

Civilization 134

Chapter 134 Lake Capital City, Tenochtitlan! Up_2

The boat master continued sailing south for a day and finally arrived at the North Gate of Tenochtitlan, the village of Tepayac, where ten thousand Samurai disembarked. Next, Xiulote would walk along the Long Bridge for several miles to reach the Lake Capital City.

Xiulote left the affluent village on the North Coast and came to the edge of Lake Texcoco. He stopped unconsciously, only to see a beautiful white stone Long Bridge, cutting across the boundless lake like a long rainbow alongside the dark earth embankments, linking to the magnificent stone Capital City not far away. The bridge was bustling with people like ants, occasionally parted by Priests and Nobility wearing feather headdresses, creating temporary voids in the crowd.

In his heart, he estimated that the stone bridge under his feet was about ten meters wide, flanked by embankments of equal width, providing a full thirty meters of road that could accommodate sixty people walking side by side, stretching for five or six kilometers. And as he looked around, more Long Bridges and embankments spread out in the distance, as if the brushstrokes of deities had joyfully divided Lake Texcoco.

Under the sunlight, the lake surface shimmered with the glistening water, the white bridge and the lake shining together, like the realm above. Thousands of small boats carrying goods and people came from all directions, nimbly passing between the bridges. Only upon closer examination did Xiulote realize the clever design of the bridges and embankments, with specialized arc-shaped holes left at intervals, allowing the small boats to shuttle under the feet of pedestrians with the lake water.

"Bridges lay upon waves, yet why speak of dragons? Paths cross the sky, yet why speak of rainbows?"

Xiulote's eyes were filled with the colors of the lake, the traversing crowd on the Long Bridge, and the white stone palaces and red-tiled Temples at the end. This was a grandeur he had never imagined!

"Xiulote, Priest, what are you muttering to yourself?" Ugus said with a smile as he looked toward Xiulote. Every resident of the Capital City took pleasure in witnessing the shock and wonder in the eyes of foreigners seeing the Capital for the first time.

"I was counting the number of bridges." Xiulote said with a faint smile, quickly regaining his composure.

"To the North, there are two main bridges leading to the villages on the North Coast. To the West, there are two main bridges and four smaller ones, running north to south, one leading to the old Capital of Azcapotzalco of the Tepanec, two leading to the middle Tlacopan, and another to the South toward Chapultepec.

There are also two major aqueducts to the West! From the foothills of the Prepetcha Highlands in the West, they traverse mountains and valleys to bring water into the Capital City—truly a massive undertaking! Usually, one is open for transporting fresh water, and the other is closed for cleaning. To the South, there is one main bridge and two smaller ones, each leading to the city-states on the South Coast.

And to the East of the Capital City lies the Long Causeway spanning the entire lake, like the embrace of a Goddess, protecting the grand waterborne Capital City from the floods of the rainy season and the brackish water of the outer lake.

This is the dwelling place of deities on Earth. It's the immortal Sun, Trakel Er listening to the will of the gods, the Divine Kingdom built by humans!"

Ugus described the grandeur of the Lake Capital City with passion, inadvertently using the lavish accents of the Capital City, singing a Priest's praise.

"This is the island surrounded by eight bridges and the Long Causeway, where the eagle descended, the place of white stones on the lake, the home where the cactus blooms, the Mexica-Tenochtitlan!"

Xiulote inwardly marveled, and he too sang the praises in the deep, melodious tone of the Holy City.

Within his field of view, bridges and causeways cut through the lake surface at will, interweaving a network across the floating fields in the lake. Hundreds of canoes rushed like shuttles, bringing the world's Wealth and tributes. In the distance stood endless stone houses, bustling crowds, and the strikingly tall twin pyramids of the Great Pyramid Temple.

This is the center of civilization, where bridges, boats, Temples, palaces, Samurai, and Priests converge, the grandest city in America, the Lake Capital City covering fourteen square kilometers!

Xiulote had once asked Aweit how many people lived in the Lake Capital City. Aweit told him with a smile that the Lake Capital City boasted eighty Calpulli communities and an unparalleled population of two hundred and fifty thousand.

When the Spaniards first came to the Lake Capital City, they were astonished by the massive stone metropolis and praised it as "the Venice of the New World." However, in Xiulote's view, that was but a narrow comparison.

In that era, Venice covered an area of only eight square kilometers and had a maximum population of one hundred and twenty thousand, not even half that of the Lake Capital City, with its Long Causeways

and water channel facilities completely beyond comparison. Venice might as well be called "the Europe of Tenochtitlan!"

If Xiulote were to make a comparison, the Lake Capital City should be likened to the Han Dynasty's Chang'an, with an area of 36 square kilometers and a population of 300,000 or Rome, with the same area of 15 square kilometers but a population estimated at an astounding one million. In any case, this was unquestionably the center of the Empire, the most splendid site of Central American civilization!

Under the raised Royal Banner, ten thousand elite Samurai marched in orderly columns south along the Long Bridge. Wherever the Royal Banner went, pedestrians on the bridge moved aside to the deeper parts of the embankments on both sides, kneeling in the lake water that rose above their lower legs.

Aweit, with the majestic demeanor of a King, led the way, while Xiulote accompanied him on either side. Together, they advanced as if entering a land devoid of people.

He observed carefully, seven-tenths of the crowd comprised commoners in single-color hemp or cotton clothes, without hats, prostrating themselves in the water; two-tenths were Craftsmen and merchants in dyed cotton clothes and wearing cotton hats, kneeling on both knees; five percent were various levels of Samurai and military Nobility in colorful War Clothes and simple Feathers, kneeling on one knee; and a very few High Priests and Great Nobility in embroidered garb and lofty Feather Crowns, bowing their heads respectfully.