

Civilization 1461

Chapter 1461: Scholar's Maritime Journal—Juneau Great Gold Mine, Golden Mountains and Streams!

"Praise the Chief Divine! The Haida mainly reside on Haida Gwaii opposite the Tsimshian coast and on scattered islands to the north, with an estimated several tens of thousands population across over a hundred tribes. In the Haida language, 'Haida' means 'Sea Bear People of the Ancient Islands'... They are excellent fishermen and sailors, and among the northern tribes, they are one of the few skilled in craftsmanship! It is said that on Haida Gwaii, the strongest tribe of a thousand people is the Sea Bear Tribe, who worship the sea bear. Their totem pole features a humanoid sea bear, transformed from their ancestor. Unfortunately, our fleet did not go to Haida Island but set out from Eagle Island for the northern coastline of the Tlingit people's territories..."

"Early June, at 55 degrees north latitude, we found a peninsula harbor just 300 li from Eagle Island's coast, a great port location! This area is the confluence of the Tsimshian, Haida, and Tlingit territories, far from large thousand-person tribes, eliminating fishing and hunting disputes, making it suitable for the Kingdom's initial establishment. Likewise, the fishing conditions at the port are excellent, especially for the Kingdom's longships, as the warm ocean currents where fish gather are only one to two hundred li from the west into the open sea! On the north side of the peninsula is a fresh water lake where potatoes might be planted..."

"Around this harbor, there is a small Tsimshian tribe of Divine Eagle believers, with just over a hundred people, who are exactly our 'Jiao People Brothers' lost for hundreds of years! We warmly welcomed the brothers' 'return', held over twenty weddings in three days, and had a grand conversion ceremony, merging with this brother tribe as 'one'... Subsequently, the Kingdom left a longship, sixty Kingdom Warrior sailors, and over a hundred tribespeople to establish the Kingdom's Divine Eagle Harbor!"

"In early June, eight longships headed north from Divine Eagle Harbor, with the help of Tsimshian guides, entering the extremely complex island coastline. There were scattered islands everywhere, divided straits and seaways, and many small Tlingit tribes! This location was already at latitude 56-57 degrees north, and I had a strong premonition that the Juneau Islands gold mine foretold in Your Majesty's Divine Revelation was not far from here! Therefore, the fleet kept looking for larger Tlingit villages and sought village elders to inquire about the tribal epics regarding the 'golden mountains and streams'..."

"The fleet visited several fishing villages but never received clear information about the gold mine, and no one had ever heard of 'Juneau'. However, the elders of the villages unanimously mentioned an ancient large tribe, the Raven Tribe! In Tlingit legend, the raven is the most intelligent Divine Bird, the creator and enlightener of the tribe. A tribe named 'Raven' is the oldest tribe with the longest heritage!"

If the golden mountains and streams foretold by prophecy truly exist, then only the grandmother of the Raven Tribe is most likely to know!"

"Thus, we recruited two Tlingit guides to lead the Kingdom's fleet to visit the northern Raven Tribe. The location of the Raven Tribe, at the 'confluence of four rivers and the coast', was actually not far away! Upon arriving, we immediately understood why there was a long-lasting thousand-person 'Great Tribe' here because the near coastal region was indeed abundantly rich with fish! The azure-and-green seawater was dotted with patches of seaweed and algae, with schools of fish swimming about. In the sky, flocks of birds attracted by the fish circled and sang amidst the springtime mountain ranges!"

"The Chief Divine bears witness! The Raven Tribe has over a thousand tribespeople, capable of gathering three hundred able-bodied men, making it the strongest Tlingit tribe within a few hundred li of the coast! However, this force is still far from enough compared to our eight longships and five hundred warriors... We presented some bronze axes as gifts and easily met the grandmother of the Raven Tribe, the elderly Black Raven Mother..."

"Black Raven Mother's hair was grizzled, her eyes equally strangely pale, yet her gaze was both aged and sharp. She scrutinized me and Zuvaro, listened to our inquiries, and heard about Your Majesty's Revelation prophecy... After a long silence, she finally spoke, her eyes turning white, her expression mysterious, and her voice hoarse, telling us: 'The golden mountains and streams are over 500 li to the north, around Wolf Island, beneath the golden mountains where the wolf totem once stood!' As for 'Juneau', she had never heard of it, nor was it recorded in the tribe's epic..."

"Hmm... as Your Majesty said, his prophecy was like looking at the vast sky through the gaps of leaves, there might be inaccuracies... But without a doubt, learning of the great gold mine from the prophecy, the entire fleet's morale was once again invigorated! With the Raven Tribe's guides, we left the Raven Tribe the very next day. Everyone gathered strength, rowing five hundred li over three days, finally reaching around Wolf Island. It is said there were many snow wolves here and once a strong Wolf Tribe. However, several decades ago, this Great Tribe was destroyed by a terrible cold snap, leaving only a few scattered small tribes..."

"Blessed by the Chief Divine! The eight longships dispersed, thoroughly searching this coastline for three days! Finally, on the afternoon of the fourth day, truly good news arrived, we found the 'golden mountains and streams' foretold in the Divine Revelation, the vast and gleaming Juneau gold mine!"

The moon set over the Western Sea, the darkness before dawn was at its deepest and most desolate. The stars in the black sky shone exceptionally bright. Scholar Mikki looked up, gazing at the celestial stars, suddenly experiencing a wondrous feeling, softly chanting.

"Ah, Chief Divine! The stars in the heavens correspond to the heroes on earth. Among those shining stars, perhaps there is one that corresponds to me!"

"Hmm? Are you a star of Divinity?"

Hearing this, Exploration Captain Zuvaro, with a half-smile, gazed at Scholar Mikki, whose face was full of yearning and asked in a deep voice.

"What about me?"

"Uh!... Zuvaro, among these stars, there is naturally one that corresponds to you!"

"Haha! Mikki, are you so confident?"

"Of course! Witnessed by the Chief Divine! Not to mention our exploration and opening of the northern sea route, just the reserves of the Grand Gold Mine at Jinxi Port..."

Scholar Mikki blinked and smiled in response.

"That stretch of shining golden mountains, the innumerable golden stones beneath the stream! ... No matter what, there must be at least a hundred tons of gold reserves?"

"Haha! Blessed by the Chief Divine! Your Majesty's Divine Revelation! A hundred tons of gold, there is surely that much... maybe far more!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro raised his head, recalling the magnificent scene of discovering the Juneau gold mine area, his eyes seemed to sparkle with golden light. He did not know that historically, the Juneau gold mine area was discovered at the end of the 19th century, sparking Alaska's first gold rush. In just over a hundred years of mining, this open-pit gold mining area produced at least 15 million ounces, or 420 tons, of gold! This was just the recorded figure, and as for unrecorded private mining quantities, there was no way to estimate. It was an era filled with legends of getting rich overnight, attracting countless people from far and wide, unafraid of the harsh cold and death to come...

Thinking of those endless golden mountains, thinking of the astonishing wealth hidden on that island, Zuwaro couldn't help but instinctively recite two lines of poetry.

"Ah! Golden mountains, the golden light, golden streams, golden sea! The Chief Divine's Divine Blood scattered upon the land, transforming into gold mines on islands and earth, golden light shining everywhere!... Ah! With one shovel, I could buy a house in the Capital City!"

"Uh?!"

Scholar Mikki was about to record and upon hearing this, black lines immediately filled his mind.

"Zuwaro! What nonsense are you singing? With one shovel, you're at most getting a dozen jin of sand gold. Although the gold content of northern sand gold is shockingly high, reaching as much as one-tenth, when refined into the Kingdom's gold bricks, it's only about seven or eight taels! This less than one jin of gold, where can it buy a mansion in the Qinchongcan Capital? At most, you could buy a thatched cottage outside the city! To buy a brick-and-stone mansion, you'd need at least a dozen jin of gold bricks, requiring hundreds of jin of sand gold to refine!"

"Hmm, also right! Mikki, your math really isn't bad! Haha, then I should slightly change it!"

Exploration Captain Zuwaro grinned, slightly altering the lyrics, expressing people's most simple expectations through the ages.

"Ah! Guided by the Chief Divine, to find the golden gold mountain, standing on the golden gold mountain! ... Ah! With one sack, I could buy a house in the Capital City! With another sack, my son would have a house!... Ah! And my grandson too! So many big houses!"

The confident and heroic song echoed under the starry sky as if even the stars were shining with golden light. Juneau gold mine region, Blood River gold mine region, Yukon gold mine region... In this desolate and cold far north, such astounding wealth lay dormant, embodying the most honest and shining power!

And this golden power, once acquired by the Kingdom, known across the ocean, it would suffice to leverage the nation across the sea! It was like the starry sky, like bonfire flames flashing along the coast, attracting countless moths to the flame, disregarding of cost, uncaring of life and death!~

Chapter 1462: October's Departure, the Spirit Heroes' Radiance!

"Praise the Chief Divine! In mid-June, we left a longship and sixty samurai sailors at the Gold Mine on Wolf Island of the Tlingit, and established the Kingdom's Divine Jinxi Port... It is a truly beautiful and prosperous port! The shallow waters and streams shimmer with a golden light, and the northern mountains radiate gilded splendor. Those continuous shimmering gold ores have slept for millions of years amidst the streams and hills until our arrival!..."

"The Chief Divine's divinity is always fair! Due to the rich gold veins, the land surrounding the port seems to lack vitality; plants are not abundant, and there are few berries and tree seeds to be gathered. Within several miles around the port, there's only a small Tlingit tribe of several dozen people. However, when the Kingdom's fleet displayed ample samurai, food, salt, and fuel, this tribe decisively chose to join the 'longship Great Tribe'..."

"The Chief Divine witnesses! Sometimes, I can hardly distinguish between the Tsimshian recruited by the fleet and the Tlingit. Their appearances and physiques are very similar, generally taller and stronger than the Warriors of the Kingdom. They are seaside fishing and hunting tribes, migrating southward from the far north inland, rowing kayaks and canoes, carrying harpoons and javelins, and towing movable small huts. They all worship the Divine Mountain and animal totems, believe in the spirit of all things, and trust the heroic spirits of their ancestors. Even their languages are quite similar..."

The long night sinks into the deep Western seas, while the golden dawn slowly emerges from the Eastern horizon. Scholar Mikki pondered for a while before asking Zuwaro.

"Zuwaro, what is the biggest difference between the Tsimshian and the Tlingit?"

"The biggest difference?"

Exploration Captain Zuwaro touched his nose and thought for a moment before smilingly saying.

"Haha! In Tsimshian tribes, men have the say, but in Tlingit tribes, women hold the authority! Among all the tribes along the far north coast, the Tlingit's matriarchal tradition is the most prominent. A robust

Tlingit woman can even marry several husbands!... Mikki, if you ask any Tlingit sailor, he can clearly tell you his maternal clan but often doesn't know his paternal clan, or even who his father is!..."

"Uh!... Matriarchal tradition..."

Scholar Mikki touched his nose and nervously glanced at his wife, the White Bear Gawa, who also turned her head almost like a sharp beast in the woods.

"Hmm?"

"Cough! Gawa, hold the box properly, this is the last page of the diary!..."

Scholar Mikki bowed his head and hastily gave a command. White Bear Gawa blinked, obediently holding the waterproof copper chest, which weighed dozens of pounds and felt like a toy to her. In fact, Unangas also have strong matriarchal clan characteristics, with most tribe chieftains being elderly grandmothers. However, fortunately, unlike the Tlingit, the Unangas do not have the strange tradition of having multiple husbands. And such a tradition indeed hampers the Kingdom's alliances and integration...

"The Chief Divine witnesses! The extraction of the gold mine requires a significant manpower and smelting requires ample fuel. Therefore, the giant Juneau Gold Mine holds no value to the tribes of the Northern Land. In reality, since we left the Whale Clan and headed north, all the tribes in the far north disregard the 'useless' gold and Lake Gems... For the Kingdom's exploration fleet, there's no urgency in mining in this large gold mining area! After all, the second batch of support fleets carried a thousand jin of gold and ten thousand jin of silver to be used as ballast for the flagship. Adding to the first batch of fleet's one thousand jin of gold, that makes a total of twelve thousand jin of gold and silver!..."

"Haha, twelve thousand jin! This number sounds large, but actually it looks like just a few copper chests, barely enough to smelt a statue of a divine person! And it's said that the chief divine object of the Lake Capital City Temple, the Great Golden Statue of the Chief Divine, is composed of no less than ten thousand jin of gold and tens of thousands of jin of silver, further embellished with hundreds or even thousands of gemstones, constantly radiating an awe-inspiring divine light!... Ah! Golden Chief Divine! May you always protect us like the sun in the far north!..."

In October in the far north, the sun arrives late. But when it does rise, its light is thorough and bright, with no sea fog to obstruct it!

Scholar Mikki gazed at the eastern golden light with eyes full of devout longing. He prayed softly, beseeching the blessings and protection of the Sun Supreme God! And not until the morning sun fully rose, with sunlight blinding him to tears, did he turn around to look at the already illuminated west.

"Praise the Chief Divine! Zuwaro, all twelve thousand jin of gold and silver are placed on the flagship Great Snow Wolf... For the upcoming westward exploration, should we take them all?"

"Twelve thousand jin of gold and silver..."

Exploration Captain Zuwaro rubbed his forehead, pondered for a long time, and gently shook his head.

"Mikki, the load capacity of the flagship Great Snow Wolf is about eighty thousand jin. I plan to take on a hundred people, which is at least sixteen thousand jin. Because we have to laboriously paddle, each person should consume two jin of salted whale meat and three jin of fresh water daily, along with some berries. Food and water for those hundred people for two months are thirty thousand jin! Firestone for cooking and heating must weigh around four to five thousand jin... As for the remaining thirty thousand jin, repair tools and ship materials will take up most of it, while the samurai's weapons and copper armor will occupy a portion. Plus herbs, cotton cloth, blankets, ropes..."

Zuwaro counted on his fingers for a while, and his expression turned heavy.

"The Chief Divine protects! Counting carefully, the flagship's load capacity is actually quite insufficient! So, we will only take the first batch's thousand jin of gold, which is two copper chests. The second batch's thousand jin of gold and ten thousand jin of silver will stay here at the Divine Peak Mountain Port, waiting for the third batch of support fleets to arrive!..."

"Well, taking a thousand jin of gold should be enough! Though according to Your Majesty's Divine Revelation, can this thousand jin of gold on the opposite side of the sea buy all the kinds of quadrupeds Your Majesty commissioned, and how many new crops can it buy?... Chief Divine! Is the Alliance's gold and silver really pursued and desired by countless tribes on the opposite side of the sea, willing to sell everything for it?...."

Scholar Mikki blinked, recalling the final annotation and prophecy in the Divine Revelation Sea Chart, still finding it somewhat incredible. After all, along the way, the large and small tribes of the far north seemed to treat gold like stone, showing no interest at all...

"Huh! Zuvaro, you're taking a hundred people? Preparing enough food and water for two full months?! This... you still want to venture this year? Why not wait until next year when the third batch of support arrives?!..."

After a moment of thought, Scholar Mikki came to his senses, his expression grew solemn. He looked at Zuvaro, who raised an eyebrow, smiled, and made a gesture of praying to the Sun.

"May the Chief Divine bless us! Mikki, you can take a longship back to report this year's exploration to the Kingdom and oversee next year's support fleet! As the Exploration Captain, I will take the flagship westward, to travel as much as possible... If we miss this autumn's precious fog-free period before the freeze, when the next batch of support vessels arrive, it may not be next year, but possibly two years!"

"Chief Divine! The next batch of support arriving here... may take two years!"

Scholar Mikki pressed his lips, knowing Zuvaro was right. If the third batch of support departs from the Kingdom's Trout Harbor this fall or winter, just reaching here will take nearly a year! And if the fleet encounters the Western Sea Coast's winter storms or the Far North Coast's spring and summer sea fogs, even a slight delay of two months could mean missing the timing... and the earliest it could arrive at Divine Peak Mountain Port would be after the thaw in March two years later! Indeed, this long 20,000-mile journey is truly too distant!...

"Zuvaro, you're right! The Kingdom's support is still out of reach, we must head west as much as possible! Here's the plan, there are still three longships left at Divine Peak Mountain Port... We'll leave the damaged one by the coast for fishing, and take two ships westward!"

The morning sun lit up the sea, its shimmering glow reflecting off the snowy mountains, showcasing the ancient grandeur. Scholar Mikki gazed toward the nearby Western Sea, pondered for a moment, then made his decision!

"May the Chief Divine bless us! One flagship carrying a hundred people is indeed too strained! Two longships, carrying a hundred and sixty people, with two months of food and water. Then, we'll head as

far west as possible, reaching a few more Great Islands, consolidate the supplies of the two ships to support one ship to continue westward, while the other returns to Divine Peak Mountain Port!"

"Oh? Mikki, you're saying... one ship will be for exploration, the other for resupply? Well, that works too! I'll be responsible for the exploration ship, and you for the supply ship. However, the supply one can't make it back to the island start point at Divine Land Port!... You plan to stay at Divine Peak Mountain Port for the winter?"

"Of course! May the Chief Divine witness! Since Keyuan and Kejie are already stationed along the rear route, I naturally have to arrange the Vanguard fleet and supplies at the exploration front!"

"Good! That's good!..."

Exploration Captain Zuwaro thought briefly, understanding Mikki's intent. In this initial phase of exploration and expansion, the Kingdom's priests carried courage without fear and piety, without so much personal interest in mind. He looked at Mikki's frost-reddened face and smiled sincerely, speaking with emotion.

"May the Chief Divine witness! Mikki, if you stay on this island through winter... you risk losing your ears and toes to frostbite!"

"May the Chief Divine bless us! There's a volcano at Divine Peak Mountain Port, there must be hot springs! If the Unangas can endure half a year of winter, we can too with them, without lacking food and fuel!"

"Uh, Mikki, it's not that I'm saying this, but you're not like me! I've received Samurai training since I was young... You're a frail Kingdom Priest, who has never experienced the Far North winds, you probably can't endure it!... Uh, don't be mad!... But, if the White Bear Gauwa takes care of you and keeps you warm, it should be alright!... It definitely will be!... Hahaha!"

Exploration Captain Zuwaro stepped back, glanced at the tall and brawny White Bear Gauwa in just a short robe, then at Scholar Mikki wrapped in furs, head tucked, and burst into laughter. Then, still laughing, he turned away, vibrant with energy, and headed towards the longship by the coast, not showing any signs of sleeplessness from the night!

"Haha! The Chief Divine guides us! Since we've made up our minds, let's depart swiftly! Mikki, keep your journal box, leave it at Divine Peak Mountain Port!"

"Uh? What did you say?"

"Haha! I said, in case we don't return, we must let the later exploring priests know about our journey and glorious deeds!... And for the westward journey ahead, we must be prepared to face death in search of the Chief Divine's glory!"

"What? Speak louder! Against the wind, I can't hear you!"

"I said! When the time comes, we must be bold, the New Continent is just ahead!"

"What?!"

In the golden sunlight, there was a golden sea. On the golden hill, there were golden figures. Zuvaro turned around, his face beaming with a brilliant smile, with the halo of the Sun behind him. At that moment, he looked like the heroic statue enshrined in the Temple, radiating a golden glow not of this world.

"I said!... May the Chief Divine bless us!..."

"Good!!... May the Chief Divine bless us!..."

Chapter 1463: The End of the Ancestor Archipelago, the Tombs of the Ancestor Giants

The Aleutian Islands in October have clear and expansive skies, the sweeping cold northern wind, and the undulating sea waves. At this moment in mid-autumn, it might be the most suitable time of the entire year for sailing among the islands.

According to the local Unanga Tribe, starting from early November, drifting ice will gradually come from the north of the islands. By the end of November, it might be a sudden cold snap or a snowstorm that will freeze the entire sea area! From that moment on, it will be a long winter of great snowstorms, heavy gales, extreme cold snaps, and long polar nights... All the creatures on the island must hibernate

in their nests until the warm winds and currents arrive from the south in late April or early May of the following year, announcing the belated arrival of spring!

However, the arrival of warm spring will bring another obstacle for sailing, which is the sea fog that permeates the entire island chain. The Unangas do not know the cause of the sea fog, but according to their centuries-old experience, this kind of sea fog is the "southern Wind God's spirit," related to the warm wind blowing from the south. The sea fog appears in spring, reaches its peak in summer, lasting from morning to night and dissipating only at noon's two-hour duration. But when autumn arrives, the southern wind turns north, and the sea fog gradually becomes less and shorter. However, with the cold northern wind, it will bring the "northern Wind God's spirit," which are the surging cold storms and tide waves!...

"Chief Divine bless us! Therefore, it is only in the gap between the southern Wind God and the northern Wind God, namely May and October each year, that are relatively more suitable days for sailing between these island chains!... Therefore, our current journey westward is perfectly timed! Praise the Chief Divine! They bless us!..."

"Praise the Chief Divine! Divine bless the fleet!"

Scholar Mikki stands at the bow of the supply longship, looking at the turbulent sea, watching the leading flagship ahead, and also looking at the gradually receding Divine Peak Mountain Port, feeling an inexplicable sense of dread. However, his frostbitten red face always retains a leader's calmness and piety.

When the sun reaches its zenith, Scholar Mikki fervently prays to the Chief Divine, invigorating the morale of the entire longship. Meanwhile, his wife, Da Xiong Gaowa, with a flushed face, takes the lead on the rower's seat at the bow. She rows with a hefty long oar, her arm muscles bulging forcefully, each stroke seemingly pressing the swelling waves half a meter down!

"The Chief Divine guides us! Forward! Move towards the western island along the extending islands!..."

On the Great Snow Wolf's flagship, Exploration Captain Zuvaro adopts a different kind of exhilarating leadership. He personally sits at the bow's rower's seat, gazing at the sea ahead while rowing vigorously, his voice also resonantly shouting encouragement. Behind him, on the sixty rower's seats, are sturdy, diligently rowing Kingdom's Warriors and Northern Land sailors. As for the twenty standby crew, they bind themselves on the deck, breathing heavily while lying down to rest.

"Chief Divine bless! Rest for two quarters! Rotate the next team!..."

The entire ship's eighty men are divided by Zuvaro into four teams of twenty. Each team can only rotate resting for two quarters each hour of rowing. In October, the island sea area has about five and a half hours of daylight, allowing approximately four hours of rowing. Actually, amidst the hard sea conditions and undulating waves of the Ancestor Islands, maintaining the fleet's emergency stamina and the Kingdom Longship's steady speed is roughly 30 li per hour, resulting in about 120 li per day.

And when evening arrives, according to the Unanga Tribe's millennia-old survival experience, they must make landfall, finding a wind-sheltered encampment at the first instance because on these perilous ocean surfaces, rowing through the night when the distant view is unclear poses unimaginable risks. If they encounter large reefs along the coast or sudden storms, it is surely a shipwreck and fatal outcome!...

Under the Unanga guide's guidance, the two longships rowed westward at a speed of 120 li per day for three days, traveling from the expansive Divine High Mountain Island 'Atka' to the equally wide 'Adak' Island.

"Atka! Ancestor's High Mountain Giant! Adak! Ancestor's Double-Headed Giant! Two heads, two smoking mountains!..."

Listening to the guide's description, Scholar Mikki blinked, gazing in the sunset glow at the evening Adak Island. The island is not small, almost connected with the Divine High Mountain Island. The island's most prominent feature is the two volcanoes separated by a hundred li east to west, each resting on the protruding parts on the island's northern side, resembling a double-headed giant!

"Hmm, double-headed giant 'Adak'... witnessed by the Chief Divine! Let's call it Divine Twin Peaks Island then!..."

"Pfft! Cough, cough!..."

Upon hearing such a name, Zuvaro, who was drinking water, instantly spat out a mouthful, turning into a faint white mist in the cold wind.

"This! Mikki? This name..."

"Ah? Zuwaro, what's wrong with you?"

Scholar Mikki was taken aback, looked at the two volcanoes in the East and West, then at Zuwaro who was wiping his face, and asked in confusion.

"These two peaks are very clear nautical markers! Could it be that this name isn't fitting?"

Exploration Captain Zuwaro widened his eyes, looked at the symmetrical, almost equally tall volcanoes in the East and West, then at the protruding part where the two volcanoes stood, which just so happened to form a bay... He was silent for a while, then murmured.

"Chief Divine! It's fitting, very fitting! Miki, you are truly a naming genius! So, the sleeping ancestor giant here is a female giant..."

Divine Twin Peaks Island has two volcanoes, as well as warm hot springs, and the small Unanga tribes that rely on the hot springs to survive the winter. The largest branch of the Unanga tribe, which has about a hundred people, is encamped in the bay under the western peak, occupying the warmest embrace of the giant. The Kingdom's two longships paid a visit to the leader of this tribe, offering Bronze Axes, salt, and firestone, and also recruited two local guides. Then, the fleet stayed for only one day before continuing westward.

Past the Divine Twin Peaks Island 'Adak', heading west for dozens of miles, lies the two-hundred-mile stretch of interlocking islands, 'Kanaga' and 'Tanaga'. In the local tribe's mythology, these are twin giants, sunk in the icy sea. Their heads became volcanoes, and their bodies formed the islands, intertwined and died together...

"Chief Divine bless! The islands here have so many volcanoes! Hmm... these two interlocking islands shall be called 'Divine Twin Sisters Island'! ... Huh! Twin Sisters, Twin Peaks, does something feel a bit off? Oh, it's true! In the Unanga people's mythology, the influence of matrilineal tradition is quite pronounced..."

However, the matrilineal influence in the Unanga people's mythology seems just to have begun. One day's paddle westward from Divine Twin Daughters Island lies an abruptly emerging volcanic island. This island is small in size, with the volcano rising to a height of about three to four hundred meters. The whole small island hosts only a tribe of a few dozen people, who call this island 'Little Girl', named for the deceased young female giant.

"Hmm, passing the Divine Little Daughter Island and heading west another two to three hundred miles lies another larger volcanic island, the legendary Divine Elder Daughter Island!..."

"Beyond the Divine Elder Daughter Island, the voyage becomes increasingly challenging, and islands to guide the way become fewer! We found a small Unanga tribe of forty to fifty people on the Divine Elder Daughter Island, and an old guide who had ventured into the Western seas, U White Crow..."

"Then, we exchanged eighty pounds of whale meat and a hundred pounds of firestone to rescue this elderly guide from the tribe! He was the oldest grandfather in the tribe, originally prepared to commit suicide this winter. The reason we gave so much whale meat is that, as the oldest elder in the tribe, his body was meant to be the tribe's backup food supply to survive the winter. Such customs of shared suicide are the tradition of these island tribes, all for the continuation of the tribe!..."

The twilight is golden-red, the East, West, North, and South are all endless vast oceans. A small island less than ten miles around is suspended alone in the middle of the sea, showing its low undulating hills and small volcanoes. This difficult-to-find small sea island is a crucial anchorage in the westward voyage, also accurately located by the old guide U White Crow as Shelter Island!

At this moment, the Kingdom's two longships are docked at this small island, lonely waiting for nightfall, waiting for sunrise, and waiting for the adventure to set sail at dawn tomorrow, heading to the next great island in the Ancestor Island chain, the 'Mother Island' over four hundred miles away!

"Hey yo, ya nagah! The sun has risen, shining on the Ancestor's little girl, in the East, East, the East! ... Hey yo, ya nagah! The sun has risen high, shining on the Ancestor's elder daughter, which is the place I am going ... Hey yo, ya nagah! The sun has set, seeing the Ancestor's mother, that is my birthplace ... Hey yo, ya nagah! The sun has descended into the sea, meeting the last grandmother, in the West, West, the West!"

As the sun sets in the West, the old guide U White Crow sits on the low hills, gazing at the red sunset in the West, as if seeing the deceased ancestors and himself who was supposed to be dead. His cloudy old eyes, reflecting the blood-red of the evening glow, flickered with distant memories, also conjuring those

ancient, desolate times. He sang the songs inherited by the ancestors in a low hoarse Unanga language, the singing floating in the cold sea breeze.

At this moment, Exploration Captain Zuvaro, Scholar Mikki, and White Bear Gaowa patiently pricked their ears to listen earnestly. Of course, the first two were just making up numbers, only White Bear Gaowa could truly understand. And when she heard the end of the song, she suddenly opened her eyes wide, exclaiming in surprise!

"Hey yo, ya nagah! Behind the grandmother is the tomb of the ancestor giants, it's where the sun sleeps! That slumbering snow, slumbering mountains, slumbering land, slumbering sun, they bury the fallen giants... Hey yo, ya nagah! The dead giants, there are so many, many bodies, the cold endless and vast, also the boundless and endless vastness!"

Chapter 1464: The Song of White Crow — Mother, Grandmother, and the Tomb

"Ah! Yah!..."

"Gawa, what is he singing?"

"Ong. West, west, to the west, the Ancestors', the Giants', tomb!"

"The Ancestors' Giants' tomb? What is that?"

"Ong! That is, that is... Yah! Countless, interconnected giants! It's what you've been searching for, what you must find, that one!..."

In the boundless deep sea, a solitary small island dots the surrounding waters, with waves stretching for hundreds of miles. On the island, there is a gray-brown volcano, covered with white snow. Among the snow are green shrubs, grass, and moss, scattered sparsely, stretching from the island's edges, reaching to the volcano's lower and higher parts. Here seems to be the world's end, barren and dead silent, with no tribes or human traces, not even sea beasts or flocks of birds.

The arrival of two longships brought a hint of life to this dead silent island. The hoarse singing of the old guide, U White Crow, seemed like the sea wind roaming from the far north for thousands of years, carrying cold, desolation, and death!

"Hey yo yana ga!..."

"By the Chief Divine! The Ancestors' Giants' bodies are the islands. From east to west, the Divine Younger Daughter Island first, then Divine Elder Daughter Island. And our current location is between Divine Elder Daughter Island and 'Mother Island!' Further west, is 'Grandmother Island,' and further beyond, it's 'Giants' Tomb'!..."

The cold wind blows, the sunset is dusky, yet Scholar Mikki's eyes suddenly brighten. He listens attentively to White Bear Gawa's translation, his face gradually showing radiance, his whole body heating up, even his heartbeat quickens!

"Ah! By the Chief Divine's grace! Zuvaro, the endless overlapped corpse tomb, is, is..."

"A brand-new continent! The New Continent Your Majesty prophesied, it's in the Unanga guide's words, not far to the west, beyond two Great Islands! Ah! The Chief Divine's volcano has been guiding us all along! And Your Majesty's Divine Revelation's prophecy also guides us!..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro looked excited, displaying fervor. He looked around at the blood-red sunset, the vast sea, the remote small island, and the remaining two longships... After a moment, he clenched his teeth fiercely, making up his mind!

"Let's rest for the night! Use snow water to replenish fresh water! Tomorrow morning, we'll row full speed to the west, to find 'Mother Island' as mentioned by the Unanga!..."

The autumn wind is frigid and cold, tides rise and fall. The sun alternates between shining and cloudy, clouds appear and disappear in the north. Under the old guide U White Crow's direction, the crew rowed vigorously northwest for two days. Finally, on the second day's evening, they saw a small island from afar.

"This is 'Mother's Child,' one of the two small islands east of Mother Island. Neither of the small islands has tribes, but there are sea lions and seals for hunting! However, the sea beasts are not numerous, don't kill mother beasts! It's tribal tradition..."

Arriving here, the old guide U White Crow's old visage transitioned from a dead dormant volcano to a lively active one. He rambled, singing many songs, telling many stories, those that not even White Bear Gawa could comprehend. On the third day's noon, the two longships finally crossed hundreds of miles of sea surface, after stopping by two intermediary islands, reaching the snowy "Mother Island!"

"Hey yo yana ga! My mother, I have returned! After five palm springs, before nine palm deaths!..."

Old guide U White Crow climbed onto the island, staring at the desolate whiteness and the still vibrant green. His cloudy old eyes slowly filled with tears. Trembling, he lay on the ground, pressing his head against the gray-brown cold earth, mixing his tears with the soil, flowing into his birthplace and the land burying his parents and tribespeople.

"Hey yo yana ga! I have returned! Father and mother's bones are buried outside the tribe's cave. I also want to bury my bones there!... Alas! Brother and younger brother's bodies are buried in the raging sea, never to be found again!..."

"By the Chief Divine! Gawa, what is old White Crow saying as he cries, laughs, yells, and howls?"

"Ong! White Crow says he... left here at twenty years old, on the island where he was born. He and his brothers followed tribal tradition, rowing to Eastern Elder Daughter Island... In the end, only he arrived, joining the tribe there, giving birth to new children... He thought he would die on the Elder Daughter Island, never imagining he would have a day to return!..."

Upon hearing this, the Scholar lowered his eyes, emotions surging dramatically, remaining silent for a long time. He knew the Unangas would row simple canoes to venture into the sea for fishing and hunting. But he couldn't imagine how difficult it would be, rowing such simple boats, crossing hundreds of miles of ocean, navigating between islands!

For the Unangas, this island chain of Ancestors spanning thousands of miles is their arduous cold homeland for generations. Ancestors' Giants died and transformed into islands. Each island-crossing voyage means accompanying the deceased Ancestors, to find tribes on other islands, allowing new bloodlines to merge! Only through such inter-island marriages, can Unangas' small population continue to thrive healthily, passing down continuously from the ancient past to today!...

"By the Chief Divine's grace! Let old White Crow lead us to visit his birth tribe! We want to know more about the west, whether it's Giants' Islands or the Tomb Continent!"...

Mother Island measures about a hundred and fifty miles long, seventy-eight miles wide. This island lacks towering volcanoes, so has no warm unfrozen hot springs, but is covered with snow-capped low mountains. Scholar Mikki thus names this island "Divine Snow Woman Island."

Divine Snow Woman Island's climate is more frigid, and the Unanga tribes here are significantly fewer than other Great Islands, estimated only at four hundred individuals. To keep warm, most of the tribe opts to dig caves, residing in semi-underground nests between the hills. They live relatively primitive lifestyles, sourcing food solely through fishing and hunting, with activity limited to the surrounding two small islands, rarely interfacing with other tribes. They have no concept of enemies, no conflicts or battles. In fact, their greatest, constant enemies are the harshly cold climate. In their perception, ships arriving from the sea signify new tribes and people joining!

Thus, seeing the arrival of two "gigantic" longships, seeing the suddenly appearing "Longboat Tribe," the Unanga on the island were both surprised and very envious, showing apparent kindness!...

The crew stayed on Divine Snow Woman Island for three days, visiting two sizable tribes. The old guide U White Crow found his birth tribe, but sadly, all of his relatives had been buried in the earth and sea. Among the near one hundred people of this tribe, there was not a single person that lived past forty years old...

U White Crow's sister died in the cold winter ten years ago. And his nephew died three years ago on a sea fishing expedition. On this string of desolate islands, tribal people's lives are so brief, that an "elder" like U White Crow at forty-five years old is almost one in a hundred!

"Hey yo yana ga! My mother, I have returned! The bones of father and mother, sister and nephew, are buried outside the tribe's cave... Hey yo yana ga! I also want to bury my bones there, to rest with them buried together!"

On the gray-white hills, rumbled winter winds arrive. Scholar Mikki and Exploration Captain Zuvaro stood side by side, once again listening to U White Crow's singing. In that hoarse singing, there was little sadness, only enduring wind and snow, like his full head of white hair flying chaotically in the far north's cold wind, frozen and frost-ridden.

Scholar Mikki listened patiently for a long time before quietly speaking.

"By the Chief Divine, Zuwaro, we queried the island's several tribes... No one has been to the northwest 'Grandmother Island,' and the last person from there came two generations ago! It's too distant, too frigid, only existing in the oral songs of the Unanga tribes... Finding it with a longship might be very difficult!..."

Upon hearing this, Exploration Captain Zuwaro pursed his lips, eyes sharpened, speaking in a deep voice.

"Gawa, ask White Crow. What does the local tribal song sing regarding Grandmother Island?"

Hearing White Bear Gawa convey the question, old guide U White Crow raised his head, giving Zuwaro a deep look. Then, he took a deep breath, singing hoarsely and shouting.

"Hey yo yana ga! Ancient sleeping Grandmother, guarding the more ancient sleeping tomb. White cold low mountains, facing white death high mountains! Returning children, rowing their Ancestors' boat, across seven days and nights, to see Grandmother's face! And the sea's windstorm, will blow them past Grandmother's embrace, sinking into the boundless sea... Or else, drifting into the Ancestors' tomb, never to return!..."

Chapter 1465: Arrival, New Continent!

"Chief Divine's guidance! Zuwaro, Grandmother Island is in the northwest from here. For the Unanga's small boats, it would take at least seven days to row, which is about over seven hundred li in distance!..."

"Chief Divine's protection! Seven hundred li... If the longship rows at full speed, maybe it will only take four days!..."

"But... distance isn't the biggest problem! The biggest problem is that on the route to Grandmother Island, there are no intermediary islands, nor any navigational markers... The longship could easily get lost and lose its bearings!..."

"Miki, no matter what, I want to try! We've heard clear rumors of the New Continent, and we have the sea charts from Your Majesty's divine revelation! Before the freeze sets in, within this last half-month window, I must make a determined effort to sail west!..."

"... Alright! Zuwaro, I'll evenly distribute all the food and firestones from the two ships to give you as much as possible... Chief Divine protect you! May you reach the new continent in the west and return safely!..."

"Chief Divine protect! I will surely reach it! But if by any chance, if I can't return... Miki, the rest of the nautical exploration will be all up to you! This Divine Snow Mother Island is at North latitude 53 degrees, which nearly aligns with the Divine High Mountain Island at North latitude 52 degrees. The distance between these two large islands is over a thousand li, it's quite suitable to establish another port. Actually, on this chain of islands, each large island with tribes should have a supply point established, to be safer!"

October reached its final end, and the cold winds blowing from the northeast already carried scents of ice and storms. Scholar Mikki stood atop the snow-covered White Mountain, watching the resolute Exploration Captain Zuwaro, remaining silent for a long time.

"Miki! After I leave, take your time, slowly manage this chain of islands, and await the follow-up third batch of support fleets, then go establish a stronghold on Grandmother Island. Make sure the maritime logs you're recording are copied multiple times by the priests and send a dedicated longship back to report! Be flexible, act decisively, rely on the Kingdom's advantage in force and resources, intermarry continually with these Northern Tribes, assimilating and converting them! Divine West Mountain Port is a good shipbuilding port, it's best to establish a Bronze Workshop as well. The Northern Land is so vast; send more people to look around, gather the tribes' rumors, and surely you'll find copper mines, tin ore, and iron ore... As for the large gold mine on Divine Jinxi Island, it should draw attention from the Kingdom, attracting a batch of migrating population to settle there!"

The sunset cast its late light, and the snowy mountains shimmered with a red glow. Exploration Captain Zuwaro rambled on, meticulously advising on many beneficial maritime details and many suggestions for constructing sea routes, as if he wanted to explain everything he thought of clearly. It wasn't until the red skies completely vanished from the sea, and nighttime ascended from the East, that he finally looked at Scholar Mikki with a face full of sorrow and heaviness, patted him forcefully on the shoulder, and smiled boldly.

"Haha! Miki, cheer up, don't have that face like you're staring at a dead person! I'm going to explore the western continent, to fulfill the Chief Divine's revelation, not to die! Haha! I shall become the first Divine Revelation Priest to arrive at the New Continent, to be eternally recorded in the Kingdom's epic!"

"Yes! Zuwaro, go peacefully! I will remember you... The Kingdom and Your Majesty will remember you, too..."

Hearing Zuwaro's words, Scholar Mikki lowered his gaze, giving the other a firm embrace. His heart full of reluctance, he clenched his teeth, looking up at the shining stars in the sky, and vowed softly.

"Chief Divine bear witness! Whether you return or not... among the stars shining up there, in the epic of this Kingdom... there will surely be one bright star corresponding to you!"

"Haha! Good! As long as I fulfill the Chief Divine's revelation, I will also be recorded in the Chief Divine's scripture, obtaining exalted divinity, turning into a shining star!"

Exploration Captain Zuwaro laughed heartily, nodding, and also looked up at the galaxies. The starry river in the far north was so resplendent, as if a belt full of stars were draped across the night sky, also resembling reflections of the islands and the sea above!

"Chief Divine's protection! Miki, with your maritime logs, the hymnal scriptures... you too will attain divinity, transforming into a star in the sky!"

The island night was filled with cold solitude, seemingly the quietest end in the world. The two Divine Revelation Priests for exploration lifted their heads, regarding the endless starry sky, so much like the boundless sea. Zuwaro gazed into the distance for a while, smiled, and left a final exhortation.

"Oh Chief Divine, tonight's starry river is truly beautiful!... Miki, you must make sure in the maritime logs, to write my image as grander, more devout, and more perfect! Understood?"

"Yes! I will... definitely!"

The exploration fleet's two longships only stayed two days on Divine Snow Woman Island. Exploration Captain Zuvaro, after much thought, left ten people on Divine Snow Woman Island to intermarry with the local tribes, also preparing for the subsequent establishment of a port. He also left half of his five hundred jin of gold, buried near Old Crow's tribal cave, freeing up some load, making additional preparations as well.

Scholar Mikki did his utmost, preparing two months' worth of food for ninety people for Zuvaro's Great Snow Wolf, along with ample fuel. Meanwhile, his own supply ship was left with only sixty people and twenty days' worth of food, needing to quickly return to Divine Peak Mountain Port for the winter.

On the third morning, the two longships parted, one east, one west. Scholar Mikki stood at the bow, accompanied by White Bear Hova and the guide Old Crow, watching the massive Great Snow Wolf sail towards the northwest's horizon. In the cold northeast wind, he observed in silence until the west-bound longship gradually shrank, then disappeared from sight, at which point he exhaled deeply, despondently giving the order.

Chapter 1466: Arrival, New Continent!

"Chief Divine protect us! Row with all your strength! Sail towards the islands in the East!..."

"Chief Divine protect us! Row with all your strength! Search for Grandmother Island in the Northwest!..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro's arms were bulging as he led the rowing. His face showed a mix of steadfast composure and secretly hidden excitement. His venture to the West was partly to fulfill Your Majesty's Divine Revelation, and partly because he indeed wanted to be the first Divine Revelation Priest to reach the New Continent!

After all, unlike Scholar Mikki, he did not possess such writing prowess to compose epic tales for posterity, nor did he have connections in the Royal Capital Priest Group. As a true commoner priest, he had only his own hands rowing to win a brand new, vast future!

"All your strength! Steady! Hold down!... Hold down the wind and waves, keep the bow steady in the Northwest!..."

Waves rose several meters high, wave after wave, causing the whole longship to shake continuously. Yet, such multiple meter-high waves were already the most suitable season for navigation in this far north sea, the gentlest sign of the storm season!

"Chief Divine protect us! Row towards the Northwest! Hold steady, you must keep the direction steady!..."

The Great Snow Wolf continued to row at full speed towards the Northwest amidst turbulent winds and waves for four or five days. Zuvaro estimated they had rowed at least seven hundred li. However, the anticipated appearance of Grandmother Island never revealed itself in the sea. Moreover, the storm season was drawing closer, and the sea swells grew larger!

"The waves are getting bigger! Everyone listen up, put on waterproof rubber raincoats and wear your straw hats! In such weather, if drenched by the tide, it could lead to sickness and death!..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro was somewhat anxious, but his face showed no sign of it. He patiently instructed everyone and reassured the sailors and guards. For this voyage, the Kingdom's prepared supplies were truly ample. The rubber raincoats worn by the crew were made from the Kingdom's densest thick fabric, with the outer layer entirely smeared with waterproof rubber, providing maximum resistance to wind and waves!

Soon, immense waves poured in, soaking through the entire longship, pressing the ship down heavily! The sailors rowing swayed in the waves, their heads and faces showered with seawater. Only after enduring waves that lasted several tens of seconds could the sailors spit out the salty seawater and wipe their wet faces. They uttered a sincere prayer before continuing their relentless rowing.

"Chief Divine protect us! Search again! Search all around! It should be around here!"

The Great Snow Wolf circled and searched for another three days on the Northwest sea surface. However, when the sailors climbed the ten-meter-high mast, all they could see was the vast, boundless sea, vast, boundless sea, vast, endless white sea!

"Chief Divine! Captain, the sea has turned white! It has turned white!...To the North, to the North, there is floating ice!..."

Upon hearing this news, Exploration Captain Zuvaro's heart shook. He ran to the ship's rail, gazing towards the northern sea and indeed vaguely saw the distant reflections of the white color.

"Chief Divine! White reflections...signs of freezing!..."

Undoubtedly, the far north freezing season had begun amidst the cold wind. Those flashing whites were large blocks of floating ice forming in the colder northern seas, drifting with the tides and waves relentlessly!

If they collided with such floating ice, even a sturdy hull made of Mexican Yun Shan wood could suffer damage or breach! Furthermore, if a fierce cold wave moved south, freezing the entire ocean surface, the entire longship might be trapped, frozen alive on the white Ice Sea awaiting death!

"Damn it! We can't find Grandmother Island, nor do we have time to keep searching!..."

Zuvaro gritted his teeth, showing a hint of determination on his face. He dampened his fingers, extending them into the wind, feeling the strong northeast wind, making a resolute decision!

"Let the Chief Divine witness! Raise the sails at the bow and stern! Tilt the angle slightly, leverage the wind to sail southwest!..."

"Chief Divine protect us! Let's go directly to the Western! To the tomb of the Ancestor Giants, to the New Continent in the Divine Revelation of Your Majesty!..."

"Yes! Raise the sails! Head southwest! Chief Divine protect us!..."

A moment later, the Great Snow Wolf hoisted the twin sails, adjusting the angle, harnessing the fierce wind. The longship that once crawled like a slow-moving turtle suddenly transformed into a running giant rabbit, the ship speed suddenly accelerating!

"Whoosh! Whoosh!"

The turbulent wind drove the massive sails, creating a rushing wind sound. Compared to the sturdy wooden keel and resilient Yun Shan hull, the Kingdom's sailing technology was far simpler and primitive. The Great Snow Wolf used primitive stiff sails, composed of thick cotton fabric, treated stiff paper, and robust bamboo. With the Kingdom's current stiff sail technology, the usable wind angle could not deviate by 45 degrees, resulting in inefficient wind use...

Nevertheless, with favorable wind direction and strong force, relying solely on the wind, the longship's speed quickly rose to fifteen li per hour! Such a speed, equivalent to 4 knots, was astounding for the Kingdom's heavy longships!

"Chief Divine protect us! Sailors rest where you are, adjust the sails constantly! Keep the bow towards the West, control the speed heading South!..."

The cold long wind blew continuously from the cold high-pressure belt in the North to the warm sea in the South. The vast sea ice drifted, starting from the freezing northern sea, scattering towards the warm ocean in the South. The Great Snow Wolf headed southwest, raising sails during the day and resting the ship at night. It was like a vanguard paving the way for floating ice, progressing two to three hundred li a day!

"Chief Divine! At such speed, without accurate directional positioning...will we miss the Western continent?..."

With strong winds, massive waves, and surging tides, Exploration Captain Zuvaro kept tight lips, wiping off the sea spray, also watching the high-wind, high-wave sea surface. The fleet rapidly headed slightly southwest, traveling for four days, covering at least a thousand li!

"Chief Divine! We reached 51 degrees north latitude in just four days! Strange, why is the temperature dropping while the fleet heads south? The north winds have diminished, but the ship speed is still increasing...at night, while the ship is at rest, it continues drifting south...what's this?...Underneath the sea surface, a southerly ocean current, a cold current?!"

November's cold wind grew sharply, biting skin painfully. Zuvaro rubbed his face vigorously, exhaling misty white breath. He puzzled this abrupt temperature change with the direction of the ship.

He did not realize that the counter-clockwise Kurile Cold Current constantly draws cold from the far North, driving the longship on the sea surface from the icy Bering Sea towards the Northwest Pacific Ocean. In fact, this cold current is also known as the "Kurile Cold Current"! And its presence signifies...

"Chief Divine protect us! Chief Divine protect us! Oh! Captain! There's an eagle! A mountain eagle flying over the Western sea!..."

"Oh? An eagle?!"

Zuvaro ran to the bow, gazing persistently at the Western sky, at the fearless mountain eagle circling overhead. He stared for a moment before tears suddenly flowed! The appearance of the eagle was an unmistakable signal, indicating land was very near in the West!

"Chief Divine protect us! Chief Divine protect us!...Completely furl the sails, row full speed to the West!..."

A moment later, the Great Snow Wolf adjusted its bow, sped westward, towards where the eagle appeared! The longship rowed for half a day when a two-thousand-meter-high mountain suddenly loomed in the Western horizon, faintly visible to everyone's excited eyes. Shortly after, after rowing for a few quarters, a vast, headless stretch of white coastline, extending north to south, appeared extensively in the West!

"Chief Divine! Such a vast coastline!...Is this, could this be?...No, it definitely is!...The New Continent! The Western continent in Your Majesty's Divine Revelation!..."

"Praise the Chief Divine! Praise Your Majesty!...Oh! Oh!...We finally arrived! We finally arrived!...After two full years of arduous navigation, we finally reached the prophesied Land of Divine Revelation, the boundless, cold New Continent!..."

At that moment, Zuvaro was tearfully collapsed on the longship. Behind him, ninety crew members also knelt on the ground, faces full of devotion and frenzy. All together fervently prayed to the Sun in the sky, shouting enthusiastically in a cathartic outburst!

"Praise the Supreme Main God, ever protecting us! Praise the prophetic Majesty, whose prophecies always come true!...Ah!! My divine Zuvaro, truly the first to discover the New Continent!!!..."

Chapter 1467: First Encounter with the Tribes of Kamchatka, the Itelmen Hunters

"Praise the Chief Divine, praise Your Majesty! The relay of twenty Kingdom Longships, the support of thousands of elite warriors and sailors, the provision of hundreds of thousands of pounds of supplies, have finally delivered this Kingdom's great longship to the new continent foretold in prophecy! ...And we sailed for a full two years, traversing more than twenty thousand rough miles, all for today's arrival!..."

November at the Kamchatka Peninsula is marked everywhere by cold, white traces. On the sea surface of the eastern side of the peninsula, death's white gleams are flickering. The long, harsh winter has arrived with the cold northern winds, making the rolling mountains become silent and the boundless tundra turn desolate. Along the whole expanse of the bleak coast, no obvious human habitation or villages can be seen, nor are there wandering deer herds. Only two towering active volcanoes conspicuously sit among the northern mountains, with faint white smoke occasionally rising, hinting at the warmth and vitality buried deep underground!

When first approaching the coast, the Great Snow Wolf ship only saw the eastern active volcano (Avachinsky). The longship rowed along the desolate coastline for half a day before entering a recessed natural bay, where another taller smoking volcano (Koryaksky) suddenly appeared among the northern mountains, shining with icy flowing light.

"Chief Divine! Two gifts from the Chief Divine, the warm active volcanoes! They are the Chief Divine's sons, towering and spouting vitality, as if exhaling Divine Smoke...then let this natural harbor be called Divine Twins...no, Divine Twins Smoke Harbor!..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro gazed towards the north, looking at the smoking icy snow volcano with genuine delight appearing on his face. He did not know the exact heights of these two active volcanoes, the eastern Avachinsky Volcano at 2741 meters, and the western Koryaksky Volcano at 3456 meters. But based on his experience along the way, wherever there are volcanoes, there will be warm unfrozen springs. And in the cold Far North land, warm unfrozen springs inevitably signify the presence and gathering of tribes!

Indeed, so it is. In later years, this place becomes the capital of Russia's Kamchatka Krai, the most livable city on the entire peninsula, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy.

"Chief Divine! What a vast bay, what towering mountains!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro jumped off the longship, landing on the bay's north side. He knelt down and kissed the cold, black-brown earth, this "Burial Ground of the Ancestor Giants". Then he surveyed the surrounding scenery, looking at the low bushes around the bay, and then at the snowy northern mountains, pondering briefly before quickly reaching a conclusion.

"Such low shore bushes, even lower than the Ancestor Island chain. Such significant mountain snow accumulation, even more than the Far North Coast... Chief Divine! The winter here is cold! It must be colder than the coastal areas of the Far North Coast! The winds here will also be strong, surely frighteningly strong!... We must quickly find the local tribes, or find the warm springs for wintering..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro slightly frowned, keeping his speculation about the local environment silently in his heart.

The songs inherited by Northern Tribes have always contained the wisdom of survival and death. The ancestors of the Unangas called this place "the Icy Burial Ground of the Ancestor Giants" for a reason. Although the latitude here is lower than Alaska's Far North Coast, the temperature is noticeably lower, and no obvious traces of human habitation can be seen along the coast...

"Chief Divine bless us, Your Majesty guides us, we are the favored ones touched by divine grace!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro pondered briefly, then smiled openly, showing confidence and joy. He looked around at the dozens of Kingdom's Warriors and Tribal Sailors who had landed, with a generous and uplifting spirit, boosting everyone's morale.

"Come! Praise the Chief Divine! Let us strike the firestones, ignite the Sacred Fire, hold a prayer ceremony! Then cook fish, shrimp, and whale meat, and hold a grand celebration banquet!"

"Praise the Chief Divine! Pray for divine blessing, celebrate the arrival!..."

Upon hearing such joyous news, the warriors and sailors also began to cheer. After drifting on the islands and sea for so long, they indeed needed a grand prayer and celebration. Soon, bonfires lit the

coastline, meats cooked with enticing aromas. And the continuous sounds of prayers and cheers echoed from the expansive bay, drifting into the distant cold winds.

"Chief Divine bless! Praise our God Huitzilopochtli! He is supreme, covering the sky and sea! Praise the God of Death Xiulote! He knows all things, guiding us from afar!..."

"Huh? Chut (wind)? Pina (smoke)? Smoke in the southern wind?"

Among the northern mountains over ten miles away, an Itelmen hunter clad in fur and carrying a hunting bow suddenly widened his eyes, looking towards the southern bay. The Itelmen (Itelmen) are one of the Kamchatka tribes residing on the southern peninsula. They are slightly shorter than the Unangas, generally around one meter seventy. They are mostly excellent hunters in the mountains and reliable fishermen along the coast.

"Mulu, what are you saying?"

"I said, look at the southern bay, there is smoke!"

"What? Smoke!"

Upon hearing Hunter Mulu's words, a group of seven or eight Itelmen hunters all looked towards the south. Soon, incomprehensible surprise appeared on their robust, round, Mongolian-like faces.

"Shh!"

The leading Hunting Team Leader Mukun, holding a strong Samoyed hunting dog, gestured to everyone to be silent. He turned his ear to carefully listen to the faint wind noise, his brow deeply furrowing.

"In the wind, there are human voices...very subtle, but many, many voices!..."

"Ah? Spirit ancestors! Could it be the southern Island Tribe (Ainu) coming to harass again?"

"How can that be! The snowy winter is almost here, and the Big Sea will freeze. At this time, coastal tribes won't come out, nor will they fight!"

"Could it be the Northwestern Rokube (Koryaks)? Are they coming to poach the deer around our territory?"

"At this time? When a snowstorm is about to arrive? Are they risking their lives?..."

"Then could it possibly be the Northern Tent Tribe (Chukchi)? They have always been fierce and aggressive, migrating everywhere on reindeer sleds, seizing food and camps from other tribes... Are they coming to steal our warm Winter Camp, steal our unfrozen spring water?"

"Ah? If the Tent Tribe is appearing here, they would definitely clash with the Rokube first! What's more, this is south of the mountains, how could the Tent Tribe's reindeer teams sneak over the mountains?..."

The Itelmen hunters discussed in low voices, displaying several degrees of unease. This desolate, cold snowfield, even located at the northeastern corner of the Asian continent, never lacks fights and conflicts between tribes.

Because, unlike the hunting tribes on the North American continent, they have higher productivity and organizational levels. And their greatest enemies had long shifted from the harsh natural environment to batches of tribes migrating around, competing for water sources and hunting grounds in Extreme North Asia.

"Enough! The spirit ancestors are watching us!"

Hunting Team Leader Mukun pondered briefly and quickly made a decision. He first handed the dog leash to the fastest runner, Hunter Mutu. The Samoyed dog, originally from the Extreme North Asian tribes, is an excellent hunting dog and guard dog suitable for harsh cold environments. And this strong Samoyed dog is an important assistant in the tribe's hunting, with high cost in training, so it can't be lost.

"Mutu, take the dog and head back to the tribe first, report to the tribe's old grandmother! Have the able-bodied men prepare, don leather armor, and string the bows!..."

"Mulu, your eyesight is the best and movements the quietest... come with me to the south for a look!"

"Yes! Sage Captain!"

Hunter Mulu nodded earnestly, using the term "Sage" symbolizing the hunting dog leader, which is "Dog King". This term accurately reflects Mukun's leadership status in the tribe, second only to the old grandmother who manages tribal inheritance. In fact, these hunting tribes in Extreme North Asia indeed have higher organizational levels than their blood cousins on the North American continent.

"The spirit ancestors are watching us! Let's go! Let's properly see which distant tribe this is, whether they are enemies or friends of our Mountain Part!"

Chapter 1468: The Surprise of the Itelmen Hunters, the Powerful Island Tribe—Enemies or Friends?

"Praise the Supreme Main God! Praise the Divine Revelation of Your Majesty!..."

"Uwa! The Chief Divine is high in the sky! The Great Great Chieftain is high on the peak!..."

"The Divine Mountain of the Ancestors, sits the Great Great Chief God! His firstborn is the Great Great Chieftain!..."

The red sun was setting in the west, and the sky was gradually darkening. On the Kamchatka Peninsula in November, it gets dark very early, and the nighttime temperature can drop a few degrees below zero. The Kingdom's Warriors and Tribal Sailors gathered around the lit campfire, eating meat and drinking soup, loudly praising and blessing. Various shouts and songs of joy spread out over the cold seaside. Although the languages of the sailors from various tribes were not the same, their joy and their animated gestures at this moment were heartfelt and evident!

Of course, on this cold and unknown coastline, whether it was the robust Kingdom's Warriors or the tall Tribal Sailors, they maintained the most basic vigilance. They wore thick leather armor inside, wrapped in soft fur outside, and never took off the bronze axe at their waist.

And all of this was seen by the eyes, heard by the ears, and smelled by the noses of the two Itelmen hunters lurking in the grass!

"Sniff!...Gugu!...What kind of meat is this? It's so enticing, smelling warm?...Huh! What they're using to make soup, the fire is so big, it doesn't seem like wood, but...a black stone?..."

Hunter Mulu lay in the grass, sniffing the aroma of meat in the air, unable to resist licking his lips and swallowing several times. This bunch of tribes from who knows where, cooking some sort of meat soup, utterly unaware of saving fuel...yet it smelled more delicious than anything before!

"Shh! Keep your voice down, don't startle them!...Black stones for soup?...Such fragrant soup! Gugu!..."

The hunting team leader, Mukun, bit his lips, looking at the pot on the distant campfire, striving not to drool. He was unaware of his extraordinary, historic fortune! They were the very first in the vast Old Continent to smell the fragrance of chili peppers!

"Damn it! They're feasting so happily, while we're out here scouting with empty stomachs..."

For the tribes of Kamchatka, who live off fishing and hunting, winter food and fuel have always been scarce. Even though Mukun was the tribe's hunter leader, second only to the Grandmother Elder in the tribe, opportunities to feast like this on meat and soup were rare.

"Yes, Captain, they're so loud, speaking softly like we are, they definitely won't hear...Strange! I don't know what tribe these people are from, I can't understand a word!"

"Hmm...May the Spirits of the Ancestors witness! It is indeed peculiar!..."

The hunting team leader, Mukun, furrowed his brow, his pancake-like face full of confusion. Even though he hunted far and wide, seeing tribes from the south to the north, he couldn't figure out where these people came from.

"Those tall hunters carry very large greatbows, somewhat resembling the northernmost nomadic tribes...But they don't have the distinctive winged armor of the nomadic or Rokube tribes, nor can I understand their language!"

"Those not so tall warriors all carry golden metal axes, could they be from the southern raiding island tribes? But they don't have the island tribes' abundant body hair, nor are they that short...Hmm, the island tribes have metallic weapons and small boats, could they be more powerful island tribes further south!"

With this speculation, the hunting team leader, Mukun, tightened his lips, silently gripping the sharp flint axe at his waist, some killing intent appearing on his face. Hunter Mulu also took down the compound recurve bow from his back and counted the number of bone arrows in his quiver.

Upon closer inspection, this compound bow is clearly a three-layer compound structure, with black birch wood as the bow face, larch wood as the bow back, the middle layer is deerskin, and the three are meticulously glued together with fishskin glue. The bowstring is tightly twisted from deerskin, and the body of the bow has a conspicuous recurved arc. This bow-making technique, derived from the centuries-old technical diffusion of North Asian nomadic tribes, far surpassed the Kingdom's longbow!

"May the Spirits of the Ancestors witness! The metal axes should be copper, not iron...And those who wield copper weapons, are only the island tribes on the southern islands, our ever-attacking enemy island tribes!"

The hunting team leader Mukun grasped the stone axe, then felt the three stone javelins behind him, his expression very solemn. Before the Russians came in the 17th century, the use of metal tools among the tribes of the Kamchatka Peninsula was very rare. Most tribes used finely processed bone artifacts and stone tools.

It wasn't that they didn't have the opportunity to trade expensive ironware from the nomadic Evenki and Even races of the west. But for these tribes of Extreme North Asia, unless it's high-quality steel that withstands low temperatures, ordinary ironware doesn't suit the environment and isn't as practical as stone tools!

Indeed, in the southern tip of the Kamchatka Peninsula, where winter can last half a year, with temperatures plunging to tens of degrees below zero, or even thirty or forty degrees below zero in the northern tip, ordinary inferior iron tools become quite brittle and very prone to breakage, not as durable

as bone and stone tools. So, among the Chukchi, Koryaks, and Itelmens, the daily use of metal implements was quite limited.

Only the Ainu people living on the warmer islands to the south learned metal smelting and casting through gradually increased contact with Wa Country, using simple bronze and iron tools. These Ainu, who used metal tools, would raid the tribe's coasts, attack solitary hunters, and poach deer herds in the tribe's territory. In other words, the Ainu Island tribe was the enemy of the Itelmen mountain tribe!

"Mulu, how many arrows did you bring?"

"Four hands, 20 arrows. Captain, the number of people opposite seems a bit much... four hands per team, two teams, three teams, four teams, four and a half teams... Luba, there are so many of them!"

"Oh Ancestors! Four hands per team, a total of four or five teams, all elite hunters in leather armor!... Hiss! What kind of island tribe can gather ninety elite hunters?"

The sunset dipped into the mountains on the west side of the peninsula. Hunting Team Leader Mukun gritted his teeth, took a clear look at the number of landing tribes, and his face instantly showed unease. Ninety elite hunters are a formidable force in the entire frigid, barren peninsula! What made him more uneasy, however, was the enormous large ship docked by the bay, one he had never seen before!

"Oh spirited ancestors! Their large ship, it's... it's so big! So Luba, Luba, Luba big!"

Seeing the Great Snow Wolf moored by the shore, with a hull as long as 36 meters, the two Itelmen hunters were so shocked that they stared wide-eyed and blankly for a long time. Compared to their tribe's fishing boats, which are only two to three meters long, this giant oar-sail ship was like a whale in the sea, and who knows how many able-bodied men it took, and how much effort it required, to build! Just using the wood from this ship as firewood would be enough for their hundreds of people in the mountain part of the great tribe to last through the long winter!

"Oh ancestors! Luba's large ship! Exceptionally tall islanders! An unprecedented powerful island tribe!"

It took a while for Hunting Team Leader Mukun to barely regain his composure, and there was a hint of fear on his face. His uneasy, chubby face looked downcast, like a dejected Samoyed bear-hunting dog.

"Captain, should we fight?"

"Fight? Hell no! Four teams of Luba's elite hunters, how could the two of us take them on? The spiritual ancestors bear witness, the entire tribe needs to be mobilized, everyone needs to be mobilized!"

"Ah! This, mobilizing the whole tribe to fight?... Captain, maybe they aren't enemies, maybe they are just passing by... or maybe they are heading to attack the Rokube?"

"Huh? Not enemies? The Big Sea is about to freeze over! If they leave their large ship here for days, it won't be able to leave! ...Winter is so long, with so many strong hunters needing food, if they can't fish, they'll hunt the deer, the deer in our territory... those are the tribe's food for the coming year!"

At this point, Hunting Team Leader Mukun gritted his teeth, his face showing both anxious unease and helpless anger. He couldn't help but raise his voice a bit while scolding hunter Mulu, who couldn't see the situation clearly.

"Mulu, the spiritual ancestors bear witness! This land of shrubs and tundras, although vast, every hunting ground and fishing ground has tribal ownership, it's the tribe's source of food! Furthermore, such numerous hunters, they'll need to find a sheltered winter camp, right? And if they go north to the warm mountains, they'll bump straight into our mountain part's winter camp! That warm mountain spring is fundamental to the tribe's continuation, not an inch of it can be given away!"

"Captain, the winter camp is so large, having dozens more people stay won't be an issue... as long as they are willing to maintain peace with us, and leave when the snow melts next year..."

"What? Are you a foolish snow rabbit, leaving them in our winter camp?... What if they won't leave? What if they are like the northern tent tribes and try to take our camp and population?! No, no! We must quickly return and mobilize the entire tribe, prepare for a fight... it's best to ambush them as they just land, before they figure things out!"

"Swish, swish!"

As the two Itelmen hunters were whispering, a sharp whooshing sound suddenly arose, shooting toward the thicket they were crouched in!

"Swish, swish, swish!... Bam!"

Over a dozen sharp copper arrows shot from several dozen meters away, brushing past the tribal hunters' leather armor, even grazing their leather helmets. Both of them shivered, instantly lifted their heads, with their faces changing!

"Ah! Oh spiritual ancestors! Oh this? ...These sneaky island tribe ambushers!"

The distant sounds of banquet celebration continued as usual, without any noticeable difference. But at some point, more than a dozen short Kingdom's Warriors were already armed with bows and arrows, spreading out to the east and west, sandwiching them in the middle. Meanwhile, six or seven tall and robust Unanga hunters wielded bronze axes and copper spears, slightly hunched, ready to pounce and chase like polar bears hunting!

"Chief Divine bear witness! Gummy People Tribal Group from afar, faraway Jiao brothers... we mean no harm, we are your friends!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro, dressed in leather armor and holding a bronze axe, stepped out from the crowd, followed by several elite warriors of the kingdom. He squinted his eyes, scrutinizing the two nervous and fearful tribal hunters hidden in the thicket. His sharp gaze swept over their sturdy leather armor, flat leather helmets, and then glanced at their waists' stone axes, the stone javelins on their backs. Finally, he noticed hunter Mulu's uniquely shaped composite recurve bow, his pupils slightly contracted, and a sincere smile appeared on his face.

"Haha, praise the Chief Divine! Since friends are here! Why not join our feast, have a delicious, spicy whale meat and kelp soup! Then, let's talk around the bonfire all night..."

Chapter 1469: We Come from the East!

"Goo goo!... Gulp! Ah woo!..."

"Delicious!... Really delicious! Truly Luba delicious!..."

"Haha! Jiao People brothers, eat slowly. There's more if it's not enough!"

As night fell, the cold wind grew more biting, and the bonfire by the coast grew warmer and brighter. Exploration Captain Zuvaro was smiling as he watched the two Itelmen Hunters holding leather helmets full of whale meat and seaweed soup, devouring meat and gulping down soup like starving beasts. They ate through four helmets in one go. Only after swallowing the spicy, savory soup did they finally warm up and exhale a few breaths of white-hot air in satisfaction amidst the cold wind.

"Whew! Oh, spirited Ancestors! What is this meat in the soup? It's so chewy, thicker than deer meat, sturdier than fish meat, and with so much salt!... Hmm? Why do I feel so light and warm? I'm even sweating..."

Hunting Team Leader Mukun was panting with his tongue out like a hunting dog. Being the first from his North Asian Tribe to taste chili pepper, his face was flushed red, and his tongue was tingling with spice, unable to fully describe this peculiar sensation. Yet, he could clearly feel his body warming up from the spiciness in the freezing Northern Land, a precious warmth that could save lives.

"Ah, Captain! The food of these island tribes is truly remarkable! So much meat, so much salt, such warm firewood, it's truly comfortable Luba!... Burp!..."

While continually exhaling from the spiciness, Hunter Mulu rubbed his round belly. Despite keeping his eyes glued to the aromatic big clay pot, his stomach simply couldn't take anymore. After a while, he reluctantly burped and murmured softly to Mukun.

"Captain, they don't seem to be from the Southern island tribes... We've fought those long-haired, bow-backed islanders before... They're usually very poor; how could they have so much precious salt? They also don't have such big ships and hardly any decent equipment, so why would they be friendly with us?..."

"Hmm..."

As Hunting Team Leader Mukun rubbed his chubby face, a sense of fog enveloped him once more. His expression slightly softened as he closely examined Captain Zuvaro's smiling face, who was also returning the glance with a smile.

"Oh spirited Ancestors witness! You, tribes with longships, where do you come from? Winter is approaching. What do you intend to do in our Mountain Part territory?"

"Under the protection of the Chief Divine! Coastal Jiao People brothers, where is your tribe located? We've come with goodwill from the distant East, hoping to visit your Leader or Priest..."

The bright moon rose, casting a silvery glow over the northern snowfield. The flickering bonfire illuminated the well-fed, smiling faces of Samurai, sailors, and hunters. The two captains spoke for a long time, then exchanged confused glances, realizing a serious problem: the language barrier rendered them completely incapable of understanding each other!

"Uh... may the Chief Divine protect us!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro's brow furrowed slightly as he pondered for a moment, looking toward the surrounding crew. He called out in his somewhat unsteady Unanga language.

"Big Bear! You're from the Mother Island at the westernmost of the island chain; come speak with them!"

Upon hearing this, the Unanga Hunter Big Bear nodded simply and approached Hunting Team Leader Mukun. This tall Unanga man, standing at 1.9 meters, was over a head taller than the 1.7-meter Itelmen hunter.

"Ancestors witness! The Great Chief sent us here. To the west, tombs, find four-legged beasts. Edible grass!"

"Uh? Ancestor? Grandmother? The tribe's old grandmother?... West?... Dead? Who died?... Find? Find what?..."

Hunting Team Leader Mukun craned his head, trying hard to listen to the Unanga hunter's words. As he listened, the bewilderment on his face deepened. He could vaguely understand some loose words, yet could not comprehend the connected sentences. Furthermore, the accent struck him as uncannily familiar; he couldn't shake the feeling that he had heard it somewhere before!

In fact, the Eskimo-Aleut languages of the Unanga people and the Chukotko-Kamchatkan languages of the Itelmen people split roughly four thousand years ago! But there are many loanwords from the Eskimo-Aleut languages in the Chukotko-Kamchatkan languages, hinting at traces of something ancient. Perhaps it was the forced eastern migrations of the Aleut tribesmen, or maybe the conquests and integrations by the Kamchatkan tribes. As a symbol of the linguistic fusion between the two sides, the Kamchatka Tribe, which possesses the most Aleut words, occupies the northernmost Arctic tundra and the easternmost Bering Strait...

"Boss, what he's saying doesn't seem like the Southern island tribes at all! How does it have the Luba taste of the Northern tent tribes?"

Hunter Mulu blinked in astonishment, curiously guessing without thinking.

"The word he used wasn't dying, but the cold place where the dead are buried, just like the tent tribe's word! And he mentioned four-legged, isn't that the tent tribe's reindeer?... Then he brought up eating; those tent tribe people would eat their deceased relatives to lay them to rest inside their belly... Ah! They're speaking the language of the Northern tent tribes and are tall like the tent tribe people... Could they be a tent tribe sitting on a ship?!"

"What! What Luba nonsense?! The tent tribes are already fierce, migrating with their herds across the wilderness, plundering surrounding tribes. If they had such big ships, capable of striking along the coast, how would Luba and we survive?"

Hunting Team Leader Mukun bit down hard, snapped at Hunter Mulu, a sense of terror slowly rising within him. The tent tribe they mentioned so fearfully were the Chukchi from the northernmost part of the Kamchatka Peninsula, the only fierce tribe among the Siberian tribes to successfully resist the Cossacks' invasion!

The Arctic Chukchi herd thousands of reindeer, migrating and leading a nomadic life across the Arctic snowfields, where winter temperatures drop to minus thirty degrees, making them truly resilient polar tribes! They have no fixed villages, only wandering camps, making them very hard to track and capture, as well as natural raiders. The whole vast Arctic snowfield from the northernmost of the Kamchatka Peninsula is their migratory territory. They have crossed the straits and connected with the Inuit tribesmen of the western North American snowfields, merging each other's languages, with tribal ties extending into ancient intermarriages. The languages of the Inuit tribes also belong to the Eskimo-Aleut linguistic family...

Thus, if the exploration fleet dared to venture north along the Arctic coast of the Bering Sea and haply encountered the fierce Chukchi tribes, it'd be possible to communicate with the Unanga tribal sailors. Whereas, with the southern Itelmen people, they would only understand a few words at most.

"Oh spirited Ancestors witness! You, tribe traveling on longships! Where exactly did you come from, and where are you headed?!"

Under the shimmering Silver River and the white snowfield, Hunting Team Leader Mukun turned somber, once again facing Exploration Captain Zuvaro, issuing the ultimate 'philosophical' query. He pointed back and forth between himself and the northern mountains, declaring, word by word.

"I, come from the North, the mountain's Mountain Part! And you, are you from the Northern tent tribes or the Southern island tribes?"

Hunting Team Leader Mukun's face grew serious as he observed the puzzled expression of Zuvaro. If the others were from the cunning Southern island tribes, they were long-time adversaries of his tribe, never to be trusted! But if the others were from the Northern tent tribes, although ferocious and notorious, they weren't immediate foes and could be somewhat trusted...

After pondering a moment, he gestured continuously, pointing at Zuvaro, and used a phrase Big Bear could understand: "Ancestor's tomb."

"Your, Ancestor's tomb!... Where is it?"

"Mine? Ancestor's, tomb? Where?"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro paused momentarily upon facing the solemn and answer-awaiting expression of Hunting Team Leader Mukun. Sharp in perception, he sensed this question might be crucial in determining their disposition—be it hostile or amicable. He thought over it for a while, observed Mukun's gestures, and suddenly had an epiphany!

"Ancestor's tomb, where?... Ah! Where am I from? Where are we from?..."

"Chief Divine witness! I understand now!... We are from the East, the East! Where the sun rises, the East!..."

Chapter 1470: Luba and Gifts

"With the ancestral spirits as witnesses! Are you from the East of Luba? From the White Sea in the East? From the Great Island in the sea?..."

"Ancestral witness! We come from the East! We are the Kingdom in the Lake, a vast continent under the mantle of the Chief Divine! We crossed the sea guided by a Divine Revelation..."

The Kurile Cold Current flows ceaselessly southward, bringing the chill of the Arctic Ocean to the edge of the Kamchatka Peninsula. Snow falls in October on the peninsula, and by November, temperatures plunge below freezing. On this icy coastline, in the biting cold wind, two people by the campfire chatted enthusiastically, gesturing and drawing in the snow, despite not understanding a single full sentence from each other, their faces full of surprise and excitement.

"Oh Ancestor! Your ships, remarkably, are from the East of Luba, from the sea of Luba! Ah! You're not from the northern Luba's tent tribe, nor the southern Luba's island tribe... You're... the Sea Tribe from the East of Luba! That's why you have large ships, that's why you're different from them!"

"Oh Chief Divine! Luba? What is Luba? Is it the sea?"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro blinked, repeating a word frequently mentioned by the other party. Upon hearing Zuvaro's repetition, Hunting Team Leader Mukun somewhat misunderstood. He hesitated for a moment, reached into the thick deer-hide robe, fumbled for a while before pulling out a long narrow deer-hide bag and a deer stomach water bag. Then, he solemnly handed these two items to Zuvaro, carefully explaining.

"Sea Tribe leader! You offer me warm meat soup, and I offer you warm Luba! Luba, the coldest winter, warming the body, life-saving!"

"What? These two, Luba? Offer it to me? ... Uh, is this a custom of showing friendliness?"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro paused, although he couldn't understand the other's language, he vaguely guessed their meaning. He hesitated slightly, took the water bag containing something, and also took the long narrow bag. First, he opened the water bag, a rich scent of blood immediately hit his nose, it was a familiar blood drink to the Highland Tribes!

"Ah? Such a familiar scent! Is this blood wine? Or pure blood? Is it a Sacrifice to declare to the Divine?..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro sniffed, not detecting the smell of wine. He looked at Hunting Team Leader Mukun, who showed a simple smile and made a drinking gesture.

"Luba! A drink, Luba!"

"Gulp! Uh? ... This taste? Is it not human blood... but deer blood?"

"A drink, Luba! From the heart... here!"

Seeing Zuvaro drink the deer blood, Hunting Team Leader Mukun smiled happily. He pointed to his own heart, indicating to Zuvaro that it was the most precious deer heart blood! In the tradition of the Kamchatka Tribes, drinking the precious deer heart blood from each other's tribe was a gesture of friendliness.

In the sub-zero winters of Extreme North Asia, the Kamchatka Tribes had neither warming liquor nor body-heating peppers, ginger, or sugar. What could warm them, revive the frozen, weakened able-bodied men, was only the most precious Luba, the deer blood that could heal and warm the body!

In this era, cold-resistant rye from Europe or cold-resistant potatoes from America had not yet reached Siberia. For the Kamchatka Tribes, who reared deer herds, their most important food source was deer and fish! And the deer herds, the precious domesticated deer herds, were the source of all essential living items for most tribes!

Deer meat was the tribe's staple food, deer hide could be used for warm clothing and armor, deer antlers could be made into needles and combs, deer bones were used for bone artifacts, and deer sinews for bows... But for healing and warming, life-saving in the winter snow, there were three kinds of Luba or three kinds of deer treasures: deer heart blood, deer whip, and deer fetus!

However, as the foundation for continuing the deer herd, the Kamchatka Tribes generally refrained from using deer fetuses, except when a noble of the tribe fell seriously ill. Therefore, the commonly seen life-saving Luba consisted of only two types...

"Whew! This deer heart blood, once downed, instantly warms the body!"

Upon drinking a few mouthfuls of deer heart blood, Exploration Captain Zuvaro felt his whole body warm up, his face flushing red. The biting cold night wind seemed instantly to become gentle.

"Oh Chief Divine! Truly a wonderful thing! Come, you have a sip too, warm your bodies!"

In the reluctant gaze of Hunting Team Leader Mukun, he handed the bag filled with deer heart blood to the Kingdom's Warriors behind him, allowing these warriors from the South to drink a few mouthfuls. He then opened the other long narrow hide bag, saw the dried contents, and a splendid expression appeared on his face.

"Ah this? Is this too Luba?..."

"Luba! To eat, Luba! Warmth and life-saving!"

"Uh... you want me to eat this? Oh Chief Divine, the customs of these tribes are indeed quite peculiar!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro hesitated for a few beats, thinking of gaining the local Jiao People's trust and acquiring more important information... Moments later, he gritted his teeth wide, taking a large bite like a foraging beast...

"Oh Ancestor! You... eat slowly, savor it! ... This, this is something that can heal and save lives in the snow and wind! What's more, eating too much will..."

Seeing this scene, Hunting Team Leader Mukun felt great regret, and Hunter Mulu widened his eyes, staring in awe at the Chieftain of the Longboat Tribe before him.

"Oh Ancestor! Such a formidable Chieftain! He drank so much Luba, ate so much Luba... this must take days to... recover from!"

The curious misunderstanding soon ended, the prolonged "negative" effects only to be dealt with later. Exploration Captain Zuvaro stood proudly, expressing the "most sincere goodwill". Subsequently, he took out a longbow brought by the Longboat, a quiver of bronze Feathered Arrows, and a Bronze Axe as another gesture of goodwill to Hunter Mulu. Then, eyes sparkling, he pointed to the Composite Recurve Bow on Mulu's back, hinting with patience.

"Uh! Such a large Hardwood Great Bow? Sharp arrows? A golden metal axe? ... Ah? All given to me?! Haha! The Sea Tribe from the East is truly blessed with Luba!"

Hunter Mulu caressed the cedar longbow in his hand, feeling the superb elastic wood of the bow's body, and looking at the craftsmanship that was simple to the point of roughness, sighed with a tinge of regret. Then, he joyfully touched the Bronze Axe, struck it a few times with a Stone Axe, and listened to the crisp sound.

"Hmm? A golden axe, it seems not to have become brittle, should be Bronze... it's different from an Iron Axe, usable in winter! Hahaha, truly Luba's blessing!"

Hunter Mulu hugged the Bronze Axe, smiling foolishly with delight. He recognized bronze, the tribe also had very few bronze items, obtained from combat with other tribes and passed down for many generations.

Compared to ironware that easily becomes brittle in the cold, bronze alloy can resist low temperatures better. Although pure tin would suffer from "tin disease" in severe cold, turning into crumbling tin powder, the alloy of copper, tin, and lead would not have issues, maintaining certain toughness even in temperatures dozens of degrees below zero.

"Uh? You want my bow as a return gift?"

Hunter Mulu smiled heartily for a while before noticing Zuvaro's hint. He thought it over and then gallantly handed his Composite Recurve Bow to Zuvaro.

"Ancestral witness! Here you go! A friend's return gift, thanks for your meat soup and gifts!"

"Haha! Praise the Chief Divine! Praise our long-lost kin brothers!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro beamed with brilliance, nodded contentedly. He felt the multi-material bow body, handed the never-before-seen Composite Recurve Bow to the Kingdom's Warriors behind him. Then he thought briefly and said to Warrior Leader Chakapu Stonefirm.

"Stonefirm, bring me two pounds of gold, and fetch that chest of 'national documents' most important to Your Majesty! ... I want them to try and recognize it! ... May the Chief Divine bless! Also, I wonder if these peculiar tribes are the Three Islands and Tribal Alliance foretold in His Majesty's Prophecy, or some Jurchen Tribes Alliance..."

"Yes! Captain!"