

## Civilization 158

### Chapter 158 Coronation Ceremony: Rituals and Tribute, The Five Mourning Attires of Mexica

The golden Sun rose to the center of the sky, emanating its most dazzling brilliance. The original Sun had already taken its place through the sacrificial rite, and next was the blessing of the Sun God.

Sunlight poured from the apex of the War God Hall onto the towering four-meter-tall sculpture of Huitzilopochtli, which glowed with the radiance of pure gold. Around His neck was a necklace intricately woven from hundreds of turquoise and yellow gemstones, glittering and spilling streams of light. In His right hand, He held a nearly three-meter-long silver javelin, with a brilliant blue sapphire at its tip symbolizing the power of lightning. His left hand grasped a silver shield of two meters in diameter, its outer edge inlaid with mother-of-pearl, rubies, and the feathers of the quetzal bird.

With the Warriors, the Sun God, and the Guardian God as witnesses, Ahuizotl, clad in the bright crimson of the royal Sun King's attire, with the towering King's flag behind him, stood solemnly with an arm shield of feathers on his left arm, his hands empty, in front of the War God Hall.

Before him stood Chief Priest Quetzal, equally adorned as a deity and solemn in expression. With both hands, Quetzal lifted the Heritage Scepter of the yellow gemstone, proclaiming loudly to the sky.

"In the name of Huitzilopochtli, the War God, the Sun God, and the Guardian God, a new Sun has risen! The grandson of the great Montezuma I, the leviathan of Lake Texcoco, the gloriously accomplished Ahuizotl, ascends the throne as the new Tratoani! The Sun of Mexica will shine upon His citizens once again, leading the brave and fearless Mexica to execute the will of the Guardian God, to vanquish the evil darkness, and to conquer this world!"

Atop the Great Temple, Quetzal's chant soared and surged, followed by the loud repetition of hundreds of priests, their resplendent recitations at once shattering the heavens and earth! At this moment, all ceremonies in the Temple District ceased, the Mexica nobility and samurai stood in silence together,

while foreign merchants and envoys turned pale. The world held a solemn hush, with only the declaration of the gods echoing.

Next, Ahuizotl knelt on one knee, lifting his hands high. With a deliberate motion, Quetzal then handed the Heritage Scepter into his hands. This symbolized the divine granting of authority to the King, to rule over the lands of the Mexica people.

Ahuizotl immediately rose and, with his right hand, lifted the Scepter high, the yellow gemstone sparkling in the sunlight. Quetzal then knelt and prostrated himself completely. This act signified the priest's loyalty to the King, following the King's will!

The assembly of Chief Priests followed suit in prostration, then came the various feather-crowned priests, followed by the array of richly-dressed nobility, the various ranks of samurai in their cotton armor, foreign merchants and envoys, and the slaves of the Temple District.

Messengers ran from the Temple District, shouting, "The King is enthroned, pay homage!" Hearing the shout, priests along the way shouted the same message, transmitting it all the way down to the shores of Lake Texcoco.

In Xiulote's eyes, as the continuous shouting spread, people fell to the ground like waves emanating from the center. Residents of the entire city paused in their actions and kneeled toward the Great Temple, faces in the mud before them.

"Hail to the King!" Quetzal chanted again.

"Hail to the King!" The echo rippled through layers upon layers, the shouts of hundreds of thousands scattering the clouds in the sky. From the golden statue, across the blue lake, all the way to the distant heavens!

Witnessing the scene of countless subjects prostrating themselves, a radiant brilliance swiftly bloomed on Ahuizotl's face, flushing it with red. He stared unmoving at the capital beneath his feet and couldn't help but open his arms wide, embracing his kingdom.

"Once there was Shang Tang, from the Di and Qiang, none dared not to feast, none dared not to serve. Such was the norm of the Shang," Xiulote mused, remembering how in ancient times Shang Tang unified the land and called a grand assembly in the Central Plains, the scene must have been like this.

The homage went on for two full quarters of an hour until King Ahuizotl finally lifted the Chief Priest to his feet. Next, the priests brought a large brazier forward and placed it before War God Hall. A predetermined priest arrived running, a torch held high. This was the Sacred Fire relayed all the way from the summit of Mount Estrella, having been carried since dawn, arriving by noon.

"Light the Sacred Fire, to pay homage to the Sun God!" Quetzal sang out.

The King Ahuizotl solemnly took the Sacred Fire and lit the brazier before him. The blue flame surged instantly, and the acrid smoke rapidly dispersed. The nobility and warriors below the Great Temple cried out again and prostrated themselves. It took a while for the flames to dim, settling into a normal bright yellow.

This was a new element added by the Priesthood after witnessing the sacrificial rites of the Tarasco people. The brazier was charged with a certain amount of sulfur for creating color and mixed with liquid fat to fuel the fire.

Observing the awed reaction of the people, Quetzal nodded slightly, indeed, the effect was remarkable.

"Sacrifice your flesh, to pay homage to the War God!" Quetzal continued his chant.

Uguel came forward with an ancient obsidian dagger in both hands. Ahuizotl took the dagger, bared his left arm, and the blade began to slice slowly into the flesh. He bit down, carefully controlling the depth of the cut, then slowly drew the blade across. In just seconds, sweat poured down his face. After several seconds, a large piece of flesh was severed and flung into the fire. Ahuizotl discarded the dagger and once again lifted the Divine Staff with his right hand high in salute.

Excitement immediately erupted atop the Great Temple. Nobles and warriors praised the King's courage and determination! In the martial society of Mexica, the King had to be a true warrior. For two hundred years, every Mexica King had practiced self-sacrifice during the coronation. The more stoic and pain-indifferent they appeared, the more they earned the reverence of the warriors!

Only then did the Priest beside him hurry forward to tightly wrap the wound with cotton steeped in medicinal juice. The white cotton instantly turned bright red.