

Chapter 1151

Well, if it's absolutely necessary. (1)

«Positions?»

Chung Myung's response was somewhat perplexed.

«Why is that absolutely necessary?»

He surveyed those sitting in the room before speaking.

«Well, even without such things, people roughly know each other's roles, you know. No need for...»

Namgung Dowi burst out and said,

«No, isn't that a matter for us to discuss among ourselves?»

«.....Huh?»

«Just think about it. If a war broke out! Sapaeryeon was invading. What would the smaller martial clans along the Yangtze River do?»

«Well, uh...»

«Wouldn't they all line up with Cheonumaeng to fight together with us?»

Chung Myung, with a slightly impressed expression, looked at Namgung Dowi and said,

«Wouldn't those people head to Gupailbang?»

«.....»

Namgung Dowi, momentarily at a loss for words, stared at Chung Myung in bewilderment.

Ogeom nodded, adding one word each.

«Even I would stick to Gupailbang.»

«To be honest, that's excessive confidence. If you want to survive, you should stick with Gupailbang.»

«Shaolin versus Hwasan. Gupailbang against Cheonumaeng. Ah, there's no need to think about this.»

Namgung Dowi's eyebrows trembled faintly.

«Where does that confidence come from?»

«Sahyeong, isn't that young gentleman from prestigious Namgung clan? Originally, people born into Namgung family tend to think they are no worse than Shaolin.»

«...Really?»

«Or why else would they act like that?»

Those bastards? Namgung Dowi forcibly suppressed his rising anger. Typically, the one who gets angry first loses in a debate. Especially in times like this, he needed to show a rational side and do his best.

«But... of course, that could be the case. However, considering the situation, there might be those who can't go to Gupailbang and still choose to be with us, right?»

«...Could that be... true?»

Chung Myung reluctantly agreed with a hesitant voice. His whole attitude said: 'I don't know what nonsense this is, but since I promised to listen, I'll hold back for now.'

«Think about it. Could those people know who is who and follow instructions properly?»
«Hmm?»

The others nodded as if acknowledging the validity of the argument.

«Makes sense.»

«Hmm. It's a point I hadn't considered.»

«Well, but... can't people just follow what others are doing? Everyone has a sense of awareness, right?»

Namgung Dowi, upon hearing that, momentarily opened his mouth slightly, looking at Jo Geol.

Jo Geol bluntly asked,

«Isn't that right?»

«What's this? That face of yours seems to say, 'I didn't expect the word 'awareness' to come out of your mouth.'»

«Huh, you look like a ghost.»

«Huh?»

«Oh, no.»

Namgung Dowi cleared his throat loudly before speaking.

«Of course, if there's awareness, that could happen. However, it's probably not very efficient. And think about it. If an elder of a well-known martial clan with white hair and beard gives an order, suddenly a young kid bursts out saying it's not like that, and we should go the other way.»

«Uh...»

«Then, who should you follow? It's not easy to decide...»

«The young one.»

«The little kid.»

«The brat who rudely and confidently speaks out.»

«The one annoying you the most among them.»

Almost simultaneously, the answers popped out, and Namgung Dowi blinked his eyes in surprise.

«Why, why?»

He asked in genuine confusion. In response, Baek Cheon gave a satisfied smile.

«Do we have another guy who disrespects the elderly, irritates everyone, and only speaks his mind?»

Ugh, that's really convincing.

Namgung Dowi was convinced for a second, but soon snapped back to reality.

«Well, that's true, but... that's something only we know! External people might know the title 'Hwasan Geomhyeop,' but they don't know what Chung Myung Dojang looks like.»

«Hey, Young Lord.»

«Yes?»

«... We didn't mention Chung Myung.»

«...»

«...»

Namgung Dowi looked at Chung Myung with trembling eyes.

Chung Myung, wearing a face that seemed to say, 'Oh? Did you perceive it that way?' smiled and looked at him. Unconsciously, Namgung Dowi avoided Chung Myung's gaze.

«Ahem.»

Now is the time to quickly change the topic.

«Anyway, um... even to prevent confusion for those who don't know him well, we need a structure and positions.»

At that moment, Yu Iseol raised her hand.

Everyone was startled, staring at her. Even Tang Gunak couldn't hide his surprised expression. Yu Iseol had attended numerous meetings until now but had never tried to express her opinion. This was the first time.

«Well, um... oh, okay. Go ahead, Yu Iseol.»

«Do they really not know?»

«Huh?»

«Him?»

She turned her head to look at Chung Myung.

Although Yu Iseol's words were only two short sentences, they convinced everyone.

«Honestly, is it even possible not to know?»

«In truth, if you still don't know, you're not from Gangho.»

«You might not know his face, but if you see a wild kid rampaging in Hwasan, even the local kids passing by would think, 'Ah, he's Hwasan Geomhyeop.'»

«To not know Chung Myung, you'd have to live with your ears plugged, right?»

Namgung Dowi remained silent.

Come to think of it, that statement wasn't entirely wrong. The notorious reputation of Hwasan Geomhyeop... no, it was too elevated. Even now, it felt like an old story that had been somewhat distorted. However, at one point, when he was known as Hwasan's Divine Dragon, he was acknowledged as the best rising star. After the massacre in Hangzhou, his fame had risen to an unprecedented level, especially because he confronted Demonic Cult.

«He became even more famous after Hangzhou incident.»

It wasn't easy to directly say that he fought alongside Jang Ilso against the Bishop. So, vaguely, it had to be conveyed that Chung Myung, along with other Cheonumaeng's members, played a crucial role in defeating the Bishop.

But Sapaeryeon claims Jang Ilso defeated the Bishop.

Anyway, even Gupailbang, unable to openly challenge this fact, maintained silence. Consequently, the news of Chung Myung defeating the Bishop had already spread throughout the world. Perhaps, in this situation, the name «Hwasan Geomhyeop Chung Myung» might be more famous than the name "Cheonumaeng"?

The popularity of someone can be gauged by how well-known they are in the small alleys. If children, when wielding sticks, shout «Plum Blossom Sword Technique» and chant «Hwasan Geomhyeop,» then it's all over.

«Well, uh...»

As Namgung Dowi stumbled over his words, the crowd clicked their tongues.

«Young Lord seems to be fixating on trivial matters...»

Im Sobyong didn't miss this opportunity.

«Isn't it because the esteemed men, who originally had a prestigious background, couldn't create unnecessary formalities? If Namgung clan became the head of Cheonumaeng, I would have been given the lowliest position possible, maybe something like 'Jangwon Environmental Management Officer.'»

«Mmm...»

Getting hit by Im Sobyong feels three times worse than being hit by others. Though he wanted to argue somehow, starting with the wrong example made it impossible to find a good rebuttal.

However, at that moment, kind-hearted Alliance Leader Hyun Jong saved Namgung Dowi.

«Well, that's not entirely true.»

Everyone turned their attention to Hyun Jong.

«Not everyone within the alliance is as famous as Chung Myung, right?»

«That's correct, Alliance Leader.»

«Actually, creating positions and authority is not something I particularly fancy, but...»

Hyun Jong glanced at everyone with a slightly humble expression.

As a practitioner of Tao, following the teachings that one should let everything flow naturally, he didn't particularly like limiting and specifying people's roles.

«Nevertheless, I understand the need for appropriate positions in places where people gather. When the elders of each martial faction have differing opinions, problems can arise.»

«Indeed...»

«It's a sensitive issue.»

Tang Gunak and Maeng So nodded in understanding.

There was rarely any conflict among the leaders of the martial arts sects. Some implicit rules had been established between them. However, the elders of each martial arts sect still sometimes found it challenging to step out of their own perspectives.

In a situation where there is time to reconcile opinions, there might not be a problem.

However, in a war where the situation can change at any moment, small clashes of opinions could lead to significant issues.

Especially when...

«Most of the damage wouldn't be to us, but rather to the smaller martial clans fighting alongside us. It's not something we should overlook just because it doesn't directly affect us.»

«Hmm.»

«In that sense, Young Lord Namgung pointed out something very important.»

«Alliance Leader...»

Namgung Dowi's eyes looking at Hyun Jong were filled with gratitude. Truly, such deep thoughts and warm consideration – his character was flawless, more than enough to be the head of Cheonumaeng!

A little earlier, Im Sobyong mentioned a situation where Namgung clan would become the head of Cheonumaeng, but that was unlikely to happen. Originally, Namgung Hwang was one of the most arrogant figures in the world. Even his own son, Namgung Dowi, thought so. However, even someone like Namgung Hwang, after experiencing Hyun Jong's character, would eventually have to relinquish the position of the head.

It was truly fortunate that Hwasan was leading Cheonumaeng. Having someone like that as the leader...

«...But.»

At that moment, Chung Myung slightly opened his mouth with a suspicious tone.

«Huh?»

«No, it's not like I'm against it. It's just that a fundamental question suddenly occurred to me.»

With a puzzled tone, Tang Gunak asked,

«A fundamental question, what are you talking about?»

«Well... it seems like you're saying it's important to protect those smaller martial clans now.»

«That's right.»

«Do we really have to worry about their lives?»

«...»

«What did they even do, speaking frankly.»

«...»

«...»

Everyone lost their words, looking at Chung Myung. However, he just tilted his head, as if genuinely unaware of the confusion.

«Did I say something wrong?»

«Well...»

For a moment, those who were puzzled stared at Chung Myung with blank faces. Even Hyun Jong, holding his face with both hands, couldn't bring himself to say anything.

How did someone like that come out under someone like Hyun Jong? And why is everyone here following the orders of someone like that?

Chung Myung, sensing the atmosphere, quickly changed his wording.

«Well, if it's absolutely necessary, I won't oppose it...»

«Excuse me, Young Lord Namgung.»

At that moment, Jo Geol quietly interjected.

“Yes? Yes, Jo Gool Dojang.”

“If we follow Young Lord's words, then this guy should also take up a reasonably high position, right?”

Namgung Dowi, turning his head to look at Chung Myung, was briefly lost in thought.

Chung Myung, yes, Chung Myung...

“Well, I suppose so?”

No matter how you thought about it, there was no way to exclude that person. If it was a reform happening under the pretext of efficiency, giving him a position equivalent to a general, so that everyone except the lords followed his orders...

Continuing his thoughts, Namgung Dowi suddenly understood the severity of the situation and stiffened. His face turned pale in an instant.

‘Him having an official high position?’

That person?

Jo Geol hastily raised his hand.

“I, I object!”

“Oh, really?”

However, at that moment, Chung Myung smoothly intervened.

“So, if one does not listen to what I say, they are considered a rebel?”

“W-wait a moment. Do...”

“In that case, I'm in favor.”

An eerie smile crept up on Chung Myung's face.

“Let's create it, whatever that positions are.”

At that moment, everyone's sharp gazes were directed at Namgung Dowi.

Only now did Namgung Dowi realize what he had done. His soul seemed to have left his body.