The World These Events Take Place In

Before anything else, a reader unfamiliar with this story needs to understand the fundamental structure of the world Ang Xiao operates in.

The **Sea of Light (Guanghai)** is a vast cultivation world where practitioners advance through successive realms by mastering increasingly profound principles of reality. The progression runs roughly from Qi Refining through Foundation Building, Golden Core, and upward. At the absolute pinnacle sits the **Nascent Soul stage**, which transforms a cultivator into a **Dao Lord** — an effectively immortal being of godlike power who resides on a divine construct called **the Other Shore**, a seven-layered sacred mountain suspended above the mortal world.

The Other Shore was created by the story's central antagonist, the **First Saint (Chu Sheng)**, who stands at its seventh and highest layer. There are exactly **six Dao Lord slots** on the Other Shore, all currently occupied. The six Dao Lords are:

- The **First Saint** himself, at the peak
- The **Sword Lord**, master of Destiny
- **Cang Hao**, master of Fate, ruler of the Dao Court
- The **World Honored One**, a Buddhist monk who is the weakest and most recently ascended Dao Lord, master of Cause and Effect
- The **Dao Lord of Magic Power**, a close friend of a legendary ancient figure named Si Chong
- The **Dao Lord of Magic Arts**

Below the Dao Lords, the highest achievable rank is **Great True Lord of the Heavenly Ascension Realm** — a cultivator who has proven a fundamental principle of reality called a **Void Proof Great Dao** and stands at the absolute ceiling of the mortal world, one step below Dao Lord status but separated from it by an almost unbridgeable gulf.

Ang Xiao occupies this position. He has for tens of thousands of years.

The **Underworld** is a separate realm below the mortal world, designed by a legendary figure called the **first Demon-Taming Peak Master (Dao Tianqi)** to receive and manage the souls of the dead. It is structurally independent from the Other Shore and its six-slot limit, meaning someone who proved the Nascent Soul stage through the Underworld could theoretically become a **seventh Dao Lord** outside that limit entirely. This is precisely why every existing Dao Lord views the Underworld as a threat.

The **Five Elements system** governs how cultivators below the Dao Lord level advance. Every True Lord proves mastery over natural phenomena organized around Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water. A cultivator who achieves all five in harmony reaches **five-element completion**, the prerequisite for attempting the final breakthrough to Dao Lord status. The specific phenomenon a cultivator masters is called their **fruit position**.

The **Cave Heaven Method** is the dominant cultivation system of the current era, controlling how fruit positions are proven and limiting advancement pathways. Its creator, the First Saint, designed it with built-in constraints that make it nearly impossible for anyone to reach the Nascent Soul stage without his oversight or approval.

The **Book of a Hundred Lifetimes** is a mysterious artifact possessed by the story's protagonist, **Lü Yang**, that allows him to reincarnate repeatedly while carrying memories and gains from previous lives. He is the wildcard that neither the First Saint nor any Dao Lord can fully account for, because his existence and history exist outside the Sea of Light's normal causal framework.

Finally, **Destiny, Fate, and Calamity** are not merely abstract concepts in this world. They are active **Great Daos** — fundamental forces of reality controlled by specific Dao Lords. When the First Saint writes a Destiny, he is not making a prediction. He is issuing a binding decree that reshapes causality itself to ensure a specific outcome occurs. This is one of the most important things to understand about why Ang Xiao's plan was so extraordinarily difficult to execute.

With all of that established, here is everything Ang Xiao did, why he did it, and how it all connected.

Who Ang Xiao Really Is

Ang Xiao's true name is **Lingxiao Donghuang Zhenjun**. He was originally a cultivator affiliated with the **Holy Sect**, the institution directly controlled by the First Saint himself.

Approximately 5,000 years before the story's present day, the **World Honored One** attained enlightenment through an extraordinary method: he traveled backward through time using the principle of cause and effect, intervening in a war between Dao Lords that occurred 129,600 years ago, and in doing so rewrote which of the two existing histories of the Sea of Light was "real." The history where the legendary cultivator **Si Chong** survived became the false history. The history where he died became official history. This rewriting of reality created significant turbulence in the causal fabric of the world.

Ang Xiao took advantage of this turbulence. He **faked his own death** and arranged for the World Honored One to conceal his true identity — his existence as Lingxiao Donghuang Zhenjun — inside the **false history** that the Buddha's enlightenment had rendered pseudo-real. This gave him two things of enormous value.

First: A new operating identity called "Ang Xiao" or "True Lord Biri," shielded from the First Saint's direct scrutiny. By burying his true self in the false history and operating under an assumed identity, he existed in a state that was extraordinarily difficult for even the Dao Lords to trace or fully understand.

Second: A **second life** — a resurrection token preserved inside the false history, tied to his true identity as Lingxiao Donghuang Zhenjun, deployable at exactly the right moment through a specific arrangement with the World Honored One.

He then spent thousands of years living as a smoke-shrouded, essentially unidentifiable figure lurking near the **Gate of Hell**, the entrance to the Underworld. The perpetual mist concealing his form was not merely aesthetic. It was a **perception barrier** — a profound technique that made it impossible for observers to clearly read his cultivation level, his fruit positions, or the true nature of his Great Dao. To anyone looking, he was simply a mysterious and dangerous old ghost of unclear power.

His surface behavior during this period — cold, calculating, ruthlessly manipulating rivals and harvesting their fruit positions — was entirely genuine. But it was also cover for something far larger.

The Core Technical Secret: Curved and Straight

Before examining the plan's phases, it is essential to understand the technical foundation everything else rests on.

Beyond the Five Elements system exists something called a **Void Proof Great Dao** — a fundamental principle of reality that a cultivator proves in the void itself, transcending any specific elemental category. This is extraordinarily rare. In the entire history of the Sea of Light, almost no one achieves it.

Ang Xiao proved his Void Proof Great Dao, which he named **Curved and Straight (Qu Zhi)**. Its fundamental principle is the **reversal and transformation between two poles** — curved becoming straight, straight becoming curved, weakness reversing into strength, life reversing into death, and crucially, any property transforming into its opposite under the right conditions.

His five fruit positions were:

- **Great Forest Wood** — mature, expansive forest growth, his primary position
- **Covered Lamp Fire** — fire sheltered and contained within an enclosure
- **Long Flowing Water** — an endless celestial river
- **Sand in Soil** — sparse, thin, weak earth
- **White Wax Gold** — refined and purified metal

The combination had an **obvious structural flaw**: Sand in Soil was far too thin and sparse to properly support Great Forest Wood. A great forest requires deep, rich earth. By conventional cultivation wisdom, this combination should have had a fatal hidden danger preventing successful completion.

This was deliberate misdirection concealing his most important secret. **He had integrated Curved and Straight directly into his five-element combination.** The Void Proof Great Dao continuously reversed the thin quality of Sand in Soil into abundant quality in practice, compensating for the structural weakness invisibly. His apparently flawed combination functioned perfectly because the Great Dao was quietly operating beneath the surface at all times.

This concealment served multiple purposes simultaneously. It hid his true cultivation level. It made him appear weaker than he was to enemies assessing his threat. It made his path incomprehensible to outside observers who could not account for why someone with his fruit position combination had not suffered the expected hidden dangers. And most critically, it set up the **final burning of Curved and Straight as the last fuel for his breakthrough** — something no one could predict because no one knew the Great Dao was integrated into his elements in the first place.

Phase One: The Chentu Manipulation and Five Thousand Years of Blocking Hongyun

The first active layer of Ang Xiao's scheme was a centuries-long act of systematic sabotage against his primary competitor.

The **Earthly Branch Chen** corresponds to an earth element in the traditional cosmological framework the Sea of Light operates within. Ang Xiao secretly **reversed the Yin and Yang of Chen Earth** — corrupting the natural pathways through which certain earth-connected fruit positions could be legitimately proven. Specifically, he targeted the pathways leading to the **Covered Lamp Fire** position, which he needed for his own five-element combination and could not allow anyone else to claim.

The target of this manipulation was **Hongyun**, a cultivator who had been attempting to prove the Covered Lamp Fire position through multiple reincarnations over five thousand years. Every time Hongyun reincarnated and tried again, the Chentu manipulation ensured his attempt failed. He spent five millennia being blocked by what appeared to be insufficient cultivation, bad luck, or circumstantial obstacles — when in reality a deliberate invisible sabotage was operating against him constantly.

Beyond the Chentu corruption, Ang Xiao also scattered **trap-laden fragments** of Hongyun's former grotto-heaven across specific locations, most notably on a road called **Gantang Road**, using them as bait. The emotional resonance Hongyun would naturally feel toward remnants of his own past cultivation space could be exploited to lure him into controlled situations where he could be further manipulated or eliminated.

Additionally, he took steps to block the emergence of a **Sixth Dragon Lord** connected to the Long Flowing Water imagery overseas. By **reversing the Chen Earth element within the Long Flowing Water formation**, he severed the ritual pathway that would have produced this Dragon Lord, eliminating a potential variable that might have complicated his own claim to that fruit position or interfered with his broader timeline.

This entire phase was about **securing raw materials** — ensuring the specific fruit positions he needed remained available for him to claim and that no rivals could reach them first.

Phase Two: Building to the Absolute Peak

Over tens of thousands of years of patient cultivation, Ang Xiao brought all five elements to their maximum possible state and integrated Curved and Straight throughout.

He reached what he classified as the **Ultimate Path level** — having proven a Void Proof Great Dao, merged it seamlessly into his five-element combination, and stood at the absolute threshold of Golden Core Perfection. This is the highest state any cultivator in the mortal world can achieve before the final breakthrough to Dao Lord status.

He was genuinely the **most powerful True Lord in the entire Sea of Light**, and he kept this fact carefully hidden behind his smoke-shrouded identity and deliberately obscured fruit position combination.

During this same period he conducted extensive study of the Underworld through his proximity to the Gate of Hell. Years of quiet observation convinced him that the Underworld path to Dao Lord status was not just theoretically possible but **practically viable** — given the right timing, the right preparation, and the right political conditions. The Underworld, operating downward rather than toward the Other Shore, would theoretically be of less direct interest to the four Dao Lords who occupied the Other Shore based on their upward-oriented power structures.

His calculated probability of successfully becoming Lord of the Underworld under ideal conditions was **70%**.

His original ideal timeline involved waiting for something called the **Great Calamity of a Thousand Years** to begin naturally — approximately twelve years away from when the story takes place. During the chaos of that calamity, when all True Lords would be fighting each other and the Dao Lords' attention would be maximally divided, he planned to quietly gather the remaining fruit positions from weakened opponents and advance into the Underworld.

Lü Yang's interventions across multiple lifetimes destroyed this plan entirely.

The Disruption: How Lü Yang Ruined the Original Plan

Through actions across multiple reincarnations — the details of which are known to Lü Yang but not to Ang Xiao — the protagonist created a cascade of problems:

Ang Xiao was **forced out of the Underworld prematurely**, losing his immortality because the Underworld would no longer accept his soul once he had been expelled from it.

He **lost three of his five fruit positions** through subsequent conflicts, leaving him with only Great Forest Wood, Long Flowing Water, and a reduced version of his earth position.

He was forced into a **rushed three-element breakthrough** just to remain relevant as a Great True Lord, which permanently capped his path — the Cave Heaven Method prevents a cultivator who achieves three-element completion from later pursuing the full five-element version.

His Underworld standing was significantly reduced, making the distance he would need to cover inside the Underworld to reach its core nearly **double** what it would have been under the original plan.

And Lü Yang publicly exposed the **Chentu secret** — the manipulation of Chen Earth — destroying Ang Xiao's most important protective cover and making his identity and methods legible to his enemies.

Faced with this situation, Ang Xiao did not despair. He **completely restructured his plan** into something far more audacious, compressed, and risky than the original.

The Revised Scheme: The Audacious Version

Step One: Securing a Resurrection

Before anything else, Ang Xiao made a **secret deal with the World Honored One**. The specific terms involved Ang Xiao entrusting his true name and his honorific title as Lingxiao Donghuang Zhenjun to the Buddha's keeping, in exchange for one guaranteed resurrection after death.

The mechanics of this resurrection were tied to the **false history** where his true identity had been buried. When deployed, it would project his false-history cause and effect into the present world, creating a new living Lingxiao Donghuang Zhenjun — his second life stepping out of the pseudo-historical vault where it had been preserved.

This was the absolute foundation of the revised plan. Without this resurrection, every subsequent step was meaningless, because the plan required him to die and continue regardless.

Step Two: Creating Two Bodies

Ang Xiao employed a method that had never been seen before in the Sea of Light: he **separated himself into a true body and a worldly body** (法外之身 — a body existing outside the normal laws of the world).

The **worldly body** was what everyone saw. It interacted in the world, attended meetings, negotiated with Lü Yang, made public moves that drew observation and analysis from all parties including the Dao Lords. Everything observers thought they knew about Ang Xiao's state, preparations, and position was based on readings of this worldly body.

The **true body** remained completely hidden until the critical moment. No one knew it existed.

This separation served a crucial purpose: when the worldly body eventually died, observers would believe Ang Xiao had been defeated and the threat was over. The true body could then continue forward without interference, because attention would have shifted away.

Step Three: Recognizing and Instrumentalizing Lü Yang

When Lü Yang appeared with his connection to the World Honored One and his possession of the **City Wall Soil Dao Fruit technique** — a power whose fundamental mystery is "Holding the Past and Present," capable of rewriting causality — Ang Xiao immediately recognized multiple things.

Lü Yang's ambitions would inevitably draw fire from the First Saint and the Dao Lords. His actions would generate **windows of distraction** — moments when the most powerful beings in the world were looking elsewhere.

Ang Xiao agreed to lend Lü Yang the use of the **Covered Lamp Fire** fruit position in a mutually beneficial arrangement. But embedded in this arrangement was a controlled dependency: if Ang Xiao withdrew the Covered Lamp Fire at the wrong moment, Lü Yang's plan would collapse. This made Lü Yang partially dependent on Ang Xiao's continued cooperation.

Through subtle manipulation of cause and effect — planting emotional impressions that Lü Yang interpreted as his own intuitions — Ang Xiao communicated to him that the Underworld entry should happen at a very specific moment: **when Lü Yang survived a near-death experience but successfully escaped**. This timing would coincide with:

- The triggering of the second Destiny marker connected to Lü Yang's cultivation of the Dharma Body path
- All Dao Lords' attention being maximally redirected toward that event
- The window of distraction from the Underworld being at its widest possible point

Step Four: Expanding the Underworld Across the Entire Sea of Light

This was the most technically brilliant component of the entire revised scheme, and arguably the most unprecedented act in the story's history.

Ang Xiao traveled to the **narrow passage overseas** — a specific geographic location representing the closest accessible point to the Underworld's boundaries from the mortal world.

There, he used his Void Proof Great Dao of **Curved and Straight** to do something that had never been done before: he **reversed the symbols of life and death across the entire Sea of Light**.

The mechanics of this reversal: by applying Curved and Straight — whose fundamental principle is the transformation between poles — to the boundary between the living world and the Underworld, he caused **all living beings in the Sea of Light to begin manifesting death energy**. The Underworld's authority, previously confined to souls who had already died, was extended to every living cultivator simultaneously.

The effects cascaded across multiple levels:

The **Underworld's rank** was massively elevated — from a domain governing dead souls to something approaching the scale and authority of the Other Shore itself. This elevation made achieving Dao Lord status within it far more plausible than it had been before.

Inside the Underworld specifically, this expansion meant Ang Xiao's own status was **supercharged**. His Curved and Straight Dao, operating in a realm that now encompassed all life and death, functioned like a dragon returned to the sea — amplified beyond what it could achieve in the normal mortal world.

All other True Lords were **weakened** by having Underworld-level status imposed on them through his perception barrier, while Ang Xiao himself was strengthened.

All major powers were drawn into conflict and chaos, creating precisely the distraction the plan required.

The expansion also established the **conditions for Ang Xiao's rank within the Underworld to be elevated dramatically**, shortening the distance he would need to cover inside it to reach the core.

Step Five: The Worldly Body as Misdirection

While the true body entered the Underworld and began advancing, the **worldly body remained outside** performing elaborate visible actions — creating phenomena suggesting Ang Xiao was still in the early stages of beginning his Underworld entry, still preparing, still dealing with external obstacles.

By the time any observer realized the worldly body was not the true form, the true body was already **deep inside the Underworld**, well past the point where intervention could easily stop it.

This deliberate misdirection bought the true body time it would otherwise not have had.

Step Six: The Severing of Reincarnation Power as a Political Negotiation

When Ang Xiao entered the Underworld and the Dao Lords began mobilizing against him, he executed a tactical move that fundamentally changed the political balance of the entire conflict.

He **severed the Underworld's reincarnation power** from reaching the **Heavenly Palace battlefield** where the major conflict between the True Lord factions was occurring.

This was not a defensive measure. It was a precisely calculated **negotiation chip**.

The effect on the Heavenly Palace battle was immediate and devastating: without reincarnation insurance, every True Lord death became permanent. Factions that had been operating with the assumption that fallen members could be resurrected suddenly found themselves facing genuine, irreversible losses. This handed a decisive advantage to one specific faction — the **Star Palace** — over its opponent.

The **Dao Lord of Magic Power** had been watching the entire situation, calculating whether intervening on Ang Xiao's behalf was worth the political cost. He needed to see sufficient tangible benefit before committing. The sudden, dramatic advantage Ang Xiao handed to Star Palace — a faction aligned with this Dao Lord's interests — was exactly the threshold

needed. The Dao Lord of Magic Power finally moved, positioning himself to shield Ang Xiao from the other Dao Lords' interference.

This was the genius of the move: Ang Xiao did not ask for help. He did not appeal to anyone's mercy or loyalty. He simply **created conditions where helping him was the most strategically rational choice** for someone with sufficient power to matter.

Step Seven: The Walk Through the Underworld

With his peak cultivation, his Curved and Straight integrated throughout, political cover arranged through the Dao Lord of Magic Power, and the true body already inside while observers watched the worldly body's deceptions, Ang Xiao's true form walked openly through the Underworld's major landmarks.

The Underworld could not distinguish him from an ordinary undead soul. He passed through each structure without resistance:

The Yellow Springs Road — the first passage of the dead, where souls begin their transition.

The Bridge of Helplessness — the crossing point that severs mortal attachments and erases worldly memories.

The Looking-Homeward Terrace — where souls take their final glance back at the mortal world before continuing deeper.

The Three Lives Stone — the most revealing stop. This stone displays a soul's past, present, and future lives to anyone who stands before it. When Ang Xiao reached it, the stone showed something extraordinary and disturbing: **he had no past life**. His soul had been artificially created rather than naturally born through the cycle of reincarnation. He was, in some fundamental sense, a manufactured being — an arranged pawn whose very existence had been engineered.

Most cultivators would have been shattered by this revelation. Ang Xiao's response, witnessed by the Dao Lords who were observing, was to show **no hesitation whatsoever**. His implicit message was clear: my origins can be arranged, but my convictions and my path are entirely my own.

The Four Directions Ghost Realm — the broader territory governing the dead across all four directions.

Each of these passages **deepened his connection to the Underworld's authority**, progressively elevating his status within its domain. The further he advanced, the more the Underworld's power aligned with and amplified his Curved and Straight Dao. The process was self-reinforcing.

Step Eight: The Calamity Connection and the Dark Storm

Simultaneously with the Underworld advance, a separate but critically important process was occurring on the surface world.

The **Calamity** is one of the Five Great Heavenly Numbers — a fundamental force of the Sea of Light that currently has no Dao Lord governing it, making it the most volatile and available of the great forces. Ang Xiao had spent years positioning himself to claim the Calamity's favor, using his **Great Forest Wood** position and the five-element combination he had built as the basis for proving it.

At the critical moment, **True Monarch Feixue** — a Holy Sect True Lord who was simultaneously one of the First Saint's most important pieces in a separate scheme involving the Ancestral Dragon — made a decision that cascaded into Ang Xiao's plan in an unexpected way.

Feixue, recognizing that she was about to be used as a vessel for the Ancestral Dragon to possess and absorb the Calamity imagery, **self-destructed deliberately and completely**, destroying the Calamity buffer the First Saint and Ancestral Dragon had built through her, and simultaneously detonating the **Yang Great Dao** that Ang Xiao had secretly placed within her sea of consciousness.

This Yang Great Dao detonation **reopened the connection between the dark side of the Sea of Light and the present world** — a dark storm that Ang Xiao had originally established and that had been dormant. Its reopening released an enormous surge of Calamity imagery directly toward Ang Xiao.

The Ancestral Dragon, who had been monopolizing the Calamity's favor for his own ascension, suddenly lost ground. The Calamity's attention shifted — partially away from the Ancestral Dragon and surging toward Ang Xiao instead.

Combined with Ang Xiao's own five-element combination, the dark storm, and the elevated Underworld status, his **Calamity-proving aura** reached a peak that surpassed the Ancestral Dragon's at that moment. The Calamity favored him.

This surge was what finally triggered his **breakthrough to Golden Core Perfection** — the Dao Lord threshold — while operating inside the Underworld.

Step Nine: The Critical Shortfall and the One-Third Problem

At the absolute peak of this surge, when Ang Xiao's Calamity-proving aura was strongest and his breakthrough was within reach, the **First Saint intervened directly**.

Using the power of **Destiny**, Chu Sheng redirected approximately **one-third of the Calamity imagery** that had been surging toward Ang Xiao back to the Ancestral Dragon.

This one-third redirection was precisely calculated. It was not enough to destroy Ang Xiao's attempt entirely — that would have been too obvious and would have provoked resistance from the other Dao Lords. But it was enough to **break the final step** of his Calamity-proving momentum at exactly the moment it would otherwise have succeeded.

Ang Xiao's Calamity connection succeeded — the Calamity did fall upon him and they became one. But the forced deficit meant his momentum fell just short of the threshold needed to step onto the Other Shore.

He was stranded in a uniquely terrible position: **having proven the Calamity but unable to ascend to the Other Shore**, with his newly achieved Golden Core Perfection status burning through his life force constantly. Without the Other Shore to stabilize this rank, he was like a candle burning at maximum intensity — brilliant, but consuming itself toward extinction.

The Other Shore's six-slot limit was absolute. With all six slots occupied, there was no room for a seventh, regardless of how thoroughly someone had proven the Calamity or any other Great Dao.

He had succeeded in everything except the one thing that mattered.

Step Ten: The Fragment Handed Down and the Final Calculation

After the World Honored One was killed by the First Saint in direct combat — the Buddha having fought to a position of near-equality with Chu Sheng through his united-consciousness Buddhist kingdom technique before ultimately losing — the First Saint claimed the World Honored One's **fragment of the Other Shore**.

Then, in a move that surprised everyone, the First Saint **gave this fragment to Ang Xiao**.

On the surface this appeared to be a reward or a concession. In reality it was a calculated move serving the First Saint's own purposes — specifically, replacing the World Honored One with a new Dao Lord who would be in the First Saint's debt and potentially more controllable than the Buddha had been.

However, Ang Xiao receiving this fragment faced an immediate obstacle: the **Dao Lord of Magic Power**, who had been protecting him, now turned against him in an attempt to seize the fragment for himself. Their battle resumed, with the stakes completely transformed.

Step Eleven: The Two Obstacles at the Netherworld Palace

Inside the Underworld, the true body meanwhile faced the two crises that tested the entire scheme's foundation.

The First Obstacle — The First Saint's Destiny:

The First Saint wrote a Destiny against Ang Xiao: you will fail, you will die here. With the other Dao Lords calculating that a new Underworld Dao Lord was against their collective interests in preserving the Other Shore hierarchy, they chose not to resist this Destiny. The decree was binding and its execution was in motion.

The Second Obstacle — The Demon-Taming Peak Master:

Even more unexpectedly, the first Demon-Taming Peak Master, **Dao Tianqi** — the original creator of the Underworld who had been dormant for over a hundred thousand years — **awakened** at this critical moment. His awakening was a direct consequence of Lü Yang's interference in the Emperor's Response realm across multiple lifetimes, a causal chain that Ang Xiao could not have predicted.

Dao Tianqi, as the Underworld's original master, had a legitimate prior claim to the throne. Two beings with claims to the Underworld's core, one Destiny writing death, and all six Dao Lords watching. The situation appeared completely hopeless.

Step Twelve: The Unexpected Gift — Dao Tianqi's Sacrifice

What happened next was not part of Ang Xiao's scheme. It was something he received, not something he planned.

Dao Tianqi assessed the situation with complete clarity: the First Saint wanted to kill him, the World Honored One wanted the Underworld for his own purposes, the other Dao Lords would seize it if it went empty, and continuing to hold the Underworld against all these forces while severely weakened would simply mean being killed anyway with nothing to show for it.

He made a decision. He called out to the World Honored One by name, **acknowledged the entire situation openly**, and then **voluntarily destroyed himself** — shattering his own consciousness, surrendering the Underworld's core, and granting Ang Xiao clear passage to the throne.

His final words were the words of someone who chose his death rather than having it imposed: if my master wants to kill me and my senior brother wants the Underworld, then let this calamity belong to someone who earned it.

This was genuine sacrifice from an entity who recognized what was happening and made a moral choice. Ang Xiao had not arranged it and could not have arranged it. He received it and accepted it.

Step Thirteen: Death, the True Name, and the Second Life

The Destiny marker was still descending. Dao Tianqi's sacrifice cleared the path to the throne but could not cancel the First Saint's written fate.

At the precise moment of his death as Ang Xiao — with the worldly body expiring and the true body crossing the threshold of the Netherworld Palace — he called out the World Honored One's **true name: Temuni**.

This name was the activation key. By calling the Buddha's true name, Ang Xiao intensified their causal connection to maximum strength, and the **Time Scroll** — a device the World Honored One had prepared specifically for this moment — deployed.

What the Time Scroll did was a specific rewriting of causality: it declared to the entire causal network that the entity who had just died was the **worldly body** (法外身), not the true form. The **true body** had been hiding and was in perfect condition all along.

This declaration served multiple purposes simultaneously:

It **technically satisfied the Destiny's requirement** that "Ang Xiao fails here" — the entity that died was the worldly body, so the Destiny was fulfilled without destroying the true continuation.

It **restored the true body to full causal condition**, acknowledged by the entire causal network as being undamaged and complete.

It **deployed the second life** preserved in the false history — his identity as Lingxiao Donghuang Zhenjun stepped out of pseudo-historical storage and into the present world, giving him a fresh causal thread with full strength.

His status broke through to Golden Core Perfection. He stood inside the Netherworld Palace, one step from becoming the Underworld's Dao Lord.

Step Fourteen: The Second Destiny and the Final Failure

He was seconds from success when the First Saint moved again.

Unwilling to accept a defeat on a matter involving the fundamental principle of Destiny — his own Great Dao — Chu Sheng **descended from the sixth level of the Other Shore to the fifth level**. This was a permanent sacrifice of his own power. Every step down from his highest position cost him real, lasting capability and weakened his influence over the mortal world. He was paying a genuine price.

He wrote a second, more absolute Destiny:

No one in the Underworld can bear witness.

This was not directed at Ang Xiao specifically. It targeted the act of enlightenment itself within the Underworld, making the Underworld itself incapable of supporting a breakthrough.

The other Dao Lords faced a choice. They had already successfully **forced the First Saint to take two steps down** from his peak position — a significant political victory that weakened him permanently. Contesting a second Destiny immediately after would cost them resources they had just spent forcing that concession. They calculated that they had won enough and chose not to resist the second decree.

Ang Xiao's consciousness disintegrated.

He had no resurrections remaining. The one the World Honored One had preserved had already been used to survive the first Destiny. There was nothing left to absorb the second.

The Tragedy of the Complete Picture

What makes Ang Xiao's story particularly devastating is the accumulated weight of everything he was working against simultaneously.

He was working against **the First Saint's Destiny**, which could write binding fate into reality.

He was working against the **six-slot limit** of the Other Shore, which his Calamity-proving could not circumvent.

He was working against **incomplete information** — he could not know about the remnant consciousness in the Underworld's core in earlier versions of the plan, and could not fully predict the second Destiny in the revised version.

He was working against the fact that the **World Honored One was using him**, not partnering with him, though the Buddha's help was still genuinely essential.

He was working against the reality that his own soul had been **artificially created** — suggesting his very existence may have been engineered from the beginning as part of someone else's design.

And yet he built a plan of extraordinary sophistication across tens of thousands of years, forced the most powerful being in the Sea of Light to permanently weaken himself, proved the Calamity — one of the Five Great Heavenly Numbers — and stood inside the Netherworld Palace with the breakthrough in reach.