

Civilization 1321

Chapter 1321: Heresy? Priests' Disputes and Agreements

August sunlight is perfect for setting sail, silently urging the calm sea. The exploration fleet held a grand wedding, and after proclaiming the name of the Chief Divine, once again embarked from the newly established Lake Bay Port towards distant lands!

Exploration Captain Zuvaro and Scholar Mikki stood on the longship, gazing at the Wiyot people's coast. The young priest Qinchongcan reluctantly saw them off, while the female chieftain Tulan wore a joyful expression. Behind them were the mixed kingdom crew and tribespeople. Seeing this, smiles spread across Zuvaro and Mikki's faces.

"Praise the Chief Divine! Among the Wiyot tribes, in this peaceful Lake Bay, the seeds of faith are finally sown!"

"Yes! Chief Divine's protection! The seeds have been sown, just waiting for time to nurture them, gradually growing and blooming, producing abundant fruits!"

The five longships continued northward, the mighty sea breeze carrying a chill. The distant Far North land was coming closer step by step. It was only when the Wiyot's cottages and bay disappeared did Scholar Mikki retract his smile and coldly stare at Zuvaro.

"Zuvaro! You've hidden things from me once again! At the Yaolem Great Tribe, you promised not to act on your own!"

"Uh..."

Upon hearing this, Exploration Captain Zuvaro rubbed his nose and lightly coughed.

"Cough! Mikki, listen to me, time was pressing, and the fleet needed to set sail promptly! I sought the consent of Priest Qinchongcan and then directly proposed... It wasn't that I didn't have time to tell you... Uh..."

Zuvaro tried explaining for a while, but Mikki's clear eyes continued to coldly stare at him, as if he'd already seen through him. His voice grew smaller and finally, with resignation, he rubbed his face and answered seriously.

"Chief Divine bear witness! Mikki, letting the fleet members reside and intermarry with the local tribes is the quickest way to establish and spread the faith! You've also seen that with the joining of female chieftain Tulan and over a hundred tribespeople, the entire Lake Bay port camp can be established quickly!"

"Didn't Your Majesty also say to learn from the local tribes! These tribespeople can teach the crew Northern survival skills and help spread the Chief Divine's faith... And by spring next year, with this manpower, we can extensively cultivate potatoes and sweet potatoes, truly establishing a food supply port in the North, even supply the crew!"

"Therefore, just as I told Priest Qinchongcan, for the sake of the Chief Divine's ministry and the kingdom's exploration, what harm is there in sacrificing oneself? Moreover, he's actually at no loss..."

"..."

Scholar Mikki pursed his lips, remained silent for a while, and then spoke softly.

"Zuvaro, Qinchongcan is one of the Crow Family's heirs, a descendant of the honorable nobility. You've arranged him in such a way, his family doesn't even know. How will you explain to the Crow Clan Leader when you return to the kingdom?"

"Ha! The Crow Family was reallocated north of the Lerma River long ago and is no longer as influential. Qinchongcan isn't the most important heir; they sent him to Divine Might University to become a Kingdom Priest without any expectation for his marriage!"

Discussing these old nobles of the kingdom, Exploration Captain Zuvaro scoffed disdainfully. He stood at the prow, spine straight, gazing over endless waves, his face full of confidence and generosity.

"According to the Alliance's teachings, low-level priests are not allowed to marry... Priest Qinchongcan was merely a small fish sent by the Crow Family to test the waters! Now, Priest Qinchongcan can preside

over a port like this, make grand strides in the Northern land, branch out and establish an independent family... Isn't this much better than being stuck in a fief of the kingdom, where there's no upward path?"

"Haha! Zuwaro, you know very well! According to the Alliance's teachings, low-level priests are not allowed to marry!"

Scholar Mikki widened his eyes, stared fiercely at Exploration Captain Zuwaro. As part of the new Divine Revelation Priest lineage under direct leadership of Your Majesty, he's not actually concerned with those declining old nobles of the Tarasco Kingdom. He said what he did just to make this point!

"You're ignoring the Alliance's teachings, allowing Priest Qinchongcan to marry, and even assured him you'd advocate to Your Majesty!"

"Zuwaro! After you left the kingdom, did you treat the teachings of the High Priesthood as nothing more than South sea breeze, blowing by not leaving a trace?!"

"Uh... Alliance's teachings, High Priesthood's teachings..."

Upon hearing these words, beads of sweat finally appeared on Exploration Captain Zuwaro's forehead. Suddenly realizing the crux, he looked at the stern Mikki, his thoughts quickly forming, and immediately grasped the Chief Divine's emblem, making a sacred oath!

"Chief Divine bear witness! I've never ignored the Chief Divine's teachings! I swear with my soul! My devotion to the Chief Divine has never wavered even slightly!"

"In the Wiyot's lake garden tribe, I arranged Priest Qinchongcan's marriage truly for the Chief Divine and the kingdom! The Wiyot proposed marriage seeing Qinchongcan as a shaman and priest of the Northern land. Northern shamans and priests can marry. If I were to refuse their sincere request, the kingdom would not only lose potential tribal support but might even gain a hidden enemy!"

"Moreover, I truly believe this teaching is an outdated provision by the Alliance! Back in the kingdom, Your Majesty didn't really value this teaching. High-level priests marrying, that's been happening abundantly. As long as Qinchongcan roots himself in the Northern land, develops a congregation of ten

thousand, ascending to a high-ranked Third Level Priest is just a matter of time! Ultimately, it's only a matter of procedure order..."

"Furthermore, we're leading the fleet, exploring and colonizing in these Northern lands beyond the kingdom and alliance's reach! In such circumstances, whatever method works, whatever means unite the tribes should be pursued without reservation! If we bind ourselves, clinging to teachings and fail to develop in the Northern land swiftly, that would be failing Your Majesty's trust!"

Listening to Zuvaro's passionate words and seeing his earnest look, Scholar Mikki pursed his lips, remained silent for a long time before releasing a long sigh.

"Ah! Zuvaro! You really are audacious and overly adaptive!... I finally realize why Your Majesty paired me with you to organize the fleet... Without anyone watching you, you'd certainly pierce the heavens!"

"Chief Divine, piercing the heavens is one thing! But if you 'adaptively' spread the faith in the Northern land and form a heretical sect... I don't want to go through all the hardships, return to the kingdom, and still be interrogated by the Inquisition! The conflicts between the Kingdom Priesthood and Alliance High Priesthood are already troublesome enough..."

"Chief Divine witness! You must promise me! Other than the priest's marriage rule, do not create any other messy affairs!"

"Uh... Alright! I swear by the Chief Divine! I, Zuvaro, apart from the priest's marriage rule, will not disregard teachings or act on my own!"

Under Mikki's gaze, Exploration Captain Zuvaro solemnly held the Chief God's Amulet and made a serious vow! Then, his eyes gleamed, with a brief thought, he keenly asked.

"Mikki, what did you say earlier? Conflicts between the Kingdom Priesthood and Alliance High Priesthood?! When did that happen? How come I don't know?"

"Hmm... You've been out sailing all the time, of course you wouldn't know. Since the High Priest went to the Divine Kingdom, there've been some conflicts over religious interpretations and priest arrangements between the kingdom and the alliance... The High Priest previously granted Your Majesty's Kingdom

Priesthood the religious interpretation rights of the Divine Revelation, but now the High Priesthood seeks to revoke or limit it... Also, for the administration of priests in the Otomi People's territory, previously it was meddled by the kingdom, but now the alliance wants direct jurisdiction... But these conflicts are not severe at the moment..."

Scholar Mikki rubbed his forehead, giving a brief explanation. This sensitive topic he preferred not to delve into deeply, and it's quite challenging to elaborate.

"Ah! Conflicts over religious interpretations and priest arrangements?..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro pondered briefly, his expression becoming solemn.

"Such conflicts? These conflicts?... Mikki! Are they truly not serious?"

"Hmm. At least when I left Qinchongcan Capital, they were just budding issues... May the Chief Divine protect!"

Scholar Mikki closed his eyes, offering his devout prayer. Exploration Captain Zuvaro also remained silent for a long time, unable to find solace. Amidst the power struggles between two religious centers, two colossal entities, what do two Second Level Priests matter? Especially when they're thousands of miles away, the only recourse they have is to pray.

"May the Chief Divine protect!"

Gently muttered prayers echoed along the desolate Northern Coast, quickly left behind by the ever-advancing fleet. Beyond the Wiyot people's lands, three to four hundred miles out, mighty Tolowa tribes (Tolowa) would soon appear before everyone!

Chapter 1322: The Hyperion Tree and the Battle of the Tolowa Tribes

Between the lakeside plains of the Wiyot people and the river valley of the Tolowa Tribes are isolated peaks and high mountains over three hundred miles, along with towering and dense redwood forests. This magnificent redwood forest is one of the oldest forests in the world. The ancient giant redwoods grow on the coastal mountains, and giant trees can be seen everywhere, with treetops reaching tens or

hundreds of meters into the sky. They seem like elders from the wilderness, calmly overlooking the tranquil sea and the longships rowing across it.

Scholar Mikki stood at the flagship's railing, gazing up at the giants in the mountain from the East, his eyes full of awe. His gaze fell upon an especially tall and striking ancient redwood, and he murmured in astonishment.

"Chief Divine! Such a tall Divine Tree! It must be the tallest giant tree on all the lands of the world!"

"The Chief Divine blesses us! To have such tall ancient trees! If used as the main trunk, it might be possible to build a giant longship over a hundred meters long!..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro widened his eyes, also gazing up at the Divine Wood appearing along the coast with an incredible expression.

"Ah! The ancient Divine Tree! The Giant God Tree spoken of by the Shaman!"

Seeing the Divine Tree, Cloaked Hunter Le Tian was also surprised. He directly prostrated himself on the deck, sincerely worshipping towards the East. Then, he excitedly spoke to Mikki.

"I've heard of this tree! The Giant God Tree is very famous among the Northern Tribes! Beyond it lies the territory of the Tolowa tribes!"

At this moment, the excited trio was unaware that this towering ancient redwood would later be known as the "Hyperion tree," the tallest known tree in the world, standing an astonishing 116 meters tall!

Such height is excessively prominent, visible from dozens of miles away. It thus serves not only as the Divine Tree for the surrounding Indian tribes and a symbol of the ancient forest, but also as a nautical landmark for navigation.

"No, no! I must give it, oh, give it a name!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro, stunned for a moment, suddenly became excited.

"This is an unprecedented Divine Tree! It's the Chief Divine's revelation and the blessing of the Chief Divine! We'll call it... Divine Revelation Tree!"

Hearing such a name, Scholar Mikki pondered for a moment before nodding in agreement. He looked at the dusk sky, then instructed the fleet to stop, land on the coast for rest, and joyfully announced to everyone:

"Praise the Chief Divine! This Divine Revelation Tree is an auspicious sign of the blessing from the Chief Divine and a symbol of the Prophecy, which will bless our northward voyage!"

Upon hearing this proclamation and seeing the real Divine Tree, the morale of the entire fleet markedly soared.

"The Chief Divine blesses us! Praise Your Majesty! Safe voyage north!..."

The whole crew rested for a night under the Divine Revelation Tree, feeling the call of the ancient forest. After the morning prayers on the second day, the fleet set off again. The morning light from the East fell on the redwood forest, casting shadows on the deep blue sea, making it feel as if they were sailing through a sea of trees.

"Chief Divine! What a spectacular sailing sight! This must be an auspicious omen!..."

Scholar Mikki, gazing at the sea of trees, prayed for a while, then spoke with a smile.

"Zuvaro, you were right! These tall and sturdy redwood trees indeed make excellent shipbuilding material for building unprecedented large ships!"

"Of course! If the Kingdom has enough manpower in the Northern Land, establishing a shipyard and harvesting these tall redwoods for shipbuilding... we could even create longships two or three times larger than now!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro, looking far at these redwoods and the ancient and wild coast, had his thoughts drift away and then return.

"It's a pity! We don't have that many people here!..."

"Hmm..."

Scholar Mikki silently nodded. He pondered for a moment and then switched topics with a smile.

"Zuvaro, how did you come up with the idea to fire the cannon-spreading faith at the wedding of the Western Bee Priest?"

"Haha! Mikki, when spreading faith, the more people, the better! I figured before the fleet leaves, it's at least necessary to leave the Chief Divine's name! When there's an opportunity, you must seize it..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro, grinning, felt proud of his exquisite thought. Then, with some concern, he spoke.

"The upcoming Northern Tribes, it's unknown how they've received the Kingdom Fleet! Don't forget, the Shaman's token may not be effective further north. Moreover, some tribes lack a common language..."

Perhaps it was the Divine Tree's blessing, but Zuvaro's words seemed enlightened. After the fleet traveled over three hundred miles north from Lake Garden Tribe, they arrived at the Redwood Tribe, the Tolowa tribe closest to the Redwood Forest. However, faced with the sudden appearance of five longships, the Tolowa people of the Redwood Tribe quickly mobilized. Armed with Stone Spears, Hunting Bows, and Javelins, they shouted loudly toward the coast, seemingly ever ready to engage with the fleet.

"Chief Divine! Why are these Tolowa tribes so vigilant? It doesn't seem easy to get along..."

Scholar Mikki shook his head and looked at the curious and observing Cloaked Hunter.

"Le Tian, has the Cedar Shaman had any dealings with these Tolowa tribes?"

"Hmm... maybe? The Cedar Shaman said he sensed great spirits under the Giant God Tree and even treated some encountered Tolowa Hunters... likely from this tribe! I'll go ask!"

With that said, Cloaked Hunter Le Tian jumped ashore, holding up the Cedar Shaman's wood carving, shouting a few phrases reminiscent of a shaman's spell. The Tolowa Hunters hesitated for a moment before a burly Hunter emerged. He carefully examined the wood carving for a moment, then with an excited expression, shouted loudly.

"Co'is! Tsi'i hewon! Friends! Welcome-worthy people!"

"Tuowu! Are you sure they are friends from the South?"

Hearing the shout from the burly Hunter, another middle-aged man wearing a Deer Antler Hat stepped forward, cautiously asking.

"Not our enemies? Not people summoned by the Leaf Grass Tribe?"

"Great Chieftain! I'm sure! This is the Cedar Shaman's wood carving from the South, they must be from the Shaman's tribe! Over ten years ago, the Cedar Shaman went to the Redwood Sacred Land, and there treated the tribe's hunters and even cured my persistent ailment!"

Saying this, Hunter Tuowu's expression was filled with excitement. He had been unable to have children before but drank the herbal tea given by the Shaman for a month upon returning to his tribe, immediately seeing a miraculous effect. Later, he often hoped to find the Cedar Shaman again, even visiting southern tribes to get more herbal tea... but unfortunately, he never encountered him again.

"People of the Cedar Shaman..."

Wearing the Deer Antler Hat, Great Chieftain pondered for a moment, carefully observing the attire of the fleet guards before finally nodding his head.

"Since they have no relation with the Leaf Grass Tribe, they are not enemies! Tuowu, you know the language of the Southern Tribes, so you must speak with them!"

"Our Redwood Tribe welcomes friends, especially those who can fight alongside us! But if secretly collaborating with the Leaf Grass Tribe to plot against the tribe's village, hunting grounds, and fields, it shall be not to die!..."

After hearing this, Hunter Tuowu nodded heavily. He followed Cloaked Hunter Le Tian and boarded the longship he'd never seen before, using Maidu, which is in the same language family as Miwock, to speak solemnly.

"Friends from the Cedar Shaman's tribe in the South! The earlier hostility was just a misunderstanding! Our Redwood Tribe has been fighting against the northern enemy, the Leaf Grass Tribe, these past few years. It's a tough battle requiring constant vigilance!..."

"You've come from the Redwood Sacred Land in the South on longships to trade with us? Or do you wish to join us and fight the evil Leaf Grass Tribe in the North together?"

Chapter 1323: Tribal Civil War Among the Tolowa People

The sea breeze was slightly cool, and the morning mist rose on the sea surface, spreading among the mountain ranges. The redwood trees mingled with the morning mist, their tall trunks looming and disappearing, appearing dreamlike and ethereal.

Five longships of the Kingdom were anchored by the coast outside the Redwood Tribe, setting up simple camps. The calls of kingfishers echoed among the nearby villages as the Samurai rose from their light slumber, donned their armor, and began preparing breakfast. The villagers from the Redwood Tribe were doing the same; vigilant Hunters, with newly traded Copper Spears on their backs, kindled cooking fires while watchfully observing the Southern Tribes arriving from the sea.

"Hiss! This fruit is so sour!..."

Miki the Sage yawned, took the berries passed by Zuwaro, tossed them into his mouth, chewed them, and instantly jolted as if he would jump up right on the spot.

"This? Zuwaro? These berries?..."

"Look! We traded these from the Redwood Tribe yesterday, and there are two more baskets. His Majesty said we must eat more fruits when going out to sea, to avoid any scurvy... haha! Such sour fruit should last long."

Exploration Captain Zuwaro held back a laugh, stirring the salmon, sea clams, and unknown vegetable roots cooking in the clay pot with a wooden spoon. The aroma of seafood rose from the steaming pot, making stomachs growl.

"Ahem! Zuwaro, is it ready? Can we eat?"

"Let it cook a bit more. The fish and clams we traded from the Redwood Tribe were likely caught two days ago, they're not very fresh... but it's not a big problem, as long as it's cooked thoroughly."

"Hmm."

Miki the Sage nodded, staring at the campfire and the heating clay pot, and asked gravely.

"Zuwaro, how much storable food did you trade from them yesterday?"

"Not much. They traded us their recent catch and game with the fleet. But as for storable smoked fish, smoked meat, beans, and corn... we got very little, probably enough for two hundred people in the fleet to last eight or nine days!"

Exploration Captain Zuwaro tugged his hair, looking toward the tribal villages in the morning mist, and sighed.

"They don't have much salt, not enough to preserve meats, and they value storable grains highly, unwilling to trade for gemstones and cloth... we got this food only after I offered twenty Copper Spears!"

"Ah?"

Hearing this, Miki the Sage frowned in puzzlement and asked.

"The Redwood Tribe is estimated to have a scale of three thousand people! They have fields opened by the riverside, dozens of fishing boats, and so many hunters... how could such a large tribe, farming, fishing, and hunting, possibly have no stored grain?"

"Hmm, Chief Divine as witness! They surely have stored grain, but they are very wary of outsiders, unwilling to trade with us."

Exploration Captain Zuwaro spread his hands, answering helplessly.

"Frankly, they don't trust us... unless we agree to their request, to join in some war against the Northern Leaf Grass Tribe..."

"Zuwaro, that's internal warfare among the Tolowa tribes, involving many tribes... the fleet is heading north for exploration, better not get involved!"

Miki the Sage shook his head lightly and responded softly.

"Chief Divine as witness! Yesterday I took Le Tian as a translator, and chatted with their Tribal Huntsman Tuowu all night... I roughly understood the situation of this tribal war..."

"Hmm? What did you find out?"

Exploration Captain Zuwaro straightened up, listening attentively. The further north the fleet traveled, the more serious the language barrier became. Finding someone to communicate with was truly a blessing from the Chief Divine!

"This coastal valley where the Tolowa people gather is about sixty miles north to south, and twenty miles east to west, a very suitable place for settlement. In the entire valley, there are a dozen or so

villages of varying sizes, with a population of about ten or twenty thousand Tolowa. But currently, they are divided into two groups, north and south. The North is the Leaf Grass Great Tribe, the South is the Redwood Great Tribe. Each of the two Great Tribes leads seven or eight smaller tribes, they've been hostile and fighting each other for many years..."

"Ah? They only have ten or twenty thousand people, yet they're divided into two groups, fighting for many years?"

Hearing this, the Exploration Captain paused, puzzled, and asked.

"Both sides could pull together several thousand able-bodied men, have a big battle, and decide the outcome, couldn't they?"

"Um, how to put it?... Northern tribal fights are different from large-scale warfare on the Highland, and different from the Canine Descendants tribes' raids..."

Miki the Sage rubbed his face, thought for a moment, and answered.

"Chief Divine as witness! Their fights are somewhat like the flower wars conducted in the past between the Mexica Alliance and the Tlaxcala Alliance, not so intense... Even though these Tolowa tribes hold deep-seated hostility towards each other, they are of the same lineage, like the Mexica and the Tlaxcala, brother tribes with a common origin..."

"Their battles aim to seize hunting and fishing grounds at the borders, and most importantly, the salt marshes... Yes, right between the two tribes lies a salt-producing marsh, their primary source of salt..."

"Every few months, both tribes come out for a fight. Generally, it's at most a few hundred people confronting each other, shouting back and forth in intimidation! Then each side sends out a dozen or twenty or so brave warriors and hunters, either to brawl or to duel... And in the end, leaving behind a few to a dozen lives, temporarily determining the ownership of a place, until the next battle... Besides this formal fighting, when hunter groups on both sides meet, they may also challenge each other. Of course, if one side doesn't respond and opts to leave, the other will only mock loudly and spread the word, but won't chase them down for a kill..."

"I see... the Tolowa are really combative yet restrained! Fascinating!..."

Exploration Captain Zuwaro rubbed his chin, pondering in silence, his eyes gleaming.

In this kind of ritualistic, low-intensity fighting, should the Kingdom's fleet get involved? Or find a way to get involved, to spread the belief in the Chief Divine, to convert these frequently battling Tribes? Or else, stoke the fire, sell weapons to both sides, and trade for their captives? But, with the language barrier and mutual distrust...

"Zuwaro, what are you contemplating?"

Miki the Sage squinted, looking deeply at Zuwaro. Zuwaro touched his nose and gave a sheepish smile.

"Uh! I'm thinking... since the Redwood Tribe doesn't have much salt and is so vigilant, they're probably at a disadvantage in the fights between both sides?... Ha! They surely haven't seized that salt marsh!"

"Hmm... that's really the case!"

Hearing this, Miki the Sage was somewhat surprised. He nodded, and said in a deep voice.

"That's indeed true! Currently, the Southern Redwood Tribe is at a disadvantage in the battles between both sides. The Leaf Grass Tribe has gained some formidable new hunters over the past two years. They suspect the Leaf Grass Tribe has gained support from further northern mountain Tolowa tribes..."

"However, with the Chief Divine's blessing! Whatever the case, our primary objective is to continue exploring northward! We should avoid getting involved in these Tolowa tribes' internal wars if we can avoid it!..."

Chapter 1324: Fire the Cannons? Fire the Cannons!

Under the vigilance of the Tolowa hunters, the exploration fleet rested for three days at the Redwood Tribe's territory, but never entered the village of the tribe. The great chief of the Redwood Tribe appeared twice, wanting to negotiate with the fleet to exchange for some useful bronze weapons.

"What do you want? We don't have much grain, can't trade it with you. However, the freshly caught fish and shrimp can be exchanged!..."

At the first meeting, the great chief's eyes were still full of wariness.

"Moreover, if you covet the tribe's villages, hunting grounds, and fields... it will be a fight to the death!"

"Hmm..."

Exploration Captain Zuwaro was at a loss for words. He rubbed his temples and said with a smile.

"I heard that your Redwood Tribe has many excellent hunters who know the ways of survival in the forest and the Northern Land! We will keep heading north; can we hire some hunters and guides to accompany the fleet on our journey?"

Hearing the translation from Hunter Tuowu, the great chief's eyes widened, and he roared angrily.

"Absolutely not! Absolutely impossible! Warriors and hunters are the roots of the tribe! You people on the longship, don't even think about tricking away the roots of the Redwood Tribe!"

"Uh..."

Hunter Tuowu hesitated for a while before translating tactfully.

"The chief doesn't like the warriors leaving the tribe and disagrees with exchanging people for weapons... Hmm, I owe a debt to the South Shaman, I can go north with you, as a translator..."

"However, I will never mediate between you and the opposing Leaf Grass Tribe! Hmm... You also need to promise me to ask the Cedar Shaman for some more herbs!..."

Speaking of which, Hunter Tuowu saw the surprised expressions on everyone's faces and mumbled an additional sentence,

"Of course! Not for myself, but prepared in advance for my ten-year-old son!..."

"Oh!..."

Exploration Captain Zuwaro nodded with a smile, consulted with Scholar Mikki for a moment, and asked.

"Tuowu, your tribe often hunts in the mountains, have you ever come across peculiar, specially colored, shimmering stones? Tell the chief, if there is a stone we need, we are willing to trade weapons for it!..."

Two days later, the great chief appeared again. This time, he said little, only waved his hand for the tribespeople to pour out a basket full of stones before everyone.

"Hmm... gold ore, seems to be of low quality... Much worse than those collected by the North Bay Tribe..."

Squatting in front of a pile of colorful stones, Scholar Mikki carefully examined them. He first identified the gold ore, but didn't pay much attention. In the land of Golden Bay, whole mountains full of gold, large gold mining areas awaited excavation. Nonetheless, gold was worth so little in the Northern Land, it couldn't even be exchanged for food...

"White, sparkling... Hmm? It seems like the one needed by the special trade bureau when making Lake Gem, that kind of... stone essence?"

Scholar Mikki's eyes widened as he looked at the excellent quartz mineral in front of him and hesitantly asked.

"Zuwaro, can you help me see! Is this the raw material for Lake Gem?"

"...Looks a bit like..."

Exploration Captain Zuwaro squinted, looked at it under the sunlight for a while, and then confirmed.

"Indeed, it's the gemstone raw material! Previously, when I led the fleet, we dug out stone essence by the seashore for the special trade bureau, which was much smaller than this, but with the same color and luster!"

"Ah! High-quality stone essence! The raw material for Lake Gem..."

Excited for a moment, Scholar Mikki suddenly sighed.

"Too bad... This place is just too far away! The Lake Gem isn't very valuable among the northern tribes... These Northern Land tribes are too practical; only copper and tin ore are really useful!..."

The two discussed for a while, then looked at the most abundant black crystals on the ground, unable to figure out what they were for a long time.

"Tuowu, what is this?"

"Oh, that's Earth Mother Stone! It's the hair of the Earth Mother Goddess that fell into the mountains while she slept underground. There's a lot of it, the whole mountain range is full! They're very hard, just a bit brittle... Sometimes the tribe's hunters use them as arrowheads."

"Black and lustrous... Earth Mother Stone... hard and brittle..."

After pondering for a while, Scholar Mikki's eyes suddenly shone with light.

"Zuwaro, feel it!"

"Hmm? What's the matter?"

"By the Chief Divine's witness! Doesn't this stone feel a bit like the iron ore mined at Black Rock Mountain?"

"Uh... it does a little. But it seems like Black Rock Mountain's iron ore isn't this hard and doesn't have such a lustrous color... Strange! What exactly is this? This is the first time I've encountered it on our journey..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro held up the black, hard crystal stone, gazing at it under the sun for a long while, full of questions in his eyes.

At this moment, the two Divine Revelation Priests of the Kingdom didn't know that to the east of the Redwood Tribe, in the Siskiyou Mountains, known as the Chetco-Tolowa area by the Tolowa tribes, lay the largest chromite-rich region in the entire future United States, with reserves amounting to millions of tons!

However, in this era, the greatest value of chromite is the iron associated with it, high-quality chromite! And based on high-quality chromite, with relatively primitive smelting and forging techniques, the "divine weapons" of this era can be produced: high hardness and high strength chrome steel!

"May the Chief Divine bless the Kingdom! Since we haven't seen it before, let's keep it! I hope it's a useful mineral..."

Scholar Miki sincerely prayed and asked in a deep voice.

"Tuowu, how do we exchange these few baskets of gold ore, stone mine, and black crystal stone?"

"Hmm, the Chieftain said... ten... no, eight copper spears! All of these will be yours!"

Saying this, the Hunter Tuowu tugged at his hair, speaking somewhat ashamed.

"If you feel it's not enough... there are plenty of black crystal stones! More than enough!..."

"Praise the Chief Divine! Let it be so then!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro nodded and said with a smile.

"We'll just bring back some samples. However, Tuowu, you must come north with us! We leave tomorrow!"

"Ancestor witness! No problem!..."

Early the next day, five exploration longships set off north again with the collected baskets of ore. In less than a day, they traveled fifty or sixty miles and arrived at the territory of the Leaf Grass Tribe, where they saw a cluster of low, dense tribal huts.

Tall totem poles stood on the shore, with all other details exactly the same, only the abstract cedar tree of the Redwood Tribe changed to a more abstract broadleaf grass.

Before the fleet could dock, hundreds of Tolowa warriors gathered on the shore, howling and roaring as if they had been waiting for a long time. Twenty or thirty canoe warboats, filled with over a hundred tribal hunters, patrolled along the coast outside the village. Their faces were full of hostility and animosity, staring at the longships coming from the South, gripping stone spears and javelins, ready to fight at any moment.

This time, Exploration Captain Zuvaro was utterly certain that if the fleet advanced any further, even if only along the coast without landing, a battle would be inevitable!

"Oh Chief Divine! How did it come to this?!"

Scholar Miki widened his eyes, looking at the Leaf Grass Tribe on the brink of rage, asking in surprise.

"What? These warriors of the Leaf Grass Tribe have already completely taken us for enemies! Yet we've never even seen them!"

"Chief Divine witness! The news of our stay at the Redwood Tribe must have already reached here..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro's face darkened, and he spoke in a deep voice.

"They must have mistaken us for the allies of the Redwood Tribe!..."

"Ah! Who spread this news?"

"Heh! Perhaps within the Redwood Tribe, the Leaf Grass Tribe has their informant..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro narrowed his eyes, glancing at the silent and uneasy Hunter Tuowu. Then, his expression gradually darkened, keenly confirming his suspicion.

"But I think it's more likely... that it was the Great Wood Chieftain of the Redwood Tribe who deliberately spread the news... so that the Leaf Grass Tribe would come looking for a fight with us!"

"Ah? Oh, this!"

Scholar Miki widened his eyes, pressed his lips together, and tore at his hair in frustration. Intent on exploring north, he had no desire to get tangled in the mess of these tribes, but the chaos was being thrown at him directly.

"Le Tian, can you try and communicate with them? Be cautious!"

Cloaked Hunter Le Tian nodded cautiously and approached the shore. This time, he did not remove his leather armor, merely setting aside his empty bow and arrows, making a gesture of embrace.

"Get lost! Enemies from the South! Colluding with the Redwood Tribe, you snake and eel!"

The Leaf Grass Chieftain of the Leaf Grass Tribe glared with wide eyes, unable to suppress his anger. He shouted as he stepped out from the crowd, taking an arrow and breaking it fiercely, tossing it onto the sandy beach.

"Enemies on the ship! This is our tribe's hunting ground, fishing ground, and fields! If you take one step further, the Ancestor's wrath will swallow you whole! ... Get lost! Go back south!..."

"Get lost! Go back south! Ahh-hoo!..."

Saying this, hundreds of tribal warriors stood at the seaside, growling threateningly like brown bears in the mountains. And more than twenty canoe warboats seemed eager, ready to charge forward at any moment!

"... Damn it!..."

Cloaked Hunter Le Tian hurriedly turned and agilely jumped back onto the longship. He shook his head helplessly and reported back.

"No talking it out! Either retreat or advance... if we advance, we'll have to fight!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro pressed his lips tightly, looking intently at the group of canoes on the coast ahead, his eyes sharp as he tightly grasped the bronze axe at his waist, turning to the Scholar Miki beside him and asking in a low voice.

"Should we fire?"

Scholar Miki gritted his teeth and, after a moment of silence, spoke harshly.

"Fire!"

Chapter 1325: Descendants of the Thunderbird, an Unprecedented Storm

"Boom boom boom boom!"

The terrifying thunderbolts, launched from the five longships, crashed onto the white beach, sending flying stones and sand everywhere! This is the majestic thunderbolt of the Chief Divine, descending for the first time in the vast Northern Land to punish the resisting foes!

"Kill the invaders!... Uh!... Ah?!..."

But mere steps away, the fierce and shouting tribal warriors suddenly fell silent, as if a chorus of wild ducks suddenly had their throats squeezed! Then, as the flying stones and sand came pelting in with fierce force, the crowd gathered on the shore uttered cries of terror.

"Ah! What is this? Thunderbolt! Thunderbolt!"

"Oh Ancestors! Thunderbolts fired from the longship! They possess evil thundering spirits!"

"It's the Thunderbird! Thunderbird! They must be descendants of the Thunderbird Goddess, coming to avenge the descendants of the forest!"

The attack from the longships was relentless; a round of cannon fire was quickly followed by a rain of arrows. Over a hundred warriors from the Kingdom drew their greatbows simultaneously, launching a volley of the highest feathered arrows at the bustling and chaotic shore!

"Aim, shoot the totem poles! Chief Divine protect us!"

"Whoosh whoosh whoosh whoosh!"

Hundreds of piercing arrows whistled ominously, darting past the fearful and panicked tribal warriors, to land slanted beside the totem poles along the shore. The sharp yet cheap bone arrows, plunged into the soft sand, nearly embedding two inches deep!

"Tiger Squat Cannon, fire! Chief Divine protect us!"

"Boom boom boom boom!"

The chaos on the shore persisted, with thunderbolts from the sea continuing to explode next to the terrified and disoriented tribal ranks, shaking the huntsmen into stumbling falls. Confronted with such mysterious and unknown frightening power, many tribal warriors known for their courage trembled, cowered in horror on the ground. Facing cannon fire for the first time, they temporarily lost the courage to confront the mysterious force, resorting only to helplessly pray to the spirits of the Earth!

"Please! Earth Mother Goddess slumbering in the mountains! We beseech you to awaken, drive away the evil Thunderbird, grant us strength to resist the thunderbolt!"

In Tolowa mythology, only those who can wield thunder are believed to be embodied as thunderstorms and wind, like the Thunderbird Goddess from the sea. She is an Evil God who ceaselessly triggers storms during winter and spring to assault the Earth. Yet, when summer and autumn arrive, the Earth Mother Goddess awakens, defeats this Evil God and drives her back to the depths of the sea. Then, the entire continent and coast return to serenity and calm.

"Ah! Ah! Oh Ancestors! How could this be happening? From the longship, how is it possible to shoot out evil thunderbolts?!"

Wearing a conspicuous deer antler crown, the Leaf Grass Chieftain shouted in anger and fear. Several archers from the Kingdom aimed their arrows at him. But when the priests' orders came down, the archers shifted their bows away.

"Aim, shoot the totem poles! Avoid killing!"

"Whoosh whoosh whoosh whoosh!"

The sharp rain of arrows again unleashed its deadly whistle, passing over the Leaf Grass Chieftain's head, shooting toward the tribe's totem poles. "Thunk thunk" came the sound of wood being pierced, and the sharp whizzing reminded the fear-eyed, helpless Leaf Grass Chieftain: like a Black Wolf, the God of Death had just leaped past him!

"Ah! Ah! Oh Ancestors!..."

After two rounds of cannonfire and feathered arrows, the tribal huntsmen on the shore had already fallen into complete chaos. At the seaside, over twenty war boats paddled chaotically, some retreating, some advancing, some trying to dock... a complete mess.

Seeing the chaotic Tolowa tribe, Exploration Captain Zuvaro's lips curled into a smile. Then, he turned his head, glanced at the pale-faced yet excited and fearful Redwood tribe hunter Tuowu, and also at the anxious and uneasy cloak hunter Le Tian, his smile brightened further. He straightened his back, looked at the tribal hunters and the translator, and regardless of whether they could understand, he boldly announced!

"This, is the power of the Chief Divine! Praise be to the Chief Divine! Repeat after me, Wezi... Lopo... Chitli! Huitzilopochtli!"

"Lopi... Lore... Chitli..."

The two tribal hunters murmured softly, their faces full of complex expressions. At this moment, the divine name of the Chief Divine was truly impressed into their hearts with force.

"Woo! Woo woo!"

Subsequently, Exploration Captain Zuvaro picked up the horn and blew it at his lips. Quickly, a red flag of assault rose on the flagship.

"Row with full force! Charge forward!"

The five longships promptly adjusted their bows, and the rowers put forth all their strength to paddle forcefully. In just moments, the speed of the longships increased to the maximum, and the sharp bronze ram heads surged straight forward!

"Bang! Crash!..."

Facing the collision with the longships, Tolowa's chaotic warboats were utterly defenseless! In mere instants, several small boats were overturned, even broken in two halves! The tribal hunters on the small boats cried out in horror, falling "thud" into the water. And if unlucky, struck by a passing paddle and pressured by the speeding ship base, it resulted in a drowned fate.

"Oh Ancestors! Longship! Big fish! Frightening! Descendants of the Thunderbird!"

After a collision, the Tolowa Hunters began shouting desperately, paddling their canoes in a frantic escape. Witnessing this scene, Exploration Captain Zuwaro's eyes flickered as he looked at Scholar Mikki beside him.

"Mikki, should we continue the charge?"

"Witnessed by the Chief Divine! No need. Their boats have scattered. We can proceed forward!"

Scholar Mikki stroked his chin, looking at the struggle flailing on the water surface, the dozen Tolowa Hunters without rescue. Contemplating for a moment, he spoke solemnly.

"Rescue them!"

"What?"

"I said, rescue them."

Scholar Mikki glanced at Zuwaro, explaining.

"We need some guides from the Northern Land... whether they're willing or not."

Upon hearing this, Exploration Captain Zuwaro pondered for a while and nodded in agreement. He immediately ordered the fleet. Then, the Samurai on board skillfully picked up the captives, binding them with sisal ropes.

"Are we taking all these dozen people?"

"No need, just leave one on each boat. For the rest, after passing the villages of the Tolowa people, give each of them a piece of bread, and release them on the shore!"

After saying this, Scholar Mikki smiled with a meaningful expression.

"Witnessed by the Chief Divine! We've left a margin, not dealt a fatal blow. Once these captives are released, with an excuse at hand... even if the Chieftain of the Leaf Grass Tribe is impulsive, he should know we shouldn't be enemies, nor can we be their enemies!"

"Hmm, not bad! Haha! I like it!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro nodded, eyes suddenly brightening. Having witnessed the Thunderbolt, Arrows, and Longboats of the Kingdom, the attitude of the Great Tribe of Leaf Grass will surely change. Perhaps...

"Full speed ahead! Onward!"

"Paddle thirty miles, then head to the shore!"

"Chief Divine bless us! The fleet will surely triumph!..."

In the midst of the rousing cheers and prayers, the five ships of the Kingdom's fleet left a chaotic battlefield, gradually disappearing into the North. And among the crowd on the shore, the Leaf Grass Chieftain shivered all over, watching the longboats of the Thunderbolt gradually sail away, his tightly clenched heart finally relaxed. Then, gazing at the Tribal Warriors who were fleeing, collapsing, or screaming in terror, he felt dizzy.

"How many warriors have we lost?"

"Chieftain, four or five warriors on the shore were shot by arrows, thirty or forty injured... while on the water, several bodies floated, and a dozen warriors who fell into the water were captured by the enemies from the Longboats..."

The Tribal Huntsmen bowed their heads, reporting to the Chieftain, faces still lingering with fear.

"How many of us remained on the Longboats? How many casualties might there be?"

"..."

Silence struck with awkwardness, and after awkwardness came boundless fear. The Leaf Grass Chieftain pressed his chest hard, suppressing the unknown fear. He took a deep breath, striving to transform fear into anger, roaring in rage.

"Damn it! Where did this tribe come from, so powerful! Damnable Redwood Tribe, where did they find such reinforcements! Ah! Ancestors..."

The Leaf Grass Chieftain cursed for a while, even pressing his head against the tribe's totem pole, helpless and despairing like a wounded bear. Then, pulling out the Bone Arrow stuck in the totem pole, he gazed for a while, then looked at the thick rain of arrows embedded in the sand.

"Hmm? These arrows... hmm!"

The Leaf Grass Chieftain widened his eyes, pondering for a long while, then looking at the place where the Thunderbolt on the shore descended. These Longboat Tribes could clearly shoot the crowd with Thunderbolt but chose the empty space instead, just like the Feathered Arrows...

"Damn it! Damn it! Could it be? Could it be!... Did I choose wrongly?..."

On the twilight-approaching beach, the warriors of the Leaf Grass Tribe cried out in frustrated howls, while their perpetually angry Chieftain fell into long contemplation and silence.

"The power at sea... the Longboat Tribe... whom do they really support? Or are they merely passing by?... And if I had their Thunderbolt and Greatbow... unifying the valleys of the tribes..."

"Ancestors! Please enlighten me! This unclear future, like a summer storm, damn it, has never been seen before..."

Chapter 1326: Kus People—Let's See If They're Good to Eat

The September sea breeze already carries a hint of chill, heralding the approach of winter. Five longships continue forward, rowing for thirty miles until dusk, when they dock by a coast filled with redwood trees.

"Praise the merciful Chief Divine! Leave one guide on each ship, and bring the rest over!"

Scholar Mikki stands calmly on the beach, observing the dozen captured hunters from the Leaf Grass Tribe. His face holds a friendly smile as he picks up a wooden carving of the Chief God's Amulet, gently coaxing the hunter at the forefront.

"Come! Recite with me! Praise the Chief Divine! Huitzilopochtli!..."

"..."

The Tolowa hunter grits his teeth, glaring fiercely at Mikki. He seems to be holding back, resisting the urge to spit.

"Ha ha!..."

Hearing the laughter, Scholar Mikki's smile falters. Turning back, he sees Zuvaro laughing audibly.

"Cough! Mikki, instead of guiding them one by one, why not just carve the Chief Divine's symbol on each of them? Even uttering a single divine name leaves them far from conversion..."

"Zuvaro, shut up!"

Scholar Mikki grits his teeth, glaring hard at Zuwaro. Then, calming himself, he raises his friendly smile again, turning to the next captive hunter.

"Come! Say one divine name, and after saying it, wearing the Chief God's Amulet, you can return to your tribe..."

"..."

The second hunter's face is wary and confused, unable to understand the words of this longboat chieftain. He cautiously watches the amulet in Mikki's hand, staring at the carved Sun Hummingbird, as if it were a Shaman Ritual Artifact capable of stealing his spirit.

"Uh..."

Scholar Mikki scratches his head, then looks towards the translator Tuowu, solemnly requesting.

"Tuowu! Although these tribal huntsmen are from the Leaf Grass Tribe, they are of your same clan... The fleet wants to release them; help with the translation, please!..."

Hunter Tuowu purses his lips, his face shifting. Hesitating, he struggles for a long time with the tribal hatred before stepping in front of Scholar Mikki, shouting a few words to the captives. Immediately, the captives' expressions change, most of them incredulous, a few showing anticipation.

"Come! Recite with me! Praise the Chief Divine!..."

Scholar Mikki smiles softly, once again stepping in front of a young captive with lively eyes, solemnly chanting.

"Huitzilopochtli!"

"...Wei Qi... Luobo..."

The captured hunter from the Leaf Grass Tribe blinks, hesitantly uttering the divine name.

"Chitli?"

"Good! Very good! Chief Divine's blessings! You pronounced it correctly!"

Scholar Mikki beams as he personally places the Chief God's Amulet around the young captive's neck. Then he unties the ropes on the young captive's wrists and hands him an acorn cake.

"Alright! Wearing the Chief Divine's Emblem! You can return to your tribe!"

The young captive's face is cautious and doubtful. He carefully steps out, looking back once, then takes another step as if testing the waters like a squirrel. His gaze falls on the bows held by the longship guards, staring for a long moment before suddenly leaping away, transforming from a squirrel into a running grass rabbit.

"Hmm?"

Scholar Mikki widens his eyes, watching the young captive dash into the woods, nimbly hiding behind a big tree. Then, after waiting for a while, seeing no movement from the fleet, he sticks out half his head and shouts loudly.

"'Anaan Haa! Sh'aa! Cheewya!..."

"Uh? Tuowu, what is he shouting?"

Hunter Tuowu's gaze shifts, watching the hunter from the Leaf Grass Tribe in the woods for a moment before replying lowly.

"He says his name is Feng Cao, a hunter as outstanding as the wind in the Leaf Grass Tribe. One day, he will see you again!"

"Hunter Feng Cao? That's a nice name."

Scholar Mikki strokes his chin, murmuring with a smile.

"Alright! The Chief Divine sees all! Until we meet again then!..."

With the first demonstration successful, subsequent steps proceeded faster. The dozen or so captive hunters recited the divine name, wore the Chief God's Amulet, received an acorn cake each, and were thus released. Their eyes held complex emotions, standing in the coastal redwood forest, gazing at the five longships sailing north again, disappearing into the dusky night. In this long day, they experienced battle and capture, captivity and release, and henceforth came to know the Chief Divine's name... This is fate, unpredictable, whether believed or not, unknown where it flows.

The fleet continued northward, rowing 150 miles, reaching another two to three thousand strong Great Tribe of Tolowa, the Mountain Tribe. This Tolowa tribe, unlike their southern kin who were long embroiled in warfare, held a less hostile attitude towards outside tribes.

The Chieftain of the Mountain Tribe was indifferent, but with the translation by Hunter Tuowu, they traded ten days' food for over two hundred people with the Kingdom Fleet who traveled from afar. After replenishing their provisions and freshwater, the fleet did not linger in the Tolowa territory and sailed back to the sea.

From the Mountain Tribe heading north, following the steep coastline for over two hundred miles, they arrive at the territory of the Kus people. Here, the towering Eastern mountains gradually level out, turning into low hills, and eventually becoming plains of long grass and Luwei. However, this does not mean the surrounding lands are richer or more populous. Quite to the contrary, the fleet saw fewer villages and smaller tribes!

"Farther north into the cold regions... without the mountains to block the chill, without the shelter of valleys... it's difficult for these northern tribespeople to form larger tribes!"

Scholar Mikki gazed into the distance, observing the desolate Luwei swamps along the coast, his demeanor growing solemn. He already smelled the icy air on the autumn wind blowing south from the North.

"Mikki! North! North! There is a new port northward! Very large!..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro excitedly shouted for a while. But as the fleet approached, his excited calls gradually lowered.

"Uh... alright! This bay has visible boundaries... then it seems not so large! Haha!"

Zuvaro chuckled, gesturing with a big hand towards the eastern bay.

"Head over there! Heading eastward! We will explore the bay thoroughly!... Isn't this the land of the Kus people? Everyone keep your eyes open, look for their villages!"

The five longships turned eastward, entering the five or six-mile-wide bay entrance. Then, a deep and broad lagoon port slowly unfolded before the fleet. After measuring the water depth, confirming it as another deep-water harbor, they continued east. The fishing boats of the Kus people also appeared in their view.

"Good! Approach them! Approach them! Huh! They are retreating from us? Are they avoiding us?"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro pondered for a moment and then spoke with a laugh.

"Then let's slow down, follow them, and find their village!"

"Then we just..."

Scholar Mikki widened his eyes, staring over fiercely.

"Zuvaro?"

"Haha! Chief Divine's blessings! They are our long-lost brothers..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro spoke leisurely, finishing the rest of the sentence with a grin.

"Since we are brothers, let's go get a meal from them! Then, have a good talk with the village elders of the Kus people to ask about the situation around here..."

"By the way! Mikki, how far have we traveled from Lake Bay Port? What's the latitude?"

"Hmm... We've traveled 800 miles from Lake Bay Port..."

Scholar Mikki raised his head, looking at the sun setting in the sky, as if he could see the invisible North Star.

"Zuvaro, last night I measured the latitude; it's around 43 degrees north... We've traveled 5 degrees north from Gold Mountain Port, more than 1700 miles!"

"Ah! So far? 43 degrees north... 800 miles from the last port..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro pondered for a while, then spoke with a smile.

"Chief Divine's blessings! The Kus people seem to have quite a few fishermen... We should visit their village, get a meal, see how good it tastes!..."

"If it's delicious, we'll station a ship here and establish a Kingdom Port!"

Chapter 1327: The Kingdom's South Port Must Be Flexible!

"The sun and the moon are two twin Ancestor Spirits, possessing the great spirit of spirituality. The sun is the day and summer, the dry and warm land Ancestor Spirit. The moon is the night and winter, the rainy and cold underwater Ancestor Spirit... They chase from the land rising and falling into the sea, making summer days long and winter nights also long..."

In the round-domed huts of the Kus people, fleet leaders sit around the hearth, eating stewed salmon soup while listening to village elder Wokey singing the myths and epics of the Kus Tribe. Although everyone could not understand Elder Wokey's chanting due to the language barrier, these old and poignant epics, with their deep and hoarse narration, carried a strangely reassuring feeling.

Salmon have a tradition of upstream migration to spawn, and are the fish most caught by these river and sea-dwelling fishermen. On a night that has grown somewhat cold, drinking a bowl of hot trout soup and roasting some easily picked scallops and crabs makes one feel comfortable. The only drawback is that these foods aren't very high in energy. Other than a few beans as vegetables, there aren't any filling grains.

"The Kus tribes, at least in this bay, primarily rely on fishing and hunting."

Miki the Sage observes the situation in the hut by the light of the bonfire. This kind of Kus person's hut resembles those of the Wiyot people: round-domed and upside-down like clay bowls. But the Kus people's huts are noticeably smaller, one must bend to stand straight inside, and the materials are lighter while the walls are thicker.

The reference to lightness means there are fewer wooden frames and more built with branches. A gentle sniff reveals a scent of cedar wood, with faint eucalyptus notes. The thickness of the walls refers to large amounts of packed reeds, grass, and pine needles, topped with a thick layer of clay.

"Low huts, thick walls... The wind must be strong and cold during winter. The lightweight materials should be to conveniently follow fish and prey, migrating when necessary..."

Miki the Sage's eyes flash as he carefully surveys the surroundings, seeing no tools or bowls for grinding corn or stored pumpkins. Instead, he sees dried berries, rabbit jerky, and hanging smoked fish. In a corner of the hut, there are dense grass baskets, deer skin rugs, small bone ornaments, and a woven grass fishing net. He touches his chin, gaining a clearer understanding of the Kus people's living conditions.

"Hmm... The climate here is no longer suitable for corn and pumpkins. Other than simply planting beans, the Kus people are almost a nomadic tribe. Fishing, hunting, and gathering, food sources are very unstable, unable to support many people... No wonder this tribe only has a hundred or so people! I'm afraid all the tribes around here are of this scale, quite dispersed..."

With that thought, Miki the Sage ponders for a moment before looking at Hunter Tuowu.

"Tuowu, can you use the Northern Land's method of communication to gesture and ask him where there are large tribal villages around here?..."

The short night passes with difficult communication, and dawn arrives with broad daylight. As soon as the sky is bright, everyone wakes up in the huts, and the Kus people in the village have already started bustling around, preparing for the fishing in Kusi Bay.

Yes, this excellent harbor later came to be named after the Kus people, called Coos Bay. However, in the harsh waves of colonialism, the Kus people lost almost all their tribes, land, and language, leaving only a few place names to prove they once existed.

Five longships are docked in the vast expanse of Kusi Bay, with many Kus fishermen curiously peering at them. They are eager to know how large a tree was used to build such big longships and how many fish it can hold at once.

Initially, when encountered, the Kus fishermen were instinctually cautious about the fleet they'd never seen before. But when Exploration Captain Zuwaro gifted some practical warm cotton cloth, the Kus people showed a gentle and friendly nature, even returning a few picked emperor crabs. Hmm, the emperor crabs have little meat, hard shells, and can cut fishing nets, making them the least favored catch by Kus people. With no natural enemies in this coastal area, they are plentiful and worthless.

"Zuwaro, this bay extends for four or fifty miles. Three long rivers converge from the north, east, and south... Upstream six or seventy miles from the southern Long River is a wind-shielded river valley. There's the only Kus tribe with a thousand-strong Great Tribe, the Valley Tribe."

Miki the Sage stands at the bay's edge, surveying the green hills and plains and gazing at the distant northeast's brown mountain range. This is a conveniently accessible natural port with vast expanses of riverbank fertile land ready for cultivation. Although the climate is cold and windy, just bring the potatoes...

"Chief Divine blesses! We can develop this bay without going south and contending with the Kus for that warm inland river valley. The Kus Great Tribe's attitude isn't yet known. Yet here, most Kus fishermen are friendly..."

"Praise the Chief Divine! Then we shall settle here!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro nods, extending his hand towards the southern bay where the rivers converge, smiling and says.

"Here! There is a bay, a river, and a freshwater small lake—we'll set up a new harbor here. Hmm, its name... Elder Wokey said they are people of the South, having migrated from the North to the South... Then the port of this bay shall be called... South Port!"

Upon hearing this, Miki the Sage's eye twitches, rubbing his brow, keenly aware that with Zuvaro's naming style, there will surely be a "North Port" as well. He was about to speak but saw Zuvaro smiling and whispering instructions to First Level Preaching Priest Keshu, who showed an expression both delighted and slightly hesitant.

"Chief Divine! Me, to manage the port?! Uh, to deal with Kus women..."

"Ahem! We shall leave fifty people and a longship here to build the Kingdom's South Port."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro's expression sharpens, sternly instructing.

"Keshu! You must strive for the Kingdom! Winter is approaching, farming must wait until next year. You must venture out for fishing, store the dried catches. You must imitate the Kus style, build enough small huts. You must also cut enough wood to stockpile at the camp..."

"Witnessed by Chief Divine! Your tasks are numerous, you must seize the time! Of course, you must also find flexible ways to get 'help' from surrounding Kus people for preaching. They are friendly and their tribes are scattered, possibly migrating in the winter, try to 'keep' them here... Keshu Priest, do you understand?"

"Yes! I... I understand."

Keshu Priest purses his lips, nodding heavily. His name is abbreviated from Cocoa Tree, symbolizing his noble lineage.

"Chief Divine blesses! The Kingdom will surely establish firm roots in this harbor!"

"Good! Excellent! As a Kingdom Priest, you should have such determination!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro nods with satisfaction. He glances at the puzzled Miki the Sage and quietly reminds.

"Remember! If there's corn, make it into cakes somehow, eat them! I've left good-looking cloth, intoxicating alcohol, and some herbs for you... So when the Kus people have to acknowledge you as relatives—be flexible, flexible, you must be flexible! Understood?"

"Yes!... Captain."

Keshu Priest lowers his gaze, nodding gently, promising.

"When you return, the South Port's population will surely double..."

"Bolder! Double twice! One can have two!..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro speaks steadily, seemingly conveying serious affairs. Then, he gazes at Miki the Sage approaching, with suspicion on his face, and smiles as he speaks.

"Miki! We'll stay here for a few days, help build some huts and continue north! It's said not far north is another tribe worshipping the sun?..."

Upon hearing this, Miki the Sage raises his eyebrows, realizing his attention has indeed been shifted. Nodding, he gazes northward, affirmatively responding.

"Zuwaro, I asked around! Heading further north, after walking three days on land, about a hundred and sixty miles, there is a group of Sun-worshipping Tribes, the Siuslaw people!"...

Chapter 1328: Descendants Who Worship the Sun, the "Fields" of the Siuslaw People

In September, four longships from the Kingdom continued their journey from the camp at South Port, bidding farewell to the newly established camp of thatched huts, and to fifty crew members from the Kingdom on the shore, along with a dozen newly joined tribal women.

"We came from the North... They go northward... We reached the river, that's where the tribes parted!... In the black forests, on the white beaches, in the autumn and winter cold winds, such partings are just like those of our ancestors!..."

The Elder of the Kus people, Wokey, led over a hundred tribespeople, singing farewell songs to friends and family. The guttural tone filled with plosive, fricative, and nasal sounds carried a deep and desolate flavor. The language of the Kus people is a unique Coosan branch, unlike the surrounding tribes. These ancient songs seem to hide some unique secrets, the origins of ancient tribes... but they have dissipated over generations, becoming difficult to hear again.

The fleet continued north, encountering long white sand dunes stretching over a hundred miles. In the early autumn sunlight, they were soft and beautiful, like the long feathers left by the Divine Bird Egret from tribal mythology, spreading and extending along the coast.

In later years, this stretch of dunes became known as Umpqua Beach. The wide Umpqua River flows from the upper reaches of the beach, three to four hundred miles inland. The name "Umpqua" refers to the Indian tribes hunting in the upstream forests, the Umpqua people. This term also belongs to the Penutian linguistic branch, the self-designation of the Umpqua people, "people of the land and home."

The fleet sailed past the white "homeland" beach without seeing traces of the Umpqua people. These mountain hunters excel at hiding, only gazing from the forest in the East, never rashly appearing at the seashore in their canoes. And soon, on the white coast, those appearing with their canoes belong to the Siuslaw people, who speak coastal Penutian, also part of the Penutian branch.

The language of the Siuslaw people could be roughly communicated with the fleet through two translations done by tribal huntsmen Le Tian and Tuowu. And the translation book of the Cedar Shaman also recorded simple vocabulary. Coastal tribes revered the Sun, establishing villages large and small in the quiet coastal valleys of the North. These villages belonged to the same Siuslaw Great Tribe, called the "Chao Yang Tribe."

Scholar Mikki never imagined that north of the scattered Kus Bay tribes, each at most one or two hundred people, within just two hundred miles in the river valleys, there would be a tribe of more than two thousand people! And when he met with the Sun Shaman of the Chao Yang Tribe, this unexpected feeling grew even stronger.

"Which tribes are you from? Where did you come from? Where are you going?"

"We are the tribe from the lake, coming from the distant South, heading to the distant North!"

"Why are you heading north? You must know, in the North, there's nothing but barren white and brown. We came from the distant North to this place..."

"Hmm... To us, the North holds the prophecy of the Prophet, a great bay... it's the guidance of the Sun!..."

"Oh! The guidance of Chinook, the tribe's Prophet..."

Upon hearing this, the Shaman Chinook of the Chao Yang Great Tribe smiled. The Siuslaw people revered the Sun, and every shaman in the Chao Yang Tribe was named after the Sun, called "Chinook." He stroked his chin and said meaningfully.

"The great Sun Chinook rises and sets again, and where He watches is our Chao Yang Great Tribe. Hundreds of years ago, the Great Shaman Chinook received the guidance of the Sun, leading the tribes from the far north land to here. He led the tribes to plant fields on the sunlit white beaches and coasts, blessed with enlightenment, gaining stable food..."

"And hundreds of years later, you follow the guidance of the Sun to the cold far north land... It seems our Sun is not the same..."

"Chief Divine bless! Honored Shaman Chinook, how can one see the full scope of the Sun? The Sun rises and sets continuously, appearing in different positions in the sky. Perhaps our Sun, despite having different guidance, is the same!..."

"Oh? The same changing Sun? Perhaps! The offspring of the Sun never refuse the future guided by the Sun... so long as He is truly filled with light, filled with warmth..."

After a series of meaningful exchanges, the aged Shaman Chinook smiled again and gestured.

"Tribespeople arriving by longship, we thank you for the cloth and metal weapons you have gifted us! You can rest in the Chao Yang Tribe, and fairly trade for some food. It is now harvest season, the tribe's food is fairly abundant... what we eat comes from the Great Shaman Chinook's enlightenment, which is actually found in other tribes as well, just not as plentiful as here..."

"Hmm? Harvest season? Shaman's enlightenment?... The Northern Land tribes here don't have potatoes. The temperature is so low, the coastal land is salty... What are the Siuslaw people harvesting?"

Scholar Mikki, filled with questions, left the Chieftain's longhouse. He stood at the edge of the dunes and scrub forest, gazing at the rare wooden longhouses before him, silent.

According to the fleet's experience along the way, the emergence of such longhouses indicates the tribe has grown to a certain scale, and has one or several chieftains or shamans of high status. Likewise, it signifies that the tribes here do not need to migrate, primarily farming, having a stable food supply, and thus lots of "fields."

"Siuslaw people's fields?..."

Scholar Mikki pondered for a long time, until Exploration Captain Zuvaro called out with a look of surprise and excitement.

"Miki! Miki! Come here, over here!"

Hearing the call, Miki the Sage looked over and saw Zuwaro standing on a grass-covered barren hill, waving him over from afar. He walked over in confusion, only to find Zuwaro crouching on the ground, digging up a long, more than one meter high "weed." Then, he watched in disbelief as Zuwaro broke off a piece of the pale yellow root, put it in his mouth, and chewed.

"Huh?! Zuwaro! Eating random roots? Do you have a death wish?!"

"Haha! Witnessed by the Chief Divine! Miki, this time, it seems you know less than I do."

Exploration Captain Zuwaro gave a proud smile and lifted his head. As he chewed the sweet root, he surprisingly detected the taste of raw sweet potato.

"This patch of weeds is actually the 'fields' planted by the tribe called the East! This over-one-meter-tall weed is what they call 'Sun Beans.' Yes, it should be some kind of wild pea. Both the root and the fruit are edible, and they're sweet!"

Zuwaro carefully searched around and plucked a bunch of pods. Then he opened the pods, poured the beans into his mouth, and chewed them, finding sweetness again.

"Here! Try some. I asked the local tribespeople, and after some gesturing, they told me that everything planted on this barren hill is edible!... Oh, and I also saw them foraging for ferns here..."

With that, Exploration Captain Zuwaro searched again and found two types of ferns around the wild peas. One had curled leaves, resembling bear paws, and looked fresh and tender. Zuwaro plucked a few tender leaves, chewed them, and his eyes lit up.

"Hmm? It's a bit astringent but incredibly delicious!"

Hearing this, Miki the Sage pondered for a while and cautiously tried some. This fern tasted excellent; it was the Bear Paw Fern intentionally cultivated by the East. Like wild peas, it was salt-tolerant and suited to the coastal wilderness as a vegetable crop. Of course, the roots of wild peas contained a lot of starch, so with extensive planting, they could barely serve as a staple food.

"Well, what is this final one?"

Miki the Sage lowered his head, examining the last one, a triangular-leaved Thistle Fern, and couldn't resist trying it, again and again.

"It's a bit bitter... has a grassy taste... hmm, not as good as the Bear Paw Fern!..."

As Miki the Sage was pondering in confusion, he heard Zuwaro calling him again. At some point, the other had moved to the coast, carefully observing something.

"Miki! Look! These are still the Siuslaw people's fields, but they're ocean fields! You see, this should be some kind of kelp and clusters of seaweed! ...Interesting! Truly an intriguing tribe!"

Miki the Sage approached the coast and lowered his head, carefully observing the Siuslaw people's ocean fields. Called ocean fields, they were actually small circular sea ponds slightly dug out in the shallows and surrounded by wooden stakes. Around the small circle were crudely made but practical fish traps. Inside the tidal sea ponds were densely planted seaweed and kelp. Under the clear autumn sunlight, these crops floated quietly in the water, growing peacefully, awaiting the tribespeople's harvest and collection.

"Hmm... really interesting! On land, they plant wild peas, Bear Paw Fern, and Thistle Fern. In the ocean, they cultivate seaweed and kelp while conveniently fishing... The East's heritage is indeed extraordinary!"

"May the Chief Divine bless! The tribe guided by the sun also possesses the wisdom of the sun... Cedar Shaman Chinook..."

As they conversed, Miki the Sage suddenly swayed.

"Zuwaro... have you noticed, the sun suddenly seems to be moving?"

"Huh? Miki, what did you say?"

"I said the sun is moving... Urgh! ... It's setting!... Ah?..."

With that, Miki the Sage exclaimed in shock and then "thud" fainted onto the beach. The warm sunlight shone on him, as if shining on a salted fish foaming at the mouth...

Chapter 1329: The Sea God's Hand, Divine Palm Peak

The morning sun fell on the round dome of the little hut, its light streaming in through the flue at the top. Exploration Captain Zuvaro bowed his head and entered the hut to visit his friend lying inside.

This type of hut, typical of the Xiusilao people, was quite low from the outside, made with a framework of branches covered by bark, fur, and thatch. Once inside, it was surprisingly spacious, as half of it was dug into the ground. Through this practical design, only a small amount of building material was needed to ensure warmth in winter and coolness in summer. The main drawbacks were that excavation was laborious, the land needed to be dry with no groundwater, and relocation was impossible.

In the dim light, Zuvaro squinted, inhaling the faint scent of herbs, and looked at the grass bed at the center of the hut. Scholar Mikki was lying there, drowsily, not knowing whether he was awake or not.

"Oh! Chief Divine! Miki, I didn't know that the thistle fern was poisonous and had to be cooked before eating! You can't blame me!..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro sighed, holding a clay pot, and approached the grass bed. Inside the pot was a seaweed and fish stew, sending out steaming hot aromas. Zuvaro lifted the stew to his lips, glanced at the closed-eyed Miki, shook his head, and took a few sips himself.

"Tsk ts! So tasty! So good! In one word, fresh!"

"Uh... sniff sniff... hmm?..."

Smelling the rich aroma, Miki sniffed and struggled to open his eyes. Yesterday, he had vomited all night, then his whole body was weak and limp, unable to move, before finally falling into a slumber. It

wasn't until this moment, after a sleep, that he started to feel a bit better, only his stomach growling fiercely with hunger.

"...Zuwaro... I'm... starving!..."

"Ah? You woke up just from smelling the fish stew? Tsk tsk!"

Exploration Captain Zuwaro chuckled, handed the clay pot to Miki, and watched as his friend, like a starving rabbit, drank the entire pot. Only then did Miki sweat all over, let out a long comfortable sigh, and asked groggily.

"Chief Divine! What happened to me yesterday? Did I get poisoned?"

"Cough!"

Exploration Captain Zuwaro gave a small "cough," lowered his head, somewhat guiltily and preemptively blamed.

"Chief Divine's blessing! Miki, you were really careless! How could you randomly eat... cough! That thistle fern? The tribe's Sun Shaman said that eating thistle fern raw is poisonous; luckily, you didn't eat much. He gave you some herbal tea, and you vomited all night... you'll probably recover in a day or two!"

"Uh... so that's it? Chief Divine's blessing! I really shouldn't have eaten randomly... eh! Why did I eat wild greens?"

Upon thinking this, Scholar Mikki paused. Then, his eyes gradually reddened, fiercely glaring at Zuwaro, gritting his teeth, and asking.

"Damn it! Zuwaro! Was it you? Was it you who told me this wild greens were edible? Right! I remember you ate first! Why were you okay? Did you set me up?!"

"Uh! No! Absolutely not! I only ate the non-poisonous bear's paw fern, not the poisonous thistle fern..."

Exploration Captain Zuwaro broke into a sweat on his forehead, hurriedly clenched his fist to his chest, and swore to the Chief Divine.

"Chief Divine witness! I never intended to harm you... the thistle fern looked so old, I wasn't even interested to eat it! Uh, Miki, you looked like a scholar, always reminding me to be careful... how come when it was your turn to act, you were even braver than me?"

"Damn it! Zuwaro, I trusted you! If I was alone, I definitely wouldn't have touched it!"

"Cough! My fault... my fault. You continue resting, I'll go attend to the fleet's matters. We had agreed to trade food with the Asahi tribe today..."

"Help me up! Let's go together!... The sooner we resupply the fleet, the sooner we can set off north..."

Scholar Mikki, gritting his teeth, struggled to get up from the bed. He tried walking a few steps, his legs somewhat numb, but much better than last night, and he could move around now. Zuwaro, supporting Mikki, had a trace of apology in his eyes, yet still wore a cheerful expression.

"Chief Divine's blessing! Miki, aren't you staying here to rest? And have another chat with that Sun Shaman, about the faith in the Chief Divine?"

"No more chats! That Sun Shaman is very knowledgeable and hard to talk to... the missionary work seems to have no chance for now. We should continue heading north, and reach the prophesized Great Bay as soon as possible!"

Upon hearing this, Exploration Captain Zuwaro agreed. Along the way, it seemed harder to sway any tribe directed by a High Priest or Shaman. He recalled what he witnessed this morning and spoke with a smile.

"Miki, today at sunrise, I saw a Xiusilao's 'Sun Dance' with my own eyes! They circled around on the sand dunes, praying to the sun and then spinning in a dance. That Sun Shaman was in the middle, shaking a

wooden bell, chanting incomprehensible songs... judging by the tribespeople's expressions, they seemed truly devout!"

"I think, their sun faith, although primitive, is strong and clearly grasped by each generation's tribal shaman. Unless we find a way to make the Sun Shaman acknowledge that the Chief Divine is the Sun the tribe worships... otherwise, the Kingdom's missionary work... might be difficult..."

"Chief Divine's blessing! With the Kingdom's mighty strength, we will eventually find a way, and win over the Chinook Shamans! But right now, the exploration north is our primary task!"

The Kingdom's four longships stayed at the Xiusilao's Asahi tribe for three days, trading for enough food to sustain two hundred people for half a month. Then, the fleet set off again, traveling north a hundred miles to exit the Xiusilao's territory.

The continued voyage along the coast revealed low green mountain forests, with occasionally noticeable fishing and hunting tribes, but of scarcely notable size. According to the information from the Asahi tribe, this was supposed to be the Tillamook people's territory, with a Tillamook Great Tribe residing inside a certain bay to the north.

Three hundred miles north from the Asahi tribe, on this particular evening, the fleet came across a stretch of brown beach. The beach itself wasn't very beautiful, just desolate and vast. What's truly captivating was the lonely rock pillar offshore to the west. So grand, it stood about seventy to eighty meters high, like a pyramid rising from the sea. Yet it was so abrupt, with nothing else around, as if the giant hand of a sea spirit was raised from the sea, its purpose unknown!

"Chief Divine! What... is this?"

Scholar Mikki widened his eyes, looking at the natural wonder before him, his mind racing with countless Divine conjectures. Exploration Captain Zuvaro, on the other hand, stroked his chin, inspecting the towering remarkable peak and the birds nesting atop, lost in thought.

"Praise to the Chief Divine! Miki, this is the Chief Divine's favor, a good omen for navigation!... Also a natural navigation landmark, must be recorded on the sea chart!"

"Hmm... I have to give it a name... like a Divine's hand-shaped peak..."

"Chief Divine witness! Then let's call it... 'Divine Hand Peak'!"

Chapter 1330: The North American Continent's Second Lifeline, North Port

Sailing on the desolate and difficult sea, encountering wonders and "God's omens" is a rare and uplifting thing. Neither Exploration Captain Zuvaro nor Scholar Mikki would miss the opportunity to boost the morale of the fleet!

Having explored such a distant distance, the fleet is nearly ten thousand miles away from the Kingdom. The vast oceans of the North and South make the great ships drift like duckweed. Only the call of the Divine and the mission of faith can make everyone fearless to continue forward!

"Chief Divine's protection! This is His miracle and His enlightenment! His hand points north, and our exploration is destined to be successful!"

Soon, four longships docked on the beach. Led by the Priests, two hundred crew members, while watching the golden sunset slowly descend behind the Subordinate God's Peak, devoutly prayed aloud!

"Praise Chief Divine, for descending miracles! Chief Divine protects the fleet! The exploration is bound to succeed!"

The golden radiance enveloped the majestic Subordinate God's Peak, forming a circle of splendid, dazzling golden halo. Everyone watched this miraculous scene in awe, some even shedding tears of reverence. And soon, the golden radiance gradually turned red, like a red Kingdom, as if it was the promise of Chief Divine.

"This is Chief Divine's will! Continue northward! Fearless advance! And all the Warriors who died during exploration will ascend to the red Kingdom, forever enjoying beautiful Anning!..."

After resting overnight on the gray-brown beach, everyone saw the morning sun in the East again. The location of Subordinate God's Peak is in future Pacific City, but its name in later times is Haystack Rock.

Setting off from Subordinate God's Peak, heading north for over a hundred miles, is Tillamook Bay, where the Tillamook tribe gathers. Following local tribal fishing boats, the fleet entered this Lagoon bay extending thirty or forty miles and encountered the great tribe, Timo Tribe. In the local tribal language, "Tillamook" means "people of the land" or "people".

Four longships docked at the great Timo Tribe, where they saw a stretch of square houses, different in form from surrounding tribes but equally low, thick-walled, used to resist wind and cold. The Timo Tribe has about a thousand people, barely qualifying as a great tribe. The tribe mainly fishes and hunts, also gathers berries and acorns, and plants a little bit of beans.

"Nawi xawánay? Which tribe are you from?"

"...Chief Divine protects! We are friends!"

Scholar Mikki widened his eyes, facing the tribal Hunter asking questions, and the scene was quite awkward.

The fleet faced the same language barrier here again. The Tillamook people spoke Chinook language, mainly the language of Northwest Oregon's river upper tribes, which was entirely different from coastal tribe translations.

Both sides gestured and communicated with difficulty for a long time. The fleet offered some cloth, indicating friendship. And the Female Chief Tila of Timo Tribe gave acorn cakes and wolf skins as gifts in return.

The Tillamook tribe is entirely matriarchal, with female elders as the family heads. The Female Chief Tila, in her fifties, is the tribe's grandmother and a singer of tribal epics. From the three or four husbands behind her, seven or eight chieftain sons and daughters, and twenty or so chieftain grandsons and granddaughters, it was clear the long-lived grandmother had a firm influence in the tribe.

"Uh... An ancient matriarchal society... While this is a good bay, it's entirely unsuitable for establishing a port..."

Seeing the Tillamook tribe's structure, Exploration Captain Zuvaro rubbed his eyebrows in distress. In such a matriarchal society, it's not men marrying women, but women marrying men. If a fleet crew were left here, instead of absorbing the tribe's women, they would be absorbed by this thousand-strong great tribe.

"Chief Divine's protection! The Tillamook people pointed north, gestured many times towards the river, and then towards the vast sky? What do they mean? Hmm, let's continue north, and see what we find!"

The four longships sailed northward again from Tillamook Bay, and after traveling two hundred miles, they turned a promontory and saw an unbelievably wide Great River! The fleet measured simply, and the river's width was an astonishing 12 miles!

"Chief Divine! Such a wide Great River! Such turbulent Water! We traveled ten thousand miles and encountered it for the first time!"

Scholar Mikki, standing at the prow, looked at the slightly turbid Rivermouth impacted by the rushing Great River, his face full of shock. Just a slight navigation experience could envision such a river's flow and width traversing an extensive basin, gathering numerous upstream tributaries, forming such a grand Rivermouth scene!

In fact, this rushing Great River is the fourth longest in North America, the Colombia River! It originates from Northeast Rocky Mountains and meanders over four thousand miles before flowing into the Pacific Ocean's Rivermouth. In the Northwest, among hundreds of thousands of tribespeople, this long Great River is truly the mother river, the second lifeline encountered by the Kingdom in the North American continent!

"Chief Divine's protection! Such abundant Water in this Great River, flooding onto the endless marshes and lagoons along the Rivermouth's shore..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro looked toward both banks, seeing only the Waterbed's mudflats and dense tall Luwei. He searched momentarily but saw no apparent villages, only a hint of smoke rising deep into the Southside riverbank.

"Mikki, do you think there will be any great tribes in this area?"

"Zuvaro, this river marsh terrain is impossible for farming or hunting. And with such swift Waterflow, it would be dangerous for tribespeople's small boats for fishing..."

Scholar Mikki pondered for a moment and made a judgment.

"I think it's unlikely to encounter large tribes within the dozens of miles of this Rivermouth! However, the upper reaches of this river might extend far, possibly housing many along-the-way tribes, making it a golden route for tribal trade!..."

"Haha! Gold is worthless in the Northern Land. The real currency here is food, cloth, and salt."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro laughed heartily, pointed toward the smoke rising from the South, and said with a smile.

"As for the number and size of tribes here... we'll know once we get there and see!"

Hearing this, Scholar Mikki smiled knowingly and nodded. Then, stroking his chin, he earnestly asked.

"Zuvaro, if there's no significant tribe here... are you thinking of establishing another port here?"

"Indeed! Mikki, you understand my thoughts!"

Zuvaro's expression became solemn, nodding earnestly.

"Chief Divine witness! This location is eight hundred miles from the South Port established within the Kus territory! At such a distance, it's about time to set another supply port..."

At this, Zuvaro furrowed his brows, visibly troubled.

"There's just one thing... that's causing me some headache!..."

"Ah? Chief Divine's protection! What is it?"

"Hmm... I've observed around; the smoke direction is on the river's south bank. The terrain there is relatively flat and has branching small rivers... I want to establish the port there!"

Upon hearing this, Scholar Mikki looked at the nearby south bank, gazing around the marshes and forest wilds briefly. He saw the marshlands forming natural protection and a calm branch of a river flowing through a slightly dry plain and hill... Seeing such terrain, he affirmed with agreement.

"There's a river, plains, and highlands! Initial stages don't require marsh reclamation; the along-river land is sufficient! Excellent, Zuwaro, the south bank here is a very suitable port!... Are there any other issues?"

"Uh!... There's a minor issue..."

Exploration Captain Zuwaro smiled awkwardly. He rubbed his face, speaking softly.

"Chief Divine witness! Although the port is on the south bank, I want to call it 'North Port'!"