

Civilization 1471

Chapter 1471: Tai Xia Country Letter, Powerful Northeast Asian Tribes

"Captain Sage, this golden stone looks shiny like the great sand gold that the old grandmother mentioned..."

"Oh ancestors! These densely packed symbols, so orderly and strange—they seem to foretell the guidance of the Divine Reindeer... are they Shamanic divination patterns?..."

The night is deep, and the starry sky over the Kamchatka Peninsula also has a brilliant galaxy. The Northern Tribes' sailors, wrapped in thick leather cloaks, skillfully dug shallow pits and set up low leather tents to shield against the wind. They assigned a team to keep watch vigilantly while others rested around several campfires on padded leather. The warmer inner circle belonged to the Southern Samurai of the Kingdom. Strong and fierce, they couldn't withstand the cold as well as the recruited Tribal Sailors from the North and had to stay closer to the fires to sleep well.

At the very center of one campfire naturally sat Exploration Captain Zuvaro and two newly arrived Itelmen Hunters. Zuvaro took out gold and a national letter, looking at the two with great expectation, but their expression was one of bewilderment rather than the strong reaction foretold by the prophecy.

"Witness of the spiritual ancestors! Coming from the tribes over the Eastern Sea, I am not the tribe's hereditary Shaman and cannot understand your Shamanic runes!"

The Hunting Team Leader Mukun tugged at his hair and shook his head vigorously, indicating he had no Shamanic heritage. He then cautiously handed back the leather paper covered with "runes" to Zuvaro, pointing toward the northern mountains with a look of reverence.

"Friend... our mountain clan's old grandmother has ancient Shamanic heritage; perhaps she would recognize your runes..."

"Hmm... you don't recognize it? Okay... you point north? Someone up north knows, right? No, the prophecy says it's on a great island to the south... oh, are you talking about your ancestors' tomb, and your tribe is north? ...What's in the northern mountains? Oh, dancers, singers, and people around fires—are they the tribe's Priests?..."

Watching Mukun's response, Exploration Captain Zuvaro scratched his head, gesturing and guessing at his meaning. He quickly understood, feeling slightly disappointed, and retrieved the unfolded leather paper.

He glanced at the first vertical line, the square character personally penned by His Majesty, "Letter from the King of the Eastern Sea Tai Xia to the King of Japan," then at the red jade seal impressed at the end of the leather paper, carefully rolling it up. Then, he placed this "national letter" into a small waterproof copper box at his feet, alongside several other important "national letters," storing them carefully.

In fact, there were only four of such solemn and peculiar vertical-seal "national letters" in the copper box! He had already secretly checked the titles of these letters; besides one for the "King of Japan," there was also a "Letter from the King of the Eastern Sea Tai Xia to the King of Chosun," a "Letter from the King of the Eastern Sea Tai Xia to the Great Yuan Great Khan," and most formally and lengthily, in the most exceptionally orderly format and humblest terms, a "Letter from the King of the Eastern Sea Tai Xia respectfully striking to the Emperor of the Great Ming, the Celestial Emperor of China"!

"His Majesty said that no matter what Three Islands and Tribal Alliance, Jurchen Tribes Alliance, or Korea Tribe Alliance, they are not particularly strong and can recognize the words of Divine Revelation, capable of equal contact. Only this final 'Great Ming Han Tribe Coalition' is unprecedentedly strong, strong, strong! Their strength equals the sum of the entire world's alliance times ten!"

"Though unbelievable and unimaginable, His Majesty's Divine Revelation has never been wrong, so it surely is an immensely powerful Great Tribal Alliance! Supposedly, their Great Great Chief is called 'Emperor,' also known as 'Great Emperor,' supreme, regarded as the only son of the Heavenly Divine. And to meet their Great Emperor Chief, or to contact the great Chiefs, Great Great Chiefs who speak for their kingdoms, one must show enough respect!"

"According to His Majesty's prophecy, the supreme Great Emperor Chief and those revered Confucian Priests place extreme importance on the respectful attitude of foreign envoys, even higher than everything else. But those confident female snakes wielding power by the Great Great Great Emperor Chief's side, as well as the chiefs managing the City-States, are especially fond of gold! And the way to deal with these different people must depend on their different identities..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro lowered his eyes, pondering repeatedly over the latter part of His Majesty's prophecy. He didn't know what a supreme Great Emperor Chief was, what an unparalleled powerful alliance was, nor did he understand what revered Confucian Priests or powerful confident female snakes were... He merely speculated based on his past understanding and His Majesty's Divine Revelation!

And according to His Majesty's Divine Revelation, the simplest way to identify these powerful Tribal Alliances is to see their attitude towards gold!

At this thought, Exploration Captain Zuvaro smiled broadly, taking out two perforated gold coins, threading them with a thin cord, and personally placing them around the necks of the two Tribal Huntsmen.

"Witness of the Chief Divine! Brothers from the tribe living in the northern mountains... this is our Longboat Tribe's specialty, two Sun Amulets made of gold, each exactly one jin!"

"Huh? Ancestors with spirit! ...Is this a golden Shaman Amulet?"

The Hunting Team Leader Mukun held the gold coin in his hand, staring at it for a while. Though one jin sounds like a lot, when in hand, it's actually less than half the size of a palm. The obverse of this gold coin is engraved with an abstract sun, inside of which is an unknown bird. The reverse of the coin is engraved with a mysterious Shamanic rune, "God." In fact, this one jin gold coin is not just exactly like the Chief God's Amulet spread by the Alliance, it is exactly the same.

"Oh! This heavy weight is really sand gold! Captain, the old grandmother once said that the yellow, heavy gold can be traded from the horse section in the western-west for domesticated dogs, or from the island section in the southern-south for edible salt... so can this small gold coin be traded for a dog or a bag of salt?"

"Mulu, don't babble nonsense like Luba, thinking about silly things! Can you walk by foot through the hostile coastal Rokube, cross the vicious roaming tents section, to see the legendary grazing horse section, or paddle to the south, to those nests of island section villages just to be sent to death? ...This gold coin is of no great use to Luba, it's just a Shaman amulet given to us by the Longboat Tribe. Keep it well, maybe the Sea Tribe's Shaman can summon the protection of the Sea God, bringing some good luck in fishing!"

"Uh, that's right! ...Captain, you're indeed thoughtful and thorough, worthy of being the Sage King of our Mountain Tribe!"

"Haha! May the spiritual ancestors protect us! It seems these Sea Tribe people now have no ill intentions, perhaps they can become friends with our Mountain Tribe... Damn! We must hurry back and tell the old grandmother about the situation here! Lest the gang of Mulu can't wait for us and leads the able-bodied men out from the mountains to attack!"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro squinted, observing the reaction of the two Tribal Huntsmen upon receiving the gold. He caught their expressions, which seemed only slightly glad, lacking the greed and excitement foretold by the prophecy.

"Ah! It seems these mountain tribes are indeed not the ones His Majesty mentioned. And the trade hopes of His Majesty may not be achievable either... Hm, the powerful Tribal Alliance of prophecy might still be further south, to the south!"

"However, the sea is about to freeze, and this year's voyage ends here! We must quickly find a warm, sheltered winter camp to prepare for the terrifying winter that is about to arrive!"

The sky is freezing cold, and without realizing it, the night has deepened. Communication was a struggle relying on gestures and drawings, as the language barrier was immense. However, the slow communication brought about basic mutual trust, hinting at the possibility of further cooperation.

"Oh ancestors with spirit! Do you wish to visit our tribe to see the wise old grandmother of the tribe?"

"Yes, yes, we wish to go north into the mountains to meet your Chieftain or Priest! We want to know the situations of the surrounding tribes and also to trade for those four-legged riding beasts, the cultivatable crops!

"What? You want to know about the surrounding tribes? You also want the transportable reindeer? Oh! And edible berries?"

The Hunting Team Leader Mukun looked at the four-legged riding beast and plants on the snow, then at Zuvaro's earnest gestures, showing caution.

For the various Kamchatka tribes, inquiring about other tribes' news usually signals a prelude to attack and plunder. It makes sense, too—the other party includes ninety elite hunters, with excellent bronze axes, Greatbows, and leather armor, along with large ships capable of navigating deep rivers...

Undoubtedly, in the sparsely populated northern snowy plains, this is a formidable tribal force that will not leave anytime soon! Since they plan to winter here, they will surely search for winter food and refuge. In this situation, the most common resolution in this combat-ridden Extreme North Asian snowy plains is to attack the weaker tribes, kill all the men above waist height, and take over their women, food, and camps...

"Um... Oh ancestors with spirit! On the desolate and cold snow plains, tribal battles never cease; the only difference is whether you kill the enemy or are killed by the enemy!"

"Perhaps... this Sea Tribe appearing from the southeastern sea can become allies with our Mountain Tribe, to resist the southward moving Rokube from the northwest!... No, I must hurry back overnight to meet the tribe's wise old grandmother!"

Chapter 1472: Nomadic Hunters of the Far North Asia, the Mountain Part Grandmother's Invitation to Meet

At dawn, as the morning sun rose from the sea, the mountain forest gradually revealed itself again. Two Kotyel'myen hunters hurriedly bid farewell to return to their tribe in the northern mountains. The Exploration Captain didn't stop them; instead, he smiled and gave them a farewell gift to pass on to the chieftain of this mountain tribe. Hunter Mulu secretly opened the package, dipped his finger in to taste it, and discovered it was two bags of green salt!

"Ancestors! It's precious salt! This sea tribe of Luba is indeed strong and wealthy!..."

"Mulu, this salt is from the sea tribe chieftain for the Grandmother, don't spill it! Wrap it tight, don't let it leak!..."

Hunting Team Leader Mukun tightened his expression, carefully tied the salt bags, and wrapped them tightly with deer skin. In the extreme cold of winter, with the scarcity of fuel in Extreme North Asia, the cost of boiling salt is too high, making salt a sought-after commodity valued by all clans. Tribes would fight over a few bags of salt, and losing a couple of people in the process was a very common occurrence.

"Yes, Sage Team Leader!..."

The two Kotyel'myen hunters maintained a steady jogging pace and quickly disappeared into the pine forest, vanishing into the northern mountains. Only after they had disappeared from sight did the Exploration Captain Zuvaro let out a long sigh, looked at the sun among the clouds, and sincerely prayed out loud.

"Chief Divine, bless us! May this mountain tribe be a friend to the Kingdom rather than an enemy!..."

After a brief prayer, Zuvaro squinted at the somewhat dim sky. Very quickly, his expression turned stern as he instructed the people on the shore.

"Chief Divine as a witness! Look at this weather, snow is coming! Quickly tighten up the camp, dig the warm earth holes half a man's depth!..."

"Yes!..."

November's snowflakes danced down from the dull sky, covering the gray-white land. Snowfall lasted for two days, with temperatures constantly below zero, and the snow quickly rose past the ankles. The cold northern wind froze the entire coast, causing floating ice to increase and even stretch all the way to the bay.

The Kingdom's Warriors and tribal sailors busied themselves in the snowstorm, chopping down trees, collecting dried branches and logs, expanding the camp on the shore while unloading winter supplies from the longship, especially the most crucial food and coal!

Four days after the two Kotyel'myen mountain hunters left, they reappeared from the north. This time, they arrived with no less than ten sleds and forty dogs. On the sleds sat a total of four palmfuls, that is, twenty tribal huntsmen from the mountain tribe!

"Awoo! Awoo! Awooo!..."

Upon hearing the continuous wolf-like howling, Exploration Captain Zuvaro was suddenly awakened. He donned his leather armor and fur, took his bronze axe, climbed on the simple yet sturdy log watchtower, and from afar, spotted the dog team and the tribal sleds they pulled on the northern snowfield.

"Huh?! These tribes in the mountains are able to tame... white wolves? To pull the sled?"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro widened his eyes, watching the howling dog teams run closer with a look of cheerful and honest wolf faces and strong wolf bodies. This was his first time seeing Siberian Huskies specifically tamed by the Kamchatka tribes as sled dogs!

But quickly, his curious gaze was drawn to the mountain hunters on the sleds, and his expression instantly became vigilant.

"Chief Divine! At least twenty elite tribal huntsmen? All equipped with composite bows and arrows?"

The twenty mountain hunters sat on the sleds, driving the dog teams to the bay at the Kingdom's camp within moments, covering several miles. On closer inspection, these hunters carried composite recurve bows on their backs, wore inner layer leather armor and outer layer wing armor, and carried heavy stone axes and stone knives. Their bodies were wrapped in thick and warm deerskin robes, yet their movements were agile. And those round, honest faces, though reddened by the drifting snow, were filled with toughness and fearlessness!

This initial winter of minus seven or eight degrees was not considered cold for the Kamchatka tribes; rather, it was a suitable season for travel. Especially after a snowfall, the tribal hunters could ride sleds pulled by reindeer or dogs, turning into nomadic people of the snowfields... the traveling speed could instantly be several times faster, potentially covering two or three hundred miles in a day!

"Chief Divine as a witness! Ah! Their mobility on the snow is surprisingly fast! This... Could this be what Your Majesty mentioned, the nomadic Northern tribes?"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro showed surprise, estimating the speed of the dog teams pulling the sleds to be at least six or seven times that of walking! His mind was racing with thoughts while he decisively issued orders.

"Stonefirm! Have the Kingdom's Warriors put on bronze cloth armors and the tribal sailors take up long spears, fully preparing for combat!..."

"Yes, Captain!"

"Awoo! Awoo! Awooo!..."

A quarter of an hour later, at the windy and snowy camp gate, the leaders on both sides met again. Exploration Captain Zuvaro, with forty Kingdom's Warriors in heavy armor and fifty long-speared tribal sailors, lined up outside the camp. Meanwhile, Hunting Team Leader Mukun, with twenty bow-carrying mountain hunters, led the dog teams down from the sleds.

"Witness by the spirited Ancestors! Friends from the sea tribe, we meet again!..."

"Chief Divine bless us! Brothers of the Northern mountains, may the Chief Divine shine upon you and your dogs!..."

Hunting Team Leader Mukun held his head high, accompanied by the tribe's elite hunters, a confident smile on his face. It wasn't until he saw the Kingdom's Warriors in platinum heavy armor that his confident expression suddenly paused, revealing genuine astonishment!

"Ah? Ancestors! Is this? Could it be... copper armor of the Horse Division? The sea tribe possesses so many copper armors!..."

As one of the tribes on the Extreme North Asia snowfield, Mukun, the Hunting Team Leader of the mountain tribe, naturally understood the significance of metal armor, whether copper or iron. Although metal armors were rare in the Kamchatka tribes, and the extreme cold was unsuitable for ordinary iron armors, the tribes in North Asia possessed all the necessary knowledge.

Thousands of miles to the west, the nomadic Evon Horse Division had acquired some bronze and iron armors from further south; some even passed down for generations, dating back hundreds or even thousands of years, from the extinct nomadic empires.

"Chief Divine bless us! Brothers from the Northern mountains, you have come to the camp... Hmm, do you wish to drink a warm bowl of whale meat soup together?"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro wore a smile, enthusiastically gesturing while observing the tribal hunters before him. These hunters bore no murderous intent, yet each wore wing armors that spanned like wings in battle, gripping bows and axes as if purposely showcasing their tribe's strength.

"Ancestor bless us! Friends from the sea tribe in the East. Our mountain tribe and the sea tribe are relatives through generations!..."

Hunting Team Leader Mukun spoke seriously, repeating what the Grandmother instructed him to say. He then reached back, patting a tall man behind him and giving a deep command.

"Wuhai! They come from those islands across the sea to the east... just like your father! Go, use the language your father taught you, tell them the Grandmother's invitation!..."

"Yes, Sage Team Leader!..."

The tall Wuhai nodded, taking a step forward. He blinked his eyes, curiously observing the armored and spear-holding Unanga fellow clansmen among the camp, and spoke in a mixture of local language and Aleut!

"Witness by the Ancestors! The sleeping giants rest beneath our feet... My deceased father hailed from Grandmother Island in the northeast. He spoke of our kindred further east, a people hard to find on the seas..."

"People from the ancestor island chain! You have come in giant longships never seen before, reaching here, into the territory of our mountain tribe!... The wise Grandmother says, the mountain tribe and the sea tribe have never fought but often intermarried since the oldest of Ancestors..."

"Spirited Ancestors, shelter us who share the same Ancestors! You sea tribe folks who come from the sea, revealing goodwill, sharing bonfires, meat, and salt... you are friends of the mountain tribe, our long-separated brothers! The wise Grandmother invites you, invites your leaders, to the winter camp in the northern mountains to gather around a warm bonfire and drink the blood of the same deer!..."

Chapter 1473: Ancestor Benevolent Deer, Divine Mountain, Tenggeri!

"Chief Divine bless! Captain Zuvaro, are you sure you want to visit the Northern Land's Mountain Part to meet with that tribe's elder grandmother?..."

"Of course! Witness the Chief Divine! Stonefirm, we've been engaging with those two hunters, inviting them to dinners and giving them gifts... isn't this all to see their leader and priest, learn about the area, and possibly explore the opportunity for local tribes to ally?"

"Indeed! But Captain... these hunters say their sled can't carry too many people, only four or five... that's clearly an excuse! There's a risk with this... Chief Divine! These tribes across the sea give me a really dangerous feeling. Their eyes are indifferent, not at all honest and warm, unlike the Jiao people of the Western Sea Coast and the Far North land!..."

"No worries! The Chief Divine blesses me! To spread the glory of the Chief Divine, for the deity's divine revelation, why not take some risks! Didn't they leave a trustworthy, hmm, charming important woman as collateral? ...Stonefirm, after I leave, keep that hostage, patiently wait for me to return! If by any chance I don't come back... think of me as dead, and lead the entire exploration team, ready to fight for the Chief Divine!"

"Hmm, understood! Captain... may the Chief Divine bless you!..."

"Haha! Chief Divine will surely bless!..."

Snowflakes softly descended onto the white earth, whitening the greenery and browns alike. Amidst the blowing snowstorm, two teams of warriors from the Eastern and Western Tribes stared silently at each other outside their simple camps along this frozen gulf. Packs of huskies sat in the snow, with curious wide-eyed expressions. They occasionally shook their silly heads to shake off snowflakes, then randomly dug in the snow with their paws, letting out a series of excited howls!

"Awoo! Awoo!..."

"Obey! Be quiet!..."

"Aw... ooo... gugh..."

A Kotyel'myen female hunter, clad in a fur robe and deer-hide hat, impatiently swung her whip, producing crisp "snap" sounds. Upon seeing her action, the huskies shuddered collectively, whimpered twice, and became disciplined once more. Hunting Team Leader Mukun glanced at the tall, fierce female hunter, pursing his lips with a hint of guilt on his face.

"Musuona, my daughter... the elder grandmother..."

However, female hunter Musuona didn't look at her father Mukun, nor did she care about his words. She simply raised her head, straightened her chest, squinting down at Zuwaro, who was in conversation, the "Sea Tribe Chieftain."

"Is this the leader of the Sea Tribe? He seems not as formidable as the warriors beside him, can he really control the tribe?"

Seeing Zuwaro's not so tall or strong figure, the female hunter's eyes showed some doubt. But when she saw behind Zuwaro, a line of Kingdom's Warriors donned in Copper Armor, many tall Northern land sailors, and the wall-like longship frozen by the bay, her eyes immediately became fervent.

"Ancestors! Sea Tribe warriors! Copper Armor, Copper Spears, and Large Ship..."

"Chief Divine bless! Welcome, granddaughter of the Mountain Part's elder grandmother, who tames white wolf dogs!"

Exploration Captain Zuwaro made his decision, smiling, nodding towards female hunter Musuona. The female hunter furrowed her brows sharply, pursed her lips, and nodded slightly in return.

"Ancestor witnessed! Sea Tribe chieftain from afar... I hope you have enough courage to live up to the elder grandmother's expectations, bringing back the Rokube chieftain's head to become my future husband!"

"Hmm? What did you say...?"

Exploration Captain Zuvaro blinked, looking at the female hunter's complicated expression but couldn't understand her words. He looked at Wuhai, the Mountain Part's translator, who merely smiled friendly, but didn't translate anything.

"Chief Divine! Truly a strange... hostage..."

Exploration Captain Zuvaro scratched his head, suppressing some doubts in his heart. He had already learned from Wuhai's words that the Mountain Part's chieftain is a wise elder grandmother. As for Hunting Team Leader Mukun, he is the leading and most skillful warrior of the tribe's hunters and also the elder grandmother's son-in-law. As for the dog trainer hunter Musuona, she is the esteemed granddaughter or "granddaughter" of the elder grandmother.

Yes, in the tribes of Kamchatka in Extreme North Asia, whether it is the northernmost Chukchi Tent Division, the slightly northern Koryak Deer Division, or the southern Kotyel'myen Mountain Part, they are all ancient matriarchal clans like the Unangas of the Aleutian Islands.

In these matriarchal clans, family bloodlines and social status are matrilineally inherited, namely decided by the mother. The highest status in the tribe is held by the elder grandmother who has many offspring, is elderly and revered, and has Shamanic heritage.

"Chief Divine witnesses! Going to the other tribe's camp, bringing more people is not useful... I only need to bring the hunter Big Bear and one Kingdom's Warrior in armor! ...No time to lose! Let's go now!"

The bitter cold wind blew against Exploration Captain Zuvaro's body, yet he didn't feel the cold at all. At this moment, the adventurous blood surged within him, like many successful experiences of the past, in his samurai-like body. With a face full of grandeur, accompanied only by two attendants, he confidently sat on the Mountain Part's sled, sitting behind Mukun.

"Awoo! Awoo! Aoaaa!"

Soon, the continuous howling of dogs resounded again. The Mountain Part's tribal hunters silently boarded the sleds, turning direction and, driven by obedient husky dogs, disappeared swiftly into the

northern snowstorm. On the snowfield covered by white snow, only the lone figure of the female hunter Musuona remained, along with dozens of Kingdom's Warriors in armor, tribal sailors!

"Ah! Spirits of ancestors, gracious Divine Deer, warm Divine Mountain, and the highest Heaven..."

At this moment, when facing the Sea Tribe's warriors alone, a hard-to-conceal anxiety arose in young female hunter Musuona's heart. She understood the elder grandmother's intention, also, what the upcoming negotiation truly meant!

If the negotiations succeed, she would leap to become the bridge of trust between the two tribes, standing out among many granddaughters of the elder grandmother, even possibly inheriting Shamanic traditions!

But if the negotiations fail, the elder grandmother as cold as the snowfield, will never let the Sea Tribe's leader return alive! As for her as a hostage, without a doubt, she will be ruthlessly abandoned by the elder grandmother, becoming a sacrifice to the Divine Deer and Divine Mountain...

"Spirits of all things, may you bless me!"

The wind and snow filling her face, female hunter Musuona lowered her eyes, softly praying to those spirits believed by the Mountain Part. She praised the heroic spirits of past ancestors and shamans, praised the ancient nurturing Divine Deer of all tribes, and also, praised the Divine Mountain, which obstructs the wind and snow, providing warmth to the tribe. And when she sang praises for the supreme Heaven, she unexpectedly used a word not ancient, a foreign term, gradually spread to Kamchatka Peninsula from the Western Evon Horse Division.

"Hmm? She is praying... to the local tribe's deities?"

Warrior Captain Chakapu Stonefirm pricked his ears, attentively listening to female hunter Musuona's hymn. He then keenly captured a word that repeatedly appeared at the end, seemingly a highly revered deity. And the name of this deity is dubbed "The Highest Great Sky God"... "Tenggeri"!