

Civilization 163

Chapter 163 - The Reform of Mexica Religion – Part 2

"Just above is the City Priest, responsible for a city and its nearby villages. The Priest of the Ecclesiastical Province, who is in charge of a complete region including several cities and villages. The establishment of an ecclesiastical province requires the approval of the central authority. The Priest of the Ecclesiastical Province can then be referred to as the High Priest, corresponding to specific states. Mexica with its Eleven States could then have eleven High Priests."

Several ecclesiastical provinces united form a general ecclesiastical province, and the priest in charge is the Supreme High Priest. If there is a significant important city, it can also be separately established as an equal-level Capital High Priest, to prevent the Supreme High Priest from becoming too powerful. Currently, it seems Mexica with its Eleven States can establish one General Ecclesiastical Province Supreme High Priest."

Above the general ecclesiastical province is the highest regional unit, the Ecclesiastical Province. The leader of an Ecclesiastical Province is the Supreme High Priest, who completely holds the religious authority over a region. In the future, once the Tarasco people are conquered, a higher Mexica Ecclesiastical Province can be established above the Mexica General Ecclesiastical Province and the Tarasco General Ecclesiastical Province."

Village and community priests, city priests, priests of ecclesiastical provinces, supreme high priests and capital high priests, top high priests. The regional Five-Level Executive Body largely comes from Xiulote's memory of the 'Cross' structure, which had withstood the test of a millennium.

The elder nodded slightly. The religious regional divisions would also be the future national divisions. Although the Alliance had not yet established a clearly ranked nation, similar planning had already been pondered many times in his mind. This child's plan, however, was even more grand and bold."

"Starting from the priest of the ecclesiastical province, the appointment and dismissal powers will be decided by the Central Church. Therefore, a Three-Level Central Priesthood is established in the Central Church, corresponding to the candidates for High Priest, Supreme High Priest, and Top High Priest. And the outstanding city priests will be selected into the lowest level of the Central Priesthood, trained centrally before being sent out to govern an ecclesiastical province."

The highest level of Central Priesthood corresponds to the current Chief Priesthood and the High Priesthood, which includes twelve Elder Priests, on par with the Supreme High Priest. "In the Cross Religion, cardinals and archbishops are candidates for the Pope."

Xiulote reflected for a moment and did not mention an even higher level, the Pope. Undoubtedly, the highest religious authority currently lay in the elder's hands. He simply reiterated the promotion mechanism again."

"The eyes of God are impartial. The Five-Level Clergy should ascend in sequence; all high priests must have experience shepherding villages and communities. The clergy is open to excellent commoners, striving to maintain balance in promotions."

Towards commoners, this was the most crucial method to maintain the vitality of the priesthood. In the Middle Ages in Europe, the church was almost the only place where commoners could rise above their stations and change their class. Of course, now there was the addition of the grand sailing adventures."

"According to the priestly system of Mexica, priests must dedicate themselves entirely to God. All levels of priests are forbidden from having formal marriages. Offspring of priests do not inherit any religious status."

Xiulote knew that, regardless of the religion in the world, the regulations prohibiting marriage and status inheritance for those truly in power, the high priests, were often merely nominal. Ten years later,

Alexander VI would succeed as Pope in Rome. The Borgia family would thoroughly destroy the reputation of the church and ignite the fuse of the Reformation."

However, such articles had to be written into the priestly regulations, trying to curb the corruption of the priesthood as much as possible, and also provide a basis for further reforms for future generations."

The elder fell into deep contemplation. The present and the future continuously played out and intersected in his mind."

"After my death, there will be a Pope to lead the religion."

Thinking this, the elder looked deeply at Xiulote. After a long while, he spoke calmly.

"Child, everything you said needs a Code of Law. I would like to hear you speak of the Code of Law once more."

A faint hint of menace confronted him, and Xiulote felt a chill run through his heart. He pondered long before responding carefully."

"Mexica society needs a religious Code of Law. The source of the Code of Law is divine revelation, not accumulated case law. The characteristic of the Code of Law is its integration of moral requirements, regulating the lives of the faithful."

"The content of the religious Code of Law encompasses three aspects: it stipulates the order between humans and God, the order between humans and society/nature, and the order between humans and themselves.

Humans and God, that is the rituals of worship, respect for and devotion to the spirits. This needs modification from the current overly bloody and violent religious rituals, preserving the beautiful aspects."

Humans and society refer to the guiding social regulations; criminal revenge, war captives, diet and lifestyle, loan interests, marital relations, property succession, and commonly practiced social moral standards."

Mexica's excessive use of the death penalty could perhaps be appropriately reduced. Marketplace judicial authority should also be reclaimed from merchants, especially the autonomy of foreign merchants. Property laws could integrate the existing regulations, further refining them."

Humans and nature, that is the regulation of fishing, hunting, gathering, gardens, and zoos, Holy Mountain, and Holy Lake."

Humans and themselves, that is personal cultivation and restraint, similar to our Mexica tradition of frugality and restrained desires. But bloody gambling should be prohibited."

In Xiulote's view, Mexica society, with its simple customs and profound reverence for the divine, held exceptionally strict ordinances, and the populace was constantly overshadowed by death. Countless customs dictated the death penalty: death for adulterers, thieves, dress code violators, public drunkenness a second time, corrupt judges, cheating merchants, rebellious slaves, disruptors of religious rites, trespassers into the Holy Mountain and Holy Lake... Such practices were very similar to the harsh penalties of the Qin Dynasty."

And the gambling supervised by judges was both orderly and uncontrolled. Whether it was ball games or dice made of beans, once betting commenced, it was common to wager all possessions and even life itself, treating death as part of the game. All this showcased the splendor and cruelty of a burgeoning civilization."