

Civilization 1451

Chapter 1451: The Scholar's Voyage Log, the Salt Fields of the Salt Creek Tribe, and Your Majesty's Path of Kings

"Chief Divine bless us! By mid-March, Whale Harbor no longer has any floating ice in sight. The sea surface near the coast is deep blue and bright, like the reflection of the sky falling down... In fact, around Whale Harbor, there was only obvious freezing in December, January, and February. In early March and November, there were only floating ice blocks deep on the west side of the harbor. What surprised me even more is that these ice blocks follow the ocean currents, flowing northwest along the coast and gradually melt... This drifting and melting process leads me to a vague conjecture: the ocean current leading the fleet westward is a long and warm current! Perhaps it's because the divinity of the Chief Divine's Light descends from the sky, and is hidden deep in the sea, warming the seawater?"

"I shared my conjecture with Zuvaro, but he didn't seem very interested. Over the past half year, he personally experienced the snow of the Northern Land and seems to have aged significantly... I looked carefully at his face, feeling like the moose in the northern mountain forests, with many wrinkles and folds, especially around the eyes, making him appear both troubled and kind and weathered."

"Hmm, it seems that everyone who stayed in Whale Harbor has undergone the same transformation, and quite a few have fallen ill. It seems the cold winter of the Northern Coast is still too harsh for the Warriors of the Kingdom and sailors. I think Your Majesty was right! If we are to continue westward, we must recruit more able-bodied men from the Northern Tribes to serve as sailors, or even train them to become Warriors of the Kingdom!"

On the gray and grayish-brown hills, Scholar Mikki and Exploration Captain Zuvaro stood side by side, looking at the nautical journal in their hands, feeling the cold wind of October's autumn day. This cold sea wind blew like early spring in March, making both of their breaths nasal.

Seeing the "moose" recorded in Mikki's diary, Zuvaro raised his eyebrow, rubbed his weathered old face, and his gaze instantly became sharp. Scholar Mikki softly "coughs," quickly extended his fingers, pointing to a subsequent passage.

"Chief Divine bless us! Indeed, after more than five months, Zuvaro has aged so much due to his hard work! While I was in the warm Gold Mountain Harbor, roasting campfires with Cedar Shaman, drinking herbal tea, chatting and laughing about the Northern Coast tribes... he was already rowing the longship, under the guidance of the whale dog from the Maca guides, exploring around the thousand-mile Long Island before the end of last year."

"Zuvaro said he encountered quite a few Clallam tribes on the island, but most were small, with only a hundred or two people! These tribes live by fishing; the able-bodied men are excellent fishermen, rowing small leather boats to fish, which naturally makes them good sailors..."

"The reefs surrounding Long Island are numerous, with rugged cliffs and complex terrain, somewhat dangerous. Fortunately, he recruited a few guides from the local Clallam tribes, safely navigating around the island. He said he found a favorable natural harbor on the north side of the island, with abundant fish nearby and weak tribes, which can be 'married into' and annexed..."

"Ha! Zuvaro, that guy, all he thinks about is this 'marriage' conversion and annexing. On this journey north, he's married eight or nine tribal wives! The young Priest, young Warriors and sailors of the fleet were all pushed out by him, combining with local tribal women... Chief Divine witness! He indulges the vitality granted by Chief Divine, no wonder he's aging so quickly!"

"Damn it! Mikki! I do all this continuous marriage not for exploration in the west? You dare to portray me like this in the nautical journal for Your Majesty?"

"Uh! Cough! Zuvaro, listen to me... I, at that time, hadn't thought it through... Your Majesty said we should act with one being upright and one being cunning, one straightforward and one calculating... your strategy is... very good! Praise Chief Divine! Zuvaro, you're very capable, and resourceful! You've greatly accelerated the Kingdom's northern expansion!"

Looking at the wide-eyed, angry Captain Zuvaro, Scholar Mikki wiped the sweat from his forehead and stammered to explain and appease for quite a while. Then, he quickly turned that page over and pointed to the content behind.

"Zuvaro, look! This entire page is your achievement! You've opened a crucial new saline field for the fleet!"

"Praise Chief Divine! I'm amazed. Zuvaro could find a natural saline field less than two hundred miles southwest of Whale Harbor! Calling it his discovery isn't accurate. The Maca people of the Whale Tribe often come to this area to dig salty soil and mix it with fish soup. Even the streams around the saline field are salty, hence locals call it Salt Creek..."

"From January to March, when the sea is frozen and has floating ice, Zuwaro leads the fleet and dozens of able-bodied men from the Whale Tribe to boil salt in the saline field. Following the method mentioned by Your Majesty at Divine Power University, they first dug salt ponds, brought in saltwater, and let the Sun shine for a while. Once the saltwater became very salty, they poured it into clay pots and ignited fires to boil it into salt crystals... The most troublesome thing was chopping wood with axes for fuel..."

"Naturally, places producing salt are occupied by tribes. The eastern Lake Bay converges with many tribes. Not far from Lake Bay's Salt Creek is the Salt Creek Tribe of Klallam, with a scale of seven or eight hundred people..."

"Salt Creek Tribe and the tribes of Lake Bay don't lack salt. The exchange value of salt in Lake Bay isn't high because many of the small lakes in the lake bay are saline lakes, providing stable saline year-round... Zuwaro managed to reach an agreement with the elder in the Salt Creek Tribe, who sent dozens of able-bodied men to assist him in boiling salt. In return, he provided sharp axes for chopping wood, soft Kingdom cotton cloth, and beautiful Kingdom gemstones..."

"Chief Divine forgive me! I strongly suspect he did something else... but I didn't ask, guessing it was his usual methods. Regardless, to store more food for the coming support fleet, salt is immensely important! I've already left personnel to inform subsequent support fleets to mediate the fighting between Tolowa's Redwood Tribe and Leaf Grass Great Tribe to better develop that saline marsh at 42 degrees north..."

Seeing this, Exploration Captain Zuwaro rubbed his brow, looked at Scholar Mikki with frustration, and said solemnly.

"Chief Divine witness! Mikki, you just love doing this! If not for the Kingdom's support fleet delaying ten days between these two Great Tribes, they wouldn't have arrived at Whale Harbor at the end of April..."

"Moreover, these two Great Tribes of Tolowa are old enemies, having fought for many generations, so how easy is it to reconcile them? Even if reconciliation succeeds, what benefit does it have for the Kingdom? Instead, I propose selling weapons to the two Great Tribes, exchanging prisoners they capture, letting them stay equal in power, continue fighting and weakening! When the time is right..."

"Chief Divine bless us! Zuwaro, as Your Majesty said... representing the Kingdom, we should spread the faith of light among the Northern Tribes! These tribes aren't fools, some things... we shouldn't do! At least not actively, not so explicitly!"

Scholar Mikki solemnly responded, seriously. In fact, his moral bottom line had become more flexible since leaving Kingdom, yet he firmly believed the fleet on this vast Northern Land should truly spread the faith of the Chief Divine, bringing better food, clothing; better metal tools, brick buildings to local tribes along the way! And this is the true "righteous path" in the one straightforward, one calculating method!

"Hmm... alright! You're right..."

Hearing Mikki bring out Your Majesty's Royal Decree again, Exploration Captain Zuvaro rubbed his forehead and nodded helplessly. Throughout the journey, the fleet used salt, food, and firestone to supplement sailors from various tribes, rather than forcibly recruiting them with force... This was constrained by Your Majesty's Royal Decree and Mikki's insistence.

"Chief Divine bless us! Perhaps, this is what Your Majesty meant by The Path of Kings or education! After all, these Northern Tribes are our long-lost Jiao People brothers... And whether they believe it or not, we believe so and need to make them believe too!"

Chapter 1452: The Scholar's Nautical Journal, Masterpiece of the Kingdom's Shipbuilding, and the Dawn of Deep-Sea Adventure

"In early March, a Kingdom longship traveled day and night without switching ships, arriving urgently at Whale Harbor! This longship is noticeably larger in size than the two longships at Whale Harbor; it is a new ship just launched by the Kingdom's Southern Shipyard! I carefully measured the length of this longship, which is an astounding 28 meters long, 7 meters wide, and the hull is extra reinforced with iron hoops and copper nails, capable of bearing a weight of up to seventy thousand catties! In comparison, the two old longships at Whale Harbor are only 24 meters long, over 6 meters wide, and can carry over sixty thousand catties..."

"With the Chief Divine as my witness!! This large longship is the vanguard of the Kingdom's second batch of support fleets and is the smallest and fastest among this batch of ten large longships. The flagship of this batch of large longships is said to be an astonishing 36 meters long, 9 meters wide, capable of bearing more than eighty thousand catties!... Allegedly, the giant timber keel running throughout this large longship was harvested from a forty-meter-tall giant spruce at Tekos Mountain in the South, then dragged by hundreds of civilians along the river for hundreds of miles to Atoyac Lake, and finally processed and built by dozens of senior artisans, representing the highest level of craftsmanship at the Kingdom's shipyard!... Furthermore, Divine Revelation Director Talaya also specifically ordered this brand new large longship flagship to be named 'Great Snow Wolf'..."

"Of course, the 36-meter-long large longship is not the limit of shipbuilding for the Kingdom. It's said that when the support fleet set out, the third batch of the Kingdom's large longships under construction included a gigantic 50-meter-long, 12-meter-wide oar-sailed giant ship! This wondrous gigantic ship involved over a hundred senior artisans in its construction, aided by hundreds of apprentices and civilians, consuming thousands of cattles of precious copper and iron materials for reinforcement, becoming a divinely crafted gigantic ship never before seen in the world!..."

"Praise the Chief Divine! This soon-to-be-launched divinely crafted gigantic ship has already been named in advance by Director Talaya, symbolizing Your Majesty as the 'Snow Wolf King'! To build this gigantic ship, the Kingdom even mobilized banners, felling the tribal Divine Trees around Hand Snake City, including a giant spruce over fifty meters high, to be used as the ship's main keel. Subsequently, the Kingdom mobilized hundreds of civilians, dragging it for months along the river, to transport this heavy timber imbued with divinity to the Southern Shipyard!..."

White and brown cliffs surrounding a blue bay, the three Kingdom longships are anchored within a naturally indented harbor stretching dozens of miles. Among the three longships of the exploration fleet, the flagship 'Great Snow Wolf' is positioned at the center, noticeably larger than the vessels on either side. Compared to the other two battered longships amid the storm, this sturdy flagship is riddled with scars yet remains with a robust skeleton, seemingly capable of withstanding an even greater storm.

"Praise the Chief Divine! Bless us with strong, lightweight, and rot-resistant divine wood! Praise Your Majesty! Guide us in building unprecedented large ships!..."

Scholar Mikki stood atop a height, gazed toward the flagship in the bay, and offered a devout prayer for a moment.

The spruce felled by the Kingdom's shipyard is posthumously extremely expensive Mexican spruce. This high-mountain tree species' wood is extremely hard, very durable, and naturally rot-resistant, allowing it to be used in water for extended periods without decay. Similarly, it is relatively lightweight, effectively reducing the ship's self-weight and increasing cargo capacity... It's almost the best shipbuilding material!

"Praise the mighty Chief Divine! Praise the powerful Kingdom!"

Looking at the three longships, Exploration Captain Zuvaro lowered his head, sincerely marveling aloud.

Regarding shipbuilding technology, he knew very little. At this moment, what truly amazed him was the thousands of shipbuilding craftsmen and apprentices behind the construction of these longships, and the tens of thousands of farming peasants and robust loggers! All this – whether it was the conscription of robust men, the dispatch of labor, the collaboration of craftsmen, or the management of the warriors – demonstrated the Kingdom's powerful organizational and mobilization abilities, showcasing a robustly operating classical military state!

"Praise Your Majesty! This is an unprecedented Kingdom, like the rising black smoke from Blackstone City's mining area, like the iron blocks forged from Black Rock Mountain iron ore, filled with burning, hard strength!..."

"Praise the Chief Divine! Mikki, the Great Snow Wolf can bear eighty thousand catties, equipped with long sails fore and aft, and sixty oar positions. If we clear out the provisions and firestones from the three longships, prioritizing resupplies on this one, it could allow sixty warriors and sailors to hold out at sea for up to two months!... And in Your Majesty's prophecy, it has already been clearly pointed out that two thousand miles westwards lies a brand new continent! Therefore, I have a bold idea: if we could harness the northeast wind, set sail fully..."

Upon hearing Zuvaro's words, Scholar Mikki's eye corner twitched, and after a brief thought, he repeatedly shook his head.

"With the Chief Divine as my witness! Zuvaro, this chain of ancestral islands has not yet been traversed; it is not yet time to venture recklessly into the deep sea! In fact, Your Majesty has also told us earlier, to cautiously proceed west along the island chain, establishing a stable returnable route, without being rash!..."

"Mikki, it's already October now! We need to hurry, and before the freeze in November..."

"With the Chief Divine's blessing! The local Unanga Tribe have already told us that there are still six or seven ancestral islands with tribes that can be used for resupply to the west! No matter what, even if we eventually have to sail into the deep sea on a desperate venture, we must allow our ships to go as far west as possible first!"

"Hmm... alright!..."

"Huh? Adventure?..."

White Bear Gawa widened his eyes watching the dispute between the two longship 'Chieftains' but could not understand the danger, devotion, and courage hidden behind those disputes.

A moment later, Zuwaro was the first to lower his head, temporarily persuaded by Mikki. He silently looked at Mikki's unfolded diary, recalling his own longship adventure in spring, struggling to row on the ice-floated sea, constantly searching, eventually bringing back uplifting news...

"In early March, the vanguard longships brought news of the support fleet's itinerary, as well as Your Majesty's latest decrees. With the Chief Divine's blessing! Both Zuwaro and I have been promoted to Third Level Divine Revelation Priests, the Fire Drill ones. But I prefer the title 'Scholar,' because during this long voyage, I have truly contemplated and learned a lot! I think maybe I'll have a chance to write a nautical book of the North for Divine Power University, describing those divine-like wonders and mysterious sightings..."

"Praise the Chief Divine! Among the subsequent support fleets, several Kingdom's Second Level Priests have joined. It seems that sailing westward for exploration has become the best path forward for civilian priests graduating from Divine Power University... I believe Your Majesty's promotion of us to Third Level Priests is a clear affirmation, allowing the two of us to continue leading the exploration westward! Such trust and honor!... With the Chief Divine as my witness! I am willing to dedicate everything to the Chief Divine and Your Majesty, including my life!"

"As for Zuwaro, he must be thinking the same! Otherwise, he wouldn't have left the salt-boiling task to me, and before he could handle the support fleet coming in, he set off again with a longship to explore the Northwest's Long Island. Before last year's freeze, he heard from the Long Island's Slaus about a 'Tsimshian' tribe at an archipelago's rivermouth and never let it slip from his mind. It's said that these skilled fishermen, the Tsimshian, share common roots with the far western northern tribes, frequently trading via kayak with the extreme north tribes, and perhaps possess news on the western island chains..."

"With the Chief Divine's blessing! In late April, this bold fellow Zuwaro finally returned from the northwest coast! He even brought back a wife from the Tsimshian tribe, taller than him by a head!... Of course, the most important thing is, from the elders of the Tsimshian tribe, he heard clear tales that the 'sacred ancestral island chain, the ancestral giants sinking into the sea, lies far, far, far to the west!'..."

"Praise the Supreme Main God! At last, Your Majesty's prophecy is being fulfilled! I must immediately dispatch a longship to report our intentions to Your Majesty!... This ship's message will take at least six to seven months to reach Your Majesty's hands. And by then, perhaps, we will already be situated within the last western island chain!"

"With the Chief Divine's blessing! By the end of April, the second batch of Kingdom's supporting longships finally reached Whale Harbor! Those hundreds of Kingdom's Warriors and the neat, magnificent array of great ships once again moved me to tears, extolling the Chief Divine's name aloud!... With the divine guidance, our westward exploration will be forcefully advanced once more! The first priority is to find the 'Juneau' Great Gold Mine, as predicted by Your Majesty!..."

"Praise the Chief Divine! The second batch of supporting fleets also brought news from the Southern Coast. The speed of the Kingdom's expansion in various ports truly exceeded my expectations!..."

Chapter 1453: The Scholar's Nautical Journal—The Expansion and Prosperity of the Southern Coast!

"At the end of April, the Kingdom's second support fleet, consisting of ten longships and seven hundred samurai and sailors, finally arrived at Whale Harbor after a long voyage of four to five months! Leading this fleet were the Kingdom's two Second Level Divine Revelation Priests, Keyuan and Kejie. From their surname 'Ke-Lang,' it was clear they were of commoner priest origin from the Kingdom..."

"Chief Divine witness! I remember them, like me and Zuvaro, were among the first graduates of Divine Power University! Their skills in astronomy, calendrical studies, and mathematics were almost the best of that cohort, even better than mine and Zuvaro's, so they joined the Divine Revelation Place in the Capital City. Unexpectedly, even the two of them managed to join the Kingdom's maritime fleet... Haha! They handed their Third Level Priest robes to Zuvaro and me, bowed their heads in salute. Seeing the complex expressions on their faces, I truly wanted to laugh out loud!..."

"Mm, we are all of commoner origin, all part of the maritime series, and all graduates of the same class, so our relationships are quite close... Only in the newly launched Kingdom maritime venture, could we, the priests who graduated from Divine Power University, surpass those seasoned, nobility-blooded traditional priests to gain precious leadership authority!..."

"At this distant northern cape, the fleet docked at the harbor, the samurai and sailors lit bonfires and feasted to their hearts' content on whale meat! Keyuan and Kejie also brought some spices and tequila. We roasted meat, drank, and chatted for a long time..."

The sky gradually darkened, black clouds rose in the east. The sun set slowly, hovering over the sea. Scholar Miki gazed at this twilight horizon and cape, as if returning to that night's joyous gathering, hearing the various accents of prayers and songs.

"Chief Divine bless! When the Kingdom's support fleet set off from Trout Town at 18 degrees north latitude, there were nearly seven hundred people, and when they arrived at Whale Harbor at 48 degrees north latitude, there were over seven hundred. Along the way, the support fleet continuously left personnel at various Kingdom strongholds and recruited tribes from these strongholds, especially the able-bodied men who converted along northern ports. This was done firstly to increase the population proportion of the Kingdom's Main Force at various ports, and secondly for the health of the samurai and sailors, to avoid diseases as much as possible. Because the Divine Revelation priests had summarized a rule that Kingdom's Warriors and sailors are best adapted for a year at northern outposts before safely being transferred to the far north..."

"Keyuan and Kejie were very excited after witnessing the spectacular and divine scenery along the way. They pulled me and Zuvaro, drinking large gulps of alcohol, and narrated the prosperity and expansion of various southern ports!..."

"The Tin Rivermouth Village at 22 degrees north latitude already has over 500 tribes and trades with several Huichol Tribe groups for tin ore upstream. The Huichol people share the same language with our Highland Tribes and have always been migrating across the harsh wilderness. When the Kingdom built a village and settlement at the rivermouth, displaying the stance of a 'large lake tribe,' several small tribes came to take refuge! However, the Huichol are not skilled in farming but excel in hunting and fighting. The support fleet left fifty Kingdom samurai and sailors at Tin Rivermouth Village and supplemented the first group of Huichol sailors..."

"At Fish Mountain Village, at 24 degrees north latitude, there are over 1000 tribes and a small temple for the Chief Divine has been established, which can now be renamed Fish Mountain Town. The Totome Tribe here is gentle and good at fishing. Under the guidance of the Chief God Priests, their farming skills have quickly improved. With the Kingdom establishing outposts and spreading the faith of the Chief Divine, more southern goods are brought in, prompting some tribes deep inland to trade along the rivers to the Kingdom's strongholds. Some very small tribes, upon hearing the Kingdom's conditions for accepting tribes, often choose to convert and join the settled 'large lakeside tribe'..."

"The fleet replenished a batch of food and salt at Fish Mountain Town and saw the Tarahumara from the mountains coming to trade. These Tarahumara tribes have many gold and silver ingots in their hunting grounds, indicating large gold and silver deposits... However, their location is too deep in the wilderness, and the Kingdom has no shortage of gold and silver, so there is little interest in those barren mountainous regions..."

"Praise the Chief Divine! Reagan Town at 26 degrees north latitude is the most prosperous and massive settlement in the Kingdom's northern lands! This town, converted from the Yoreim Great Tribe, now has a scale of at least 4000-5000 people, capable of mobilizing over a thousand fighting Kingdom Warriors and able-bodied tribespeople!... The Songbird High Priest focuses almost all his efforts on farming, missionary work, and construction in Reagan Town. Leveraging proximity to the Bird Guano Stone Islands, he promoted this natural fertilizer in the riverside fields of Reagan Town, achieving divinely inspired increased yields, revered by the surrounding tribespeople. During the off-farming season, he organizes tribespeople to dig water channels and build small reservoirs to store precious rainwater during the rainy season..."

"In Reagan Town, the Divine Revelation Place has set up a pottery workshop, brick kiln, and bronze smelting facility, able to produce a small amount of bronze ware. Outside of Reagan Town, potential high firestone coal mines, copper mines, and gold mines are being developed... The Songbird Priest approached Keyuan and Kejie with a tempting proposal: gather all the warriors of the Kingdom's fleet and recruit the able-bodied tribespeople of Reagan Town to conquer the Yomei Great Tribe at 27 degrees north latitude, thus controlling tens of thousands of tribes within several hundred miles north!"...

"Keyuan and Kejie hesitated for a long time but eventually declined. After all, their primary mission is maritime exploration... According to the message I previously sent back, the support fleet replenished over 200 tons of firestone in Reagan Town. More than half of these firestones, especially those that smoke less when burned, come from the Yomei Great Tribe in the north. Chief Divine! That ancestral land of the Yaji people, rich in firestones, is truly impressive! Mm, we'll let the Kingdom's priests preach among the Yaji tribal groups for another one or two years, that should be enough..."

"The fleet, loaded with the firestones needed for the northern lands, left Reagan Town and arrived on the peninsula in the southwest, the South Bird Stone Village at 24 degrees north latitude. The population here is now over 600, mainly composed of guano rock miners. The Divine Revelation Place has set up a dedicated Bird Guano Rock Office, stationed with two priests and a Warrior Captain to manage the excavation of these guano rocks. The Kingdom places great importance on the development of this Bird Guano Stone Islands. It is said that these seemingly ordinary 'guano rocks,' once transported to the two southern counties of the Kingdom, can be turned into four to five times the increased yield per ton!... Chief Divine! This is truly the Life Stone bestowed by the Chief Divine, with the divinity to nurture crops!

"Chief Divine bless! Every autumn and winter, the Kingdom's merchant fleet comes here once, taking away all the excavated guano rock and bringing enough food for five hundred people for a year. The rainfall here is so low, there are scarcely two showers a year. Therefore, the locally grown sweet

potatoes are just barely better than nothing, not enough to meet the demands of over five hundred people, requiring grain supplements from Reagan Town... The surrounding Kochimi tribes have very sparse populations, and nearly all small tribes that the Kingdom could recruit have already been recruited. They are the fishermen of this settlement, able to bring back considerable fish catches..."

"Compared to South Bird Stone Village, the North Bird Stone Village, which also has guano rock, is much inferior. When the fleet arrived at this village on the west side of Long Island at 28 degrees north latitude, they discovered it had fewer than 200 people, mostly Kochimi fishermen who converted... I think, that's the starting point of the Western Sea Coast, and only when the ports across the Western Sea Coast develop can this North Bird Stone Village have the potential to thrive!"

Chapter 1454: The Scholar's Voyage Log, the Ancestral Land of the Kumeyaay, and the Great Salt Sea Rich in Blue Salt

"With the Chief Divine as my witness! From the drought-stricken, hot North Bird Stone Village to the wet, cold Whale Harbor, it is a vast span of seven thousand miles along the Western Sea Coast! On this coast, many tribes cultivate, gather, hunt, and fish, raising a myriad of unique flags and totem poles!... And from North Bird Stone Village heading north, passing through the barren dunes and coastlines of the Kochimi people, traversing twelve hundred miles of rare green, one reaches the edge of a mighty long river, witnessing vibrant life. There lies the division between the dry and wet precipitation zones of the Western Sea Coast, and home to the Kumeyaay Ypa Great Tribe of over five thousand people!..."

"At 32 degrees north latitude, the Ypa Great Tribe of five thousand people is an ally tribe of the Kingdom. The supporting fleet, carrying seven hundred Samurai and sailors, docked at the Ypa Great Tribe. And the Preaching Priest Kuimu, in his delight, requested the supporting fleet to stay a few extra days to participate in the conversion ceremony for several Kumeyaay Samurai... To put it plainly, Kuimu hopes to use the endorsement of the Kingdom's powerful Samurai to further showcase the Kingdom's might!"

"May the Chief Divine bless! The mission work at the Ypa Great Tribe is evidently not going as smoothly as expected. Though the Red Stone Chief of the Ypa Great Tribe has long since converted to the Chief Divine, few among the tribe's Noble Chiefs and Priests have followed suit. Instead, it's the ordinary tribespeople and common warriors and hunters who are more inclined to convert to the faith of the Chief Divine!"

"Kuimu, the Preaching Priest of the Ypa Tribe, told the fleet leaders Keyuan and Kejie: The main reason for the tribespeople's conversion is the agricultural guidance of the Chief God Priest, which has significantly boosted crop yields and introduced them to new crops like potatoes. As for the warriors and hunters, they convert because of the doctrine of the Chief Divine's Divine War. As long as they fight

for the divine, through bravery and military merit, they can receive the glorious divine grace, obtain land and population, in other words, become the tribe's Chieftains and Noble Chiefs!..."

"Guided by the Chief Divine! Hearing this, I have a vague premonition. That for these large tribes along the Western Sea Coast, the spread of the Chief Divine's faith is likely to bring about changes in the tribes... and such changes may not come as a gentle drizzle, but as a sudden storm!..."

The sea wind howled, and a thin mist arose over the evening sea, suggesting traces of a storm, yet completely elusive. Scholar Mikki looked gravely at his own written records, then glanced at the calm face of Exploration Captain Zuvaro, and asked in a low voice.

"Zuvaro, the Red Stone Chief Matutumbe of the Ypa Great Tribe, was personally converted by us... and now, evident tensions have arisen within the Red Stone Tribe... what do you think?"

"My opinion? Hmm... my opinion is that when the time is ripe, we will take down this large tribe at the rivermouth!..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro grinned, showing a carefree expression. As Mikki instantly furrowed his brows, he laughed and explained.

"Mikki, on our journey, we have seen it very clearly. The further south in latitude, the better the water and soil environment, and the larger the scale of the tribes. And when these tribes grow to a certain size, like three thousand or five thousand people, hereditary tribal leaders begin to emerge, as do Noble Chiefs, Priests, Chieftains, and Samurai!..."

"Our dissemination of the Chief Divine's faith, in itself, has nothing... er, may the Chief Divine forgive! I misspoke. The spread of the Chief Divine's faith is to guide them on a path of enlightenment!..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro slightly bowed his head, taking a glance at Mikki's composed face, continuing to speak with a smile.

"However, having stepped into the light, they must also confront the shadows. With the cultivation of potatoes and increased food production, more tribespeople can be sustained. With Bronze axes and spears, sturdy Greatbows, and resilient Leather Armor, the hunters and warriors will grow even

stronger. As for the faith of the Chief Divine that we've introduced, it disrupts the ruling foundation of the Noble Chiefs and Priests, shaking the inherited tribal legends... Simply put, the three stones of tribespeople, tribal warriors, and tribal Noble Chiefs, once balanced together, are no longer stable!..."

"It's like transplanting a small, long-growing flower into a larger pot. The roots of the flower are bound to suffer, unable to grasp that much soil. The original roots need time to grow and adapt, to further expand, to continue to control the entire pot!..."

"Chief Divine's blessing! But for us, why let the old roots control the pot? The Priests of the Chief Divine need to acquire more power! The Kingdom also needs the warriors of the tribes, the tribespeople, and must control each tribe and territory to unite the Western Sea Coast as one!... So, my opinion is simple, wait for the time to mature, when the tribes' foundation in faith is established, deploy the Samurai battalions to convert the entire Ypa Great Tribe! The position of this tribe is extremely important, also boasting salt to the east..."

At the notion of uniting the Western Sea Coast, Miki the Sage's heartbeat accelerated for a moment. He remained silent for a moment, then subtly nodded, looking back at his handwritten journal.

"The fleet remained at the Ypa Great Tribe for a full ten days, participating in several Chief Divine ceremonies, and restocked on potatoes, sweet potatoes, and over a thousand pounds of green salt! The fertile riverbank held by the Ypa Great Tribe is indeed very suitable for farming. And three to four hundred miles east of the Ypa Great Tribe is the homeland of the Kumeyaay people, the boundless Great Salt Sea (Salton Sea), sustaining the Salt Sea Great Tribe of nearly ten thousand individuals!..."

"It is said that the hundreds of miles of salt marshes at the edge of the Great Salt Sea enjoy year-round clear skies with little rain, covered with shimmering blue and white salt granules. And sacks of the North's precious edible salt are readily available there, requiring no fuel expenditure to boil salt, just finding a spot to dig is sufficient! The salt produced there travels along several 'Great Long Rivers' (Colorado River system), upstream into the interior, traded to the powerful Apache Alliance, Navajo Alliance, and even further distant lands..."

"May the Chief Divine bless! If the Kingdom can gain control over the divisions of the Kumeyaay and occupy the vast Great Salt Sea, the Kingdom's series of settlements from north to south will no longer need to worry about salt supplies! Moreover, by controlling this valuable salt-producing region, the interior tribes upstream of the 'Great Long Rivers' will also fall under the influence of the Kingdom... Ah! Praise the Chief Divine! May Your glory extend into the interior wilderness, reaching the hundreds of tribes!"

"Ah! The homeland of the Kumeyaay, the salt mines of the Great Salt Sea, the Salt Sea Great Tribe!..."

Seeing this, Exploration Captain Zuvaro licked his lips, filled with a profound longing.

He had toiled hard, leading over a hundred men, cutting numerous trees, boiling salty water for two months, to scrape together three to four thousand pounds of salt. Meanwhile, the tribespeople of the Salt Lake Great Tribe only need to find a salt mine, open a salt well, and with ease, dig out thousands to tens of thousands of pounds! The salt they excavated was large and blue, with a subtle aromatic taste, even a hint of sweetness, earning it the name green salt. This green salt, in terms of purity and flavor, far surpassed any sea salt he had boiled!

In fact, the reason the supporting fleet stayed at the Ypa Great Tribe for ten days was precisely to trade for green salt transported from the Salt Lake Great Tribe. The trade was done through barter, quite straightforward. The Salt Lake Great Tribe's "Wild Bull Opening Mouth" wants one Bronze Spear for a sack of green salt, likely weighing over a hundred pounds. As an intermediary in the transport of salt, the Ypa Great Tribe also required equal recompense. Simply put, for every hundred pounds of green salt bought, each of the two Great Tribes was given one Bronze Spear. As for the more copper-heavy, wood-felling Bronze Axe, one exchanged for two to three hundred pounds of green salt.

"Oh Chief Divine! The Kingdom fleet traded one hundred Bronze Spears and forty Bronze Axes to get over ten thousand pounds of green salt! Yet, once brought to the Far North land, several tens of pounds of green salt, plus less than a hundred pounds of Firestone, could recruit a strong tribesman! And the whale meat stored by the exploration fleet was all cured with this salt..."

"With the Chief Divine as the witness! This eternally arid, green salt-producing Great Salt Sea is crucial to operating along the Western Sea Coast and is a key focus of the Kingdom! The Chief Divine's blessings must shine upon the azure and white crystalline salt sea!..."

Chapter 1455: The Scholar's Nautical Journal—Pioneering the Western Sea Coast, the Cedar Shaman's Choice

"At latitude 34 degrees north, the narrow coastal stretch and mountain valley of the Chumash people is where the Kingdom's Three Hills Port is located. When the support fleet arrived, Keyuan and Kejie were surprised to find that this rivermouth valley port had not been reported as having 200 people, but had swelled to over 800! It was obvious that this supply port was on the verge of establishing itself from a village to a town. And the First Level Priest Kebao, who was presiding over the port, would surely be promoted to Second Level..."

"Praise the Chief Divine! Priest Kebao, with just fifty Samurai, had initially established the Kingdom's order among the narrow, hundred-mile radius valley around the rivermouth. The Chumash tribes, originally loose and primitive with only dozens of people, accepted the faith of the Chief Divine and migrated to the vicinity of the port to cultivate rudimentary fields. Undoubtedly, the Kingdom's development here is a form of the Chief Divine's guidance! These Chumash people's simple and blank minds, after converting to the Chief Divine's faith, became extraordinarily devout. They diligently followed the teachings of the Priest and Assistant Priest, learned the agricultural techniques of the Kingdom, and planted the potatoes brought by the Kingdom. After witnessing for the first time the abundant harvest of food last autumn, their faith strengthened as a form of reciprocation!..."

"The support fleet resupplied with some food at Three Hills Port, unloaded a batch of Bronze Weapons and tools, and even some iron farming implements. Priest Kebao, along with a few young Assistant Priests of Chumash descent, requested that the support fleet leave some craftsmen capable of shipbuilding. He wanted to develop a fishing industry for this tribal gathering port. Additionally, he wanted a few elite Scouts to further explore between the Western Mountain and the Northeastern upstream Northern Land tribes..."

"Keyuan and Kejie expressed support and left behind dozens of Kingdom's Warriors and sailors, supplementing with some tribal sailors from the Chumash people. If the surrounding mountains and upper river of the Great River consist of tribes of only dozens of people, then the scale of the Three Hills Port can clearly be expanded further! In fact, the Kingdom's Priests had long discovered that the smaller and looser the Northern Tribes, and the less grain they produced, the easier it was to spread the faith of the Chief Divine and for them to be absorbed and assimilated by the Kingdom!"

"At latitude 35 degrees north lies the Oak Tribe of the Salinan, and at 36 degrees north, the coastal tribes of the Costanoan. Keyuan and Kejie told me that between Three Hills Port and West Mountain Port, this one thousand-mile, plantable, humid coastline seems to have been preliminarily designated by Your Majesty as a place of exile... The Kingdom will likely exile the Noble Chief Heads and noble warriors of tribes who lose their lands after a Divine War here! After all, this seven-thousand-mile long Western Sea coast is vast and desolate, filled with dense forests. To develop this coastline, manpower must be acquired as much as possible, especially those with farming and construction skills..."

The skies darkened with a crimson glow, and clouds drifted amidst the fog. Witnessing this, Scholar Mikki and Exploration Captain Zuvaro exchanged glances, their thoughts somewhat unsettled.

"Zuvaro, I'm a bit worried... If the Kingdom banishes those Southern Tribe's noble warriors to the Western coast, it will definitely trigger conflict with the local tribes!..."

"Chief Divine Witness! Mikki, there's no need to overthink. This type of tribal conflict is entirely controllable. The Southern Tribes exiled to the Northern Land can bring better farming techniques, cultivate more corn and potato fields, and sustain more people! The exiled nobles, having a small population, can only gradually expand by intermarrying, annexing, and assimilating the local small tribes. After all, whether the Northern or Southern tribes, they are all descendants of the Yellow-skinned Jiao people, and their integration proceeds swiftly... The exiled nobles and warriors can also bring more advanced building and manufacturing techniques, establishing towns that make this barbarously vast Western sea coast truly develop!..."

Hearing this, Scholar Mikki remained silent for a long time before lowering his head and whispering "hmm." He quietly resolved to establish a clear order and rules for the colonization, exile, and development of the Western coast, for tribal intermarriage, annexation, and assimilation, and eventually integrate them into the Kingdom's doctrine!

"At latitude 38 degrees north, in the vast Golden Bay, stands the Kingdom's most important port on the Western coast, the ever-expanding West Mountain Port! The entire port has already housed 1,300 people, a third of whom are warriors and sailors from the Kingdom or the Southern tribes, while the remaining two-thirds are converted members from the Miwoc, Costanoan, and Yokut peoples. In recruiting local tribes for the Kingdom, the assistance and influence of the Cedar Shaman have been quite crucial. The North Bay Tribe, with a population scale exceeding ten thousand, has become the Kingdom's most powerful tribal ally on the entire Western coast!..."

"Chief Divine Witness! West Mountain Port has cultivated numerous potatoes on the plain and hills by the lake, with last year producing a decent yield as well. Although the Kingdom's potatoes are small in size, they are not picky about their soil, growing well on the hills. As soon as the Northern tribes received this crop, they all became fond of it. Among all the tribes, the Cedar Shaman's North Bay Tribe, occupying the Bird-cat River Valley (Napa Valley), has the largest area planted with potatoes! Their agricultural conditions are superb, with high potato yields that caused the Kingdom's Preaching Priests sent there to be constantly amazed!..."

"Praise the Chief Divine! Besides agricultural development, a small shipyard has been established in West Mountain Port. This simple shipyard currently can only build Twin-hulled War Canoes and slightly larger fishing boats. It cannot yet construct Oar-sailed Longships, but it has sufficient craftsmen and materials to repair longships! Here, Keyuan and Kejie saw many Mivok carpenters and shipwrights, all coming from the North Bay Tribe. The North Bay Tribe even dispatched many young nobles to West Mountain Port to learn the Kingdom's script, calendar, and the 'Book of Ama Colley'"

"Chief Divine Bless! The rapid development of the North Bay Tribe and their longing for the Chief Divine's glory far exceed our imagination! Under the guidance of the Cedar Shaman, the Mivok's North Bay Tribe, in encountering the Kingdom's foothold at West Mountain Port, is akin to a bean finding corn. They intimately entwine with the Kingdom's port, learning everything introduced by the Kingdom, and constantly obtaining support and strength for growth and progress!..."

The islands drift into the White Sea, with a long wind coming from the ice fields. Scholar Mikki pursed his lips, recalling the wise and knowledgeable Cedar Shaman, his expression complex. He pondered for a moment, staring at the contemplative Exploration Captain Zuvaro, and spoke lowly.

"Zuvaro, the second batch of the Kingdom's massive support fleet reached West Mountain Port, and the Cedar Shaman immediately sent a greeting Envoy. Not long after, he personally traveled to West Mountain Port, engaging in a long conversation with Second Level Priest Keyuan!..."

"Hmm? Mikki, could it be that Priest Keyuan's stationing at West Mountain Port is related to the Cedar Shaman?..."

"Very likely! No, it's certain!"

Scholar Mikki affirmatively nodded his head. After thinking for a moment, he spoke in a serious tone.

"Chief Divine Bless! The Cedar Shaman has already become proficient in conversing with the fleet's Priests in Navajo, even able to recite most portions of the 'Book of Ama Colley'. He is in good health and very curious about the Southern Kingdom... According to Kejie's accounts, the Cedar Shaman intends to sit on the returning longship and visit Your Majesty in the Kingdom of the Lake! He wishes to formally convert to the Chief Divine there... and Priest Keyuan is very eager to make it happen, as it would be his first impressive achievement after reaching the Western sea coast of the Northern Continent!..."

"What! In just one year, the Cedar Shaman learned Navajo and the Kingdom's script and understood the 'Book of Ama Colley'?!"

Upon hearing this, Exploration Captain Zuvaro was taken aback. He was astonished by the Cedar Shaman's linguistic talent and, on the other hand, amazed at his keen sensitivity and willingness to change.

"Oh Chief Divine! If the Cedar Shaman truly arrives at the Kingdom, meets with Your Majesty, and performs the blood oath to convert to the Chief Divine's faith... then as the most prestigious and first tribal shaman to convert on the Northern Continent, Your Majesty will certainly not skimp on rewards, and might even directly promote him to a glorious Fourth Level Priest!"

"Indeed! If so, the powerful North Bay Tribe could fully join the Kingdom of the Lake as an independent Fief... and the entire fate of the Miwoke Tribes could undergo a major turning point! The Kingdom might not even need to use any force to integrate the tribes along the Golden Bay into the Kingdom's order, establishing a model for peaceful assimilation for all tribes... Chief Divine Bless, may your radiance shine amid the Western sea coast's mountains!"

Chapter 1456: The Scholar's Nautical Journal—Harbors Across Twenty Thousand Li, the Lifeblood of the Western Sea Coast

"May the Chief Divine bless us! The support fleet of the Kingdom replenished some food at West Mountain Port, repaired the longships that had journeyed here, and exchanged for three well-conditioned old longships. There are four Kingdom longships stationed at West Mountain Port, making it the largest Kingdom port on the Western Sea Coast! Subsequently, the support fleet left behind sixty to seventy Kingdom sailors and supplemented an equal number of Miwoke sailors before continuing northward. In fact, throughout this journey, the continual exchange of sailors allows the fleet to better adapt to the environment of the Northern Land and also helps increase the proportion of the Kingdom's main force at each port..."

"At latitude 39 degrees north, the Bear-hunting Tribe of the Pomo people is a Great Tribe of three thousand, occupying vast river mouths, coasts, and mountain forests. The Bear-hunting Tribe is very friendly towards the Kingdom. The primary reasons are, firstly, the mediation and assurance of the Cedar Shaman, and secondly, due to the Kingdom's formidable strength, with the continual appearance of massive fleets and Samurai. And the final, most crucial reason is the Kingdom's incessant supply of Southern trade goods which the Pomo people ardently desire, including the 'rare' Lake Gem, precious metal axe-spears, and practical cotton cloth cocoa!..."

"Like the forest tribes of the East, the agricultural level of the Bear-hunting Tribe is still very primitive and cannot provide much food for the fleet. However, within this powerful Great Tribe, there are many strong Pomo hunters skilled at hunting in the woods, and there are many furs available for trade. The surrounding mountain forests of the tribe are abundant with towering redwoods, cold firs, oak trees, and white pines, all excellent lumber... Therefore, the goods that the Bear-hunting Tribe can provide are a small amount of food, a moderate amount of furs, a large amount of lumber, and recruitable tribal hunters!..."

"Under the nod of Chieftain Bear Wind of the Bear-hunting Tribe, the support fleet left behind First Level Preaching Priest Nolan, along with several young Assistant Priests of the Kingdom, to spread the faith of the Chief Divine among the Bear-hunting Tribe and teach them potato cultivation. At the same time, the support fleet also recruited more than a dozen strong, tall Pomo hunters with metal tools and weapons as a supplement for the crew. Their strength is indeed impressive, and they are evidently taller, particularly adept at using the javelin!..."

"At latitude 41 degrees north, the Kingdom's Lake Bay Port is established around the Lake Garden Tribe of the Wiyot people, with a current population of over 500! The vast majority of the population of Lake Bay Port comes from local intermarriage and conversion of the Wiyot people, exemplifying the assimilation and integration of Northern Tribes! The Preaching Priest of the port, West Bee, has already established large areas of hut and wood houses, along with a stone temple of the Chief Divine. His wife Chieftainess Tulan has just given birth to their first child! As for the rest of the residing Kingdom's warriors and sailors, they have all intermarried with local Wiyot women, many of whom have already had children!..."

"Praise the Chief Divine! Second Level Priest Kejie, on behalf of the Kingdom, conveyed the blessings of the Chief Divine to them and left behind many metal tools. Following this, he, along with two hundred warriors of the Kingdom and more than a dozen baskets of rich gifts, personally visited the kind and gentle old chieftain of the Lake Garden Tribe, Tu Jing, to persuade them to convert to the Chief Divine's faith!... Finally, the old chieftain Tu Jing nodded in agreement, participating in the conversion ceremony with the tribal chieftains, and switched their belief to the Chief Divine's faith! The Lake Garden Tribe, comprising two to three thousand people, has thus embarked on a bright path!..."

The night enveloped the earth, the bonfire ignited between the mountains. A gust of cold wind blew from the North, bringing the chill of October's Far North land. The White Bear Gawa placed a clay pot on the bonfire, dug some snow chunks into the pot, and threw in a large piece of frozen whale salted meat. She glanced at the two engrossed 'Chieftains', thought for a moment, and took out a small bag of invigorating herbs to add to the pot for boiling.

"Chief Divine bless us! The simple Lake Garden Tribe has converted to the Chief Divine!... Slurp, the delicious grilled eel..."

Miki the Sage's eyes flickered, recalling the delicious grilled eel of the Lake Garden Tribe and couldn't help but lick his dried lips.

"Oh Chief Divine! One wonders when we might return to the Southern Lake Bay Port... Surely, it must be eight or nine thousand miles away!..."

"Hmm, calculating the series of supply points established along the route, from Lake Bay Port to High Mountain Port, there are ten segments to the journey, eleven ports... it should tally up to ten thousand miles!..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro chuckled and shook his head, his expression carrying a touch of nostalgia. After this ten thousand mile journey, they still have to continue westward, unsure of how many years might pass before returning... Perhaps, this thousand-mile journey of turbulent waves and endless horizons might swallow them completely, never granting a chance to return...

"Yes! Following Lake Bay Port comes South Port and North Port!..."

Miki the Sage paused slightly, rubbing his weathered chin, his eyes somewhat distant. By the orange glow of the bonfire, he gazed upon the navigation journal in his hand, akin to seeing the pioneering past and the inevitably prosperous future!

"Praise the Chief Divine! Just north of Lake Bay Tribe, merely one or two days' voyage stands the towering Divine Revelation Tree. Assisted by Priest Kejie, the people held a prayer ceremony on the coast where the Divine Tree stands, before continuing north. At latitude 42 degrees north stands the rivaling Redwood Tribe and Leaf Grass Tribe of the Tolowa people. These are two Great Tribes of several thousand, each consolidating small tribes over years of fierce battles, gradually forming the embryo of a Tribal Alliance..."

"The fleet of over seven hundred Kingdom people arrived and greatly intimidated the two Tolowa Great Tribes. Priest Kejie, representing the Kingdom, stayed a few days, meeting separately with Chieftain Leaf Grass and Chieftain Mighty Oak of the Redwood Tribe, conveying the Chief Divine's light and mercy, hoping to mediate the conflict between the two! Ultimately, his results were merely establishing trade relations with the two Great Tribes, securing permission to spread the Chief Divine's faith, and obtaining peaceful passage guarantees for the longships... The hatred accumulated between these two Great Tribes spans many generations, and likely cannot be easily settled. Similarly, the two warring Great Tribes highly value their population, making it impossible for the Kingdom to recruit valiant Tolowa warriors, but exchanging prisoners of war for weapons seems doable..."

"At latitude 43 degrees north lies the Peaceful Bay of the Kus people, which is the Kingdom's South Port. In barely a year, this Kingdom's port expanded from a mere sixty to seventy individuals to over three hundred! It's evident that Zuvaro, full of cunning schemes, imparted many chaotic ideas to Priest Keshu who manages this place. The Kingdom's warriors and sailors, through deception, surprise attacks, gifts,

and even enticing with alcohol... each has married several Kus women. These semi-matriarchal small tribes have converged like iron filings to a magnet, surrounding the South Port within tens of miles, numbering an estimated six to seven hundred..."

Upon seeing this, Exploration Captain Zuvaro awkwardly rubbed his nose. He gave a light 'cough' twice, explaining in a low voice.

"Miki, May the Chief Divine bless us! In order to spread the Chief Divine's glory, for the Kingdom's prosperous future, and to enlighten the ignorant Northern tribes... the devout warriors and sailors of the Kingdom are willing to make 'sacrifices' through their hard work!... Praise the Chief Divine! Let our bloodlines and those of the Northern Jiao People unite closely, indistinguishably!"

"Oh! Closely united, indistinguishably?... Zuvaro, you're quite something!... uh..."

Upon hearing this, Miki the Sage grinned mockingly. But when he noticed the newly adult, cooking White Bear Gawa nearby, his voice instantly lowered. After a while, he rubbed his cheeks and sighed.

"Chief Divine as witness! Intermarrying with Northern Tribes and merging our bloodlines, and converting relatives' faith to the path of the Chief Divine truly is the fastest way for the Kingdom to develop on the vast Western Sea Coast!... But alas, for the loyal warriors and sailors of the Kingdom who come here to marry and settle, they can no longer return! And across the Kingdom, how many loyal warriors and sailors can travel a thousand miles to settle in this vast and desolate Western Sea Coast?..."

Hearing this question, Exploration Captain Zuvaro squinted his eyes, pondering silently. He understood Miki the Sage's implication and sensed his concern.

The fleets heading north twice have brought nearly two thousand strong warriors and sailors from the Kingdom. These individuals are selected from various counties, holding the deepest faith, utmost loyalty, and obedience to the Kingdom as the backbone! Even though the populations of counties in the Kingdom are in the tens of thousands, such backbones are not numerous.

Therefore, continuing the Kingdom's support, maintaining such quality in the crew cannot be sustained. Be it through noble exile or tribal migration, it will introduce many unreliable populations... by then, the order on the Western Sea Coast might not remain so stable and harmonious!...

"May the Chief Divine bless us! The Kingdom, possessing a massive fleet, also holds the lifeline of the Western Sea Coast, not to be challenged by any tribes or fiefs! The faith of the Chief Divine will eventually spread throughout the Northern Land! And when we reach the western continent, as prophesied by the Divine Revelation of Your Majesty, we will surely obtain four-legged riding beasts traversing the land and gigantic ships connecting coasts!..."

Chapter 1457: Scholar's Nautical Journal, Conversion of the Sunward Tribe, Sprouting of the Northern Faction

"North latitude 44 degrees, is the Dawn Tribe of the Xiulao people, a coastal Great Tribe with more than two thousand members! The Dawn Tribe's Sun Shaman Chinook is wise and friendly, and once had a trade supply agreement with the Kingdom. However, the first group of Kingdom's fleet that passed by the Dawn Tribe was only about two hundred people. This time, there were ten Kingdom longships, fully loaded with seven hundred warriors and sailors! Such a massive military force can overwhelm any Great Tribe on the Western Sea Coast, even shocking Chinook, the Shaman of the Dawn Tribe!"

"Shaman Chinook appeared in person and talked with the leading High Priest Kejie throughout the night. This time, he talked about the Sun, about the Sun Ancestors revered by the Dawn Tribe, and the Sun Supreme God worshipped by the Great Longship Tribe having many 'common' aspects... Kejie the Priest was pleased to mention that the Dawn Great Tribe was also a descendant of the Jiao People, a 'brother' tribe of the Kingdom lost long ago... The talks between the two sides ended in sincere happiness and unity. Shaman Chinook represented the Dawn Tribe, while Kejie the Priest represented the Kingdom of the Lake, and both sides pledged a blood oath to upgrade their trade supply relationship to a mutual alliance..."

"After the blood oath of the alliance, faced with Kejie the Priest's sincere 'request' to convert to the Sun Supreme God, Shaman Chinook pondered for a long time and then smiled, taking the Sun Hummingbird Talisman of the Chief Divine and placing it around his neck. This symbolic act represented the Dawn Tribe of more than two thousand people embracing the Sun Supreme God... Then, he eagerly invited the Kingdom fleet to leave behind a First Level Preaching Priest named Chagwa, along with several young Assistant Priests skilled in planting potatoes, to spread faith and new crops within the tribe. The supply fleet also replenished some tribal specialty foods from the Dawn Tribe, including kelp, sun beans, wild peas, bear fern, thistle fern... and recruited a dozen or so Xiulao sailors familiar with the Northern Land to help set up kelp farms..."

In October, the Far North land has equal shares of day and night, with the splendid star river hanging high in the clear and distant sky. From ancient times to today, the stars here have been so bright, unaffected by the dense and dazzling lights of human towns. Meanwhile, the guiding North Star hangs steadily at the zenith, almost unmoving in position. It seems like the Chief Divine's clear and eternal guidance, telling the Kingdom fleet where exactly they are!..."

"North latitude 52 degrees... It's only eight latitudes away from the Dawn Tribe at north latitude 44 degrees. And the longitude that Your Majesty spoke of, the east-west distance we traveled, covers at least six or seven thousand miles. Longitude calculation, Your Majesty said, requires time, yet it's unknown when we could create an accurate timekeeping 'clock' as foretold in the Divine Revelation..."

Scholar Mikki drank the last sip of warm whale soup, looked up at the starry sky for a while, then exhaled slowly, smiling as he spoke.

"Zuvaro, it's only delicious when the whale soup has kelp from the Dawn Tribe added!"

"Haha! Mikki, any soup with added kelp becomes delicious. This plentiful seafood must be a gift from the spirits of the sea, to be so delightfully rich and flavorful!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro laughed, casually eating firm whale meat. He didn't have high demands for food, as long as it filled the stomach and replenished energy.

"Praise the Chief Divine! Zuvaro, after the Dawn Tribe became an ally of the Kingdom, their techniques for cultivating kelp, planting sun beans, and fern can be spread among the coastal tribes and Kingdom Port! We can't just keep eating whale meat or potatoes..."

"Indeed, it's good to have more food sources. Sun beans and fern can be grown on coastal saline soil without competing with potatoes for land. Kelp can even be cultivated by the sea ponds, and we might raise fish alongside..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro rubbed his chin, pondering the unique agricultural heritage of the Dawn Tribe, his smile taking on a deeper meaning.

"Haha! Sun Shaman Chinook is indeed a clever and cunning old shaman. Last time, when we tried persuading him to convert to the Chief Divine, he was reserved, smiling without saying much. This time, when Kejie arrived with seven hundred warriors and sailors from the Kingdom, he smoothly shifted, pledging a blood oath for an alliance and acknowledging faith... What a sly old fox!..."

"Yes, the Chief Divine witnesses! Kingdom's interaction with the Northern Tribes relies on strength as a foundation. Northern Great Tribes living in such harsh and wild environments have a keener awareness of power compared to tribes in the Southern Plateau and Jungle! Of course, their tribal populations of at most several thousand can't compare with those southern City-State tribes numbering tens of thousands..."

Scholar Mikki nodded affirmatively. Over the past two years, his understanding of the Northern Tribes has grown deeper. In truth, compared to Highland Tribes and Jungle Tribes, Northern Tribes focus more on food, population, and weapons, less so on tribal land, and their faith is quite flexible.

From their tribal characteristics, the majority of Northern Tribes are pragmatic, nomadic tribes that neglect faith, while the vast Northern Continent is their ancestral homeland. When faced with irresistibly forceful threats, their first choice is to ally and make friends, turning threats into allies. And if an opposing threat is irreconcilable, they choose to migrate as a tribe, leaving their settled territory for the vast inland.

Northern Tribes have a tradition of tribal migration and possess the ability for guerrilla raids in the mountain forest. Therefore, the Kingdom's interaction with them focuses more on peaceful marriages and alliances, preaching conversion, and cultural integration, while military usage is relatively cautious. More often than not, the Kingdom merely demonstrates its strength, showing the Northern Tribes that it is powerful and not easily provoked!

"North latitude 45 degrees, is the Divine Providence's Divine Palm Peak. Kejie the Priest, leading the support fleet, held another large prayer ceremony, boosting the fleet's morale. Not far north of Divine Palm Peak is the Timos Tribe of the Tilamok people, with only a little over a thousand tribespeople. The Female Chief of the Timos Tribe, the tribe's matriarch Tila, was surprised by the fleet's size and the number of warriors, displaying both secret vigilance and immense enthusiasm!..."

"The support fleet stayed at the Timos Tribe for three days. Female Chief Tila expressed a clear willingness to accept faith in the Chief Divine!... However, we all know in our hearts they merely added a mighty divine from the south to their worship, still lacking one Divine Palm Peak's distance from true, singular piety... Through the priests' discussion on the fleet, we left Preaching Priest Mibolo, who married the Female Chief Tila's youngest daughter, to guide the conversion of this not-so-large thousand-strong tribe... The fleet also left a few Assistant Priests and twenty warrior sailors to marry Tilamok women, integrating into the Timos Tribe..."

"Hmm? Mikki, I recall, Mibolo is your cousin, isn't he? Just graduated from Divine Power University?"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro blinked, looking at Scholar Mikki. Mikki scratched his head, furrowed his brows slightly, then nodded affirmatively.

"Yes! Mibolo is my cousin, twenty years old, and just graduated from Divine Power University. Many young priests on this support fleet are fresh from Divine Power University, perhaps related to the first fleet's priests. After all, there are few vacancies left for priest positions across the Kingdom's counties, with so many priests of noble birth... Actually, for Kingdom priests from common backgrounds, preaching in the Northern Continent might be the best opportunity!..."

"Hmm... Although the Timos Tribe is poor without much output, it is a medium-sized tribe with a thousand people, controlling a coastline of two or three hundred miles. Kejie left Mibolo there, also left twenty Kingdom warriors, personally presiding over his wedding... Probably out of regard for us!..."

At this point, Scholar Mikki lowered his eyes, softened his voice, and quietly said.

"Chief Divine witness! Zuvaro, I've always been a bit uneasy... We've flexibly relaxed the doctrines, allowing young priests to marry and have children in the North, allied with various tribes... And the priests along this string of settlements mostly come from Divine Power University, they have countless connections... If this continues long-term, and the seeds grow into pumpkins, intertwining with each other into one entity, will it..."

"Chief Divine protects! Guiding the Jiao compatriots of the Northern Land back to the righteous path of the Chief Divine is precisely the divine duty of Kingdom priests! Even if slightly overstepping the doctrine, it is for the sake of true faith!..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro likewise lowered his eyes, murmured a prayer, interrupting Scholar Mikki. Their discussion thus ended, burying all future concerns regarding the Northern Land deep within their hearts.

After all, even if the priests of the Northern Continent ultimately rely on various converted tribes, establishing ports in different places and forming a separate northern faction within the Kingdom's Priesthood... Then, the two who initially explored the northern coast and founded the northern faction would naturally possess the leadership status of such a political faction! If this faction truly forms, for the two as leaders, whether they return to the Capital City or remain in the Northern Land, it would be more benefit than harm!

"Praise the Chief Divine! Beyond the Timos Tribe is North latitude 46 degrees, North Port! This Kingdom's port, welcoming numerous migrating small tribes of Krasop, is just flourishing with prosperity! And the arrival of the Kingdom's mighty fleet meets appropriately with envoys sent by the Rivermouth Tribe Confederation of the North!..."

Chapter 1458: The Scholar's Nautical Journal, North Port's Development Opportunity, and the Whale Clan's Conversion

"North Port at 46 degrees north latitude is located on the south side of the mighty river (Colombia River) estuary, where multiple rivers converge! Stationed at North Port by the Kingdom are the two brother priests, Tu Shan and Tu He, with two fishing longships and over twenty local tribal canoes. After more than a year of their efforts, the population of North Port has grown to over 500 people, of which 80% are Clatsop tribe members absorbed by the Kingdom. These Clatsop people are excellent fishermen, hunters, and gatherers, but not skilled in farming. So, the entire port has only developed several hundred acres of potato, sweet potato, corn, and pumpkin fields beside the river on the southern inland. Currently, the primary food source for the port remains the caught fish..."

"Among all the ports on the Western Sea coast, North Port's location is extremely important! Because the mighty river flows all the way from the distant East with many branch waterways, and it is said to stretch as long as four thousand miles! It is known as the second lifeline of the Northern Continent, linking hundreds and thousands of tribes together... In my view, it is a naturally excellent trade port, capable of establishing peaceful trade exchanges with the vast inland tribes! However, the major tribes around the river may not think so..."

"When the Kingdom's support fleet, loaded with seven hundred warriors, arrived at North Port, the envoys from the Northern Rivermouth Tribe Confederation happened to be staying at the port. The so-called Northern Rivermouth Alliance actually is the combined effort of Chinook Tribe, Cathlamet Tribe, and Wahkiakum Tribe around the Rivermouth area to jointly resist the emerging Kalapuya tribal alliance occupying the affluent river valley area (Portland)! These two rival tribal alliances along the Long River each can mobilize three to four thousand able-bodied men. Therefore, it is estimated that both sides have nearly twenty thousand tribes, and the Kalapuya people expanding on all fronts might have even more population... According to the traditional understanding of the Northern Land, these two 'powerful' alliances each with a scale of over ten thousand people are rare 'major forces' on the Northern Continent!..."

"Among the two alliances, the downstream, loosely organized Rivermouth Alliance is clearly the weaker defensive party, resisting the Kalapuya tribes' invasion. And their envoys arriving at North Port have a very clear purpose. That is to persuade the smaller Clatsop tribes of the mighty river's south shore to join the 'powerful' Rivermouth Alliance... The Rivermouth Alliance's envoy was initially very confident,

repeatedly claiming to 'shelter' the 'Longship Tribe' of over five hundred people. Until the Kingdom's powerful support fleet arrived, hundreds of armored warriors appeared, shocking and astonishing the Rivermouth Alliance emissary beyond belief! These armored and bow-bearing warriors are equivalent to the tribes' elite bear-hunting warriors. Yet, neither the Rivermouth Alliance nor the Kalapuya Alliance can produce three hundred bear-hunting warriors!..."

"With the Chief Divine's protection! Witnessing the Kingdom's strength, the Rivermouth Alliance's envoy clearly changed their attitude, but still invited the 'Longship Tribe' to join the Rivermouth Alliance. Tu Shan and Tu He hesitated a bit because many of the tribes accepted by North Port were forcibly migrated by the Kalapuya Alliance, whose aggressiveness is indeed very strong... The support fleet's Priest Kejie consulted with Tu Shan and Tu He for a long time before finally politely refusing the Rivermouth Alliance's invitation suggestion. However, the Kingdom is willing to swear an alliance with the Rivermouth tribes on equal terms, forming an allied tribe. Besides this, the Kingdom is also willing to exchange bronze weapons and tools for the Rivermouth Alliance's food, timber, and war captives..."

The stars twinkle in the night sky, watching over the flickering bonfires rising on the islands in this desolate icy sea. Scholar Mikki massaged his temples, pondering over Priest Kejie's arrangements, then looked towards Exploration Captain Zuwalo.

"Chief Divine witness! Zuwalo, after Priest Kejie left fifty Kingdom warriors at North Port, left fifty sets of bronze cloth armor, and exchanged two sturdy large longships with North Port's two old longships. Afterward, upon his handover with us at Whale Harbor, he set his station at North Port... Is he planning to capitalize on the intertribal alliances' conflicts along the Long River to make significant moves?..."

Upon hearing this, Exploration Captain Zuwalo rubbed his chin and nodded affirmatively.

"Chief Divine witness! It should be like this! Priest Keyuan stationed at West Mountain Port is developing the harbor while focusing efforts on the Cedar Shaman. Similarly, Priest Kejie stationed at North Port is naturally aiming to develop the harbor, taking advantage of the intertribal alliance conflicts to use the Kingdom's armored military force to annex various tribes of different sizes!... Both of us have quickly climbed up the ranks through exploration and pioneering achievements along the way. Seeing this, naturally, they want to quickly establish their own accomplishments, making significant moves in the Northern Land! And the places left for their achievements..."

"In fact, if not for His Majesty's very clear mandate prioritizing exploration of the Far North... I doubt Priest Kejie would leave just fifty copper-armored warriors!..."

"Hmm, indeed! Priest Kejie abandoned the temporarily more populous and abundant Whale Harbor to choose North Port, connected to the mighty river, as his station. So, the struggle up and down the mighty river will inevitably deeply involve the Kingdom as well!..."

Scholar Mikki gently shook his head. He did not favor such expansion based on force, but undeniably sometimes it might be the fastest way to absorb and expand through force seizing various tribes!

The Kingdom's priests traveled thousands of miles to the Western Sea coast of the Northern Land, all harboring ambitions of making contributions. According to the Kingdom's expansion policy, as long as the tribes they control have enough population, the Kingdom Priesthood will generously promote them and provide them with more resource support! All this is for the sake of preaching and expansion...

"The support fleet stayed at North Port for four days, resupplied some food and water, stationed dozens of Kingdom sailors, and recruited an equal number of Clatsop sailors before heading north again. Tens of miles north of the great river's north bank lies the Chinook people's Great Chinook Tribe. The support fleet reached this tribe of one to two thousand people, displayed the Kingdom's elite warriors, and only after declaring 'friendship' with the Great Chinook Tribe's chieftain did it head back to the coast..."

"At 47 degrees north latitude, another vast rivermouth area is home to the Xia He tribe of the Xialisi people. This fishing-hunting Xia He tribe only numbered seven to eight hundred people, almost migrated eastward when facing the enormous fleet. Priest Kejie met with Chieftain Xia He, presented the Kingdom's gifts, solemnly proclaimed 'friendship,' and 'persuaded' them to convert, recruiting a dozen or so sailors... Afterward, First Level Preaching Priest Pehuoguo stayed at Xia He tribe to spread the Chief Divine faith and guide the Xialisi in potato cultivation..."

"After leaving the Xia He tribe, going north another five to six hundred miles, at 48 degrees north latitude, is Whale Harbor, the starting point of the Kingdom's exploration once again! Upon reaching Whale Harbor, ten large longships had already exchanged five old longships, swapping nearly half of the crew! Warriors and sailors from ten plus tribes and over ten ports congregated in the fleet, symbolizing the Kingdom's strength and operations in the Northern Land!..."

"With the Chief Divine's blessing! With the arrival of this support fleet, exploration of the Far North can continue to push along the coast! Of course, before officially departing, there remains one critical event! That is to formally unite and merge with the Maca Whale Tribe, who are only five to six hundred people but possess whaling techniques, then hold a grand conversion ceremony, let the entire tribe swear a blood oath of conversion, to believe in the Chief Divine. Henceforth, the mighty Kingdom of the Lake will 'embrace' the little Whale Tribe at the world's end, making them an inseparable part of the Kingdom!..."

Chapter 1459: Scholar's Nautical Journal, Far North Coast Recap, Eight 'Divine' Ports

"Chief Divine bless! After the Kingdom's support fleet arrived, facing seven hundred Kingdom's Warriors and sailors, the conversion of the entire Makan Whale Tribe became a natural outcome. This small tribe of only five to six hundred people, had already intermarried with the Kingdom's Warriors and sailors, establishing mutual trust. And Zuvaro, this guy, even married the Whale Tribe chieftain's elder hunter Whalesea's youngest daughter as his fourth wife... Chief Divine! I seriously suspect if someday, Zuvaro enters the Kingdom's Inquisition, he might never come out again!..."

"Although the Whale Tribe's population is not large, their significance to the Kingdom is very important! They possess unique whaling techniques and occupy straits and capes through which whales pass. With the Whale Tribe's whale-attracting technology, understanding of whale habits, plus the Kingdom's large ships, javelins, and powerful crossbows, coastal whaling can be stabilized! And as long as they can capture a big whale, tens of thousands of pounds, even a hundred thousand pounds of fish meat output, huge amounts of high-quality oil, can almost provide abundant food supply for the whole support fleet!..."

"Praise the Chief Divine! In fact, the Kingdom Ports and coastal tribes along the way are not very abundant in food. The Kingdom's support fleet has never stored enough grain. But after arriving at the Whale Tribe, the support fleet participated in whaling, killing a magnificent big fin whale, gaining forty to fifty thousand pounds of whale meat, and several thousand pounds of oil!..."

"At Whale Harbor, the support fleet unloaded most of the blue salt, a small amount of firestone, replenishing food that can support the whole fleet for four full months, mainly salted whale meat and whale oil that can be stored and eaten! At the same time, the fleet left sixty Warriors and sailors from the Kingdom's Main Force, supplemented by thirty Makan sailors. This way, Whale Harbor's population reached seven hundred people. About one-third of them are from the Kingdom's Main Force, ensuring stability!"

"In Whale Harbor's arrangement, First Level Preaching Priest Zuyu served as the village priest, marrying the guide Whaledog's sister. Old chieftain Whalesea converted to the Chief Divine, engraved the Chief Divine's Emblem on his forehead, but still served as the village leader of Whale Tribe, responsible for daily whaling activities. Chieftain Whalesea is a truly wise and open-minded elder hunter. After the support fleet appeared, he did not reject 'joining the 'amazingly powerful Longboat Tribe', even easily converted by Blood Oath, engraving the Chief Divine's Emblem on his body. For him, as long as the tribe's continuation was assured, and tribespeople's lives improved, positions like 'chieftain, leader' were actually not important. Of course, life in the Northern Land is tough and miserable, these small tribe chieftains have to lead the tribe to constantly migrate, personally participate in hunting, fishing

and gathering, even personally fighting other tribes, truly the least enjoyable chieftain I have ever seen!..."

"By the end of April, the support fleet of ten longships completed supply at Whale Harbor. Priest Kejie handed over with us and returned south to North Port to seek his own achievements. Praise the Chief Divine! Zuvaro and I, after waiting a long half-year and experiencing the snowy winter, can finally set off again to push the exploration of Your Majesty's Divine Revelation! Of course, our first destination for departure is not the thousand-mile Long Island of northern Siuslaw people but the Salt Creek Tribe of southeastern Klallam people. Hundreds of warriors in the fleet were gathered together, a force extremely amazing in the Northern Land! We will give the old grandmother of Salt Creek Tribe a small shock of the Chief Divine! Best if we can, with the fleet's sufficient strength, 'persuade' them to convert to the Chief Divine, even if just nominal acceptance!..."

The long night stretches on, stars like an ocean. Starlight twinkles in the night sky, reflecting on the deep sea surface. The aroma of whale soup lingers on the mountain top, attracting distant red foxes and arctic foxes who cautiously peek out. To the four-legged fierce beasts, they have always been vigilant, almost the only predators on the island. In this era, predators don't care about their beautiful fur but covet their scarce few pounds of meat. This is also the reason for their survival. Until one day, their pure colorful fur becomes a luxury more valued than gold, true destruction comes then!

"Wow! Such beautiful foxes!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro glanced at the spot of pure white and fiery red not far away, in the firelight. He blinked his eyes, the fur on those foxes seemed flawless. If he could bring them back to Lake Capital City, it would be a wonderful gift to delight the noble ladies beyond measure, perhaps even willing to offer themselves. However, the significant mission of exploration weighs heavily on him, leaving no time for such trivial matters.

"Miki, the old grandmother of Salt Creek Tribe allied with us, nominally converted to the Chief Divine, and accepted the Kingdom's First Level Preaching Priest, Tayumi. With Salt Creek Tribe as a mediator, we have communication channels with various tribes around the Bay of Hundred Lakes, creating an extra route to obtain salt!..."

"In fact, ten longships, seven hundred warriors and sailors, such strong force, is enough to establish roots in the Bay of Hundred Lakes! But exploring further, continued port establishment means we can't leave too many people in the Bay of Hundred Lakes... Now it seems this distant Far North land, the long journey westwards might surpass the long Western Sea Coast!"

"Chief Divine bless! Indeed! From Whale Harbor heading north can be considered the Northwest Coast, Far North Coastal area! Along the way, the supply ports we established..."

Scholar Mikki nodded seriously. He rubbed his hands, extending his fingers, calculating port by port.

"Witness of the Chief Divine! First is Divine Shellfish Fish Port on Siuslaw people's Long Island, next is Divine Eagle Wing Port at the intersection of Tlingit and Haida people, followed by Divine Jinxi Port at Tlingit people's hunting grounds, also referred to by Your Majesty as Juneau's Great Jin Mine. Further ahead is Divine Blood Bay Port where Eyak people reside, Divine Great Whale Port where Sugpiaq people are found, Divine Land Port where Unanga people appear, and where we are now, Divine Peak Mountain Port!... Just a quick count, that's eight ports, a journey of seven, eight thousand miles!"

"Exactly! On the Northwest Coast, we've already established eight ports named after 'Divine'! And at each port, we left a longship, sixty to seventy warriors and sailors, to recruit surrounding tribes... Chief Divine! When departing Whale Harbor, I thought the ten longships of the support fleet were enough to reach the western island chain's end! But unexpectedly..."

At this point, Exploration Captain Zuvaro shook his head with a wry smile. But he knows well, establishing supply points along the journey, recruiting various Far North tribes, follows Your Majesty's Divine Revelation and is the most prudent and safe expansion approach! After all, not only do they need to explore this barren cold coast but also develop stable supply routes on the Far North Sea. And although winters on the Far North Coast are harsh, spring, summer, autumn catches are indeed plentiful!

"I think we were mid-May, circumnavigating the southern side of the thousand-mile Long Island of the Siuslaw people, then at the northern-most point of Long Island, at the location I previously selected, left the first longship, and established Divine Shellfish Fish Port! What was the latitude of that port calculated at? Oh, right, 51 degrees north!"

Chapter 1460: The Scholar's Sailing Journal – Coastal Salish Tribes, Beautiful Land, and Eagle Island Tribe

"Bless the Chief Divine! After departing from Whale Harbor, the route northwards always managed to benefit from the warm ocean current, thus making the sailing swift. By mid-May, the fleet arrived at 51 degrees north latitude, on the north side of Slaos People's Long Island, and established Shenbei Fish Port (now Port Hardy). The location of Shenbei Fish Port was chosen by Zuvaro beforehand, and the name 'Beiyu' Port was given by him. This port controls the strait on the north side of Long Island, with an abundant fishing yield, producing salmon, cod, scallops, prawns, and crabs... Haha! So many schools of

fish swimming around the strait, yet Zuwaro was the first to cast a net and only caught a heap of scallops. He shamelessly called it a Divine Revelation and named the port 'BeiYu'!"

"Praise the Chief Divine! I added the word 'Shen' in front of 'BeiYu Port', representing that this year's exploration is getting closer to the enlightenment of the Chief Divine! This part of Slaos People's Long Island is only separated by a strait of several dozen miles from the continental coast to the north, which allows trade with the tribes across the sea. According to the guide from the Whale Tribe, Whale Dog, on the other side is the Heiltsuk Tribe. These tribes, like the Slaos and the more northern coastal tribes, primarily fish. The tribes are usually small, ranging from dozens to a few hundred people. And the language they speak is the relatively simple Salish, which can barely be communicated with the guides of the Whale Tribe... I have recorded these tribes as the Coastal Salish Tribes!"

"The location of Shenbei Fish Port is a Slaos fishing village of about a hundred people. Zuwaro had visited here last year and was familiar with the tribal leaders. The arrival of the powerful Kingdom's fleet, with 700 Kingdom's warriors landing, greatly shocked the small tribe of only thirty to forty able-bodied men! What followed was logical and went extremely smoothly: forming alliances, tribe mergers, collective conversion... Finally, the fleet left 60 warriors and sailors, an old longship, and a batch of supplies to ensure the port could be self-sufficient before heading north again!"

"Moving north from Shenbei Fish Port, within only three or four days, the fleet reached a coastal fishing village of the Heiltsuk Tribe called 'Waglisla'! In the local Salish language, this name means 'A New Beautiful Place' or 'Beautiful New World'. Thus, this tribe of four to five hundred people can also be called the 'Beautiful Tribe'. Facing the powerful yet communicable Kingdom fleet, the leaders of the Beautiful Tribe expressed obvious goodwill. They lit bonfires and sang ancestral songs to welcome these 'distant friends on large ships'!"

"From the ancestral songs of the Beautiful Tribe, I faintly heard traces of ancient origins. They seemed to have migrated from a very cold, snow-covered northern inland after a long journey to settle here on this warm southwestern coast! That northern mountainous region is also known as the 'Cold Stone Mountains'... And compared to the barren, cold far north, this warm and fertile coast is truly wonderful!"

The moon rose to the center of the sky and gradually drifted towards the western sea. In the deep night filled with silent winds, a cluster of bonfires lit at the mountain peak dispelled the coldness that could freeze droplets with the warmth of firestone and dry branches. Scholar Mikki sat by the bonfire, reminiscing about the lush Coastal Salish Tribes, a warm smile appearing on his face.

"Praise the Chief Divine! The breeze caresses the green trees, and the sea air is full of lively vitality! The ripple of the tides intertwines like an ancient and simple ancestral song. The gray-white beaches and gray-brown reefs continuously interlace, forming a complex coastline. The clear seawater sparkles, from emerald green shallows to the deep blue sea!"

"Flowers bloom along the shore, the multicolored spring adorning the entire seaside like the magnificent feathered garment of the earth! The white seagulls joyfully soar in the sky. Dense schools of fish weave through the slightly green seawater. Sunlight penetrates the clouds, falling upon the vast sea like a string of bright, sacred obsidian beads! Oh Chief Divine! The brilliance of heaven and earth intertwines into a bright expanse, like your most generous blessings!"

Seeing the praises written by Scholar Mikki, Exploration Captain Zuvaro smirked, murmured softly to himself, and sighed with envy.

"Mikki, this is the Northern Coast after spring's arrival. If you stayed there like me during winter, I bet you'd freeze into a ball, unable to release even a warm fart!... Eh! If I had your way with words, why venture out to sea? I'd just become a scripture priest in the wide and splendid temple of the Capital City, writing scriptures and praises all day, wouldn't that be nice?!"

"Uh... Praise the Chief Divine! Even scripture priests need to witness these divinely inspired landscapes to write truly good praises!... It's called... um, 'the divinity falls in the eyes, settles in the heart, and overflows from the mouth'!"

"Ha! Divinity overflows? Why does it come out of your mouth and somewhere else for me..."

"Uh! That... Zuvaro, everyone has their strengths. I like good food, and you're good at eating, healthy!"

"Good at eating? Healthy? You... Get lost!"

"Haha!..."

Laughing heartily with the captain who shared countless life-and-death experiences, Scholar Mikki joked a few words while rubbing the confused head of White Bear Gaowa. Then, he turned to the last page of May in the diary, where observations about the Tsimshian people were recorded.

"At the end of May, the fleet of nine ships left the Beautiful Tribe of the Heiltsuk and traveled to the Tsimshian territory, navigating along the rugged, reef-filled coast. Tsimshian people are a tribe skilled in fishing, as well as hunting and tracking. Similar to the Heiltsuk, they migrated from the northern Cold Stone Mountains through bloodshed. Their tribe size generally isn't large, around a few hundred people, likely limited by food supply constraints. After all, as one moves northward from Whale Island, the coastal tribes are primarily fishing and hunting tribes, perhaps gathering berries, pine nuts, and acorns, but lacking a stable food supply. It's uncertain whether the potatoes brought by the fleet can be grown along the relatively warmer coastline of the far north? Hopefully, they can!"

"By the end of May, we reached 54 degrees north latitude, to the largest Tsimshian settlement, Eagle Island Tribe, close to a thousand people! Eagle Island Tribe is surrounded by mountains on three sides, with two mighty rivers flowing north and south, and a wide bay to the west. This is where fish gather, the place of salmon migration in summer, with abundant fishing harvests. Surrounded by wind-shielding mountains and impacted by the two rivers, the bay experiences shorter freeze periods in winter compared to the surrounding coastlines, allowing for ice fishing even when it's frozen... The relatively warm environment and excellent geographical location provide ample food, supporting such a 'large' tribe of a thousand people on the far north coast!"

"Eagle Island Tribe, named after the 'Eagle', has a totem pole depicting a White Eagle standing on a snowy mountain. Similarly, the Kingdom reveres the 'Divine Eagle', with many eagle patterns carved into the longships and eagle feathers adorning the helmets of warriors. This fascinating totem connection seems like a blessing and gift from the Chief Divine, making the chiefs of Eagle Island Tribe extremely friendly!... Of course, it could also be because the fleet's military might is overwhelmingly strong compared to the tribes of the Northwest Coast..."

"Praise the Chief Divine! Zuwaro had been to Eagle Island Tribe before, and it was here he learned about the Western Island Chain. His third Tsimshian wife is from the Eagle Feather Tribe, reportedly just reaching adulthood. In the Eagle Feather Tribe, the adulthood standard is fifteen years old, and girls marry at that age to quickly continue the tribe... Haha! Zuwaro, this fellow, has always been good at eating, healthy, very healthy!"

"Witnessed by the Chief Divine! No matter what, Eagle Island Tribe expressed strong friendliness. In front of the tribe's totem pole, Great Chief Tsin Eagle of Eagle Island took out the ancestral Snow Eagle Ceremony Bowl, lit the alliance's pine resin and eagle blood, and made a blood pact with me and Zuwaro! Happily accepting the Sun Supreme God Amulet I presented, he perceived the Hummingbird on the amulet as an eagle emblem. His return gift was a peculiar eagle bone wooden carving, featuring an eagle's skull and cedarwood body, adorned with red ochre patterns and inlaid with abalone and sea snail shells..."

"I was quite amazed at such intricate bone wood carvings! Great Chief Tsin Eagle told me this inherited ancestral apparatus came from the Haida on the large island across the sea. In contention for a bountiful fishing ground, he once paddled a canoe to kill a Haida chieftain. The carving was his most prized trophy!"