

Civilization 177

Chapter 177: Analysis of Mexica Social Classes: Land and Manpower_2

It was December, and the harvest of cocoa, avocados, and herbs had just been completed. The royal Chinampas were once again planted with staple crops like corn and soybeans, while pumpkin had not yet been sown. There was also a dedicated area for growing a variety of spices and chili peppers. The floating fields on the lake were lush and green, forming a stark contrast with the barren farmland along the distant lakeshore.

Standing on the Chinampa, Xiulote smelled a faint scent of river mud and the peculiar odor of manure. During the planting of the new staple crops, the soil fertility needed to be replenished. It was the dry season, and small boats clearing silt were everywhere on the lake. Villages along the lake had to provide labor to dredge river mud for the royal family and the nobility.

"The Lake Capital City has about nine thousand hectares of Chinampas in total. The Chinampas are the foundation of the Lake Capital City and also the foundation of the Mexica people. A single hectare of Chinampa can feed at least twenty commoners."

Seeing the farmers busily planting, Gillim was in good spirits and rarely showed a smile.

Xiulote nodded. After thinking for a while, he asked a question that had been on his mind for some time.

"Who has control of these Chinampas? What are the exact numbers?"

Gillim pondered for a long time, calculated in his mind several times, and then answered seriously.

"We are currently seizing the land of the Prince of Texcoco and the nobility, and I have also sent people to carefully survey the land situation of the Capital City. Only the royal family, princes, great nobility, priests, lesser nobility, and commoner samurai can control the Chinampas. Ordinary commoners, craftsmen, and merchants do not have the privilege to control the highly productive Chinampas."

"The royal family owns about two thousand five hundred hectares, which is the most accurate figure. The two princes have nine hundred hectares, we just confiscated all five hundred hectares from the Texcoco Prince, and half of the two hundred hectares from the Tlacopan Prince. Of course, the two princes still possess villages and ordinary farmlands beyond their respective city-states, which are not accounted for at present."

"The great nobility owns roughly two thousand four hundred hectares of Chinampas, almost as much as the royal family. This figure isn't entirely accurate, it could be anywhere between two thousand to three thousand hectares because it is difficult to scrutinize the lands of the great nobility. The land of the priests is estimated at around nine hundred hectares; you can go back and ask the High Priest for the exact number. The lesser nobility owns approximately one thousand four hundred hectares, while the commoner samurai should also have something in the region of nine hundred hectares."

"The lands of the great nobility and priests are connected to each other. The lesser nobility own smaller areas. The land of the commoner samurai is completely scattered, only allowing for a rough estimate."

Xiulote nodded solemnly. He did a quick calculation and then asked in surprise.

"The royal family and great nobility each have nearly thirty percent of the land, princes, priests, and commoner samurai each have ten percent, and lesser nobility have fifteen percent. Does this mean that the land is entirely concentrated in the hands of the highborn? Approximately how many people are there in each social stratum?"

Gillim nodded gravely and spoke in a deep voice.

"Indeed, the highborn hold the land and wealth of the Alliance, and likewise, they hold the Alliance's manpower. The royal family and each prince have several hundred people, with dependents numbering in the tens of thousands. The several dozen great noble houses of the Capital City have thousands of members, with tens of thousands more attached to them. The priests number in the hundreds, with several thousand servants. The lesser nobility also number in the thousands with tens of thousands of dependents. The commoner samurai are roughly over ten thousand strong, and if including their families, also amount to tens of thousands."

"These six groups are the true rulers of the Capital City. In the Alliance's Heavenly Divine Tree, the royal family is the main trunk reaching for the sky, the great nobility are the thick branches, the priests are the connecting bark, the lesser nobility and the samurai are the outer leaves, while the rest - the hundreds of thousands of farmers, city dwellers, craftsmen, and merchants - are merely the roots providing nourishment."

Hearing this, Xiulote reflected on the power structure of the Alliance.

In the Triple Alliance of Mexica, the royal family is the government of the Mexica, exercising the responsibility of leading the Alliance. Below the king, the four-person governing group of the Alliance is all of the royal kin, and he himself is likely to enter as an heir. The royal family itself is made up of nobles of various sizes, divided into many branches, and many are enfeoffed to other nations.

The royal family, great nobility, and priests commonly intermarry and are closely connected. This is why the annihilation of the Texcoco line was such a huge shock and had extensive implications. However, the Texcoco lineage was relatively independent and had fewer ties to the royal family. If action were to be taken against the great nobility of Tenochtitlan later, it is feared even the royal family itself could split and possibly rebel.

The lesser nobility and commoner samurai are actually not much different. A lesser noble without military merits could be demoted to a commoner samurai, with partial land confiscation. In contrast, an outstanding commoner samurai might be promoted to a nobility awarded lands. They do not possess the capacity for hereditary succession, and each household comprises only a few dozen people. These warrior classes provide the military force for the Alliance in wars and can be considered the extremities of the ruling class.

Further down, ordinary commoners are strictly restricted, organized into communities, and serve as the basic units of the ruled. Commoners have to pay tribute, participate in agricultural production, provide labor, produce goods needed by the rulers, and supply militia in times of war. In this era, commoners have no say in matters.

A moment later, Xiulote asked another critical question.

"If one hectare of Chinampa can support at least twenty commoners, how many samurai can each social stratum mobilize?"

Gillim thought for a moment, which was also of concern to him. He calculated in his mind and estimated cautiously.

"Theoretically, supporting one samurai is equivalent to supporting three commoners. The royal family's maximum support capacity should be seventeen thousand people. But in reality, the royal family needs to cultivate luxury goods, and support a large number of servants, musicians, and singers. The actual samurai directly dependent on the royal lands are only about ten thousand, of which five thousand belong to the family's warriors, and five thousand are enfeoffed. And with taxes from the Capital City and tributes from the alliance, an additional two thousand samurai can be specially supported."