

## Civilization 190

### Chapter 190 - News from Afar: Cuba, Maya, and Chibcha\_2

"Ore? These two gemstones were acquired from other Mayan merchants. Sailing the Mayan paddle sailboats from Ekab on the northeastern tip of the Yucatan Peninsula, heading to the endless Great Lake in the East. If fast, it takes six or seven days, if slow, more than ten days. Passing through some islets, you could reach the end of the world— the snake-shaped continent where the Feathered Serpent Divine last stayed and departed from."

"Many wild tribes live on the continent. They cultivate tobacco and love the shiny glimmer of gold and silver. We can exchange a bag of Gold Dust for more than ten bags of tobacco leaves. Then, by selling the divine tobacco to the inland, the profit is more than tenfold."

"The Feathered Serpent Divine left its serpentine body on the snake-shaped continent, and the ground solidified as a result. Open-air copper mines are the scales of the Feathered Serpent, visible everywhere. And the black hard stones are the teeth of the Feathered Serpent, only found on the easternmost snake head of the mountain ranges. Further east from the snake-shaped continent, there are many more lands and islands, which are the hundreds of following snakes that left with the Feathered Serpent Divine!"

Hearing this, Xiulote stood up, turned his back to the Mayan merchant, and started pacing forward, concealing the intense change in his expression. He pondered for a long time: beyond the Yucatan Peninsula to the East lies the fertile Cuba, Haiti, and the paradise where two to three million Taino people live happily.

Cuba is the region richest in minerals in Central America, with almost all of its mountain ranges containing copper ores. In the eastern mountains of Cuba, there are 3.5 billion tons of iron ore, accounting for over 20% of the iron ore reserves in Latin America, and it can be mined in open pits! Similarly, Cuba is also the largest area for chromite mining in the world.

With this in mind, Xiulote paced back, slowly sat down, and his expression had returned to calm.

He picked up the "Black Gemstone" again. If his guess was correct, this glittering black stone was chromite Crystal Stone, the only mineable chromite ore. One of the most important strategic materials of the industrial age. And the black hard stones that Tikalo mentioned must be the extensive open-pit iron mines.

"How long would it take to sail from Vastec's Papantla to Maya's Ekab?"

Xiulote asked in a deep voice, trying to maintain a steady and calm tone.

Tikalo looked at Xiulote, perplexed. He was surprised by the young man's reaction and did not understand the significance of the black ore.

"From Papantla along the coastline, you must first pass through the Totonac's City-States, then the Central Cho'ol maize people, followed by the warring Northern Yucatan maize people. We need to bring enough Escorts, stick to the continent's edge on our journey, preferably in large dugout canoes with paddles and sails. If you find the right route, it takes a month or two at sea; you must resupply several times at the city-states along the way to reach Ekab on the northeastern tip. If a storm hits, you must take shelter immediately; one careless moment could mean the ship is wrecked, and lives are lost."

Hearing this, Xiulote sighed deeply inside. The long journey from Papantla to Ekab and then back to Cuba, given the carrying capacity of a dugout canoe, made it impossible to transport large quantities of iron ore over long distances. The Mayans' long-distance trade mainly dealt in precious luxury goods, gold and silver, and gemstones.

"Unless..." The young man pondered secretly, his eyes gleaming sharply and meaningfully looking towards Tikalo.

"Establish a base on the coast of the Mayan city-states, smelting copper and iron ores from Cuba!"

Xiulote paused for a moment, smiling gently.

"Tikalo, are you of Mayan nobility, the sacred descendant of the Kokom Family? How are the thriving Mayan city-states now?"

Hearing this, Tikalo wore a sad expression. He took off his Feather Crown, caressed the Divinity of his head, and paid tribute to the Heavenly Divine and his ancestors.

"The sacred land of the maize people is heading towards decline! The nobility of a hundred generations have fallen to dust; the heritage left over thousands of years is disrupted and scattered, and the peasants' banners are planted on the Temples! Just like my sacred Kokom Family."

Seven hundred years ago, the gods abandoned us. The earth cracked, rivers dried up, the maize harvest failed, and the city-states fought among themselves. The gods' Royal City, the beautiful and magnificent Tikal, perished! Thousands of pyramids and altars returned to dust, buried deep in the Jungle. The last Tonina stele stopped six hundred years ago; the Golden Age had ended.

More than ten million maize people could only migrate north and south, drifting like fluff in the wind, henceforth divided into the Northern, Central, and Southern parts. Then each part further split, and dozens of city-states fought incessantly, and the civil wars were exceptionally cruel. Farms and villages

turned to ashes in the civil war, Temples and aqueducts ruthlessly destroyed, maize people dying at all times!"

"Wait, you just said, over ten million Mayan people?" Xiulote was somewhat incredulous. In his mind, the Rainforest was a barren land with a sparse population, and the future Maya population was only in the millions.

Tikalo nodded earnestly.

"During the Golden Age according to the records, the Rainforest was full of aqueducts, the plains were fully cultivated, and people started to plant terraced fields in the mountains. The City-States were prosperous and wealthy, as populated as the Lake Capital City. The Mayan city-states had at least ten million people, plus the entirety of Guatemala, it might have even reached twelve million!"

Xiulote looked into Tikalo's sincere and bright eyes, tasting the sadness within them, and nodded slightly: the lost Maya civilization, the bygone Golden Age.

Tikalo continued to recount the history of the Maya.

"In the North Yucatan, our sacred Kokom Family inherited the knowledge from the Royal City of Tikal, the noble bloodline ruling over the dazzling Mayapan. It was the continuation of the divine glory, the 'model of the Maya,' a brand new era of prosperity! My name comes from Tikal, the City of the Gods."