

## Civilization 1401

### Chapter 1401: Arrangements for the Kingdom's Capital Region, Xiulote's Final Trump Card

"Olosh, my most trusted teacher... The three major cities of Capital County, a mining area, and a population of over half a million, are the most important political core of the Kingdom of the Lake and the economic pillar of material production for the kingdom!..."

The sun rises and sets, and in the blink of an eye, two days have passed. Xiulote repeatedly pondered the layout of the Kingdom of the Lake, considering the positioning and arrangement of each county and the future movements of each legion... Until the blueprint in his mind became clear, he picked up his pen and continued to write letters to the kingdom's senior officials.

"The Avit God King has made full preparations, sending envoys to request my return to Lake Capital City, Tloquiditlan, to participate in the Grand Festival. I have no way to refuse, as my father is also in the Capital City... Next, the management of Capital County, the military affairs shall be your responsibility, the political affairs entrusted to Chief Minister Jatili, and the economic production handed to Divine Revelation Director Talaya. Among the three, you shall be the leader!..."

"In the entire kingdom, whether it's Rivermouth County, Zicao County, Apa County, Qingqiu County, or the newly conquered Great Lake County, all supply excessively large military forces, beyond the production capabilities of each county..."

"Among the five counties, Rivermouth County with over thirty thousand people, and Apa County with nearly thirty thousand people, both have vast arable lands, ample food supply, and many banners... However, metal equipment, agricultural implements, and tools cannot be self-supplied, and their output of goods is also scarce... They are primarily agricultural counties based on farming and warfare."

"Zicao County, with nearly thirty thousand people, occupies the prosperous trade route of the Tarsas River, with quite developed commerce. The county hosts several small copper mining sites, a large-scale Black Rock Mountain iron mining district, capable of producing many metal resources, along with the kingdom's vast Southern Shipyard... It belongs to a trade and production... hmm, industrial county."

After pondering for a while, Xiulote still wrote down the word "industrial." The industry here, rather than actual factories, is more reminiscent of workshop industries.

The mining district developed in Zicao County, the foundries and smelting workshops, and the shipyard constructing longships are all practically controlled by the Divine Revelation Place, implementing the army's laws, essentially the state-run "industry" within the divine military system. As the kingdom is still newly established, and military laws are always strict, these military-industrial enterprises maintain high operational efficiency, continuously providing the driving force for the kingdom's war machine!

"As for the remaining Qingqiu County, located in the northern wilderness, the land is barren, with little material output. Although its area is vast, it has only fifteen or sixteen thousand people, and grain production merely suffices to maintain itself. The newly conquered Great Lake County, with around twenty thousand people, has great future potential, but presently faces similar difficulties... These two counties, related military matters even surpass agricultural production, can be termed as military counties."

"Among all the counties, only Capital County is the most crucial foundation of the kingdom! With over half a million people, Capital County boasts vast and fertile manors, producing food that can supply eight to nine hundred thousand people. The copper and coal extraction in the Blackstone City mining district and bronze smelting provide the kingdom and half the realm's copper needs!"

"The bronze foundry bureau in the Capital City provides bronze spears, bronze axes, bronze arrows, bronze cloth armor, and bronze cannon for almost the entire army of the kingdom... The Divine Revelation Place's Gunpowder Bureau in the Capital City also produces gunpowder weapons to conquer the realm... As for the special trade bureau's Lake Gem, it is even an important source of revenue for the kingdom's expansion and prosperity..."

At this point, Xiulote paused, reminiscing about the various reports from Capital County, inaccurately estimating the figures for the kingdom.

If described in the words of later generations, the economic production proportion of the over five hundred thousand people in Capital County, likely occupies more than 60% of the total one hundred and eighty thousand people of the entire kingdom. Next is Zicao County, hosting numerous workshops, occupying about 20%. As for Rivermouth County and Apa County, the two agricultural counties, each occupies about 10%. The Great Lake County and Qingqiu County probably each only have 5%...

Of course, in this era of warfare, the importance of economic production is evidently less than the war capability of the army. After all, if you can't produce things, you can still mobilize the army to seize them...

"Chief Divine bears testimony! Population, food, military preparedness, sources of wealth... Capital County is the core of the entire kingdom, and my most crucial foundation! As long as the prosperous Capital County is in hand, no matter how the magistrates of the counties wage wars, they will remain within the control of the kingdom..."

"Olosh, my teacher, my Capital Army Commander! For the Capital Army, expansion through conquest isn't the top priority; protecting the workshops and farms within Capital County is the most vital!..."

"After I head to Lake Capital City, the major affairs of Capital County will be jointly discussed by you, Chief Jatili, and Talaya. I will entrust the authority to make decisions to you three. If the situation is urgent, as long as the joint discussion approves..."

At this point, Xiulote's expression turned serious, hesitating slightly before solemnly writing.

"Chief Divine bears testimony! Capital County's thousands of military farms, hundreds of civilian settlements, tens of thousands of agricultural slaves, massive military production... Once the situation becomes urgent and the joint discussion approves... The Capital Army can mobilize emergency forces county-wide, drafting one in three, organizing an unprecedentedly large legion!..."

In the entire realm, only the Alliance has the strength to threaten the kingdom's Capital County. If matters indeed progress to that stage, Xiulote's intention to return to the kingdom becomes almost impossible. By that time, the core upon which all counties and tribes of the Kingdom of the Lake converge...

"Olosh, my teacher. If the above events occur and I can no longer return to the kingdom... The Ancestor bears witness! I have a three-year-old son, Shaokang, secretly raised by his mother Nashu in the Temple of the Goddess of Spring in the southwest of Capital County. Chief Jatili is also aware of this... If the worst happens, he, being a direct descendant of the Holy City lineage, can succeed my legacy. Please assist him in growing up..."

After painstakingly writing this final segment, Xiulote took a deep breath, remaining motionless for a long time. In political planning, there can be no wishful thinking; one must consider the worst possible scenarios!

For the already formed military-political group of the Kingdom of the Lake, once the kingdom fully breaks with the Alliance, if he were detained in Lake Capital City, or even killed... Naturally, the kingdom's factions couldn't possibly reinstate Xiuhua, the eldest son under Avit's control, surrendering life and death to the God King, and facing the inevitable purging. By then, the only choice the kingdom has, the only connection to unify the various tribes, can only be the secretly raised second son, Shaokang!

In fact, Xiulote sending Nashu and his second son Shaokang back to the Kingdom of the Lake early was precisely driven by political instinct, leaving the kingdom a potential heir that could be accepted by all tribes. And such a happening signifies a dreadful civil war sweeping the entire realm!...

"Hoo!... Avit, my uncle, my teacher, my father-in-law, thank you for teaching me the last lesson... Chief Divine shelters! I sincerely hope such a future never occurs... We should not be adversaries, but seekers with the same ideals, searching for a future empire for the entire realm, for millions of tribes!..."

"Ancestors shelter! Avit, you think the same, right!... I remember our oath, wishing you soar high like the Divine Eagle, bathed in the sacred sunlight, while I am willing to be like a submissive cactus, silently rooted... waiting for time and the future!"

Chapter 1402: Entrusting the Sage's Great Achievements, Reassuring Talaya's Promise

"Jatili, my most respected Sage... Regarding the compilation and dissemination of the Kingdom Epic, and the reorganization and assessment of the Kingdom Priesthood, I have some suggestions and thoughts to discuss with you..."

After finishing the letter to the Capital Army Commander, Xiulote first transcribed the content of the Kingdom Analysis. On this basis, he separately wrote a royal decree and a letter to Chief Minister Jatili and Divine Revelation Director Talaya.

In the letter to Chief Jatili, Xiulote first inquired about the progress of the Kingdom Epic, which is about integrating the cultural consensus of the Kingdom's various tribes, or "establishing a common ideological consciousness."

"My Sage, hundreds of thousands of Tlaxcala tribes have migrated to the Kingdom and converted to the embrace of the Chief Divine... At present, the existing Mexica-Prepetcha common epic needs to be further extended and revised to incorporate the culture and heritage of the Tlaxcala people, and to

include the myths and legends of the God of Death of Divine Mountain into the grand epic of the Kingdom!..."

"At the same time, for the young children and teenagers of Tlaxcala, community educational altars or academies need to be established, taught by the Kingdom's priests and Samurai, to dilute the influence of the Cloud Serpent heritage and establish their sense of identity with the Kingdom!..."

"Of course, for the compilation and dissemination of the Kingdom Epic to truly touch people's hearts, it requires the united efforts of the Chief God Priest, tribal narrators, troubadours, and academy teachers! Those historical accounts and records that are detrimental to the unity of the tribes can be suitably revised or erased... And the piles of heritage tablets and books tirelessly printed day and night by the Capital City's papermaking and printing workshops are precisely the instruments to unify the thoughts of all the tribes across the world! Especially the mythological illustrations that are straightforward and simple, directly capturing people's hearts!..."

"Respected Sage! Your profound knowledge and understanding of cultural influence and ethnic shaping far surpass those of the Kingdom's various priests! This significant work, I can only entrust to you... And my views align closely with yours! In the process of integrating all the tribes and reshaping the descendants of the Jiao People, the creation of cultural heritage, historical poetry, and narrative texts will be more critical and enduring than the spread of the chief divine faith!..."

"The common chief divine faith, the increased agricultural output, and the path paved by military merits can bring the tribes back to one mind for a generation or two! But if the narrative of the Jiao people's origins and the unity of all tribes truly permeate the hearts of all tribes, then that is a long-lasting unity that is not easy to dissolve! Once such national consciousness takes shape, even if internal strife and division occur among the tribes, they will always coalesce into a whole once again, which is the future world you and I desire!..."

Writing to this point, Xiulote paused and felt a sense of emotion. The cultural integration of the various parts of the Celestial Empire began with the Zhou Dynasty's concept of "Zhu Xia", forged into one under the First Emperor's "unification", "same script", and "burning of books", survived through the Martial Emperor's "dismissal of schools of thought", and only after the political and economic unification, did it gradually condense into a cultural unity known as the "Han World"!

"Such a challenging great work is naturally not something that can be accomplished within a generation. But right now is the best moment, and also the only opportunity, to shape a powerful nation in America during the era of tribal ignorance! And if this opportunity is missed and the tribes achieve literacy enlightenment, it will be extremely difficult..."

Feeling emotional for a moment, Xiulote thought of the ancient Mayans in the East, the Musica and Chibcha people of the Southern Continent, and the more prosperous Sun people of the Incas, and gently shook his head.

For mature local civilizations like these that have developed comprehensive systems, integrating them into the common culture of the Jiao People's tribes will be much more challenging! And if the cultures of various tribes further develop to the level of the European countries at present, awakening an initial sense of national consciousness... then integration might no longer be possible!

"Chief Divine bless! Ancestors of the Jiao People bless!... My respected Sage, the conquest of the Totonac Coast tribes is nearing its end. I have collected many heritage tablets from the seaside tribes and assembled dozens of sages and priests from the tribes, all of whom are being sent back to the Kingdom in succession... For the cultural integration of the Totonac tribes, it can also start now! Among them, the legends and roles of the Feathered Serpent Divine need modification. The myths of the giant serpent and the sun can be utilized... and how to incorporate them into the overall 'Shenha Epic' of the Kingdom requires your wisdom and creativity..."

"My respected Sage! The construction of a unified culture and nation is your most important great work!... As for my promoting you to the Kingdom Priesthood's High Priest, reorganizing the Kingdom Priesthood... it is to counter and compete with the High Priesthood of the Alliance..."

"The so-called counter and competition is about having an opposition, but fighting without breaking, the purpose being to prevent the High Priesthood from influencing the Kingdom's religious affairs and the Kingdom's power... As a learned and wise Sage, you will be able to grasp the subtleties within this... Chief Divine bless! Please rest assured, I will definitely return safely after the inevitable changes arise in the East!"

For Sage Jatili, Xiulote did not mention issues regarding his second son, Shaokang. This pivotal power of enthronement, he dared not entrust into the hands of this old Prepetcha fox, as this too is a political power balance. Following this letter, which served as a royal decree, was a letter to Divine Revelation Director, Talaya.

"Talaya, my most reliable subordinate..."

Just writing this opening, Xiulote paused. Toward this Divine Revelation Director who wholeheartedly sided with him, complex feelings surged within his heart. These feelings were not of love, but rather a fusion of pity, guilt, and consolation. Once a man's bottom line becomes flexible, it continues to lower more and more...

Xiulote mused for a while, scratched out this opening sentence, and after replacing a piece of parchment, he thought for a moment and wrote again.

"Talaya, my closest follower, and my most reassuring partner... The Kingdom's Divine Revelation Place, controls the mines, military workshops, gunpowder bureau, shipyard, smelting place, casting place, printing bureau, and special trade bureau, making it the largest production and research group in the entire world! ... It has already grown into a massive beast possessing its own ability to devour and grow. And the handling of this beast, only putting it in your hands, can truly set my mind at ease!"

"After the East expedition, I will return to the Lake Capital City and might stay for two years... Talaya, for the management of the Divine Revelation Place, I entrust you with it all! ... As for the development direction of the Divine Revelation Place, as I have mentioned many times before..."

"The primary task of the Divine Revelation Place is technological research and development! As evidenced by the discovered formula for volcanic ash cement, improved granulated powder and purification, ever-increasing iron smelting technology, more mature bronze casting cannon... larger oar-sailed longships, the promotion of maize breeding, compost techniques, and guano rock fertilizer research... every single technological appearance and application will change the future of the whole world!"

"The second task of the Divine Revelation Place is military production. Bronze weapons, bronze armor, bronze cannons, gunpowder weapons... these innovative new equipment and the large output of the Craftsman Camps are the Kingdom's greatest confidence to overpower the tribes and conquer all directions, being invincible! ... After I go to the Lake Capital City, if the Alliance sends people to demand technology and craftsmen, you should be able to tactfully refuse, delay, and evade... Don't worry about my safety! Only this way am I safe..."

"As for the third task of the Divine Revelation Place, it is to increase the production of ironware and accelerate the dissemination of ironware! With current iron-smelting technology, it is already able to provide abundant and inexpensive iron farming tools! Iron hoes, iron sickles, and iron tools can significantly improve the farming efficiency of villages, and the production capacity of town craftsmen... And this is the Kingdom's development foundation, continuously innovative productivity!"

At the end of the letter, Xiulote sighed with eyes lowered, and then he wrote a promise. And for this promise, Divine Revelation Director Talaya had waited for ten years...

"Chief Divine bless! Talaya, hold the Divine Revelation Place well for me..."

Chapter 1403: The Northern Star of the Wilderness, the Fourth Military Governor!

"Balamo, my Great General bearing heavy responsibility! The wind and sand of the wilderness carve sculpted stone pillars and also shape your resilience. In the vast northern lands, you have long safeguarded a frontier for me, enduring much hardship..."

Cycling through the exchange of letters, it came to the last kingdom's county magistrate, the poet commander Balamo stationed at Desolate Valley City in Qingqiu County. This time, the letter and royal decree sent by Xiulote to this county magistrate also carried belated commendation and reward.

The location of Desolate Valley City is approximately at 22 degrees north latitude, situated in the former Pamus River Valley of Pamus State, at the border of the Mexican Plateau and the Sakascat Wilderness. From the perspective of precipitation, this valley is situated at around 400mm of rainfall, marking the so-called "agricultural and pastoral dividing line." Of course, in this era, there are no Old Continent herds on the northern wilderness, only North American bison running wild, migrating herds of deer and packs of wolves, as well as the desert cottontail rabbits which serve as an important meat source for the tribespeople.

"Qingqiu County guards the wilderness, and the central valley area is suitable for cultivation. Meanwhile, the western and northern parts of the valley, being half grassland and half desert, are more suited for pastoralism..."

"The so-called pastoralism involves raising some herds of herbivorous animals to provide food. Such pastoral activities are actually present on the highlands, like the ants, grass rabbits, and hairless dogs that the Alliance raises... And in the wilderness, the suitable animals to raise are two kinds: rabbit herds and bison herds..."

Writing to this point, Xiulote paused slightly. He recalled the intelligence about the wilderness tribes and also remembered snippets of rumors from later generations.

In this era, the North American prairie tribes have already semi-regularly raised North American bison herds to provide more stable sources of meat, fur, bones, and sinew and horn. Among them, the Cheyenne, Sioux, and Lakota tribes are particularly well-known for bison raising. Of course, this "raising" does not mean domestication; it merely ensures that the living area of the bison herds remains stable within the tribe's territory, overlapping with the tribe's activity range.

Only a very few bison, close to humans since young, can be briefly ridden by trusted hunters, used even for short-distance transport. As for complex agricultural labor, it clearly exceeds the current endurance capacity of North American bison.

"Balamo, I have heard there are hundreds of bison herds being raised around Desolate Valley City, and priests from the Divine Revelation Place are also involved in the cultivation, having already raised two generations. I consider this matter very important, and you're doing well!..."

"For Qingqiu County at present, the role of the bison herds is not only to provide meat, fur, sinew, and horn but also, the most crucial benefit is to provide a large amount of manure! To achieve a bumper harvest of grain in the barren wilderness, sufficient fertilizer is indispensable!..."

"Thus, I commission your first important task to be the expansion of the bison herds, especially increasing the number of female bison! Those tribes who aren't adept at farming often know well how to handle bison. You should select professional herdsman and hunters from among them to engage in the raising and strengthening of the bison herds..."

Xiulote recalled the later generations' North American cattle herds, vaguely remembering particularly strong and tall breeds resulting from Eurasian public cattle interbreeding with native female bison. There is no reproductive isolation between Eurasian domestic cattle and North American bison, and these mixed-breed offspring are markedly more docile, able to engage in complex farm work.

If enough female bison herds are raised in advance, as long as a few Eurasian bulls are introduced, the number of cattle can quickly expand. Once there are many oxen, the entire kingdom, the entire realm's agricultural level, will rapidly leap to a higher level!

"The combination of agriculture and pastoralism, with sufficient food production, is the foundation for the kingdom to stand firm in the wilderness! Balamo, as the county magistrate of the kingdom, you must always remember that the kingdom is based on farming and warfare, with 'farming' preceding 'war'..."

Xiulote carefully instructed a few more words before solemnly writing down the royal decree.

"Balamo, the second important task I entrust to you is to keep an eye on the expansion of the Red Crow Great Tribe and take part in it timely! According to the news brought back by the exploratory fleet, thousands of warriors from the Red Crow Tribe are relentlessly campaigning northward. The Coa Wei Ke tribes along the banks of the Great River are either surrendering and submitting or fleeing and migrating..."

"With successive waves of impact, the tribes of the Northern Land are gradually descending into chaotic slaughter. And Qingqiu County, with a population of 150,000, has a military force of 20,000 to 30,000 strong, making it one of the most powerful forces in the wilderness! You must proactively deploy people to delve into the Northern Land, to welcome and subdue those migrating tribes, and even actively dispatch troops to subjugate those weakened tribes to expand Qingqiu County's army!..."

"And as for the realm occupied by the Red Crow Great Tribe, the city of Otter Cukuxicapan, you must continually send envoys to urge the Red Crow Chief Amos to abide by the agreement and hand it over as soon as possible! When necessary, you can coordinate with the Prince of Xilotepec's Suiqiu City, Osellor, to jointly deploy troops against the Red Crow Great Tribe, intimidating and deterring them! At present, at least half of the Red Crow Great Tribe's forces are far in the northern Great River, and they certainly won't be your match—they can only retreat northward!..."

"Once the kingdom controls Otter City, it completely controls the upstream tributaries of the Tampen River. And through the land of the Otomi and this thousand-mile waterway, the kingdom can bypass the Alliance and connect with the Totonac Coast... With this route, we can establish trade among the Northern Wilderness, the Vastec Coast, and the Totonac Coast to facilitate the development of all parts of the kingdom! The Silver Raven Great Tribe of Vastec is also an ally we can greatly strive for... In critical moments, this will be an extremely vital messenger route!..."

Xiulote lowered his eyes and wrote a meaningful sentence. Then, after pondering for a long time, he continued to clarify the deep meaning.

"Qingqiu County is rooted in the Northern Land, and its relationship with the Otomi tribes is inseparable! Balamo, as the County Magistrate of Qingqiu, the two largest groups in the county are the Otomi tribes and the Wilderness tribes. And when the Wilderness tribes moved southward, they committed heavy slaughter on the Otomi tribes... Therefore, you must mediate the relationship between the two sides to avoid any dissatisfaction! And the third important task I give you is to cooperate with the Supreme High Priest Omaltzin of the Otomi Diocese, and the City Lord Jiowar of Otapan City, to jointly resist the... pressure from the alliance!"

The old priest of the Otomi people, the former Supreme High Priest of the Otomi, aged Olte, finally succumbed after a serious illness lasting two years. He passed away to the Divine Kingdom in the sky at the end of last year, sent off by the wailing of over a hundred thousand Otomi people. Xiulote, situated by the shore, did not receive this belated mourning news until early this year.

Thinking of that "groundhog"-like tenacious old back, he fell silent for a long time, filled with emotion and a faint sorrow. Under the wise guidance of the old priest Olte, the interests of the Kingdom of the Lake had long been deeply bound with the Otomi tribes, inextricably linked. The future Olte envisioned for the Otomi people had also fully rested upon Xiulote's shoulders.

"Even if you burn all the wild grass over the hills, you must leave the cocoa for the tribe's continuation! Because, after the wild grass is burned, it will grow back'..."

Xiulote spoke softly, murmuring the words the old priest Olte once said to him. Then, he chanted with emotion, filling in a blessing ending to this ancient sacrificial verse.

"Yes! Under the Chief Divine's gaze, the wild grass has grown! They thrive lushly in fertile valleys and by rivers, intertwined and indistinguishable from the reeds of the Kingdom of the Lake. And the most resilient cocoa falls silently, exhausting all vitality but leaving behind seeds for continuation, which are the future spring and sunlight..."

"Balamo, this is a sacrificial poem I wrote for the old priest Olte, which I handed over to his disciple and successor, the new Supreme High Priest Omaltzin, to be read aloud before a gathering of Otomi priests... As for the other successor who Olte tirelessly cultivated, he is my brother by oath, City Lord Jiowar of Otapan..."

Xiulote picked up his pen, continuing to write to Balamo with the language of a poet, weaving a deep tapestry of power and conflict.

"The alliance's High Priesthood has already sent personnel, attempting to seize control of the Otomi tribes' divine authority. And the royal central authority of the alliance has a strong interest in the solid ancestral lands of the Otapan Mountain City! After all, this is where Tizoc faced failure, and it holds special significance for Aweit. If the alliance can completely control the mountain city, stationing troops in Otapan, there would be a truly magnificent stronghold on the northwestern plateau..."

"The world's foes and allies are forever altering with the shifting of circumstances, constantly changing. The transformations of all things resemble the rotation of a circular cycle, sometimes requiring ups and downs, dizzying, without direction..."

"Balamo, having said so much... I must reiterate it clearly! At least until I inherit the greater power of the alliance, the Kingdom of the Lake and the Otomi tribes remain the closest allies! Your Qingqiu County, with its thousands of warriors, must secretly cooperate with Omaltzin and Jiowar, to jointly resist the royal and divine authority extended by the central alliance!"

"I have already issued orders to the Divine Revelation Place in the capital city to support Otapan City with a large batch of bronze weapons, paper armor, leather armor, greatbows, and crossbows... to arm a legion of eight thousand Otapan! And in return, the Otapan tribes will provide two thousand warriors and enough grain for twenty thousand people for a year to your control in Qingqiu County! Thus, you may recruit the poor tribes further north to join the army with freedom! And the Kingdom of the Lake and Otapan tribes will provide you with sufficient equipment and food..."

The long letter to the poet finally came to an end. Xiulote, with a melancholy expression, gazed at the northern night sky through the open ceiling. Then he picked up his pen and wrote the last few sentences, expressing his complex feelings with the language of a poet.

"The night is so long, and the sky is filled with starlight. The stars gather around the moon, waiting for the patient dawn! ... Balamo, you are the Northern Star, the Arctic Star, the guardian star of legend, gathering tens of thousands of wilderness warriors for me! ... Chief Divine witness! As for me, I am like the master of stars, the sun within the dark night, granting you the power to guard the Northern Land: Qingqiu Jiedu! Able to independently conquer and negotiate, recruit and expand the army, and preside over all military and political affairs as the Great Chief of Qingqiu!"

In fact, Balamo in the wilderness had long been fully presiding over local military and political affairs, independently recruiting wilderness tribes. The so-called Qingqiu Jiedu Order seemed more like a posthumous recognition and acknowledgment by the kingdom. Yet the truly important promises and rewards were...

"In addition, the establishment of the kingdom's eighth eight-thousand-man regiment, composed of four thousand Otomi warriors and four thousand wilderness warriors, to form the Qingqiu Legion! The Qingqiu Legion's equipment, following the kingdom's standards, includes four Divine Eagle Cannons, ten

Tiger Squat Cannons, five hundred sets of bronze cloth armor, all dispatched and supplied by the capital's craftsman camp!"

"My poet commander Balamo, my great general bearing heavy responsibilities, you are the kingdom's eighth Legion Commander, the Qingqiu Legion Commander!"

Chapter 1404: The Sun and the Giant Serpent, the Sacred Child!

"The Capital Region County Magistrate Olosh, governs the crucial area of the Capital Region. The Rivermouth County Governor Elvi, stations at the River Mouth Fortress. The two major counties, the Capital Region and Rivermouth, are fundamentally directly governed by the Kingdom. And the legions stationed in these two counties will not easily be deployed..."

"Outside the two counties, all other territories of the Kingdom are under the jurisdiction of Military Governors, who independently expand and develop!... The Zicao Governor Etalik campaigns along the southeastern coast. The Great Lake Governor Kuluka explores the western Great Lake Region. The Apal Governor Ezpan dispatches troops to the southwestern coast. The Qingqiu Governor Balamo expands in the northern wilderness... Plus the soon-to-be-established Coastal Governor, to campaign in the Eastern Maya... that makes five directions of military governance, ready to crusade for the Kingdom in all directions! And these heavyweights commanding the legions will also become my confidence to confront God King Avit directly!..."

The world's map is spread on the black wooden table, a faint incense lit in the grand hall. Xiulote extends his finger, touching the mountains and rivers on the smooth map, also observing the densely marked words and symbols, pondering all future possibilities.

"The Colima great iron mine, Cuba's great iron mine, Sakascat's great silver mine, Gold Mountain's great gold mine... these already discovered but undeveloped mineral resources... if connected by a complete sea route, even reaching the distant Old Continent, to open up much-needed trade, whether through the Eastern Sea or the Western Sea... then the vast reserves of precious metals would continuously flow, transforming into the power to strengthen and expand the Alliance!... Surely, the colonizers confronting the Eastern Sea are much more dangerous than the Western Sea's communication attempts with the Siberian tribes and each clan of the Wa Country through the Arctic!..."

"The operation along the eastern coast is crucial! From Cuba to the Maya Lands, all these arrangements must be entrusted to Head Warrior Bertade, I only trust him!... Bertade will first serve a year as Coastal Legion Commander and Governor, and once the route to the Maya Lands is opened, he will be promoted to the full-fledged East Sea Marshal!"

"Under the command of the East Sea Marshal, there must be at least three legions: the Coastal Legion, the Black Wolf Legion, and the East Sea Navy. The next Coastal Legion Commander will be given to Artillery Camp Commander Tupa. And the Black Wolf Legion will continue to stay on the coast, along with the expanded East Sea Navy, participating in the eastern Maya campaign... as for Bertade's personal army... hmm! Give him four thousand of my Imperial Guard Legion! I cannot bring too many guards back to the Lake Capital City..."

Xiulote's finger moves, tracing through the thousand-mile jungle of the East, reaching the re-marked Maya Lands.

According to the triumphant reports from the Black Wolf, tens of thousands of the Kingdom's legion have already breached Lake Sacrifice City, advanced on the Great Divine Mountain of Fireworks, and are closing in on the Hidden Serpent Holy City! And after two or three years of expeditions, over a hundred thousand Totonac tribes have surrendered to the Kingdom of the Lake after more than two hundred thousand casualties! As for the remaining three to four hundred thousand, they are either deep in the inland mountain forests, or clustered around Hidden Serpent Holy City, making their last stand.

"As long as we pacify Hidden Serpent Holy City, the thousand-mile coast, and nearly a million Totonac tribes, will have no choice but to gradually submit at the Kingdom's feet! And tens of thousands of surrendered Totonac Warriors can conveniently press eastward, driving the campaign against the Maya!..."

"The thousand-mile land of Totonac, nearly a million clans. Such vast territory, such massive scale, almost accounts for half of the Kingdom! If we can successfully control the dispersed and loose coastal clans, the Kingdom's strength and potential will suddenly surge, laying the foundation for continuous eastward advance... and this is precisely why I defy Avit, embrace local tribal elites, intermarry with Totonac Divine Descendants, and desperately aim to leave offspring!..."

Xiulote lowers his gaze, returning from the global layout to the Seaside Lands. Compared to Black Wolf's campaigns in the eastern Seaside, he places more importance on the consolidation of the Seaside Lands. And to completely secure the Seaside clans, winning over the Totonac elites and warriors...

"Hmm... wasn't the Doctor saying, just in the next few days?... I don't know whether it'll be a boy or a girl... but whether boy or girl, will be the Chief Divine ordained ruler of Totonac!..."

Xiulote gazes at the map, immersed in lengthy contemplation. Until dusk, a trusted aide hurriedly arrives with an eager face, whispers a few words to Guard Commander Ecatl. Then, Guard Commander Ecatl's face suddenly reveals genuine joy and nervousness!

"Family Head! The doctors in the royal chamber have just sent a message!"

Guard Commander Ecatl prostrates and reports solemnly.

"Your concubine, the Snake Woman Miyava, is in labor!..."

"What! Miyava is in labor?!"

Upon hearing this, Xiulote's eyes widen, and he abruptly stands up. He drops the paper in his hand, and without hesitation, waves his large hand.

"Go! Ecatl! Arrange the personnel, summon all excellent doctors, come with me quickly!..."

A long night passes, accompanied by unceasing luxurious candlelight, also with difficult and involved moans. And as daylight breaks, a crisp and clear cry finally echoes in the wooden house of the backyard!

"Wah! Wah!..."

"Your Highness! Chief Divine's blessing! Just over six pounds, a healthy princess!..."

In the spacious and comfortable wooden house, a soft cloth bed is laid out. Miyava, pale-faced, smiles weakly as she lies in bed, exhausted and drenched in sweat. Hearing it's a daughter, her smile immediately vanishes, with a touch of trembling and unease. As she wearily turns her head to see the visibly joyful King in the center of the wooden house, she is stunned, confused, and unsure.

"Princess? Daughter! My daughter? Haha! My first daughter!"

Xiulote beams with delight, cautiously cradling his daughter in his arms. He looks at the soft and wrinkled little baby girl, full of affection in his eyes. He observes intently for a while, then lowers his head curiously, gently nudges his daughter's nose, and then kisses her forehead without restraint.

"..."

The little baby girl opens her eyes, staring blankly at her father for a moment. Then, her mouth opens silently, and soon she bursts into a loud cry!

"Wah! Wah wah!..."

"Oh! She actually opened her eyes, just born and already open! Haha! My eldest daughter will surely be exceptionally intelligent when she grows up!..."

Watching his 'wah wah' crying daughter, Xiulote laughs heartily, with a hint of pride and satisfaction. He lacks the prejudice of this era, where having a son would certainly be great, but having a daughter now also pleases him! In the entire Central America, although female Great Chiefs are not numerous, they still exist, unlike the patrilineal inheritance solely based on male heirs in East Asian countries.

"Good! Very good! Chief Divine's blessing upon me, granting me a lovable and intelligent eldest daughter!"

Cradling his newborn daughter, Xiulote raises his arms high. Seeing this gesture, everyone immediately pays respect and stays silent, awaiting orders. Next, the traditional naming ceremony of the Mexica nobility will follow. The name determined by the father and ancestors signifies the child's weight in their hearts and also foreshadows the child's future status!

"Chief Divine witness! Ancestor witness!..."

In the presence of everyone in the house, in front of the bowing Guard Commander Ecatl, and the astonished Snake Woman Miyava, Xiulote solemnly lifts his daughter and declares loudly and solemnly.

"She is my daughter! She carries my bloodline and the holy serpent blood of the coast!..."

"She is the child of the Sun and the Great Serpent, born on the morning of the last day of April, arriving with the dawn!... She inherits the divinity of the highland and seashore!..."

"And her divine name, I have long decided for her!"

"She is called 'Xo-Ilhuitl-Tlalcoatl' (Xo Ilhuitl Tlalcoatl), 'Sunshine and Divine Serpent of the Seaside', Xo Light Snake!..."

Chapter 1405: The God-Blessed Maiden, Hope of the Totonac People

In the silent wooden house, the King loudly announced his daughter's name. In the Navajo language, "Ilhuitl" means light, alluding to the sun in the sky. And "Tlalcoatl" means the long snake of the Rain Divine, the sacred giant serpent. Together, the two names signify "Sun and Giant Serpent," that is, "Light Snake."

Everyone in the house fell silent for a moment, then understood the political significance behind the name. The eyes of the doctors and priests soon filled with deep envy. They looked at the daughter in the King's arms, then at the disbelieving Snake Woman, and offered their congratulations and blessings to the King.

"Chief Divine bless! The Sun God bestows the sacred princess, and will also grant her the sun-like beauty and health!..."

"Praise the Chief Divine! The divinity of the Rain Divine, transformed into the long snake of the Seaside, guards the princess! She will rise with the snake, roaming the Eastern Sea and mountains, mastering the vast sea and land!..."

"Family Head! Chief Divine bless, Ancestors protect! Your sacred heir has gained another one!... And it's a thoughtful princess too..."

"Haha! Hahaha!..."

Xiuluo laughed heartily. Among the congratulations of the crowd, it was still the words of the Guard Commander Ecatl that resonated most with him. He smiled and nodded to everyone, then gently touched his daughter's wrinkled face before passing her to the Priestess of the Goddess of Spring, in the midst of her powerful cries. It was only then that he looked at the somewhat weak and nervous Snake Woman Miyava, nodded gently, and also reached out to touch her cheek.

"Miyava, take good care of yourself! Don't work too hard, don't overthink, take care of your body, and take good care of our child!..."

"Yes, Your Highness!... I, I was thinking of giving you a..."

Miyava's weak voice was trembling, and inexplicably a bit aggrieved. Xiulote raised his eyebrows, glanced at his healthy and lively daughter beside him, and interrupted Miyava before she could finish speaking.

"Hmm. With the Chief Divine as witness, a daughter is just fine! This is our daughter, and I like her very much! You need to take good care of her! Understood?..."

Faced with the King's sharp and serious gaze, Snake Woman Miyava hesitated, lowered her smooth neck, and obediently nodded.

"I obey you! My Highness..."

The rise of the sun accompanied the arrival of new life. But under the clear seaside sunlight, in the prosperous Golden Bay City, a "wise" messenger with an unsettled heart, neither bright nor at ease, was confined in the Main God Temple, sitting anxiously at all times.

"Oh, Chief Divine! It's been seven or eight days already! How come His Highness Xiulote hasn't seen me yet?... It was supposed to be today, but why was it canceled last minute? Could it be... could it be!... His Highness is dissatisfied with me, unwilling to even grant me a meeting?!"

"Ah! If I can't meet His Highness, then my fate, all the prepared speeches, and the matter of Papu Priest's surrender... what should I do? What should I do!... Tilan and Tidan, those two children, are still in the Kingdom's hands, and who knows if they've been sent to the Alliance!..."

Mayan merchant Tikalo, full of worry, touched his wise bald head, anxiously looking towards the gate of the courtyard guarded by the red-haired Samurai. He peered for a moment, tiptoed, and tried hard to look outside through the high windows on either side, but saw no one. After looking back and forth for a while, he finally couldn't hold back and approached the courtyard gate, shamelessly speaking with an unfamiliar Guajili language smile.

"Honorable Samurais! The Chief Divine bless you! I... want to go out and have some exchange with the filth deep in the earth..."

"Huh? You want to do what?"

The two Guajili Samurai guarding the gate looked puzzled at this Mayan bald head who kept running around, not knowing what he was babbling about.

"Uh... I mean, I want to use the toilet..."

"Huh! You want to squat?"

One Guajili Samurai paused, stretched out his hand, pointed to a wooden bucket in the corner of the courtyard, and replied rudely.

"Isn't that a bucket? Go squat there! Hurry up, someone will come to change the bucket in the morning, just once a day, in time for breakfast..."

"Uh... ahem! Honorable red-haired Samurai... um... I can't go here, I want to go to the big toilet outside the Temple..."

The newly built big toilets of the city-states and temples, along with strict sanitation laws, were one of the new policies brought by the Kingdom's conquest.

"Hm? You don't want a private spot, you prefer to be crowded with others, lively?"

The Guajili Samurai assessed the Mayan bald head in front of him, as if looking at a fool. After thinking for a bit, he shook his head firmly.

"No way! Orders from above: you are not allowed to leave the courtyard! Unless you're summoned by the God of Death Great Chief!..."

"Uh... honored red-haired Samurai, please make an exception! It's been seven or eight days... I have this chronic issue, can't get used to being alone!..."

Mayan merchant Tikalo's eyes flickered. He urgently wanted to know the news from the outside, to know His Highness's plans for him, so he could prepare his responses in advance. And the Chief Priests of the Temple were his best news source! Those local Totonac priests were much easier to deal with compared to these intractable, clueless barbarian children from the Wilderness. And a smart person like him, if locked up with nothing to do for too long, would eventually drive himself crazy.

"Ahem! Honored Red-Haired Samurai, I have two small items that I wish to present to the Priest of the Chief Divine... Uh, I kindly ask you to help pass them on..."

Tikalo thought for a moment, reaching into his bosom stealthily, and took out two small jade ornaments, slipping them into the hands of the two gatekeeping samurai. Then, smiling broadly, he spoke.

"I kindly ask both of you to take care of this, just a little flexibility..."

"Oh? By the Chief Divine! This smooth feel... is it jade? Expensive jade?!"

The two red-haired Guajili samurai grasped the jade ornaments in their hands, exchanging glances for a moment, their expressions changing slightly.

"Yes! These are Mayan jade stones from the East, which can be exchanged for a lot of... um... cloth and pottery!..."

The Mayan merchant Tikalo, smiling broadly, looked at the two red-haired samurai and asked softly.

"The Chief Divine bless! Honored samurai, these two jade ornaments... are merely a token of my respect, not worth much!..."

"..."

The two red-haired samurai exchanged a glance, their eyes flickering. They hesitated for a moment, whispering a few words in the wilderness dialect.

"...What do you think?"

"Let's accept it! Anyway, in the wilderness, it's the same; it's not a big deal."

"Uh, okay... let's go for it then!..."

They talked for a while longer and then knowingly nodded together, accepting Tikalo's bribe. Witnessing this, Tikalo's smile brightened even more. He moved gently, about to head out the door, but was grabbed by the two samurai!

"You, going out the door, what do you want to do?!"

"Uh!... This? Me?! Didn't you already agree?..."

"Agree to what?... Oh, you mean that? Sure!"

The two red-haired Guajili samurai chuckled, pointing to a corner of the courtyard, speaking seriously. Upon hearing these words, Tikalo was instantly dizzy, almost falling over in shock.

"Chief Divine as my witness! We don't have so many customs as your Southern Tribes do; no need for what wooden barrel... Aren't you uncomfortable going alone? Come on, we'll accompany you, one on each side!..."

"Ah! This! You? You!... Cunning! Detestable! Simply evil!..."

While the three were conversing, suddenly outside, the Main God Temple rang with a crisp bell sound. The bell's chime floated like Fei Yu, quickly becoming urgent until the thundering bone horn blast echoed! The long, skin-and-bone horn blew out an awe-inspiring and melodious tune, resonating throughout the Golden Bay Temple and City-State. Those familiar with rituals, if listening carefully, could clearly discern it as the opening for a formal divine ceremony!

"Ooh! Ooh! Ooh!..."

"Praise the Chief Divine! All the Chief Divine Priests, gather in the main hall! Quickly!..."

Shouts in the Mexica language and Totonac language echoed throughout the Main God's temple. Soon, dozens of Chief Divine Priests from various tribes had gathered in the main hall of the temple. Then, Iwood, the Second Level Priest from Golden Bay City, holding the inherited scepter with a snakehead, joyfully called out loudly, his voice ringing like the horn.

"Praise the Supreme Main God! Praise the bright Sun! Praise the sacred Giant Serpent!..."

"Our most revered His Highness Xiulote, the highest Western King, has just had a holy Princess! She is also the daughter of the Serpent Mother Great Chief, a Divine Daughter who carries the blood of the Sun and the Divine Serpent alike!..."

"The Sun shines on the Seaside, the Divine Serpent coils upon the coast, and the union of the Sun and the Divine Serpent is, in the mythology of the Seaside Tribes, a destined Queen to unify the Seaside Lands!... Come! Let us recite the Book of Ama Colley, sincerely praying loudly for the Princess of the Seaside, for the hope of our Seaside Tribes!... Chief Divine bless! Praise the bright Sun! Praise the sacred Giant Serpent!..."

Within the temple, upon hearing such joyous news, the faces of dozens of priests from the various Totonac tribes erupted with genuine elation. In this era, the power of myths and legends was so deeply ingrained in people's hearts. And where people's hearts directed, there was the tangible rule and great strength!

At this moment, the priests of the Seaside tribes shouted in unison, dancing frantically, driven mad by it, both for the prophesied Divine Descendant, the hope of the Seaside Tribes, and for their own bright future!

"Chief Divine bless! Praise His Highness Xiulote! Praise the Sun and the Giant Serpent!... Praise the Divine Daughter, the hope of the Seaside Tribes!..."

#### Chapter 1406: Bone-Deep Flogging

The news of Xiulote's eldest daughter, the birth of the Light Snake, quickly spread among the higher echelons of the Seaside Lands, especially among the Totonac elite. Although this news was not officially announced, it could not be kept from the Alliance. And for Xiulote, he had no intention of hiding it.

Because this newly born divine child, mythologized through the legends of the priests, would become a powerful legal authority for the Kingdom to control the Seaside Lands and one of the strongest supports for stabilizing the hearts of various tribes!

"The thousand-mile eastern seaside must be controlled by the Kingdom... and now, the Kingdom has firmly taken hold of it!"

This was the political message Xiulote needed to convey. The control of the Seaside Lands, the passage to the East, was precisely his bottom line of interest. And after discussing with the Chief Priest Yitai of the Seaside for two days, he finally met with the anxious and unsettled Mayan merchant Tikalo in the Temple of the Chief Divine.

"Your Highness! Your most loyal servant, bearing joyful news from afar, sincerely presents to you..."

Xiulote expressionlessly entered the side hall of the Temple. He merely cast a cold glance at Tikalo and mercilessly ordered the Guard Commander.

"Ecat! Tikalo deceived the Kingdom and schemed against the exploration fleet... Give him sixty lashes! Right in front of the Chief Divine's statue! Whether he lives or dies is of no concern!"

Upon hearing the final words "whether he lives or dies is of no concern," Guard Commander Ecatl raised his eyebrows, instantly grasping the situation. He took the execution whip, soaked with cold saltwater, and strode toward the terrified Mayan merchant Tikalo.

"Ah! Ah, Your Highness! I... I did not, I am not..."

"Crack! Crack!..."

"Ah!... Chief Divine!..."

"Crack! Crack!..."

"Ah!... Heavenly Serpent Divine!..."

Two red-haired Samurai stripped Tikalo of his robe and pressed him onto the cold bluestone. Then, Guard Commander Ecatl, with a stern expression, extended his arm, pivoted on his feet, and swung the whip forcefully, producing a piercing sound! His actions were unusually skilled, and his control over the position was very precise. He avoided the back and waist, which could be fatal, and struck hard on Tikalo's buttocks and legs, instantly leaving bloody marks.

"Crack! Ten lashes!"

"Ah!"

With each heavy crack of the whip, the Mayan merchant Tikalo let out a hysterical scream! The whip soaked in saltwater, after just about ten lashes, tore his skin open, causing him to tremble all over in pain. The excruciating whipping was followed by the searing pain from the saltwater on the wounds, as if they were burning!

"Ah! Stop it! Stop it!... Your Highness! Please! Please!... Heavenly Serpent Divine!"

The Mayan merchant Tikalo struggled violently, like a fish out of water, yet he was firmly held down by the strong Samurai. He had never endured such painful punishment, not even in the Papu Priest's dungeon where his life was intentionally spared. But at this moment, facing the Guard Commander's "merciless" whipping, recalling the icy expression of His Highness, his wise mind was filled with pain and fear, even howling in unintelligible Mayan language.

"Ah! Heavenly Serpent!... Ancestor!... Grandfather!... Father!... I, I'm coming to you! Ah!..."

"Crack! Crack!... Thirty lashes!"

"Uh..."

The Guard Commander Ecatl maintained steady movements, one lash after another. Listening to Tikalo's screams, which grew increasingly hoarse and faint, he quietly relaxed his grip a bit. And on the places where the whip landed, there was almost no healthy flesh, just scarred and even bleeding wounds!

"Crack!"

"..."

The long whip fell, blood splattering. Viewed from a distance, Tikalo was covered in blood, motionless, lying on the bluestone floor of the Temple, resembling a Sacrifice in mid-offering.

"Final ten lashes!"

In fact, the Guard Commander Ecatl's whipping was quite skilled, one of the methods for the ascetic priests to self-mortify. Such scars were excruciatingly painful, looking terrifying, but they were only superficial wounds, not life-threatening. Given the Guard Commander's strength, if he truly wanted to beat someone to death, a dozen hard lashes on the back and waist's vital points could injure Tikalo's internal organs, instantly killing him on the spot!

"Crack! Crack!..."

"..."

"The Chief Divine witness! Family Head, sixty lashes are completed!..."

Guard Commander Ecatl put away the blood-stained long whip, turned around, and bowed his head to report. Xiulote looked at the nearly breathless Tikalo, who could no longer make a sound, and nodded slightly. Such a profound deterrent should make this cunning Mayan merchant remember for a lifetime!

"Tikalo, do you plead guilty?"

"... Your... Highness... I... I... plead... guilty... guilty!... Chief Divine... witness..."

"Hmm."

Xiulote gazed calmly, observing Tikalo's tear-filled eyes, his face full of snot and tears, and looked over his blood marks and whip scars. After a while, he crouched down, touched Tikalo's divine bald head, and sternly admonished him.

"The Chief Divine witness! Tikalo, you have received your punishment. And the merciful Chief Divine is willing to give you one last chance!..."

"If you dare deceive the Kingdom again, to craft some shady schemes... I will personally offer you as a sacrifice to the Chief Divine on the altar!..."

"Tikalo, do you understand?"

"Ah! I... I... understand... Your Highness... my... King..."

Tikalo trembled all over, looking up at the expressionless King, with sheer terror in his eyes. At this moment, the shadow of young Xiulote's innocence had completely disappeared from his heart. What remained was a cold, ruthless King, unreadable and capable of ending his life at any moment!

"Hmm."

Xiulote stood up and finally gave instructions to the two trusted aides behind him.

"The Chief Divine's blessing! Treat his wounds with my ointment!"

"Yes, Your Highness!..."

After giving all these instructions, Xiulote turned around to leave the courtyard. Seeing the King about to depart, although in pain and immobile, Tikalo still made a strenuous effort to call out.

"Your Highness... Your Highness!... The Chief Divine witness! I have a... critically important... message to... report to you!..."

"Hmm? Speak!"

"The Naval Commander of the Hidden Serpent Holy City... Papu! Papu Priest! He wants to bring... the fleet and shipwrights... to personally surrender to you!..."

"The Naval Commander of Hidden Serpent City? The one who attacked the exploration fleet and captured you?"

Upon hearing this, Xiulote furrowed his brows. He went back to Tikalo, crouched down again, and asked, looking into his eyes.

"Did you say shipwrights? What shipwrights? The Mayan royal shipwrights you lost?..."

"... Yes."

The Mayan merchant Tikalo trembled slightly. He cautiously glanced at His Highness' calm expression and quietly replied.

"Papu Priest... captured me and then released me... he wants to bring... a fleet of two thousand men, seven large paddle sail ships, along with a large number of shipwrights and all the large timber... to personally surrender to you..."

"He promises to prevent... the Chief Priest of the Hidden Serpent City and the Divine Descendants from escaping. He is willing to guide the Kingdom Legion into the fortified Hidden Serpent City..."

"And his only condition is to personally surrender to you, continuing to serve you in conquering the eastern Maya Lands!..."

#### Chapter 1407: Divine Revelation Record, Religious Interpretation Rights, and the Origin Scripture

The spring farming of the lowland seaside always begins a little earlier than on the Mexican Plateau. As May just begins, the black smoke of slash-and-burn agriculture rises from the jungle being cleared. Tens of thousands of tribespeople, organized into settlement brigades, under the supervision of the Chief Divine Priest and the Samurai of the brigades, begin working in the fields, sweating profusely.

Crude but sufficient wooden and stone farm tools, strict yet orderly collective labor, rough but effective small canals, and compost fermentation that villagers can't comprehend, akin to religious commandments... Improvements in basic agricultural production are centered around Golden Bay City, spreading gradually across the vast seaside lands, guided by the Chief Divine Priest and Samurai of various governing parts from the kingdom's controlled settlement villages! The high-yield cassava brought back from Cuba is being cultivated in the official fields of Golden Bay City, nurturing hope for the future!

"More bountiful crops, more diligent people, and higher agricultural productivity... these are the fundamental forces that can change the world!"

In mid-May, Xiulote toured and inspected the spring farming around Golden Bay City. He saw villages brimming with vitality and stood amidst fields sprouting new shoots. With satisfaction, he instructed the Seaside Chief Priest Yitai.

"This year's spring farming is evidently more orderly than last year's. The kingdom's agricultural reform has indeed brought some results to the seaside lands!..."

"Yitai, the Chief Divine's missionary priesthood, and your inquisition not only need to spread the faith of the Chief Divine but also the latest agricultural techniques! New sacrificial hymns must be created, turning the steps of agricultural production into catchy songs, and then under the name of the Chief Divine, guide them to the rural field heads!..."

"Yes! Divine Revelator High Priest Sir, we follow your enlightenment!..."

The Seaside Chief Priest Yitai, dressed in his ritual robe and barefoot, stood on the soil beside the fields. He held a scroll of scripture under his arm and a newly made charcoal pen in his hand, recording diligently and respectfully.

"The Chief Divine watches from the sky, gazing upon the lands of the seaside, bestowing a divine revelation. He said: 'Hold a sword in one hand, a scripture in the other. Feet must tread on the farmlands, eyes follow the Sun...'

"Yitai, I maintain; as long as, under the guidance of the Chief Divine, the villages and tribes that have surrendered receive tangible increases in agricultural production, the faith in the Chief Divine will truly take root in people's hearts, manifested by actual divine acts and benefits! And the worship foundations of the old gods will gradually crumble in the comparison between today and yesterday..."

"And as long as the vast majority of tribespeople truly convert, those few remaining nobles and chieftain remnants won't be able to stir up any major turmoil!..."

"Yes! Yes!..."

The Chief Priest Yitai nodded repeatedly, continuing to record the king's teachings, using language akin to scripture to write new Chapters for the seaside.

"The Chief Divine possesses boundless power, causing the false gods of the seaside to fall one by one. He is majestic yet benevolent, leaving wise warnings for the followers of the seaside: 'Those who believe in me and follow my words will see bountiful harvests in their fields, their tribes will flourish, and progeny will multiply... while those who do not believe will face desolation, withering, and death, destined for their tribes to disappear and sink into the endless deep Eastern Sea...'"

"Yitai, what are you writing?... Hmm? 'Divine Revelation of the Eastern Sea'?"

Xiulote turned his head, took over the written scripts by Yitai, and after flipping through them slightly, his expression subtly changed. He saw the entire volume densely recording his usual words and deeds, royal decrees, and instructions; these actions were embellished using priests' language under the name of 'Divine Revelation,' organized into a religious book representing the kingdom's ideology, titled 'Divine Revelation of the Eastern Sea'...

"Yes! Divine Revelator High Priest Sir! You are the Divine Revelator bestowed by the Chief Divine! This scripture elaborates on the teachings of the Chief Divine through your words, leading the kingdom's and the alliance's priests onto the true path of the Chief Divine's enlightenment!..."

The Seaside Chief Priest Yitai exhibited respect and reverence, emphasizing "kingdom" before "alliance" in his words, and highlighting "divine revelation" and "true path." This insinuation was all too apparent for Xiulote, who was entangled in the political struggle between the alliance and the kingdom.

"Hmm..."

Xiulote pondered for a moment, gazing deeply at the respectful Chief Priest Yitai. Then he nodded slightly, spoke meaningfully.

"The Chief Divine is never stagnant; He is the rising, never-setting Sun! The true path of divine revelation should indeed be known by the Chief Divine's priests... and some of the alliance's elder priests, who remain in the early sunrise, might struggle to keep up..."

"Yitai, your scripture is well-written, very good! Keep up the good work, and continue further; let the kingdom's priests chant and read it first!... The kingdom Priest Chief Jatili is getting old, and needs to focus on governmental affairs and the epics of various departments. And the kingdom Chief Priest Mawilo is also not young anymore... The kingdom indeed needs a scripture Chief Priest in religious texts to ensure that the majority of kingdom priests walk on the 'true path of divine revelation'!"

"Ah! Yes! Yes! We follow your will! Divine Revelator High Priest Sir, your enlightenment is the most sacred and splendid peak illumination from the Chief Divine descending on earth! I am your humble follower, the recorder of this illumination, to let the light spread through the world..."

Hearing such a promise, the Chief Priest Yitai was overjoyed, falling on his knees onto the muddy fields, bowing to the king. The so-called scripture Chief Priest, able to define the kingdom's ideology and examine the faith of the vast majority of kingdom priests... such a position, wasn't it equivalent to the kingdom Chief Priest Mawilo, being one of the most revered?!"

"Oh? The most sacred and splendid peak illumination, the illumination of the Divine Mountain? ..."

Upon hearing this, Xiulote understood in his heart, smiling with appreciation. He looked into the eyes of the Chief Priest Yitai, asked in a deep voice, also assessing the wisdom and pursuit of the other.

"Yitai, which mountain do you speak of as the Divine Mountain? Is it the Great Divine Mountain of smoke and fire at the seaside? The Tancitaro Volcano of the kingdom? Or the Smoke Peak Divine Mountain of the alliance and the land of Tlaxcala?"

"Uh..."

Faced with this politically wise question, the Seaside Chief Priest Yitai's thoughts raced, eventually breaking a slight sweat on his forehead. His eyes flickered for a while, suddenly brightening as he respectfully responded.

"Divine Revelator High Priest Sir... I believe, whether it's the Great Divine Mountain of smoke and fire, the Tancitaro Volcano, or the Smoke Peak Divine Mountain, they are tangible and have a master, belonging mainly to one region, one ethnic group... To let the illumination of the Divine Mountain surpass the alliance, even to illuminate the world..."

"Why not adopt the name of the mythical Aztec Divine Mountain renowned among the Mexica people's origins! ...Then write a core Origin Scripture! Integrate the Mexica epics of the alliance, with the kingdom's exploratory fleets' discoveries on the northwest highland, narrate the Chief Divine's original guidance and redemption, to redefine the foundation of the Chief Divine faith, including all tribes within!"

"Hmm? The Origin Scripture of the Aztec Divine Mountain? The Chief Divine's original guidance and redemption? Redefining the foundation, including all tribes..."

This time, Xiulote was serious, contemplating for a long while. What he was originally asking about was the consideration and wisdom of the political situation, how the kingdom priesthood's ideology should be integrated when facing the alliance's High Priesthood. However, the Chief Priest Yitai's answer was to bypass the situation of fighting without breaking and go directly to seizing the highest theological interpretive authority, overpowering the alliance...

"Yitai, now is not the time to upend the table... It is still a bit early to redefine the origin of the Divine Church!..."

After much consideration, Xiulote shook his head with a smile. He extended his hand, grasping the Chief Priest Yitai's hair, responding meaningfully.

"Of course, your idea is good, you can start preparing now!... This book of the Origin Scripture, telling of the Chief Divine's original guidance and redemption, will follow the narrative of the Chief Divine's puissant creation in the 'Book of Ama Colley' ... So call it... 'The Original Divine Revelation Record: The Exodus of Aztec!'

Chapter 1408: The Royal Banner Heads East, the Black Wolf Welcomes

In mid-May, after being stationed for half a year, the royal banner of Xiulote set off once again from Golden Bay City. Four thousand from the Imperial Guard Legion escorted the King, heading east, inspecting the city-states and villages along the way. This time, the King's journey was officially in the name of inspecting the spring plowing in various places, and the itinerary was largely in accordance with this.

Xiulote traveled in intervals, inspecting Cone House City, Coyote City, and Ke Shi City, checking over twenty villages and tribal camps along the way. He even toured the ruins of the Third Ancient City, held a sacred ceremony, and offered sacrifices to the Divine Stele that has been passed down for over two thousand years. After detouring nearly seven hundred miles, Xiulote finally arrived at the ancient Lake Sacrifice City in mid-June.

Beside the boundless Sacrificial Lake (Laguna Catemaco), the Black Wolf's royal banner stood tall, fluttering in the wind. The Imperial Guard Legion arrived solemnly, carrying tall long spears, tidily like a forest. The Black Wolf Torc personally led a group of army generals with hundreds of red-haired trusted aides to meet them thirty miles outside the city.

"With the Chief Divine's blessing! Black Wolf, how is the battle going on the front line?"

After formal rituals and greetings, Xiulote called Black Wolf close to him. Under the escort of generals and samurai, the two walked towards Lake Sacrifice City while discussing the latest frontline battle situation.

"Has the sacrificial site of the Fourth Ancient City been seized? Has the Southern Grass Altar City been captured? What's the situation in Hidden Serpent City to the southeast?"

"Your Highness, the sacrificial site of the Hill City in the Fourth Ancient City was occupied by the legion half a month ago! I arranged for a tribal camp to guard the ancient altar of the city. As for the original priests of the old gods, half were sacrificed and executed, and half converted to the Chief Divine..."

"As for the resisting Woodland City, Grass Altar City, it was just conquered by the Eastern Expedition Legion seven days ago! The army has slain four thousand resisting tribal warriors and able-bodied men, converting nearly fifty thousand Totonac tribe members in the woods! Henceforth, within two hundred miles around Hidden Serpent City, there's no large city-state of the Totornak Alliance left, nor any possible support. At this moment, this so-called Sacred City by the Seaside stands as an isolated city!..."

The Black Wolf Torc followed steadily behind Xiulote, respectful and intimate. Upon receiving news of the royal banner's eastern advance, he strictly supervised the legion's units, personally overseeing the battle below Grass Altar City, even deploying the fervent throwing vanguard platoons to hurl explosive Divine Power Globes...It was only seven days ago that the woodland great city three hundred miles to the south was breached, and the Grass Altar City of the Eastern Totornak Alliance was taken.

"Your Highness, now that Grass Altar City is conquered, the Oaxaca Valley and the Zapotec tribes along the southern coast have lost all contact with Hidden Serpent City. Additionally, the main passage for the Totonac priests and Divine Descendants of Hidden Serpent City to escape into the southwestern inland jungle has also been cut off!..."

"Currently, the army's eastern vanguard has already breached the Great Divine Mountain of Fire area, with all stone fortresses and wooden forts advancing to the outskirts of Hidden Serpent Holy City!... As long as your Royal Decree is issued, the main force of the army can press up for the final siege anytime!"

"Hmm. With the Chief Divine's blessing, we must eradicate the roots completely! We cannot allow those influential Coastal Priests and Divine Descendants to flee with the tribe core into the deep jungle!..."

Looking at the situation, they either defend the city till their end, or flee to the Maya Lands in the East... As for the formal siege on Hidden Serpent City..."

On this topic of warfare, Xiulote finally stopped in his tracks. He turned serious and watched the expression on Black Wolf Torc's face, earnestly inquiring.

"Black Wolf, the Naval Commander of Hidden Serpent Holy City, that Feathered Serpent Priest Papu, wishes to surrender to the Kingdom... With the Chief Divine as witness! As the Commander-in-Chief on the front lines, I need to know, what is your take on this? Do you agree or disagree?"

"Uh... My view..."

For the unity between king and ministers, Xiulote could not directly accept such a major surrender without consulting the opinion of the front line commander-in-chief. Upon hearing the King's inquiry, a touch of hesitation appeared on Black Wolf Torc's face immediately.

In his mind, he naturally wanted to capture that damned Papu Priest, along with the priests and Divine Descendants of Hidden Serpent City, and sacrifice them all! But when he thought of the recent persuasion of the Mayan merchant Tikalo, and observed the increasingly authoritative demeanor of His Highness...

Hesitating for a moment, Black Wolf Torc bowed his head in salute, and solemnly responded in a deep voice.

"Your Highness, if the Naval Commander of Hidden Serpent City can lead the fleet and craftsmen to surrender, cut off the eastern escape route for Hidden Serpent City's priests and Divine Descendants... It would benefit the Kingdom's eastward expedition significantly!... If the army continues to campaign along the Maya coast, the Kingdom will indeed need larger ships, more shipwrights, and more sailors and naval warriors!..."

"Therefore, my opinion is to agree to accept the Naval Commander of Hidden Serpent City's surrender! As for whether he continues to lead troops, that decision is yours!"

Upon hearing this response, Xiulote raised an eyebrow. He looked at the sincere Black Wolf Torc, gradually revealing an appreciative smile.

"Good! Black Wolf, you can consider the overall kingdom strategy and planning beyond battlefield slaughter, from the Kingdom's grand perspective... I am very pleased!..."

"As you just said, the Kingdom's eastern campaign will not stop with the Totonac people's surrender, nor will it end with my return to the Lake Capital City. The route to Cuba must be thoroughly opened within these two years and firmly controlled in our hands!..."

"With the Chief Divine's blessing! Your Highness, are you really going to return to the Lake Capital City? Please, you must... think, think and think again! Other than you, there is no second person who can lead the mighty Kingdom, command the legions to advance!"

Black Wolf Torc pursed his lips, unable to hide his concern in his eyes. Looking at Xiulote's decisive expression, he gritted his teeth and knelt to pledge.

"With the Chief Divine as witness! Your Highness, if you are truly determined to return to the Lake Capital City... I, Black Wolf Torc, would be willing to guard you closely, even at the cost of my life to protect your safety!..."

"Haha! Black Wolf, your loyalty to me, I'm naturally aware of it! And the decision I made has been long since pondered... Avit God King has made up his mind. He sent envoys four times to summon me back, even sent three Royal Family Legions to garrison in the Southern Three States of the Alliance... Given the circumstances, I can't not return! But you shall remain by the seaside, strongly controlling the formidable Black Wolf Army for me, exploring further east... This is far more helpful for me, the Kingdom, and even the whole world than being a samurai guarding by my side!"

Xiulote extended his hand, smiling as he helped Black Wolf up. His smile was gentle, and his expression was filled with calm. At this moment, he patiently instructed his beloved general, much like he did a decade ago when he first guided the young aides.

"Black Wolf, always remember! The grand Lake Capital City is the capital of the Alliance and our Mexica people's true foundation! Our journey relies on the power of the Alliance and the Mexica people,

starting from the Lake Capital City... There lies our greatest city, never a lair of dangerous beasts. The prosperous Mexica Alliance will never be our enemy, but our belonging and home!..."

"Ah! What... Your Highness? Given the current situation... the Alliance and the Kingdom?..."

"Yes. The Alliance and the Kingdom may slightly contend, but can never be adversarial! Because, between Avit God King and me, we prosper together and suffer losses together!... Only through continuous expansion can we alleviate and resolve the internal contradictions within the Alliance and the Kingdom. If civil war erupts and accumulated contradictions from expansion explode, our great undertaking as Mexica people will be destroyed in an instant!..."

"Avit is my wise teacher, my intimate father-in-law, and my dignified King! He actually deeply understands this and has always conveyed it explicitly. It's just that... some who consider themselves loyal subjects and some with ill intentions keep provoking between us, making contradictions more pronounced... The current contradictions that have emerged, as long as I return to the Lake Capital City, I'm fully confident they can be bridged!..."

With a lingering gaze, Xiulote looked toward the vast Sacrificial Lake, seeing the naval fleet moored in the water. He pondered for a while and then changed the subject, smiling as he instructed Black Wolf.

"Black Wolf, this ancient and expansive Sacrificial Lake has continued sacred sacrifices for thousands of years, burying countless ancient divine natures and sacrifices, transmitted from the Olmec Era to today! When I was in the Lake Capital City, I had heard of it and also saw the transmitted mural illustrations. When the Kingdom compiles the epic history of the world, this Olmec sacrificial rite here must be revised and incorporated as well..."

"Come, you shall navigate me! Let me take a good look at the scenery by the lake, at this newly conquered ancient land!..."

Chapter 1409: The King's Teachings on Politics...

"Black Wolf, as a Legion Commander and a Great General who stands alone, you not only need military talent but also need to familiarize yourself with and grasp 'politics'!... I have high expectations of you. You are good at fighting and always win, this is very good! For the Alliance and the Kingdom, a military victory is the best political means to align people's hearts. And the wealth and population plundered in war are the most effective economic supplements to satisfy the interests of Samurai and Priests... Tupa, you should listen carefully too. If you don't understand, ask me!"

"Yes! Your Highness!..."

Hundreds of war boats unfolded on the Sacrificial Lake, surrounding a small ordinary boat in the middle. On the small boat, Black Wolf Torc exerted all his strength, rowing hard while seriously pondering, sweat perspiring from his forehead.

In front of him was the Guard Commander Ecatl rowing with a lowered head. Behind him, with eyes wide open, rowing and listening attentively to the King's teachings was the Artillery Camp Commander Tupa.

At this moment, Xiulote sat beside Black Wolf, facing the high and far-setting sun, gazing at the shimmering lake surface, listening to the sea-flavored long wind, leisurely teaching the assembled generals.

"If you want to preside over a region, you must understand what military, politics, economy, and thought are, and the relationship among these four under the heaven..."

"In today's world, Priests, Samurai, and tribespeople all revere leaders who can achieve victory! People believe that victors possess divinely blessed power, willingly following the strong without caring whether they are benevolent... However, the military is always a continuation of politics, and it must serve politics, not the other way around..."

"Your Highness, the 'politics' you speak of, can't be seen or touched, I still don't quite understand."

Black Wolf Torc scratched his head in frustration. He naturally disliked this kind of abstract thing that required strenuous thinking, but the highness kept forcing him to read, learn, and reflect continually.

"The so-called 'politics', the first is 'governance', the second is 'control'. For you, it means managing a place, managing a group of people, and managing them well! And the essence of politics is the orientation of people's hearts; having people follow you is good. If people rebel against you... Black Wolf, don't show fierce looks, don't bare your teeth! Slaughter is never the best way. You need to divide the people under your rule, understand the needs of different strata, and then unite them with politics..."

Xiulote looked at Black Wolf's puzzled expression like a Husky, pondered for a moment, and tried to express it as simply and clearly as possible.

"From my personal experience, in today's world, the key to politics has two points. One is the distribution of power, the other is the political route... that is, whom do we allow to dine with us, choosing reliable people to embark on the journey together. And the decision of how much to eat and where to go must be firmly held in our hands!"

"Eating? Journey? How much to eat, where to go?..."

"Exactly! If the Seaside Lands are a piece of corn bread, always held by the Divine Descendants of the various tribes, then our conquest now is to snatch this corn bread from the hands of the Divine Descendants of the tribes. Thus, for these old rulers, our conflict is irreconcilable, and we must sacrifice them, send them to the pyramid top... And after acquiring the corn bread, we distribute it according to past merits, present strength, and the upcoming route..."

Saying this, Xiulote stretched his hand, took a piece of corn bread used as rations from Guard Commander Ecatl's hand, exerted effort and snapped it, finally breaking the hard bread into evenly equal two parts.

"The Kingdom's conquest of the Seaside Lands relies on the strength of the Samurai. The Kingdom's Legion Warriors, the surrendered Totonac Warriors... these tens of thousands of troops are our strongest supporters and the most powerful stratum in the Seaside. Therefore, we first give half of this bread to them, ensuring the reward of their merits, namely the promised military merits subsequent to land and title grants, can indeed be fulfilled..."

Seeing this, Black Wolf and Tupa nodded seriously, like a big and a small wolf sitting. Then, they watched as Xiulote stretched his hand again, splitting the other half of the bread into two again.

"From the remaining half, we take another half and give it to the Kingdom's Priests and the local elite of the Seaside. In their hands, they possess cultural knowledge and, to a certain extent, the thoughts of tribespeople. We need them to manage the Seaside City-State for the Kingdom, manage civilian settlements, and lead tribal beliefs... In reality, the power they want far exceeds the quarter of the corn bread in my hand. And the bread they eat, the power they hold, will continuously and steadily expand..."

At this point, Xiulote paused. He showed a smile, looking at Black Wolf and Tupa, questioning them as if testing them.

"Black Wolf, Tupa, do you know what the reason is?"

"Um... because the Priests are rather cunning and will steal the bread of the Samurai?"

Tupa pulled his hair, tentatively answered.

"The Chief Divine bears witness! In the Alliance, many High Priests presided over regions, eventually becoming wealthy, even transforming into a hereditary family!..."

"Hmm, that counts as one reason. Anything else?"

"Uh... because those Totonaq elites keep sending women to the King, then giving birth to the King's bloodline?..."

Hearing Black Wolf's answer, Xiulote's old face darkened. He looked at Black Wolf's earnest face, holding his hair, and sighed.

"Black Wolf, Miyava gave birth to my eldest daughter, Light Snake... You can be wary of Miyava, but you must protect my eldest daughter for me... In fact, I plan to let you become my eldest daughter's Martial Arts teacher, get involved in her education..."

"Yes, Light Snake should learn the War Club and Shield like a Mexica child, have the strong body and mind of a Samurai! And she cannot be educated by those Totonaq elites to learn about potion and dance, turning into a Snake Woman..."

Thinking about the education of his children, Xiulote touched his nose, rarely feeling a bit headachy. He did not have the time and energy to teach each of his children personally. Therefore, he was unsure how his children would grow up... After a while, he shook his head, returning to the topic.

"Ahem! The bread in the hands of Priests and elites will continually become bigger. The main reason is that their governance over the City-State and villages increases the output from each place, thereby making the entire bread larger!..."

"Improving the output of agriculture and workshops allows a tribesperson to produce more wealth. Managing villages and towns allows more population to thrive. Expanding the scope of direct control, incorporating more tribal lands of the mountains... The combination of these actions is the improvement of the Kingdom's production capability! And it's what I am about to talk about: the economic interests of each stratum within the Kingdom..."

"Uh... Your Highness, you haven't said whom the remaining half of the half bread is given to."

Black Wolf Torc thought for a moment, pointing at the last quarter of corn bread in Xiulote's hand, seriously asking.

"Besides, you only talked about how much to eat; nothing about where to go!"

"Haha! Indeed! Black Wolf, your question is excellent!"

Xiulote chuckled. He seriously answered while looking at the last quarter of bread in his hand.

"This last quarter of political power in the Seaside Lands... naturally goes to the followers who share the same political route, can embark on the journey together! And my path, my goal, in short, is 'advance, advance, continually advance, advancing towards the entire world!'"

"The Chief Divine bears witness! The road I tread is to unify the world and consolidate tribes into one path! Thus, all heroes under the heavens must be used by me! Those who can keep pace with me, run with me, share these powers of the world! And those who cannot keep up shall dwell on a segment of the path; I won't linger in granting wealth..."

"Black Wolf, Tupa, do you wish to proceed with me, unite the world, consolidate tribes, and forge an unprecedented Empire?"

"The Chief Divine bears witness! Your Highness, you are the sole Divine Eagle of the Sun, also the supreme Thunderbolt, I am willing to serve you unto death, shatter all enemies!"

"Your Highness, you are my Wolf King, and I am your subordinate wolf! I am willing to bite and chase for you, whether it be the East or the West!..."

"Haha! Great!!"

Watching the two generals bowing and laying their heads on the boat plank, Xiulote laughed heartily, feeling great joy. He accurately broke the last corn bread in his hand into one large and one small piece, handing the large piece to Black Wolf, the small piece to Tupa.

"You accompany me on the journey, I shall share power with you! This stretch of a thousand leagues of Seaside is merely the beginning of our long road! The world's path is still long; it will be broader beyond your imagination!..."

Xiulote gazing upon the vast Sacrificial Lake, looking toward the distant East, where the Holy Mountains loomed high, solemnly promised.

"The Chief Divine will bless us! We will keep advancing, advancing, advancing!... Until we reach the shores of the endless Great Lake!"

Chapter 1410: The Kingdom's Political Path of Expansion and the Three Stages of the Maya Campaign

"Samurai, Tupa, the governance of the Eastern Sea is crucial in the kingdom's long-term political strategy! From the vast grasslands of the Coa Wei Ke Great River in the North, to the jungle coasts of Vastec; from the thousand-mile coastlines of the Totonac, to the coastal regions of the Eastern Maya; and then eight thousand miles away to Cuba Snake Island, even further to the islands of the Great Lake... this vast stretch of over ten thousand miles is what we call the land of the Eastern Sea! And this sea route connected by passage is the kingdom's line of interest for Eastern expansion, as well as the future lifeline for all tribes under heaven!"

The group sailed on the lake, the water reflecting the colors of the mountain, with the East standing tall with mountains. Xiulote gazed toward the East, his view extending far, seeming to reach the end of the Caribbean Sea, those lush and prosperous islands.

The kingdom's political bodies have already expanded and dispersed throughout the realms of Central America. As he returns to the Lake Capital City, the authority for various conquests will be entirely handed over to the generals. At this critical moment, he needs to clearly inform everyone, proposing the kingdom's political masterstroke, thus unifying everyone's thoughts and goals under one clear banner! The "banner" he chose is the kingdom's "expansion," the "unification" of the world!

"Monkey Kuluka will hold the fort at Chapala Great Lake for me, launching an expedition to the lower reaches of the Lerma River; miner Ezpan will swear allegiance to me with the Colima tribes, securing peace on the North Tectos Coast; the veteran Etalik will control the Tarsas River downstream for me, conquering the Tlapanec coast; poet Balamo will recruit the wilderness tribes for me, governing the wilderness upstream of the Tampen River tributary."

At this point, Xiulote looked at the two generals, took hold of the hands of Black Wolf and Tupa, and entrusted them solemnly.

"Black Wolf, Tupa, may the Chief Divine protect! The campaign in the Eastern Sea lands, I will entrust Bertade and you all!"

"Once Head Warrior Bertade captures Cloud Serpent Mountain City, he will lead four thousand Imperial Guards, that is half of the Imperial Guard Legion, to come to Golden Bay City. He will become the first Military Governor of the Seaside, assembling the Coastal Legion composed of Totonac Warriors, and serve as the first Commander of the Coastal Legion! Hmm, Tupa, you will lead the Artillery Camp as the Vice Commander of the Coastal Legion. Subsequently, the army must drive the tens of thousands of surrendered Totonac Tribe Warriors, continuing the eastward expedition to the Maya Coast!"

"According to the exploration fleet's map, the eastward expedition to the Maya Coast will be divided into three stages, namely the Central Maya Coast, the Lowland Maya West Coast, and the Lowland Maya East Coast... I will only give the strategy for the first stage, the conquest of the Central Maya Coast. As for the remaining Lowland Maya Coast, it will depend on the specific situation, to be decided by Bertade and you yourselves!"

Xiulote unfolded the leather map he carried, densely filled with his meticulous drawing of the Maya based on memories from later generations and reports from the Eastern Sea exploration fleet. Pointing

first at Hidden Snake City, he traced eastwards until reaching the southern side of the Yucatan Peninsula, encircling at Grassland City among the Putun tribes.

"The first stage is to pacify the more than one thousand miles of the Central Maya Coast, from the Hidden Snake City of the Totonac people to Champoton of the Putun Tribe, the 'Grassland City' in the mouths of the Maya! Among them are many small city-states and villages, including Red Lake Town and Shrimp Village, but there are no particularly large city-states or tribal alliances... This also means there are no forces strong enough to resist the kingdom's legion."

"This vast Central Coast, with tribes of all sizes along the way, possesses cultural characteristics of the Olmec and the Mayans, and retains some Highland culture brought by the Toltec eastward expedition. Their resistance level against highland conquest should be weaker than that of the ancient Lowland Maya Tribes... And the half-hunting half-farming Putun Tribes, whom the Lowland Mayans call 'Barbarians,' can likewise be subdued and driven northward as tribal forces by the kingdom!... Previous exploration fleets have opened a good start for the kingdom, establishing good trade connections with a powerful Putun Tribe Chief."

Here, Xiulote paused slightly. He looked seriously at the two generals from his trusted aides, and instructed solemnly.

"Black Wolf, Tupa, there are two key points in the campaign against the Eastern Maya Coast! The first point is to continuously organize servant armies to bear losses, maintain logistics, and subdue local regions from newly conquered areas through converted faith, military merit ennoblement, and vanguard selection from the conquered city-states and tribes, cultivating reliable local forces step by step from surrendered servant armies."

"Therefore, in the next step of the Eastern campaign, the surrendered Totonac Warriors will have to take on the main fighting roles and be parcelled into newly conquered territories! Furthermore, the war against the Eastern Maya Coast and the East's expansion is the best means to absorb and unify the warriors from various coastal regions."

"The first stage of the campaign lasts until preliminary acceptance, alliance, and even submission of the Putun Tribes. These semi-nomadic Putun Tribes are excellent sources of servant armies! The tens of thousands of tribe able-bodied men accustomed to warfare have a wilderness tribe tradition of respecting powerful tribes. If they accept the kingdom's conscription and influence, they will be the best assistance for conquering the Lowland Maya!"

"As for the second key point in conquering the Maya Coast, it is to form a sufficiently powerful Eastern Sea Navy to completely suppress the coastal city-states, and even each Mayan Chiefdom!"

"To maintain the thousands of miles of coastline, maintain the kingdom's city-states and fortresses in various locations, supply the frontline army's campaign... inland jungle transportation is certainly inadequate! We must possess a strong Eastern Sea Navy! And in the not-too-distant future, this Eastern Sea Navy will face more challenging opponents and opportunities, those fair-skinned enemies coming from the sea."

Xiulote reached out, patting Black Wolf's shoulder lightly, smiling to reassure him.

"Therefore, if the Naval Commander of Hidden Snake City can bring the fleet and shipwrights to surrender, it would be beneficial to the kingdom's naval strengthening... For the kingdom's expansion path, we need to forgive his offenses, accepting his surrender! As for whether this person can be used and to what extent... it depends on whether he's smart enough to walk the same path as us!"

"There are many heroes in the world, and many elites in each tribe! To conquer the world, opportunities to integrate into the kingdom, showcase talents, and enjoy the fruit of power must be given to these heroes from various tribes! Like the wilderness Guajili Tribes, once our enemies, creating many troubles for us. Now, they are the sharpest blades in the kingdom's hands, also the most ferocious pack of wolves!"

"Witnessed by the Chief Divine! Although I am from the Mexican Royal Family, I have no bias when facing the tribes beneath the heavens. If the heroes of the world are willing to be used by me, walk the same path, and even be drawn into my fold... I will treat them equally and share the bounties with them! Black Wolf, Tupa, you must also do the same!"

"Because the force that the kingdom can deploy to the coast is actually limited. Stronger and more powerful forces require you to expand yourselves! In this regard, I will not limit you in the slightest, freely expand the pack of wolves for me!"

This long-term plan and promise said with sincerity made Black Wolf and Tupa's eyes gleam brightly, resembling the lead wolves hunting in the night. And "Wolf King" Xiulote smiled as he grasped the hair of the "lead wolves," releasing the restraining "reins," and generously promised.

"As long as the first phase of the campaign against the Maya Coast is completed and the thousand-mile region of Central Maya is controlled, Head Warrior Bertade will be promoted to East Sea Marshal, a position equal to the Prince of the Alliance! And Tupa, you shall take over the Coastal Legion, succeeding as the Coastal Legion Commander to oversee military affairs on the Totonac Coast!..."

"Ah? Your Highness! I... I'm to take over the Coastal Legion? Oh this!"

Upon hearing this, Firearms Camp Commander Tupa's young face first showed disbelief and surprise, followed by sheer joy and excitement, and then a hint of fear appeared...

"By the witness of the Chief Divine! Your Highness, I am still young and lack deep credentials... There are so many veteran generals in the kingdom..."

"Haha! Tupa, what? Do you lack confidence to command the Coastal Legion and manage the Seaside Lands for me?..."

"Ah! I do! Your Highness, I am confident! I have battled in the Seaside Lands for years, so I am absolutely familiar with the situation... As for the Totonac Warriors' Legion, I am also confident I can lead it well!..."

"Very well, with the blessing of the Chief Divine! As a young general, you should have such confidence and fighting spirit! Tupa, you emerged from my trusted aides, and I have never doubted your loyalty. Now that I have chosen you, and you have this ability, you must do it well for me!..."

Xiulote firmly appointed Firearms Camp Commander Tupa. Then, he glanced at Black Wolf, who appeared calm and as though he had already anticipated this, with a slight hint of surprise passing over his face.

"Oh? My clever Black Wolf, you guessed it already?"

"Indeed!"

Black Wolf lifted his head and confidently replied.

"Your Highness, I, Black Wolf Torc, am smarter than the bald Mayans without hair, and I had already guessed your intentions!"

"Oh?"

Upon hearing this, Xiulote raised an eyebrow and instantly understood in his heart.

"So it was you! Mayan merchant Tikalo, you sly old fox, you told Black Wolf these things... I fear Black Wolf's willingness to accept the enemy's surrender is also because of you..."

Xiulote's thoughts turned, seeing through it yet choosing not to lay it bare. He smiled and reached out, warmly ruffling Black Wolf's head.

"Good! My Great General, my Black Wolf! You are so smart, you must have anticipated... The place I have left for you to go is two thousand miles away, to preside over the military and political affairs of the various Maya states, becoming the Military Governor of the Maya Lands!..."

"Ah! What!! Two thousand miles away, Ma... Maya Military Governor?"

Black Wolf Torc's confident expression froze instantly. His pupils widened in shock, mouth opened wide, resembling an incredulous Arctic sled dog, a fierce husky.

"Yes! The Maya Military Governor, the Great Chief presiding over the military and political affairs of the Maya!"

Xiulote nodded, his eyes becoming sombre. He spoke in a quiet, deep voice, yet somehow a boundless crimson seemed to envelop him.

"With the blessing of the Chief Divine! To conquer the ancient, devout, innately noble, and class-fixed Maya tribes... it always requires slaying enough of the Divine Descendants, sacrificing sufficient noble species, spilling ample blood, and burning enough temples... Until all the old order is broken, all traditional resistance is dismantled, can it be achieved!..."

"Therefore, Black Wolf, let loose! Subdue the Maya coastal states for me, let them all convert for the Chief Divine! Regardless of how you slaughter, that is the necessary price for unification..."