most beautiful place within the North Swords' headquarters, the Water Blossom Hall; at the same time, it was the residence of the Intelligent Beauty, Dok-Go Sul-Lan. She was the prided jewel of the North Swords' head, and she had only just turned 19. When she was only 7, it was said that she stood head-to-head with the Imperial Palace's royal scholar. As her appearance was nothing short of a world-class beauty, she received the adorations of countless men. With her intelligence and beauty, topped by her background, it was truly hard to find a woman as perfect as her. Along with the Transient Beauty, Jegal Cho-Hong, the heir to the Jegal Clan and the disciple of Nine Jung Alliance's Shaman, they were called the Two Beauties of Murim.

Clueless about such things, Pa Chun continued to follow the shadow traveling in the night. Suddenly, a strange scene was captured in his sight. He detected several tens of men hiding around the lake, in bushes, trees, underground, and even beneath the lake. However, the shadow effortlessly continued on its way, quickly running across the lake. Of course, no one came out to stop the shadow.

'Aha, this is where he was headed. They might mistake me for an intruder if I'm not careful. Should I go back? ...No, since I came all the way here, I might as well go see what's up. At the very least, I have to see who that was.'

Pa Chun activated the Heavenly Demon's Concealment Skill to the extreme. This was the first time since his debut that he had used the technique to this degree. The Heavenly Demon's Concealment Skill, fully used by his Inner Qi that infinitely neared 4 Cycles, held an unfathomable power. He could move through the tiniest cracks, and no trace of him would be felt. He was even able to pass by someone directed from the front, and still remain unnoticed. Even someone with a stronger Inner Qi level, although he would feel the fluctuations in the surrounding Qi, would still be unable to see him. Immediately, lifting his body up into the air, he soared through the lake, towards the place the shadow traveled.

Chuak.

Chuak.

.....

The sound of pouring water suddenly stopped.

“Hwan Sa?”

“Yes, miss!”

After a while, the bathroom door opened, and a beautiful girl wrapped in a towel walked out. Without paying attention to the dripping water, she sat down on chair, her leg crossed on top of the other. Because of this position, her secret place was in full view.

“How did it go?”

“Miss! Well... that is... I regret to inform you but...”

“Why are you stuttering, Hwan Sa? This isn’t like you. Just tell me everything.”

Ah, what a beautiful voice! Could this be what it sounds like to roll jade beads on a silver platter? No, even rolling diamonds on a golden platter would not make such a beautiful sound (it’d just be a rolling sound). In any case, her voice was as pure and fresh as a jade, comparable to her absolute beauty! Her eyes, especially, were jewels to behold, sparkling radiantly as if to suck in all surrounding light. Her eyes, slightly wet, seemed as if it would pour out tears at any moment, making whoever gazing into it want to listen to any of her desires. Truly, a mystical beauty!

“I’m guessing... that the rumors were true.”

“Yes, miss...”

The reporter was not kneeling down in respect, but rather standing up. With almost all of her face covered, the only thing visible were her eyes, delicate and gloomy. Her eyes were blue, a rarely seen color. Although her face was covered, from her stance without any openings, Pa Chun deduced that she was a strong expert. Her name was Hwan Sa! Her name was not known within the North Swords, and only the people of the Dok-Go clan knew of her. It was clear that she and the young miss had a master-servant relationship. The previous head, the Concealed Dragon Emperor, had personally raised her up to serve his beloved granddaughter. No one knew exactly what level of martial arts she had

reached, but the Concealed Dragon Emperor was once known to have said: “If you were born a male, you would have undoubtedly shaken the very foundation of Murim, and I would have made you my grandson-in-law without the slightest hesitation.”

At Hwan Sa’s reply, the Intelligent Beauty Dok-Go Sul-Lan turned her body behind and let out a sigh. Her face was filled with unimaginable sorrow.

“Miss! What do you plan to do?”

It was quite uncharacteristic of Hwan Sa to ask Dok-Go Sul-Lan a question. In fact, it was a rare occurrence that happened once in a blue moon.

“What is there to do? Everything has been decided already...”

Dok-Go Sul-Lan’s sorrowful retort struck Hwan Sa’s heart with pain.

.....

Hwan Sa was unable to say anything. She knew a hasty comfort would only worsen the situation.

“Can you... explain a bit more in detail?”

At this, Hwan Sa immediately replied.

“He was... simply said, an idiot. He’s nothing but a poser that participates in all kinds of disgusting deeds. More importantly, he was a man capable of murder and rape. He would lay his hands on his friend’s women and enjoy abusing women he bought with his money. More than a few women have already committed suicide because of this man, and many countless others have been murdered as well. His notoriety is spread through the small town he lives in, but no one can do anything about it because of his connection to the South Blades. Furthermore...”

“That’s enough... thank you.”

...

“You may go rest now, Hwan Sa.”

After bowing curtly, Hwan Sa turned around to leave.

“Hwan Sa.”

At her master's calling, Hwan Sa stopped her tracks, but she did not turn back around.

"If... you were me... what would you do?"

...

"If I were you... I'd... refuse. But I am not you."

Right, and that was the problem. She did not have the courage to do such a thing.

"If I were to run away from home... would you help me?"

...

It was a difficult question, but Hwan Sa answered immediately and easily.

"Of course. My duty is to protect miss. I will stay by your side!"

"Thank you, Hwan Sa."

Hwan Sa knew. She knew that her soft-hearted young miss would never dare to go against the wishes of her parents. And this made her heart ache even more.

When Hwan Sa finally left the room, Dok-Go Sul-Lan continued to just sit on her chair without the slightest thought of drying her wet hair. When she finally moved, both her hands held her head tightly. Then a weeping sound flowed out.

"sob sob... sob... Mother..."

She was crying. The way she held the sounds back to prevent any noise from ringing out made her look even more pitiful. Hwan Sa stayed in front of the closed doors to her room, silently listening to her crying voice. Her mask was stained with tears, and as if she could no longer stand it, she moved away from the door, to the opposite side of the hall.

Once Hwan Sa disappeared completely, someone had appeared from the shadows. It was Pa Chun. He had seen and heard everything that had just happened. He was surprised to see a woman of Hwan Sa's caliber, but he was even more surprised to find out this place was the residence of the North Sword's crown jewel. And of course, as he listened it on their story, he was

surprised more than just once.

‘So that’s it. This is the reason why the South Blades started to support the North Swords. Murim... what a scary place! For his ambition, the North Swords’ head easily trampled on her daughter’s happiness. Huhu, if that’s the case, no need for me to feel sorry. Alright, the first step to my grand plan begins here! I will wait no longer. A sliver of consciousness had prevented me from taking action, but such things are long gone. I will directly obtain what I wish for.’

Sssss.

Pa Chun disappeared once again. Would anyone know? That Chun Ma’s Disciple, Pa Chun, had finally come to a decision.

.

Dok-Go Sul-Lan stood up from her seat. Though she was biting down on her lips, it seemed she had come to terms with her fate. She stood in front of a mirror. Slim waist, flowing hair, and skin as clear as jade. She herself thought that she was beautiful.

‘Ah~! If only Older Brother was still here... he would surely be on my side...’

But it was of no use. She had no idea where her older brother and grandfather was, and it wouldn’t be until half-a-year later that they would come back. Two and a half years ago, they left for a three-year training. The two people who had cared for her greater than anyone else in the world! Was this my fate? To think this decision would be made when they were gone on a trip!

Her hands reached for the knot of her towel. With a little twist, the knot was undone, and the towel drooped down to the floor. She was fully naked. She once again stared at the mirror, as if to inscribe the reflected image of her body onto her mind. Tears flowed down once again.

“What if I could just disappeared?”

“Hup.”

“?”

Turn.

Dok-Go Sul-Lan quickly turned around. Seeing nothing out of the ordinary, she

titled her head.

“Did I hear wrong?”

She knew Hwan Sa was the only one within her residence. Knowing this, she once again sat back down on her chair, then began to dry her hair with the towel.

The sound had, of course, come from Pa Chun. He had entered once Hwan Sa left, and walked in on the naked Dok-Go Sul-Lan, letting out a sound in surprise. Even now, his heart did not cease its rapid beating.

‘Why did she take her clothes off? But... she’s... a real beauty. *Gulp*. Oh... is she going to put on an even better show for me?’

When Dok-Go Sul-Lan began to dry her hair, Pa Chun did not know where to place his eyes. Not only could he see every part of her body, her ample breasts swayed with every movement of her hands! In the end, Pa Chun chose to turn away from this sight.

-Turn your head back, Pa Chun! You bastard, what are you doing to my fun time? Hm? Ah, please! Just turn back and... oh, how nice.

=Amitabul, Shizhu! You must leave this room. This is not what a gentleman would do.

‘Ah, damn it...’

There was a clear reason why Huineng was so flustered and why Chun Ma was so happy. There was a small mirror beneath the bed head where Pa Chun had turned to, fully reflecting the scene that he had just seen. This time, however, Pa Chun continued to look through the mirror. The thought of turning his eyes away never occurred to him again. If this was the will of the heavens, how could he go against it?

Sword of the Emperor Volume 1 Chapter 14

Chapter 14 – An Unexpected Offer

Once the woman was up, she turned and walked towards the bed while her long graceful hair was wrapped around a towel. As she unknowingly passed Pa Chun who had hidden himself, he managed to catch the fragrance of her body along with the refreshing smell of perfume as if she took a bath filled with countless incense. While the overwhelming mysterious scent tickled his nose, the woman dumped herself on the bed. As these events were unfolding right before his eyes, even the almighty Pa Chun couldn't help but feel his face flush red as blood rushed to the head. Just imagine, the most beautiful and heaven-like woman, walking around naked in front of your eyes! Furthermore, wasn't she completely unaware of his presence?

She cleared away the blankets and tucked her body away.

-Damn what a waste! She should've waited a little longer before going to bed!!

Even without Chun Ma's lamentation, even Pa Chun was disappointed. Why did it feel like his chest was so empty?

"By the way, why did I even come here? Oh yeah! I'm here to seduce her! From appearances, she seems pretty docile and kind, if I tread carefully she'll be extremely useful!

Pa Chun's outstretched hand flickered across Dok-Go Sul-Lan's body. However it wasn't to obscenely grope her body. It was simply to prevent the woman from screaming and making a ruckus by sealing off her pressure points. Dok-Go Sul-Lan opened her eyes wide when she realized something was wrong. However her pressure points were already blocked and she was unable to scream. She seemed to be extremely shocked at Pa Chun who suddenly appeared before her. He was wearing a faint smile as he brought a chair and sat down. His actions seemed so

natural that it was like this was his own room. Furthermore, he looked at her with a charming smile. Although she could not speak, her eyes seemed to be asking endless questions. Who are you? What are you doing? Do you think you'll be safe after this? If you don't quickly release me, you will regret it!

[Young Lady! I am not someone whose here to harm you. First, allow me to introduce myself. I am called Jade Faced Divine Dragon Mun-Yun. While I was traveling in the night, I by chance discovered a person who seemed like an intruder so I ended up following him here. After that, by chance, just by chance, I learned of young lady's crisis. I wish to help you, young lady, and I wish you no harm. I will release your pressure points so can you promise me that you will not create any problems?]

Dok-Go Sul-Lan's eyes seemed to stutter. Well, since her pressure points were blocked, she would be unable to express her intentions!

"Very well then. Then I will trust and release you"

His hands once again flickered across her body.

As soon as her pressure points were released, she immediately sat up and tried to slap Pa Chun across his face.

However, Pa Chun grabbed her hand and immobilized her. Should I just have taken the beating? It wasn't like this was a crime worthy of death... However should I have let her slap me just once? No, that won't do. He is a prideful man with dignity. How could he let a woman slap his face?

Huk! He finally realized when he grabbed Dok-Go Sul-Lan's wrist.... She was still not wearing anything and was showing him her natural curvy figure. It was at this moment that both of them became aware. Dok-Go Sul-Lan stupidly looked at Pa Chun when she realized her naked body was clearly and plainly visible in clear sight. When both their eyes met, Pa Chun realized that she was about to scream when her shoulders were rising. His hand shot out like lightning and clamped the woman's mouth shut.

"Mmpff"

Was the only sound she was able to make.

"Shh, please be quiet. If you try to make a scene, I will have no choice but to be

ruthless with you”

She nodded her head but could he trust her? Although unsure, he had no choice but to trust her!

So he decided to trust her once more. Once he removed his hand from her mouth, she quickly covered her body with blankets. Why are you being so embarrassed, I already saw everything....

Pa Chun leaned on his chair.

“I wish to help you young lady. Please acknowledge my sincerity”

Did he realize how fake his words seemed? However Dok-Go Sul-Lan’s mind was not clear. She couldn’t acknowledge the fact that her precious naked body that she had protected and hidden away for countless years was seen by a complete stranger. To make things worse, when her eyes met Pa Chun’s, the tips of her ears turned red and could not say anything. The intelligence and talent that described her in the rumors was nowhere to be seen. Instead, she shivered in fear like an ordinary young girl. She was never able to learn the martial arts. She followed her father’s wishes so she never had an opportunity and instead read or painted pictures. Her life in other words, was extremely ordinary. She knew nothing about the outside world and knew even less about people. The things she knew were from books she read or things she heard from conversations. It would not be an exaggeration to say that all she had was her imagination. From the day she was born, she had never set foot out of the North Swords. She was unable to determine the motive of the man and couldn’t make a clear judgment. In the end, all she was able to do was shake in fear. However, she was still in a way special. As she carefully watched Pa Chun’s eyes, she began to calm down. She did not see any malicious intent in those eyes.

“What will you do to me?”

If this was heard and understood in a different way, it might have been strange. However because it was Dok-Go Sul-Lan who said the words, it did not seem weird.

“Um..... I will do whatever young lady wants me to do”

This conversation seemed almost too appropriate to be had with a naked lady

during the late night.

“Then will young lord do whatever I tell you to do?”

If the conversation was heard by someone else, it is possible that they would misunderstand.

“That’s right! Just say it! If it’s from you, I will do whatever you ask of me”

He immediately felt embarrassed as soon as the words left his mouth. If he wasn’t, it would mean that he had no dignity as a human.

“Then please take me away.”

“?”

Pa Chun was once again stupefied. Because she said something he had never imagined, he was left speechless. Pa Chun was previously stressing about the methods of seduction so that he could use her. But now that she declared that she wants to go with him willingly, Pa Chun felt almost betrayed because his seduction plans which he was so worried about became worthless.

“Will you..... follow me?”

“Yes! Wherever.... If you can take me out of the North Swords, anywhere is fine. I will forever be in young lord’s debt for the rest of my life.”

“Very well then. After you dress, we’ll leave.”

“Right now is not possible. Please come back tomorrow at this time.”

“What did you say?”

“I said to come back tomorrow.....”

Did this girl think that he was stupid? She might as well try to toy with him. Does she think that this even sounded reasonable?

“Alright”

Was she thinking that I would be intimidated by something like this? Obviously not. She must think that without my schemes, I would be no different from a corpse. Who does she think I am...?

In the end, he agreed to this weird promise. Suppressing his disappointment,

he left Dok-Go Sul-Lan's room.

When he returned to the Guest Reception Pavilion, the situation was far more severe than he had anticipated. When Nangong Hyuk Ryun and Nangong Ah-Yeon came in to Pa Chun's room, they immediately left after discovering that he was missing. After that, Nangong Ah-Yeon repeatedly visited to see if Pa Chun had returned. Even when other groups of people went to see the voting results, Nangong Ah-Yeon stayed behind and continued to guard Pa Chun's room. Although her overdramatic actions brought suspicion, she remained stubborn. When they returned, they found her sitting down in Pa Chun's room while tears dripped down from her eyes.

It was then that Nangong Hyuk Ryun realized that something was wrong. He immediately reported the disappearance to the experts of the Five Clans Union, and the news then traveled to the Nine Jung Alliance. When the revered representative of the Nine Jung Alliance, the High Priest Ji-Gong, learned that there was a man of the title, Jade Faced Divine Dragon, who had succeeded the secret moves of Lord Huineng, he took great interest in this man. This resulted in a great amount of interest towards the disappearance. After concluding that the North Swords had done something to this man of importance, the Five Clans Union and the Nine Jung Alliance immediately went to the North Swords for answers. But how could they possibly know of the real reason for Pa Chun's disappearance? It was only then when the head and the previous head of Gae Bang visited the North Swords. When the news of the arrival of the two heads spread, even the head of the North Swords made an appearance. Who was the previous head of Gae Bang? Along with the twin Nohs, he was a loyal vassal planted in the Gang Ho by the First Emperor. It had not been a day since he met the Gunmun Emperor, Yun-Mun. After hearing that he may have been hurt by the North Swords, his anger had already pierced the heavens. Although Dok-Go Han-Chun was the leader of the North Swords, the man he greeted earnestly was the close friend of his own father. In front of the head of Gae Bang, he had no choice but to keep his head down. While he paid his respect, he scolded his subordinates to immediately give them their full aid in the search. This was how the disappearance of one person created such a gargantuan crisis.

When Pa Chun arrived at the Guest Reception Pavilion, no one was present.

‘Are they not finished?’

He sat down and poured himself a cup of tea.

‘Come tomorrow? Unbelievable..... You don’t think she’s going to tell a different story after setting a trap do you?’

-Pa Chun! Are you really going to do what the girl says?

[Why do you ask?]

-I don’t think her mind was stable.... I admit that she’s pretty and kind but isn’t it absurd that she asked you, a stranger to take here away? Furthermore she’s a woman.

[Is that what you think? But my thoughts are a little different from yours. I don’t know what it is but I think she’s different from other ordinary woman. Furthermore, from looking at her eyes, I don’t think she lied to me]

-Hey Pa Chun! Strange... you.... perhaps...you fell in love with her?

[That’s right. Why, is that a problem?]

-Aren’t you mistaken about something? In the future, that woman may regard you as an enemy.

[I am aware]

-Don’t be stupid! Love! That’s absolutely nothing. It’s worthless as a pile of dirt you see in the street.

[By the way, why are there people running around everywhere? Is there something going on?]

-Who knows, maybe there’s a fight going on...

Pa Chun went outside. Not only in the Guest Reception Pavilion, but warriors of the North Swords were also running around. It seems like something did happen. He called a warrior who was about to run past him.

“Hey you. Did something happen? What’s with the commotion?”

“I’m not sure. Something about a Jade Face or whatever. Because of that one

guy, the entire North Swords is in the state of emergency.”

Once he finished talking, the warrior went his own way.

“Jade Face? Just who is he to cause this commotion? Have the Tartars (Mongols) invaded? No that’s not possible, this is the Murim! Even if that were the case, that wouldn’t cause this much chaos.... Wait a sec, haven’t I heard that name before? Wait, Jade Face? That’s me!”

What’s happening! Is this because I saw that girl’s naked body? Did she tell them that I’m an intruder? If I waste time here hesitating, I might fall in a difficult situation

In order to gain more information, Pa Chun ran towards an area, densely populated with warriors. If that’s the reason for the search, I should get ready to run.

As he was running, he found a suitable fellow. He was called Chang San of the North Sword Prefecture who usually did odd jobs and chores. He just stood there watching the warriors while continuously sighing.

“You over there”

Jang-San turned around in surprise.

“Just what is going on? Why is it so chaotic?”

“Huh? I don’t know myself. How could someone of my status know anything? All I am aware is that someone went missing and people are trying to find him”

“What? By any chance, is that missing person you’re looking for the Jade Faced Divine Dragon?”

“Hmm.... Jade Face... yeah, it was something like that”

“Is that so?”

What is this? I’m missing? Just what crisis are we under? Why am I missing? And why are they looking for me?

Pa Chun was still unable to understand the situation. In cases like this, it’s best if I were to find someone I knew....

Divine Sword Pavilion! The Great Business Hall! This was where all the plans

and decisions in the North Swords were made. At this time, the air had already cooled, leaving a chilly atmosphere. The highest seat was empty, as the head of the North Swords, the Supreme Divine Sword Dok-Go Han-Chun, sat below along with several other figures. Among these figures was the previous head of Gae Bang, the King Gae Poong Chun-Ho. It was easy to tell just how uncomfortable and anxious he was by looking at his folded arms and closed eyes. Besides these two, many other notable figures had also gathered. Not only the experts of the North Swords, but the experts of the Five Clans Union and the Nine Jung Alliance were also present. Even the experts of South Blades who have heard of the investigation also decided to attend. Now that the votes have ended in favor of the plan, Dok-Go Han-Chun needed to leave a good impression with the people present. For him, this time was vital for his plans and unfortunately, he could tell that he was being misunderstood because the person of importance has disappeared in the North Swords which he governed. As a result, Dok-Go Han-Chun was being evaluated poorly by the others present. He was of course angered by their expressions but with the previous head of Gae Bang present, who had dozens of years of friendship with his father, the Concealed Dragon Emperor, right in front of him, he was unable to lash out on the others.

“Damn it..... Just what happened? How does it make sense that you still haven't found him? How can 15,000 warriors not find one person? If, just if..... If something happened to that person.... Be aware that we will fight you till either the Gae Bang or the North Swords disappears. Even if we have to deploy a hundred thousand beggars, we will not leave a single blade of grass unsearched, do you understand!”

Dok-Go Han-Chun was endlessly shocked because he had never seen this person so angry. Truly strange. Just what was the relationship between that young lord and previous head of Gae Bang? He felt that his words were too fierce. Even if that young lord was like his son, his words and a search of this scale seemed far too exaggerated. However he only quietly listened to Poong Chun-Ho's scolding. If even the head was acting so submissively, what could a North Swords expert do? Watching Dok-Go Han-Chun's behavior, the Five Clans Union's head of Peng Clan seemed extremely pleased.... Until Poong Chun-Ho noticed him grinning.

“Oi Peng, what are you so happy about that you are smiling? Is there something that calls for congratulations? Huh? Did your father teach you that way?”

Whine....The Peng Clan head stood there with his head down as if he committed a crime punishable by death. The South Blade’s chief was 80 years old this year, but even he was Poong Chun-Ho’s junior. So no one dared to refute him or get involved. Perhaps it would be different if the Concealed Dragon Emperor were to come. While the leaders of the Murim were having their discussion, Nangong Huyk Ryun and 9 others were standing in a corner. The heaviness in their hearts was the same for each and every one of them. But despite the heavy mood, there was someone who seemed pleased because of the crisis. That person was the North Swords Law Enforcement Corp’s leader, Smiling Sword Wu Hyun-Choong. Although he tried to restrain himself, he could not help but grin. Thankfully he was standing behind Poong Chun-Ho, so he was not caught.

“Advisor! How did it go? Has your subordinates contacted you yet?”

“Unfortunately they have not...”

“Hmpf! Are you even trying?”

It was the Five Clans Union’s clan leader Peng. Who else but him would further disturb their mind sentiments?

“Elder Peng, aren’t you taking this too far?”

The North Swords’ Advisor, the Three Eyes Thousand Brained So Chun-Ak stated.

“What do you mean? Was I wrong? From what I know, the North Swords were disgracefully destroyed by the Jade Faced Divine Dragon. He has now disappeared in the very center of their territory! Then isn’t it obvious what happened? Despite that these people are feigning ignorance on what happened....

“What did you say? You dare say that?”

“All of you be silent! Now you guys are starting to fight amongst yourself? Fine then, you might as well take the fight to the very end!” Roared the previous head

of Gae Bang.

“My Lord! The Jade Faced Divine Dragon, Mun-Yun, seeks your audience”

Jump.

“What?”

“Where?”

“Hurry up and bring him in!”

It was really him. The first person to run out to see was Nangong Ah-Yeon who spread her arms out for an embrace..... only to be dodged by Pa Chun who continued to walk as if nothing was out of ordinary! Because he seemed perfectly fine, the people present were stupefied.

“My Lord..... You were safe”

!!!

!!!!

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The previous head of Gae Bang just called the young Jade Faced Divine Dragon Mun-Yun... his lord?

[Poong Gae, what are you doing? There are many eyes watching]

It was then King Gae Poong Chun-Ho realized his mistake. Because he was too joyful, he acted without thinking. Even though he realized his mistake, hasn't the water already been spilled? The head of North Swords was so surprised that his eyes became visibly larger! That was also the same for Nangong Hyuk Ryun, the Nine Jung Alliance, the Five Clans Union, and the South Blades. Just who was King Gae Poong Chun-Ho? Was he not this one of this generation's most highly esteemed elders and the previous head of Gae Bang, the Largest Outer Force under the Heavens? How could someone of that level call someone else as lord and bow before him? It was even stranger that this “lord” seemed to be a young man in his twenties. This was huge news. It was necessary to control the situation to prevent this information from leaking out but that was not possible. If they were to try to forcefully hide the truth, it would only serve to amplify the suspicious.

After Pa Chun smoothly helped him to his feet, he declared to the people around him

“Because of my lack of responsibility, I burdened all of you needlessly. For that I sincerely apologize. I especially don’t know what to say to the North Swords’ head.”

“N.... Not at all. I don’t mind”

He was still unable to come out of the shock. Because of that, he became extremely awkward in regards to Pa Chun. Regardless, the crisis seems to have now been resolved. The tense atmosphere was finally broken with Dok-Go Han-Chun’s announcement.

“Please, let us all go to the Great Banquet Hall. Isn’t today a day where we make history in our Jung Pa Murim? Please eat and enjoy as much as you desire.”

Because the mood was so tense that everyone’s nerve was on high alert, his casual words left everyone in bad taste. However he still managed to ease their minds. The people from the Five Clans Union and the Nine Jung Alliance, as usual, did not seem very comfortable. In the meantime, although Poong Gae asked Pa Chun for an explanation, but he failed to receive an answer.

In a short time, the area was soon filled with people who gathered with food and alcohol. While the table was being set up, the menservants brought in countless types of food and alcohol. At the entrance, the experts of the North Swords enthusiastically greeted the individuals coming in who belonged to the Nine Jung Alliance and the Five Clans Union along with the experts of Gae Bang.

Along with the previous head of Gae Bang, the Five Clan Union’s clan leader Peng, the Nine Jung Alliance’s High Priest Ji-Gong, and the South Blades’ Top Elders, Pa Chun was guided to the innermost center of the banquet hall where the highest guests of honor was seated. The special treatment towards Pa Chun was because he was of his “master” relationship to the previous head of Gae Bang. Nangong Hyuk Ryun who originally wanted to sit with Pa Chun was disappointed while Nangong Ah-Yeon continued to glance and sometimes outright stare at Pa Chun.

“Elders! Please ease your past grudges and allow me to pour you all a glass”

“Here, you too Sir Mun! Please receive a glass from me as well!”

It was the North Swords' head, Dok-Go Han-Chun. While he poured Pa Chun a glass, his eyes were aimed at Pa Chun, not wanting to miss even the slightest details. He sharply examined every single one of his movements and characteristics. Although Pa Chun noticed, he calmly ignored the stare and continued with his drink.

‘Hmm, just how does it make sense that this brat is King Gae’s master? In order to conquer all of Murim, it is absolutely necessary to gain King Gae’s support. Although I was able to curry a few favors using my father’s relationship with King Gae, I still need to coax this brat..... In times like this, I wish I had another daughter..... ugh’

He was truly a frightening man. The man named Dok-Go Han-Chun!

From this merry atmosphere, laughter after laughter were poured out. The sound mostly came from those who threw a vote favoring the North Swords' plan. At first, it seemed that both sides would come out to be pretty even, but once the voting began, most had voted in favor of the eradication plan. No one could now prevent the plan from taking its course. Even the Clan Leader Peng who had declared he would leave the Jung Do Alliance seemed like he could not go against the flow. All the cards were now in North Swords' hands.

Sword of the Emperor Volume 2 Chapter 1

PS: Sorry about the weird spacing. The brackets [] kind of screws up with it on wordpress, and kind of makes it skip of the newline.

Ch 1: The Way of the Sword

The dinner finally ended in the Time of the Tiger (3:30-4:30am). Although their faces showed expressions of satisfaction, underneath their masks were uneasiness because of the disaster that would soon hit Murim. Among their numerous secrets, that at least was clear. The Ma Do Expedition! In the thousands of years of Murim history, this was the first time that the Jung Pa openly declared that they would conquer the Ma Do. The head of North Sword requested the other sects to return to their territories for preparation, and to return in one month time. He then declared that any sect or individual may enlist in the subjugation army if they so desired. The 9 Great Schools' Nine Jung Alliance, the North Swords, the 5 Noble Clans' Five Clans Union, and the South Blades were factions that could be considered the pillars of the Murim World. If these people were to assist in the subjugation army, it would be the largest and the fiercest military fighting force in the history of Murim.

The blinding sunlight that enveloped the earthen fields dragged last night's darkness out of existence. Immediately upon waking up, Pa Chun searched for Guest Reception Pavilion's backyard. Between the gardens was a small martial art training ground, and Pa Chun caught sight of several holes scattered about the ground. Pa Chun stood in the very center of the training ground. Dangling from his waist was a pair of swords. If anyone were to recognize the identity of these two swords, it would most definitely become problematic. But thankfully, no one could figure out their identities. Pa Chun drew out the Heavenly Demon Sword*.

[TN: reminder; Chun Ma = Heavenly Demon]

The sword, its length 4 Ja and 5 Chi (~135 cm), looked rather long. Although he had never once wielded it in battle and was therefore clueless about the full extent of its strength, he was able to feel its power just by looking at it.

[Chun Ma! What is a Sword?]

-The Sword is the Etiquette(禮) and Path(道)!

It was a line unbefitting of Chun Ma.

[The Etiquette and Path? I wasn't asking for some sage-like anachronistic rabble..... In the end a sword is a tool for murder. Isn't it more important to know how effectively your sword can destroy your opponents? Isn't that the most important thing?]

-Is that really what you think?

His voice was uncomfortably heavy. It was a reaction unusual for Chun Ma.

-Listen carefully. Well, even if I explained it, if you don't understand then it's no use..... Do you know why the sword is called the King of all Weapons? Although it's partly because the sword is the weapon that is closest to perfection, but it is ultimately because the sword is capable of enlightening its wielder to the very maximum of their abilities. Lift the sword into the air!

Like a well behaved child, Pa Chun obediently followed his instructions. Once he channeled his Inner Qi, the Heavenly Demon Sword began to rise. Seeing this, Chun Ma immediately resumed his lecture.

-In the end, Martial Arts is just the extent of your understanding of the Qi. You were able to levitate your sword because you exerted dominance over the sword with your Inner Qi. The universe is full of Qi. We as humans are able to accumulate it as Inner Qi and use it as we wish. Qi Cultivation is ultimately the reaction between you and the Qi within the universe. Using you as a host, the Qi is able to change and take a tangible form. Although the shape of the Qi will change, its innate nature remains the same! Now, I'll explain further about the secrets of this art.

He acted as if a venerable master was passing his teachings to his disciple and

displayed an image that was very different from the usual playful Chun Ma

-Fly the sword as far as you can!

At his words, Pa Chun started to move the sword that was dangling in the air. At first the sword was slowly accelerating. Then suddenly, the sword burst off with sudden speed.

-Retrieve it.

[H-huh?]

Bang!

Pow!

In the tree 15 Jang (~45m) away, the sword deeply lodged itself in the trunk. If a stranger was to see this, it would have been a truly astounding sight. This technique could only be the Force Sword.

-What you just did now is nothing more than an imitation of the Force Sword.

[An imitation you say?]

-That's right. A mere imitation. After the Heavenly Demon Sword passed 10 Jang, your Inner Qi was no longer able to control it. Because you lost your supremacy, you weren't able to channel Qi into the sword so it ended up being lodged into the tree. That is the limit of your Qi Cultivation. Then now, why do you think the sword no longer reacts to your Inner Qi? It is simply because the power you used to retrieve it could not match the power you used to throw it. From this display, your range of control does not exceed 10 Jang! Utilizing Sword Qi, Sword Energy, or Reinforced Sword is simple if you're holding onto a sword. Even if you could create countless Sword Rings and emit Sword Petals, your sword skill would not be enough to be called true Sword Arts. Then what is the true limit of the sword? What do you think?

[Well... I don't know much about swords]

-Sword Qi Collection can be considered the first step, followed by the second step, Force Sword. Occasionally, there are people who regard this as a godly Sword Technique and use it as their foundation to merge with the sword. Then they call it something fancy like the Flying Sword Technique and regard it as

something amazing. That is something even you can do. Sword Qi Collection means that the Qi inside of you becomes one with universe through the sword. Even if it doesn't use up the Inner Qi within your body, it is capable of reacting with the Qi within the Universe naturally. That is why it is absolutely critical for you to understand the sword and realize the meaning behind the theory. This is the first step of understanding the limitless sword arts.

[This is just the beginning?]

-Only when you have naturally understood will you be able to use the Force Sword. The first step is called the Hand Force Sword, and it allows you to control the Sword Qi with your hand. You should be able to control the sword within a 100 Jang (300m) radius. Next is the Sight Force Sword, which allows you to control the movement of the sword as far as your eyes can see. Lastly is the Mind Force Sword which allows you to control it however you desire, simply by your will alone. At this stage, even if the sword is far beyond your sight, you will be able to control it perfectly, as if you're holding onto the sword. This is why your earlier performance was nothing but a poor imitation.

[Phew~ That's amazing. Then I guess the Mind Force Sword is the very pinnacle?]

-Hell no! Most idiots who train in the sword think that the Force Sword is the final form. That is simply just the beginning.

[The beginning, you say?]

-There is a stage called the Formless Sword.

[Formless Sword? Are you saying that the sword has no physical form?]

-There are two requirements for this technique. The first requirement is the Invisible Sword. You must be able to form a sword with your Qi, and nothing but your Qi. Once you reach a certain level in the first requirement, the created sword will eventually lose its shape. That is the second requirement, the Mind Formed Sword. The Formless Sword isn't a technique that lets you kill with your mind. It's a technique that lets you kill your opponent with a sword that you create with your mind. To put it in simpler terms, the Formless Sword is a sword you create and materialize from your own Inner Qi that will lose its form when mastered. When this happens, it is in its ultimate form. A formless blade created from your mind that can kill. This form transcends the limit of the Force Sword

stage. It becomes a sword that is impossible to defend against!

[What the hell do you mean!]

-All forms of Sword Qi can be blocked in some way. But regardless of what defense one puts up against the Formless Sword, there is nothing that can actually block it. For example, the Sword Screen, the dense aggregate of Sword Energy, can be used as a curtain to block oncoming Sword Qi! If you were to use the Sword Screen, Sword Qi will never be able to penetrate it! In that case, you must break through the Sword Screen with raw power.

-I'll tell you about Sword Qi, first. You should know, when the Sword Qi multiplies in power, it reaches the Reinforced Sword stage. However, when the Sword Qi becomes wider instead, it reaches the Sword Wind stage. You can think of Sword Qi as a thread. Then, the Reinforced Sword would be a stronger thread and the Sword Wind would be a sheet of threads! After these stages is the Sword Blast stage. The Sword Blast is capable of destroying space itself, rendering it into a vacuum like state. Even the Sword Screen is unable to block against the Sword Blast. The Formless Sword is the very pinnacle of Sword Blast. To put it simply, look at water. No matter what it is, water always flows over anything it comes into contact with. When water flows from high to low, even if you were to obstruct the path with boulders, the water will simply just go over it. It is the same for the Formless Sword.

-A long time ago, there was a certain expert who had reached the pinnacle of the Force Sword. The Sword Screen he used combined several layers of the 'sheet' I mentioned, and each of these layers was said to have in the Reinforced Sword Stage. Therefore, it was said that his Sword Screen was impenetrable! However, the Formless Sword would simply flow through it! His Sword Screen would never be able to defend against the Formless Sword!

[Then Chun Ma, just how far have you advanced?]

-I.... have gone beyond the Formless Sword.

[What? Are you saying... there is a stage beyond the Formless Sword?]

-That's right. Although I struggled at the bottleneck, I was eventually able to surpass the Formless Sword and reached the Nature Sword.

[Nature Sword?]

-That's right the Nature Sword! The nature contains an unimaginable power. This stage does not create a formless sword, but turns nature itself into a sword!

[What you are saying.... I don't understand....]

-For example, although there is a huge gap in understanding, when it rains, think of every droplet as a shard of Sword Qi! Under this power, millions of soldiers would be slaughtered without having a chance to fight back! Tell me, is there someone that can dodge wind? If the wind becomes Sword Qi, who in the world will be able to evade that? If lighting became sword Qi, is there a sword that can shield you from that?

[Are you telling me something like that is possible?]

-It is! After that is the Universe Sword. This step is something even I cannot explain. However... I am sure that it exists. By combining with the universe, you become a part of its power. I'm guessing that it will be able to grant the wielder to control space itself as he wishes. This is all I am able to currently imagine....

[Then Chun Ma, in the history of Murim, how many people have entered the Nature Sword stage?]

-None. From what I know, no one before me was able to enter this stage. However, there are people who have achieved this stage beyond the Murim!]

[What are you talking about? Beyond the Murim?]

-You will eventually learn about them. If you become strong to the point that you become a threat to them, they will definitely show themselves.

=You must be talking about them!

-Huh? Baldy, you know them too?

=I have never met them in person, but I have heard of them from my master. They seemed to have once come to visit the Great Dharma.

-Is that so? Then that Dharma kid must have entered the Nature Sword stage. I stand corrected, there have been two in Murim history!

Chun Ma was a figure of 1700 years ago. He was born in the same time as Mencius and died during the unification of China. Dharma should have been

around 8, 9 centuries ago.

-In the end everything becomes one. From now on, forget about those worthless martial arts you've been relying on and only hang on to the power of the sword. If you train yourself rigorously, you will one day reach enlightenment and make a break through. Understanding the profound meaning behind the Three Swords of the Heavenly Demon may help you reach that sage earlier.

[Then what should I do with the high-level techniques I already know....]

-If you hang on to those kinds of things you will never improve. Martial art techniques are nothing but variations of Speed(快), Change(變), and Strength(強). All paths lead to one. The final form of all martial art techniques lies in Enlightenment. If you insist on any one of Speed, Change, or Strength, you will eventually run into a wall. If you cannot overcome that wall, you will never reach Enlightenment. Even if your Inner Qi reaches several tens of cycles, if you fail to overcome this wall, you will not be any stronger than someone of 5th Inner Qi cycle. Of course, no idiot would not have reached Enlightenment by then, but this is just a hypothetically situation. The difference between someone who relies on the knowledge of his techniques and someone who has understood the profound meaning of the world is too great. Ultimate Experts are quite common, but Masters are rare, and True Masters are even rarer! Beyond them, those who have reached the Demigod level can be counted on one hand. You are free to choose the your own path. But know this! The vital difference between you and the rest of the world is that while others train all their lives to create, build, and reinforce their foundations, you already have the foundation built inside you. It may even be possible that you will become the very first human to see the endless depths of the Limits of the Sword. But if you end up throwing away this valuable chance away, it will be no different than kicking mud at the Heavens.

While listening to Chun Ma's speech, he plucked out the sword stuck in the tree. Why did it seem that the Chun Ma Sword seemed heavier than usual? Flames seemed to burn inside his chest. This was not a simple thirst for victory, but a intense curiosity towards the stage which no one had ever reached. At this very moment, achieving that stage became the very purpose of his life. It was exactly like Chun Ma said. Because the path was long and difficult, it would be

truly unfair if he were to turn his back from this path despite his god given gift. That's right, I will do it! I'll rise higher and higher. When I reach the height where I can no longer rise, then I'll just be satisfied with what I have already gained..... For some reason the morning felt even more pleasant than usual.

When Pa Chun returned to his room, he immediately took a bath. As if trying to wash out the dregs in his heart, he submerged himself in the water. After finishing a meal with Nam-Goong Hyuk-Ryun, he had tea while exchanging a friendly conversation. Pa Chun however, was unable to delve into and enjoy the conversation. His head was filled with Chun Ma's teachings and the words spoken around him did not even pass through his ears. He would often stare out blankly while thinQing about something else. Although they regarded him as strange, they still showed an indifferent attitude.

Pa Chun was invited by the North Swords' head for lunch and left for the Divine Sword Pavilion. The head had personally invited Pa Chun and sent several of the Protectors' experts as an escort. The Divine Sword Pavilion had 9 floors. The 1st floor to the 7th floor was the Protectors' Palace, where the four different Palaces resided. The 8th floor was the Business Hall The 9th floor was a place where no one could go to without permission as it was the private quarters of the North Swords' head, the Dok-Go Han-Chun. Pa Chun was being escorted to a room in that very 9th floor. Dok-Go Han-Chun was dressed in a black robe with nine gold dragons that radiated waves of light as if it was alive. He was already seated when Pa Chun had arrived.

"Please have a seat Sir Mun! Today I wished to make a special seat for you Sir Mun so I asked my men to escort you here. You are not uncomfortable I hope?"

"Your words are too humble. I am honored to receive your invitation. By the way, your quarter is quite cozy. I am slightly jealous that you live in such a place"

It was something that Pa Chun said while looking left and right.

"Hahaha. If you wish, I could clear it out for you any time it is desired but....."

"Then, at this opportunity, should I just move in?"

"Hahaha for me it would be an honor if you were to do that. If Sir Mun were to desire to live in the North Swords, I would like to aid you even if I had to build two more Divine Sword Pavilions.

“Is there really a point in building a new? You could just empty out this one....”

Perhaps because his words seemed to go too far, the head’s complexion seemed to pale but it immediately changed back to the original bright face.

‘What a snake-like fellow! What? Clear out the Divine Sword Pavilion?’

‘Bastard! He’s having fun spouting out empty nonsense. He must take me for a fool!’

While the two were inwardly cursing each other out, their faces showed radiant smiles. Neither of them was to be underestimated. After a short period of time, 10 maids came in with plates filled to the brim in both hands. The maids placed the plates of on the table starting from Pa Chun’s side. There were numerous dishes that even Pa Chun who was once the emperor have never seen before. Although he had once took pride that there was not a single precious dish that he had not tasted, he was confronted with countless gourmet like food that he could not identify or much less know the ingredients. It was easy to imagine the splendor that Dok-Go Han-Chun lived with.

“Please help yourself. Let us exchange words while having lunch.”

The two of them frequently asked and answered questions over the table. The questioner was usually Dok-Go Han-Chun while Pa Chun usually answered the questions

“What’s your thoughts after joining the Great Jung Do Banquet?”

“Well.... I was slightly disappointed. I heard that it was one of Murim’s great gatherings so I had many expectations... but in the end, there wasn’t anything special. By the way, are you serious about conquering the Ma Do?”

“It is something that has already been decided upon..... What can I do about it? I also don’t wish for it, but since all of the fellow Gang Ho-ins desire it, I have no choice but to follow through.”

-Wow this chap is a one sickening bastard. Even though he’s the master mind, what gibberish is he saying? Because the fellow Gang Ho-ins desire it, he has to follow it? Just dig a ditch and die you piece of garbage!

“Hmmm.... Then what plan are you thinking of to use to conquer the Ma

Do?”

“That... First of all, the Murim army must be formed in order to enact a plan... A frontal attack will probably be the best course of action. I predict that it will take at least a year to finish. Their headquarters is at Hangzhou, but since their branches are scattered about everywhere in secret locations, it will take a bit longer to destroy them. But if Sir Moon were to aid us then we would be able to shorten the time it would take to finish this war.”

“Then after the Ma Do is cleaned out, will the Murim Army disband?”

It was a question meant to attack the Head’s very core.

“Who knows. That would be decided after the conquest is complete. To be honest, in my opinion I would like to establish it as a permanent existence. For harmony in the Murim world, wouldn’t that be the best?”

-Rather than peace and harmony, it’s to satisfy his greed.

“From what I hear... the 3 Outside Powers and the Ma Do’s relationship are quite friendly. What will you do if they were to aid the Ma Do?”

“Something like that won’t happen. They have already proclaimed their stance on this issue... Even if they were to help the Ma Do, it won’t be much of a difference in the overall outcome.

He showed extreme self-confidence. However, it was reasonable since the 3 Outside Powers would be no match for the combined forces of the 4 Powers of Jung Do.

“Besides that are there any other variables?”

“The central figures of Murim are the 4 Powers of Jung Do. Honestly, the other powers are not huge threats so I wouldn’t call these factors variables. But I have heard... that the Heavenly Demon Sect’s techniques have appeared. If the Heavenly Demon Sect has truly returned... it will become our greatest threat.”

“The Heavenly Demon Sect has reappeared?”

“I didn’t mean that the Heavenly Demon Set has revealed themselves, I meant that a person who claimed to be Chun Ma’s successor has appeared and his Martial arts is known to be very similar to that of Chun Ma’s.”

“Ah, is that so?”

-What a stupid fellow! Not even realizing the guy he’s talking about is in front of him.... Truthfully besides people like him who act like they’re smart, there aren’t any decent guys. When he learns the truth later, how resentful and cheated do you think he’ll feel?

“And because of that.... Someone like Sir Mun is a necessary existence for the Murim army. Do you have any thoughts of working together with me for the honor of Murim? If you desire, I can promise you the seat of Ten Thousand Men Commander.”

‘This man is truly astonishing. He’s talking as if it’s already been established that he will be the leader of the Murim army. What does he take me for.... There’s no way that’s happening. But I can’t hesitate when he’s offering me the leader’s position... Damn I screwed up.

“Haha I am grateful that you view an inadequate person like me with such esteem. I will make the decision after I think it through.”

“That... is fine. Just please don’t forget that I hold you in high regard.”

“Father, it’s me”

“Hoh~. Come in”

‘Huh? What is this now?’

It was the beautiful lady Dok-Go Sul-Lan. Although they have already met and had a conversation while she was naked, her elegant dress took her beauty to a whole new level. The green silk dress that was tightly wrapped around her body accentuated her curvy figure to the point that anyone would give gasps of admiration.

She seemed shocked when she noticed that there was someone else in the room.

“This child is my daughter. Hurry up and introduce yourself.”

“This one is called Dok-Go Sul-Lan.”

While introducing herself, she stared at Pa Chun

'Wait, isn't this young lord? Last night's....'

"Oh is that right? I am called Jade Faced Diving Dragon Mun-Yun. It is an honor to meet someone as beautiful as you are."

-Ugh what a bold guy!

=Amitabul!

"Haha come here and sit down. How is she Sir Mun? I'm not saying this because she's my daughter but don't you think that she's perfect?"

-This bastard! What is his motive? From the looks of things, it seems like he called her here himself

'Truly an astonishing fellow. He's making me feel disgusted. Trying to trick me using his own daughter. If I knew any less I would have been completely fooled.'

"Yes you are right. I too have seen many beautiful women in Gang Ho but it's a first time seeing a beauty like lady Sul-Lan."

At his words Dok-Go Sul-Lan's face became red.

[Lady, I will come tonight to steal you away]

While her father wasn't looking, she slightly nodded her head at Pa Chun's words.

"This child is now 19 years old so she is now at the age that I should send her over for marriage.... I am pained in my heart due to the fact that she must leave me soon. I need to decide on her partner even though I don't wish to send her. Hah.... The feelings of all parents seem to be alike.

'He talks like an angel. How would the child feel after seeing such a father? Would she feel sickened even if he's her parent?'

"So the groom hasn't been decided?"

"Of course... Even though there are numerous men who want to take her, how could I give her to just anybody? Maybe if the groom was like you Sir Mumn I would agree."

Because he already knew the truth about the situation, Pa Chun was extremely confused. He even doubted whether what he knew was accurate.

“Sir! Please help me. Help from something like you is vital. For Gang Ho’s tranquility, I will rely on your earnest support!”

“If it is something I could help you with I will help. I am thankful that you are helping me with so many things. I also had a good meal thanks to you and you even expanded my view of this word. I don’t know what to say to thank you. If you desire it, I will help you no matter what the problem.”

‘This bastard needs a taste of betrayal. How dare he try to scheme right in front of me....’

“Haha thank you. After hearing your words, it feels as if all my anxiety have been washed away as if I have gained an army of a thousand men.

“Then... I must leave now. There are people waiting for me...”

“Ah.... I seem to have selfishly held you here for too long. Everything thing I did was out of admiration for you so please don’t take offense.”

“You are too humble...”

He once against memorized Dok-Go Sul-Lan’s figure. When Dok-Go Han-Chun saw that, the sincere smile on his face disappeared for a second and reappeared once more while Pa Chun was getting up. Even after Pa Chun turned around and left, his smile still did not disappear.

“Uh, Father, who was that person?”

“There is no need for you to worry about him. You just watch your behavior and prepare for your marriage. I will send you off for marriage next spring.”

“Just who am I marrying?”

“Who do you think? Haven’t I already told you it was with the young master of the South Blades?”

“Father that person is....”

“Shut up. You should just do as I say. How dare you talk back to me! I was the one who raised you all this time and you can’t even carry out a single one of my wish? Furthermore, where else would you find a better marriage candidate? If you just follow my words you can live your entire life without worries. You may leave.”

“Yes....”

She bowed to her father and left the room

‘Father, I do not need something like that. I could do whatever you desire but I would like to marry someone I love. I’m sorry.’

Without knowing his daughter’s hidden feelings, the Dok-Go Han-Chun’s laughter echoed all throughout the Divine Sword Pavilion.

“HAHAHAHAHAHAHA!”

He laughed as if everything was going as he planned. But would things truly go so smoothly?

Sword of the Emperor Volume 2 Chapter 2

Ch 2: Dok-Go Sul-Lan Runs Away!

Night approached slowly as it silently swallowed the world. North Swords' inner court was still filled with sound, as they discussed and ratified decisions over food and wine regarding the Ma Do. Because of the atmosphere, the patrol warriors slackened their guard. Pa Chun advanced to the Water Blossom Hall. Only here could Pa Chun find several men hidden in the surroundings for an ambush against any unwanted intruders. However this level of preparedness was not enough to stop him.

Dok-Go Sul-Lan wore a light dress and was busy preparing herself. She was packing several casual clothing, ornaments, along with a few books she was reading. The North Swords was filled with laughter as they ate and drank, but only in the Water Blossom Hall area did it seem too quiet. Although the Water Blossom Hall was enormous, the only other residents of this area were four maids and Hwan-Sa. Besides those five people, no one ever came in as it was not a place that had visitors. It was also questionable on how many times the father came to visit Sul-Lan. There was no area in the North Swords as solemn as Dok-Go Sul-Lan's residence.

"It's me young lady."

"Please come in Hwan Sa"

"Have you readied yourself?"

"Yes....."

"It seems you have set your mind on leaving"

"Yes, you are correct."

"It was a wise decision. But it won't be easy to escape from here without a

plan....”

“I don’t know either but so I have to trust that person”

“I’m not sure if that person is trustworthy. It’s not that I can’t trust your judgment but it’s just that the person is a stranger from the outside... Also I’m worrying how he will escape from this place. When it is discovered that young lady has gone missing, havoc will arise in Gae Bong Prefecture.”

“I understand your worries Hwan-Sa. But I believe that everything will work out fine.”

Although Hwan-Sa’s face was covered in veil as usual, her green eyes seem to say, ‘I will always protect you.’

‘What is this? Don’t tell me she told that wench Hwan-Sa about this plan?’

-What did I tell you? Just get out of here before the problem gets even bigger.

‘Out of the question! I already promised her and I won’t be the one to breach that! I’m a man of my words!’

-Even though you’re such a twisted person, your words are so righteous. Just be honest and say you’re doing this because she’s pretty!

‘Fine! So what? Chun Ma! If you say one more word, you know what’ll happen right? You seem to be really haughty these days since I was being lenient with you....’

Chun Ma immediately shut his mouth. He was truly a pitiful fellow.

“By the way, what’s taking the young lord so long?”

“You don’t think this fellow is chickening out after saying those big words?”

“Do you think I’m like you?”

Hwan-Sa immediately turned around in response to the voice.

“Hoh, your movements are quite fast.”

‘I-Impossible, how could I have not noticed when he was so close?’

Hwan-Sa was extremely shocked.

‘I feel like I’ve seen this man before... Who is he? Where did I see him?’

At this moment, Hwan-Sa's eyes that were engrossed with Pa Chun's and Pa Chun's eyes that were absorbed staring at Hwan-Sa's seemed to ask the same question.

"Just where did I meet him?"

"You!"

"Y-You... You're that!"

"The horse?"

"You were that stupid person!"

"What did you say?"

Pa Chun showed a huge frown.

"I was wondering who you were and you turned out that to be that wench making chaos on a black horse!"

"What did you say?Chet, I was here politely waiting for you and you turned out to be that crazy prankster riding a horse!"

"You!"

"What, am I wrong?"

"Che... I need to calm down. I don't have time argue with a bratty woman. Young lady, please hurry and follow me."

"Huh? Yes!"

As Pa Chun lead the way, Sul-Lan followed with her belongings.

"Do you think we're going on a picnic? What's with that bag?"

"Yes? Ah... I-I'm carrying a few clothes... ornaments... and the like"

"Leave them all here and bring only your body. I'll prepare everything you need"

"Yes? But.... I don't wish to trouble you."

"If you don't want to go then don't... I'll leave by myself."

"Alright."

As desperation hit her, she flung her bag to the side. As Pa Chun began to move, Hwan-Sa and Sul-Lan followed.

“Hold on.... You’re not going with us right?”

“Of Course... I’m going too.”

“What did you say? ...Is this for real, young lady?”

“Yes... is there a problem?”

“It’s not a problem but... Look here you black cloth wrapper, I can’t be responsible for you too, so you better not drag us down and follow as if you’re life depended on it. Understand? If we’re discovered because of you... Don’t think you’re ass will be okay. I’ll paddle your buttocks till you die!”

“Y...you!!”

But Hwan Sa had nothing to say. From the way how he was able to approach her without her even nothing, she could guess that this man was a powerful expert.

‘Let’s see if you’re this arrogant when you fail!’

When she acted as if she hoped that he would fail, Hwan Sa was dumbfounded at herself. As Pa Chun was about to take a foot out, Hwan-Sa stopped him.

“Look her, Mr. Expert. What are you trying to do without a plan?”

“Plan? What plan? We’re just going out, is that so hard?”

“This... It may be fine for you and me but my young lady doesn’t know martial arts!”

“Is that so? That doesn’t matter. I’ll just carry her in my arms....”

“It may be possible to escape with her in your arms if this was a different place but in the Water Blossom Hall, there are men waiting in ambush so we won’t be able to get out safely! Don’t tell me you didn’t know?”

Pa Chun thought carefully at her words

‘Well, I guess it’s normal that they’re being cautious. There may be problems if I try to escape while carrying her in this dead silent environment... plus, the guys surrounding this place are also experts.’

“Fine. You’re words do make some sense. Lady Sul-Lan! Come over here”

“Why?”

“Just come!”

“Yes... young lord”

Pa Chun carefully examined Dok-Go Sul-Lan’s face... Even without any actions or words, when Pa Chun looked at Sul-Lan, her face quickly turned bright red.

[Chun Ma, will it work?]

-Definitely! But it won’t last for more than ten minutes.

[That’s more than enough.] [Look here kind lady! Listen to me carefully. You too Hwan Sa! You listen also”

‘How dare he use such impolite words, especially towards the young lady...’

But Dok-Go Sul-Lan did not seem to mind.

“I am going to change your face.”

“What?!”

“Just listen.”

As she suddenly exclaimed out loud, the two of them showed a shocked expression. Hwan Sa’s heart became uneasy at the possibility that the surrounding warriors may have heard.

“Hwan Sa! Don’t worry. Sound can no longer pass through the walls in this room.”

‘I knew this bastard was an expert, but I didn’t think he would be at this level...’

“I am going to change your face to someone else so you and Hwan Sa can just leave normally! Understand? Once we get out of this place, I’ll carry you and leave. Planning finished! Any questions?”

“You’re going to change my face?”

“That’s right”

“That’s possible?”

“It’s because it’s possible that I am proposing it you idiot!”

‘T-This bastard’

“I don’t want to do that”

Sul-Lan replied depressingly while looking at the floor Don’t worry! You’ll turn back to normal after some time...”

“You’re not planning to use the Perfect Disguise Technique, are you?”

“Why? I am going to use it”

“Hey look, I told you the lady can’t use martial arts.... What’s with that face?”

“Go and call one of the maids here! I need to look at her face. What are you doing? Hurry up and move it!”

It was at this moment that Hwan Sa finally started to move.

“Don’t worry too much. There won’t be any problems”

His hand was holding Sul-Lan’s shoulders. Although she seemed to be nervous, she only gave an awkward smile to Pa Chun. Didn’t he once disappear right in front of her eyes? She was surprised back then. Although Hwan Sa often did a similar thing but it was not as amazing as what Pa Chun was capable of. He was able to disappear like erasing a drawing drawn on dirt.

In the hallway, Hwan Sa awakened the sleeping maids and was talking to them.

[That’s enough. Just stop.]

Pa Chun began feeling Dok-Go Sul-Lan’s face.

“Lets begin. Rest assured, it’ll be over in a second....”

Sha sha sha sha.

Pa Chun’s hands flashed waves of golden light that covered Dok-Go Sul-Lan’s entire face and seemed to continuously enter in and out of her pores.

Sha sha sha sha.

This process itself took one minute

“H-How is this possible?”

Hwan Sa was thoroughly shocked. The appearance was identical to that of Gum Meng, the maid she called down. Her face was long, her eyes up high, exactly like the maid. In this form, Sul-Lan looked to be around 25.

“We don’t have time for you to admire! Hurry and get out! Hwan Sa what are you doing? Take the lady and hurry up...”

“Ah... Alright. Please follow me, miss.”

The two of them left with haste and as Pa Chun watched them leave, he himself vanished into thin air.

Hwan Sa and Sul-Lan calmly walked out of the Water Blossom Hall. All that was left was to go through the lake. The length was 30 Jang (90m), a considerably lengthy distance. Perhaps it was because they were thinking too much and was overly concerned, their walk did not seem natural, especially that of the maid’s.

Chauk.

The water in the lake split in half, as two people appeared from it. Despite the chilly weather, their clothes did not have a single droplet on them. Their clothes were most likely specially made to be resistant against water.

“Where are you going at this late hour?”

It was a question directed at Hwan Sa. All people in the Water Blossom Hall had to listen to her orders. However, against the guards stationed at the outskirts, she herself had to cooperate. The guards did not exactly know of Hwan Sa’s identity, but they did know that she was a skilled expert with a high social status.

“I have to go somewhere for a while. It is the young lady’s orders, get out of the way.”

“Don’t you know that this place closes at the Hour of the Rat? (11pm-1am)”

“So you saying that you’ll disobey me?”

“That’s not it... I am just telling you of the regulatory rules.”

“The faster you move out the faster I can come back. If something happens to

the young lady are you going to take responsibility?”

It was a merciless statement.

“Please forgive me, you may go. However.... If you do this again it will make things difficult for me”

“I understand. I will remember”

They finally were able to bypass the guard warriors then suddenly, one of the two guards sent a trill message that was targeted for the maid.

[Gum Meng! I'm off duty tomorrow so... you understand right? Come here when you can. I'll be waiting with gifts.]

Click!

It felt like their hearts were about to stop when their ears heard the message. In their nervous state, receiving such a strange signal would no doubt startle them... But it seems that Gum Meng and that guard were in that kind of relationship.

As Sul-Lan and Hwan-Sa left, one of the guards seemed very puzzled.

“How strange....”

“What is?”

“When did Gum Meng's buttocks start looking so shapely?”

“This guy! What wouldn't look pretty in your eyes? Stop talking nonsense and prepare for the rotation. My body's condition today is unusually terrible...”

“Phew”

The two automatically sighed.

[Keep on moving!]

Surprised, Hwan Sa looked carefully left and right to find the owner of the voice

[Don't try to find me and go stand behind that big tree! Now!]

They followed his instructions and went around the tree.

Sha Sha Sha.

He appeared like a ghost

‘What an amazing fellow. He might be on par with the Head’s martial skills’

“We don’t have time. Since Hwan Sa can come out by herself, I’ll go first”

As soon as he finished talking, he put Dok-Go Sul-Lan into his embrace and leaped off to the skies. At this, Hwan-Sa’s jaws dropped open and stupidly stared.

Swish.

Swish.

Sul-Lan shut her eyes and tightly locked Pa Chun in an embrace and could feel his bodily aura. Although her eyes were closed, she could feel the height and sense the speed that they were moving. The night air of late autumn was truly cold. To resist the cold, she snuggled even closer to Pa Chun.

They arrived at a hill where they could view the North Swords from a far distance. Dok-Go Sul-Lan’s features by then had turned back to normal and Hwan Sa who had followed was busy trying to control her heavy panting. Although Hwan Sa followed Pa Chun as if her life was at stake, in the end, she was left far behind, forcing Pa Chun to wait a considerable amount of time for her.

“Listen here! From here on, there must not be a single inch of a trail. I have to go back so you guys find the Gae Bang’s headquarters. It’s a shrine located at the edge of Gae Bong prefecture. Until I come find you, stay there. Find the previous head and tell them that I sent you guys and tell him of your situation. Once that’s done, he should give you guys a place to stay. It may be frustrating but you must remain hidden as if you’re dead. Understand?”

“Weren’t we going together?”

“If I disappear I’ll be the one suspected. Plus I need to know their movements so it’ll be easier to leave later. I’ll follow you soon so go on ahead first.”

When Sul-Lan learned that Pa Chun was not going with them, her expression showed nervousness. It was also the same for Hwan Sa who was also inwardly shocked at her change.

“Leave. They will soon notice that you guys are gone. Maybe it would be different if Hwan Sa were to go back. Perhaps they’ve already found out. I said hurry up and leave. I’ll come back in one or two days, understand?”

“Yes.”

Sul-Lan replied back calmly. In response, Hwan-Sa said, “Chet, do what you want. Let’s go miss!”

As Pa Chun stared at the two as they slowly disappeared from sight, a slight smile appeared on his face “Now let’s go back to see how the Head reacts!”

Sssss.