

## Civilization 791

### Chapter 791: Interpretative Authority of Scripture

The prayer voices of the early morning wafted through the sky over the Lake Capital City. They flew into the cloud layers of the rainy season, transforming into the thunder above the ninth heaven, singing praises to the Chief Divine's glory. Atop the majestic Great Temple, hundreds of priests chanted in unison. The burning incense sent up pleasing spirals of blue smoke that encircled the Sacred Fire and then scattered up and down the pyramid. At this moment, the Temple Pyramid shrouded in divine smoke was like the Chief Divine's Serpent Mountain, and the Lake Capital City was the embodiment of the Divine Kingdom descended!

Xiulote inhaled the scent of the divine smoke, feeling completely refreshed and invigorated. The incense of the Great Temple was a blend made from various spices, with a considerable amount burned every day.

He discerned each element carefully; the base was the relatively cheap pine resin, fragrant with the scent of pine forests. Next was the red sandalwood known as 'Incense Beans,' sweet with a hint of coolness that brought genuine pleasure. Amidst the strong sweetness lingered a subtle and elegant freshness, which was the calming scent of aloeswood. And upon taking a deep breath, the last to be detected was the hidden fragrance of yellow sandalwood. When burned alone, the scent of yellow sandalwood was not particularly intense, but when combined with other spices, it could make the other fragrances even more pure and exquisitely beautiful.

The sound of the prayers gradually subsided, but the divine smoke lingered on. Watching the lower-level priests approach the Sacred Fire and continue to add bags of spices, Xiulote couldn't help but feel moved.

"The incense used in just a single prayer would be enough to make European kings envious and covetous! Only the High Priesthood serving the Chief Divine atop the Great Temple can enjoy such luxury and solemnity, even King Aweit cannot compare..."

After a moment, the morning prayers of the Priesthood concluded, and calm returned to the Priest Grand Hall. The High Priest sat solemnly at the head, looking down at Xiulote at the lower seat and spoke in a deep voice.

"Praise the Chief Divine, He blesses His servants!... Supreme High Priest Xiulote, how is the missionary work progressing in the Lake District?"

"Praise the Chief Divine! Your Reverence, the High Priest, the spread of faith in the Lake District is rapid. In every village in the north and the center of the district, monuments to the Chief Divine have been erected, and Divine Priests are leading the faithful. In the Patzcuaro Lake region, the old faith of the Tarasco gods is nearly gone. At the annual Great Ceremony to the Chief Divine in Qinchongcan City, tens of thousands of devotees come from all directions, earnestly participating in prayer, many with tears streaming down their faces."

Xiulote replied confidently with a smile.

"To the south of the Lake District, the Chief God Priests have just begun to penetrate the countryside. The traditional nobility that hindered the spread of faith have been eradicated, and the signs of the Chief Divine are erected in every town. In Kulamo City, High Priest Yitai organized a religious inquisition squad to identify and deal with obstinate old god followers, and it has been quite effective."

"Hm, there was a report from the Lake District recently, highlighting the religious inquisition squads," the High Priest nodded. He pondered for a while and looked towards several Elders of the High Priesthood who were present.

"What do you think?"

"Lake Texcoco is where the Chief Divine has descended multiple times, and faith in the Chief Divine is extremely strong; there is no immediate need for religious inquisition there," the Elder Priest Azar pondered briefly before taking the lead to speak.

"However, in the areas around Xilotepec City to the north and the land of the Jontal people to the southwest, there remain remnants of the old faith. We could establish religious inquisition squads in these two regions to capture and judge the stubborn followers of the old gods!"

Then, Elder Azar looked towards Xiulote and nodded slightly as a gesture of respect.

"Besides, in the northern Otomi Triple Alliance, conversion to the Chief Divine hasn't been long, and there are surely remnants of the old gods. Although the old gods of the Otomi people, gods of the Day and Night, are also one of the Subordinate Gods, the priests must stress the supremacy and uniqueness of the Chief Divine. The Otomi Triple Alliance also can undergo religious inquisition!"

"Establish a religious inquisition squad in the Otomi Triple Alliance?"

Upon hearing this, Xiulote's eyebrows rose.

The old nobility of the Otomi Triple Alliance commanded the tribe's military force and were mostly managed by the Kingdom with loose reins. Elder Olte, a highly respected old Priest, led the mountain city's Otomi Priesthood in converting to the Chief Divine. Although the old god priests had converted to the new god, their traditional power would not fade so easily. The gods of Day and Night still held unparalleled influence in the hearts of the Otomi people. The integration of the northern triplets required a long stretch of time and patience, and if a religious inquisition squad were dispatched at this time, it might provoke a tribal uprising.

Elder Azar was a war god Elder Priest from the Capital City and had a reputation for being rather forceful. In Qinchongcan Capital, Supreme High Priest Mawilo had mentioned Elder Azar, saying he was always the first to express his opinion in the Council of Elders and would even occasionally counter the High Priests' words. But the Envoy sent to the Kingdom of the Lake by his father brought word that Elder Azar's son, Third Level High Priest Aureli, was in very close contact with his father and seemed to enjoy their conversations...

The Grand Hall fell into silence, with several High Priests quietly weighing their thoughts. After pondering for a while, the High Priest looked toward High Priest Uguel.

"High Priest Uguel, what are your thoughts?"

Having not seen him for four years, Uguel's face had grown fuller and his smile even more kindly. His eyes flashed briefly before he answered with a smile.

"The areas around Xilotepec City to the north and the Land of Jontal to the southwest are suitable for establishing religious inquisition squads to spread the Chief Divine's glory and guide those lost citizens. As for the Otomi Triple Alliance to the northwest, Supreme High Priest Olte has been in charge of the Otomi lands for decades, he certainly has the ability to handle everything. I hear he works tirelessly on church affairs and his spirit grows ever closer to the Chief Divine. Perhaps we should wait a little longer..."

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Xiulote bowed his head in silence. The closer his soul came to the Chief Divine, the closer he was to going to the Divine Kingdom. After the death of the Elder Priest Olte, the independence of the Otomi Priesthood would gradually be stripped away. In fact, in Xiulote's heart, he did not wish to see the Otomi Priesthood become independent.

"Excellent! Elder Priest Uguel, your understanding of the teachings of the Chief Divine is profoundly deep. The Chief Divine reigns over the sun and the thunderbolt. He is both warm and merciful, and strict and resolute. The spreading of our religious duties should be the same!"

Hearing these satisfying words, the High Priest nodded slightly and spoke decisively.

"Decree: In Xilotepec City and in the Land of Jontal, establish religious tribunals to handle civil religious affairs for a period of two years! After two years, depending on the faith situation in both places, we will decide whether to continue."

"Praise the Chief Divine! May His glory scatter across the land!"

Many High Priests saluted simultaneously, and with this, the religious duty was considered planned. Soon, the flame of religious judgment would ignite in the peripheral districts of the Alliance, strengthening the spread of the faith in the Chief Divine.

After completing the salutations, a priest carrying the decree hurried down from the Great Temple. Then, the grand hall returned to solemn quietude.

"Supreme High Priest Xiulote, you recently reported to me the miracle of the Sky God in the Lake District."

The High Priest pondered for a moment and then spoke loudly.

"Now, in front of the Elder Priests, you may elaborate further."

"By your command,"

Xiulote smiled, nodded in greeting to the Elder Priests, and then slowly began to speak.

"The Divine Revelation Place in the Lake District received enlightenment from the Chief Divine. The Divine Revelation Priests learned the Principles of Nature of the Chief Divine and with the mighty force bestowed by the Chief Divine, were able to lift a huge rubber paper ball two hundred meters into the sky! Recently, the miracle of the sky in the Kingdom of the Lake came from the Divine Revelation Place's creation."

"What! Lifted into the sky?"

"A huge rubber paper ball?"

"The Principles of Nature of the Chief Divine?"

"Again, a creation of the Divine Revelation Place!..."

The High Priests whispered amongst themselves, and low murmurs of discussion arose in the grand hall. A few Elder Priests exchanged glances, silent, but deep in thought.

"Exactly!"

Xiulote nodded solemnly. He paused briefly, then simply began to explain.

"Fellow Chief God Priests, in the Alliance's traditional ceremonies of worshipping the Rain Divine Tlaloc, there's a prominent part. It involves taking out the intestines of a Jaguar or a mountain lion, tying off one end, blowing air into it, then sealing it completely. Afterward, the Sacred Fire is briefly applied to this air-filled intestine, and it flies up to the top of the Temple..."

Upon hearing this, the priests nodded. It was a traditional ceremony, proving that the Rain Divine controlled the wind. Sometimes, Temple Warriors would shoot arrows to burst the ascending air-filled intestine, mimicking the sound of thunderbolts. The common folk held great awe for such ceremonies.

However, as the singularity and elevation of the Chief Divine deepened, the subsidiary Rain Divine's ritual processes had been greatly simplified, and such ceremonies had not been held for several years.

"The Chief Divine is supreme and mighty, He also controls the force of the wind, and His power far surpasses that of the Rain Divine!"

Xiulote paused to set the tonality for the invention of the hot-air balloon. To the powerful Divine Priesthood, most new inventions are defined as either sacrilege or miracles by a single pronouncement. In reality, what was invented did not matter. Who invented it, and who controlled it, was what mattered.

"Therefore, by the power of the Chief Divine, the Divine Revelation Place in the Lake Region made a rubber paper ball several meters in diameter, using the power of the Sacred Fire to lift it into the sky! The rising paper ball was adorned with the emblem of the Chief Divine, to proclaim His glory to the citizens on the land!"

Low murmurs of discussion rose again. Hearing this, the Elder Priests' eyes lit up. A flying Divine Object that could soar into the sky, symbolizing the Chief Divine! The value in spreading the faith was naturally self-evident.

"Excellent! Supreme High Priest Xiulote, truly you have received Divine Revelation, spreading the light of the Chief Divine!"

Elder Priest Uguel's round face quivered, showing a benevolent smile.

"Such a flying Divine Object is also urgently needed by the Alliance's Divine Revelation Place. It would be best used at the upcoming New Year's grand ritual!"

Hearing this, the few Elder Priests present nodded in agreement and looked towards Xiulote. After Xiulote's departure, the Divine Revelation Place of the Alliance had gradually been marginalized, staffed with many people by the High Priests, and had now almost lost its capacity for research, turning into a primarily manufacturing camp of craftsmen. Without strong guidance and oversight from the upper echelons of power, it was really difficult for an institution and system ahead of its time to endure.

"Respected Elder Uguel, when I came from the east, I brought a new flying Divine Object, prepared for use in the upcoming wedding ceremony. Currently, this Divine Object is placed in the village on the North Coast of the causeway."

Xiulote smiled gently, well-prepared.

"All the Elder Priests are invited to inspect it. Once it successfully flies during the ceremony, the Divine Object will remain at the Alliance's Divine Revelation Place. The accompanying Divine Revelation Priests will also provide guidance, enabling the Divine Revelation Place's craftsmen to master the manufacturing skills!"...

"Very good! Supreme High Priest Xiulote, you have done very well!"

The High Priest smiled slightly and told the Elder Priests of the Priesthood. "

"The Divine Revelation Place in the Lake District has received Divine Revelation, studying the teachings of the Chief Divine, mastering the power of creation... Decree: The Divine Revelation Place in the Lake District shall focus on the study of the doctrine, creating Divine Objects beneficial to the Priesthood. The explanations of the doctrine by Divine Might University shall not fall under the supervision of the High Priesthood, nor shall they enter the Calmecac in Lake Capital City!"

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Upon hearing this, Elder Priest Azar furrowed his brow. The implication behind this divine decree wasn't simply "the Divine Revelation Place operates freely, without oversight," but it granted the lake district church the independent right to interpret doctrine! Once this right was issued, the status of the lake district church would significantly rise, even to the extent that, in some ways, it could stand equal with the Texcoco church district.

"Damn that old man! Even if the lake church district is under your direct grandson's control, there's no need to be so anxious to give him the right to interpret doctrine as well!"

Azar cursed inwardly a couple of times but dared not to voice his thoughts. He slightly turned his head to look at the High Priest sitting at the head of the table, whose expression was as calm as still water, and clenched his mouth shut.

The great hall fell into silence. The Elder Priests all looked down without speaking, and even Uguel, known to be kind-hearted, remained silent.

"Elder Priests, any objections?"

The High Priest surveyed the hall, expressionless, gripping the Divine Staff in his hand. After waiting a moment without receiving a reply, he calmly nodded and issued the order.

"Witnessed by the Chief Divine! Since there are no objections, so be it! Write down the decree, let all the Elders stamp it with their seals, and then deliver it to the lake district church!"

Under the watchful eyes of the High Priest, the senior priest in charge of recording, trembling in his fingers and sweating on his back, wrote down the decree. Then, the High Priest sealed it first with the Jade Seal, followed by Elder Priest Uguel. The decree was passed around, and each Elder Priest solemnly pressed their seals. The die was cast, and Elder Priest Azar sighed before finally affixing his seal.

Afterward, the decree, carefully packaged, was handed over to Xiulote.

The High Priest looked at Xiulote with a gentle gaze, a flicker of emotion passing through his eyes. He slightly lowered his eyes and announced without expression.

"Praise the Chief Divine! Supreme High Priest Xiulote, take good care of the decree. Keep a devout heart, be solemn and self-disciplined. Always bear it in mind, and beware of acting recklessly!"

"Praise the Chief Divine! Witnessed by the Chief Divine! I will bear in mind the teachings of the Chief Divine, comply with the decisions of the High Priesthood, be solemn and self-disciplined, and devoutly give praise," Xiulote suppressed the shock in his heart. He lowered his head, respectfully replying, though he had many questions inside.

He too understood that this decree represented the extremely important right to interpret doctrine. Ordinarily, the High Priesthood would never grant such a right to a distant church district, because that would be equivalent to fostering another esteemed small Holy See outside the supreme Holy See...



Upon hearing Xiulote's oath, the expressions of the Elder Priests slightly improved. Uguel nodded and said with a smile,

"Praise the Chief Divine! Supreme High Priest Xiulote, from now on, you are one step closer to the glory of the Chief Divine. We will stand together, serving the supreme Chief Divine!"

"Praise the Chief Divine! Supreme High Priest Xiulote, may the glory of the Chief Divine shine upon you, as it illuminates us!"

The Elder Priests successively responded with greetings, most of them smiling. Only Elder Priest Azar maintained a dark expression, remaining silent.

"Praise the Chief Divine! Elder Priests, the lake district church will always heed the decisions of the High Priesthood and will do its utmost to spread the faith of the Chief Divine!"

Xiulote responded with respectful salutations. From this moment on, as the Supreme High Priest of the lake district church in charge of the right to interpret doctrine, his status was on par with that of the Elder Priests of the Capital City, even slightly exceeding them.

The sacred smoke rose slowly from the jade incense burners, bringing a soothing scent for the heart. The formal audience finished with these exchanges, and the senior priests relaxed, beginning to chat and laugh amongst themselves. The High Priest sat high on the Throne of the Gods, watching the scene calmly with a smile on his lips, yet his eyes carried the weight of ages.

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The sacred smoke swirled in the hall, bringing with it the presence of the deities, sunlight poured from the zenith, granting divine radiance. The Grand Hall of the Priests was solemn and ancient, exceptionally sturdy, built upon a foundation of white granite, topped with dark red volcanic rock, and bonded with a mortar of corn ash. The four walls of the Great Hall were adorned with murals of deities, embellished with gold and jade decorations, brilliance and color flowing everywhere.

The High Priest, wearing his long Feather Crown, sat solemnly below the zenith. The Elder Priests were seated cross-legged in two rows, perched high above ground. The High Priests stood in reverent silence,

holding scrolls, wooden slabs, and ritual vessels. And Xiulote, clad in Black Wolf ceremonial attire, also sat cross-legged, occupying the newly added lowest seat among the Elders.

On the outermost perimeter, dozens of temple Samurai, holding sharp bronze axes and wearing Beast Mask Helmets, stood steadfast like sculptures. They had dedicated everything to the Chief Divine, remaining unmarried for life, to earn the great honor of guarding the Grand Hall of the Priests.

Prince Totoquihuatzin from Tlacopan, with an expression of respect, slowly entered the Grand Hall of the Priests under the guidance of a High Priest. Facing this majestic scene imbued with divinity, he could not help but bow his head reverently, acknowledging the supreme divine authority.

"Praise the Chief Divine! Prince of Tlacopan, Divine Descendant Totoquihuatzin, offers his respects to the High Priest!"

Upon hearing Totoquihuatzin's name, Xiulote's expression turned solemn, and he slightly turned his head, sizing up the old acquaintance he hadn't seen in a long while. Not having met for four or five years, the prince had clearly gained considerable weight. His head was adorned with a towering yellow-green Feather Crown; around his neck hung a Pure Gold Amulet of a Sun Hummingbird, and he was dressed in a yellow robe befitting the highest Nobility, with gold ornaments dangling from the hem, swaying gently. The entire person looked just like a pineapple glistening with gold, exuding an aura of wealth and status.

Seeing the "pineapple" Prince of Tlacopan, the Elder Priests wore smiles on their faces, each casting their gaze downward in silence. In the eyes of Elder Azar, there was a clear look of contempt. Such ostentation, in the eyes of the Mexica who revered martial prowess, suggested an inability to fight bravely, to win the hearts of the Samurai, and hence posed no threat at all.

Elder Azar smiled wryly to himself, muttering inwardly.

"The Prince of Tlacopan, truly like a pineapple adorned fruit."

The High Priest, in his Feather Crown Ceremonial Dress, sat at the head of the room. He looked at the pineapple prince calmly, lips curling into an almost imperceptible smile.

"May the Chief Divine protect us! Prince of Tlacopan, Totoquihuatzin. What brings you here to report?"

"May the Chief Divine protect us! Respected High Priest, I have come to... er... confess, regarding the nobility and priests of Tlacopan."

The pineapple prince lifted his head, revealing a fatigued and aged face. He cautiously glanced at the High Priests within the Grand Hall and carefully responded.

"Respected High Priest, may I confess privately to the Council of Elder Priests?"

"Oh? To confess privately to the Council of Elder Priests..."

The High Priest pondered for a moment, glanced at the pineapple prince's expression, and slightly nodded.

"Granted!... Everyone else, leave. Praise the Chief Divine!"

"Praise the Chief Divine!"

The twenty-odd High Priests bowed their heads in salute, echoing the sentiment, and then receded from both sides of the Grand Hall. Soon, only seven or eight Elder Priests remained in the Great Hall, along with Xiulote there at the High Priest's indication.

The now spacious Grand Hall seemed even more solemn, silent to the point where one could hear a pin drop. The High Priest looked serene, smiling as he spoke.

"Witnessed by the Chief Divine! The benevolent Chief Divine casts forth the Sun's radiance, warming the hearts of the faithful, accepting confessions that come from the heart! Prince Totoquihuatzin, speak of your transgressions, the Chief Divine may choose to forgive."

The pineapple prince nodded, responding in a low voice.

"Respected High Priest, this year, the Alliance has once again conducted the reduction and reassignment of noble titles and lands in Tlacopan. Many hereditary nobles were stripped of their Lake Region fiefs, assigned to the Land of Jontal, as well as to the mountainous regions near Weytamo. The High Priesthood also stripped some Priestly Families of their hereditary fiefs and teaching rights..."

Upon hearing this, Elder Uguel nodded knowingly. The reassignment in Tlacopan was centrally managed by the Royal Family with the assistance and coordination of the High Priesthood, and he was the Director responsible for overseeing it.

Over the five years of religious reform, the Alliance's process of centralization continued to deepen. The Texcoco Lake Region, situated in the heart of the Mexican Valley, is rich and prosperous, with at least one and a half million people, and has been gradually brought under the direct control of the Alliance. The Nobility from various regions were either harshly reduced in rank, reassigned to foreign states, or, like the Texcoco Nobility, completely exterminated. Now, at least seventy percent of the lands in the Lake Region are owned centrally by the Royal Family, and most of the villages are well organized, with Priests from the Capital City Priesthood involved in governance.

This year, as the Elder's illness grew worse, the Alliance's efforts for centralization reform became increasingly forceful and urgent, even ruthless. The dissatisfaction among the powerful Nobility in the Lake Region grew day by day, with a few small-scale rebellions taking place.

The secret service groups of the Alliance and the system of confession played their parts. When the Lake Region Nobility organized to a certain extent, they would leak secrets, drawing the powerful Royal Legion. Facing tens of thousands of copper-armored elites, tens of thousands of Imperial Guards with Longbows, all attempts at noble rebellion were nipped in the bud, invariably ending with the extermination of the entire family.

Now, the Great Nobility within the Lake Region live in constant trepidation, urgently seeking reassignment and looking forward to the Eastern Campaign. Meanwhile, the Great Nobility of the Four States outside the Lake Region have also lost much of their autonomy due to the strong intervention of the Central Royal Family. Xiulote's unpleasant experience at the banquet in the western City-States was precisely due to this context.

The Tlacopan City-State, located on the western shore of Lake Texcoco, near the Lake Capital City, has seen its remaining hereditary Nobility and Priests subjected to severe measures in the second round of reforms, losing most of their autonomy.

## Chapter 795: The Prince's Repentance, the Secret Conspiracy, the Inevitable Divine Punishment!\_2

Elder Uguel's eyes twinkled as he watched the Pineapple Prince's reverent carefulness, and a sense of emotion arose in his heart.

"In the five years of reform, the Prince of Tlacopan has surrendered his family's samurai and the management rights of the city, and now has even given up most of his land and subjects, leaving only his glorious title and accumulated wealth... Truly a role model among the great nobility!"

The High Priest lowered his eyes, patiently listening to the Prince of Pineapple's "confession."

"... Respected High Priest, I genuinely support the reforms of the Royal Family and the High Priesthood! Seeing the Alliance growing stronger day by day, and the Chief Divine's glory spreading across the world... As a prince of the Alliance, enjoying a luxurious life, what does it matter to give up some land and people!..."

In the Priest Grand Hall, the Prince of Pineapple showed a devout expression, as if willing to sacrifice himself for the Chief Divine at any moment.

"... But there are always some hereditary nobles and priests who cannot see the grand situation of the Alliance, blindly like moths to a flame. In the city of Tlacopan, some great nobles are plotting, and some subordinate divine priests participate in it... I have heard a little, deeply troubled, and powerless to stop it... so I had to come to the Great Temple to confess to the High Priesthood!..."

"A plot?"

Upon hearing this, the High Priest's eyes flickered. He revealed a kindly smile and inquired.

"Totoquihuatzin, my child, what are the great nobles and priests of Tlacopan plotting?"

"The Chief Divine witnesses! Respected High Priest, I have never participated in it and do not know the details."

The Pineapple Prince's chubby face trembled, and he quickly spoke up.

"I only heard it's related to assassination, involving the High Priesthood and also the King..."

"Oh? A plot to assassinate... truly a grave sin!"

The High Priest's expression became stern. He glanced at the Elder Priests listening attentively and slowly nodded.

"The Chief Divine witnesses! Totoquihuatzin, my child, if you have a list of these nobles and priests, you would have accomplished a great feat!..."

"Praise the Chief Divine! Respected High Priest, I am willing to do my utmost for you, sparing no effort!"

Upon hearing this, the Pineapple Prince's expression shifted, a look of joy appearing. He respectfully knelt down, prostrated himself in homage, and then took from his bosom a list already prepared.

"High Priest, here is the list of the nobles and priests involved in the plot! I also have a few trusted aides who can help with guidance..."

"Azar..."

The High Priest looked towards Elder Azar. The stern War God Elder nodded, took the list from the hands of the Pineapple Prince, briefly checked it, and his eyebrows deeply furrowed. Then, he handed the list to the High Priest, his face showing an unmistakable intent to kill.

"High Priest, the remaining nobles of Tlacopan with actual power are almost all on the list!... These damned nobles plotting assassination, their sins are unforgivable! The subordinate divine priests daring to participate should also be completely exterminated!..."

The High Priest took the list, glanced at it briefly, the names of nobles with control over lands and subjects were all there. He understood, slightly smiled, and made a promise to Prince Totoquihuatzin.

"My devout child, you have accomplished a great feat! The Chief Divine knows all, shines upon his devout believers, accepts their sincere confessions, and promises a beautiful future!... Now, you can face the statue of the Chief Divine, and pray earnestly for His blessings!"

Prince Totoquihuatzin nodded in understanding. He closed his eyes, and in front of all the Elder Priests, grasped the pure gold Sun Hummingbird Talisman around his neck, and prayed solemnly.

"Praise the Chief Divine! I am willing to follow the guidance of the High Priesthood, offering all of myself for the Chief Divine! With a devout faith, I do not wish to enjoy comfort in the heart of the Lake Region... I only wish to go to the remote ecclesiastical districts in the frontier, to spread the glory of the Chief Divine, dedicating my life!..."

Upon hearing this, the Elder Priests exchanged looks briefly, all deep in thought. The High Priest slowly nodded and looked toward Elder Uguel.

Elder Uguel pondered for a moment, spoke softly, yet loud enough for everyone to hear.

"The Land of Jontal to the southwest is narrow and has been completely resealed. The area around Xilotepec City to the north, the tripartite Otomi to the northwest, still has plenty of land. There's also the southwest Tlacopan Mountain region recently occupied by Priest Xiulote..."

Hearing about these impoverished and rough hills, the Pineapple Prince kept his eyes closed, his face twitching. He hurriedly prayed again.

"The light of the Chief Divine rises like the dawn, shining from the East! Following His light, I go to the distant lands in the East..."

Elder Uguel raised an eyebrow, pointed towards the East, glanced at Elder Azar. Elder Azar, serious, nodded approvingly at the Pineapple Prince, and appreciation appeared in his eyes. Soon, all the Elder Priests nodded in agreement, looking towards the chief of the High Priest.

"Excellent! My devout child, the Chief Divine has heard your prayers and will entrust you with the important task in the East!"

The High Priest smiled faintly, anticipatory.

"The Chief Divine witnesses! Prince Totoquihuatzin, once the Alliance invades the Tlaxalans to the east, the remote eastern frontier will have your new fiefdom. This is a promise made by the High Priesthood on behalf of the Chief Divine!"

"Thank you, most high High Priest!"

The Pineapple Prince trembled with emotion, prostrated himself before the High Priest. Then, he successively bowed to each of the Elder Priests, including Xiulote.

"Blessed by the Chief Divine! Praise His glory!..."

The High Priest waited patiently until the Pineapple Prince had finished bowing, then calmly gave the order.

"Elder Azar."

"High Priest."

"Take a thousand Temple Guards, along with the trusted aides directed by Prince Totoquihuatzin, and proceed immediately to the western City-State of Tlacopan! According to the names on the list, capture the conspiring great nobles and subordinate divine priests in sequence!"

"At your command!"

Elder Azar bowed to accept the order, took the list, and then, pressing on the obsidian Short Dagger at his waistline, his expression revealed a cold intent to kill, he exited the Priest Grand Hall.

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"Elder Uguel."



"Venerable High Priest."

"Please proceed to the King's Palace, report this matter to King Aweit, and seek the support of the Royal Warriors to be prepared for any eventuality!"

"I will comply with your decree!"

Uguel nodded, gave Xiulote a kind look, and set off immediately.

"The remaining Elder Priests, head to various parts of the Temple District to make preparations. Calm the citizens of the Capital City, summon the Temple Guards, establish a Priesthood Review Committee, and prepare for the trial meeting!"

The High Priest pondered for a moment, his eyes emanating a ruthless chill.

"Chief Divine be witness! The plot to assassinate is unforgivable. Those who defy the Chief Divine must accept the Divine Punishment! Thoroughly investigate the hereditary nobility and priests of Tlacopan! Any involved in the conspiracy shall have all male descendants executed; those who knew but did not report shall be stripped of their fiefs and exiled to the western Kingdom!"

"Chief Divine be witness! Those who defy the Chief Divine must accept the Divine Punishment!"

In the grand hall, the remaining five Elder Priests loudly agreed, setting the tone for the trial.

Within the High Priesthood of the Capital City, none were Elders from the Tlacopan state, nor did anyone plead for the involved hereditary nobility and priests. It was a time of intense religious reform, and facing such conspiracy naturally called for severe measures to completely eliminate the risks posed by the Tlacopan state!

For the central Royal Family, this conspiracy came at an opportune moment. After clearing the remnants of the Tlacopan state nobility, they could fully control the lands and population in the western part of Lake Texcoco, further deterring other state nobilities!

"Prince Totoquihuatzin."

After making arrangements, the High Priest then turned to the pineapple prince, who looked fearful, and smiled gently.

"You may proceed to the side hall to rest and wait for the trial meeting. Don't worry, my devout child, where Chief Divine shines, no harm will come to you!"

"Praise the Chief Divine! Thank you for your mercy, Venerable High Priest!"

Hearing this, Totoquihuatzin somewhat relaxed. He first respectfully saluted the High Priest and then again to the remaining Elder Priests before retreating backward out of the grand hall.

The Elder Priests also bowed their heads in salute and departed one after another. Soon, under the stern shout of Elder Azar, the Temple Guards swiftly assembled in the plaza of the Temple District. The warriors held copper axes and spears, their expressions icy and solemn. Young War Priests, as the military backbone, donned the bronze cloth armor from the Kingdom of the Lake. Within moments, beneath the grandeur of the Great Temple, the atmosphere was stern and murderous!

In the empty grand hall, now only the seated High Priest and Xiulote who was sitting cross-legged remained.

Xiulote stood up, glanced at the plaza below. The Temple Guards seemed to have been prepared and had already assembled. With a thoughtful expression, he walked up to the meditating High Priest and reverently bowed his head to inquire.

"Grandfather, why are you in such a rush today..."

"Xiulote, we will talk about it when we get back!"

The High Priest opened his eyes, revealing a glance sharp as a Jaguar. The instant aura disappeared swiftly, and when Xiulote looked carefully again, he saw only a calm, frail old man.

"Yes!"

Xiulote nodded slightly. He pondered for a moment, praying to the Chief Divine.

"Chief Divine's protection! The Temple Guards' operation to capture, I hope all goes smoothly. The Tlacopan nobility dared to plot an assassination of the Venerable, their sin is unforgivable!"

"Chief Divine's protection! The fates of mortals are always set early by the Chief Divine, only the divinely blessed can see it in advance."

The High Priest smiled slightly, reached out his hand, and kindly touched Xiulote's head.

"High Priest Xiulote, rest assured, this operation will surely proceed smoothly."

Saying this, the High Priest looked up, raised the Divine Staff in his hand, gazing at the sunlight falling from the zenith. The sunlight was so bright and radiant, the gemstones on the Divine Staff glimmered, but the hand holding the staff was covered in blood.

The High Priest's expression became distant for a moment, with a smile on his lips and a profound look in his eyes. At this moment, he saw the destined fates of many people, and also his own destined fate. A true master always arranges everything silently. The only uncertainty for him was Xiulote's future.

"Grandfather, you..."

Xiulote waited for a long time, somewhat worried.

"Xiulote, the fates of mortals are always set early by the Chief Divine, only the divinely blessed can see it in advance."

As if time had reversed. High Priest Xutel's expression was profound, he spoke again, sending a chill through one's heart.

"Rest assured, this operation will surely proceed smoothly... because I have already arranged everything!..."

#### Chapter 797: Alliance Secrets, Books and Documents Part One

The Priest Grand Hall shimmered with golden light, and the volcanic rock ceiling reflected a blood-red hue. The Sun Hummingbird sculpture of the Chief Divine stood tall, seemingly benevolent yet mercilessly overlooking all life.

The muffled voice of the High Priest softly fell upon Xiulote's ears, causing him to shiver. Xiulote looked up and exclaimed in surprise.

"Grandfather, you..."

"We'll talk when we get back!"

The High Priest waved his hand, his expression unchanged, then affectionately patted Xiulote on the shoulder.

"My child, keep your heart at peace, and stay with me to handle today's matters first."

Observing this, Xiulote silently nodded, standing by the side and waiting patiently. He had too many confusions, too many things to understand about everything that happened today.

Authority and solemnity returned to the Priest Grand Hall. Soon, the High Priests returned to the hall and busied themselves with daily matters. At the command of the High Priest, newly written scrolls and reports were brought into the hall to be reviewed by both the High Priest and Xiulote.

"Xiulote, sit here and carefully go through the books and documents of the High Priesthood,"

the High Priest commanded with a smile, gently instructing him.

"In the books, the first two volumes compare pictorial texts with block characters, the middle volumes organize the myths and legends from around the world, and the last few volumes contain the doctrines of the Chief Divine Religion to date. In the documents, the first few are about last year's village tributes in the Alliance, the middle ones are about the religious beliefs within the Alliance, and the last concern missionary activities outside the Alliance... You must thoroughly understand these,"

"Yes,"

Xiulote respectfully nodded, filled with anticipation.

The books were the cultural repository of the High Priesthood, and the documents were the crucial secrets of the Alliance. The vast Priesthood worked day and night, extending its reach throughout the Alliance territories, to gather these details. Only here, in this supreme Great Temple and with the permission of the High Priest, was he allowed to access such top-secret information.

Xiulote first opened the books and quickly looked through them.

The creation of the Alliance's script had been ongoing for years and was increasingly refined. Under the framework of "Divine Revelation" in Chinese characters, there were not only transliterated Celestial Empire characters but also many phonetic Mexica kana. The priests of the Alliance, according to everyday grammatical habits, had reshaped a consistent system of language and script, leading to the initial forms of simplification.

Upon seeing this, Xiulote reflected silently. Language and script must complement each other. With Chinese characters as the mainstay, localized kana was inevitable. The eventual Mexica script system would be akin to Japanese and Korean. The culturally adept priests could read Chapters in Chinese characters but spoke in reorganized Nava language.

Xiulote then began to read the organized world myths and legends. Situated at the center of the world, the Mexica Alliance had collected depictions from surrounding regions' engraved stones. According to the newly born unitary thought of the Kingdom of the Lake, not only was the history of Mexica origins completely revised, but the myths and legends of different regions were also recompiled.

"Unified origins from the Tar people... Ol, Teo, Tol, Tec, inherited by the Alliance... Chief Divine promises, divine blessings upon the Royal Family... Sun's light shines, wars blaze... All regions of the world, reunited under one... "

As Xiulote read this, his heart surged. The world originated from the Tar people, passing through the Olmec, Teotihuacan, Toltec, Tepanec, inherited by the Mexica Alliance... Chief Divine promised the Mexica Valley to the Alliance, divine spirits blessed the Royal Family as the supreme rulers of the world... The Alliance, following the will of the Sun God and War God, waged divine wars to subdue all regions, reuniting them under a unified rule... This was the mythical epic of the Alliance!

He pondered for a while and couldn't resist adding a line at the end of the mythical epic.

"... The mandate of heaven, everlasting and unceasing!"

The High Priest glanced over it and a hint of a smile appeared at the corners of his mouth.

"What do you think?"

"Very good! It should be widely circulated throughout the world!"

"Indeed, then print it out in tens of thousands of copies. Distribute them across the Alliance, let children and youths study them as a foundation for selecting priests and Samurai. Spread them to all the states in the world, so even the farthest Mayan merchants wishing to trade must be familiar with this document."

The High Priest nodded with a smile, making a decision.

"The other books should be handled in the same way. If you have time these days, you could help me review and revise them."

"I dare not disobey!"

Xiulote nodded in agreement, his expression invigorated.

The Alliance, in possession of printing technology and paper, and having a well-established writing system, held absolute advantage in the cultural dissemination among the tribes of Central America. As these revised mythological epics spread and were deeply rooted in people's hearts, a unified ideological consciousness would gradually take root, and the concept of a unified nation would accelerate in coalescence.

Of course, the integration of culture, over many years, was not achieved in a day. To rule the world effectively, the fastest way was still monotheism.

Xiulote calmed his emotions and opened the last document of the Chief Divine Church.

In the past five years, drawing on the ideas proposed by Xiulote and traditional beliefs, the doctrines of the Chief Divine had roughly taken shape under the efforts of hundreds of High Priests, logically coherent on a preliminary basis. Of course, the current Chief Divine Church had yet to face a formidable challenge, nor was there a need to delve further into religious philosophy.

Ultimately, the Chief Divine faith, emerging from the Nava polytheism, still retained many remnants of subordinate gods and could be referred to as Nava monotheism or Nava Chief Divine Church. The most important five parts of the religious doctrine were that the Divine was singular and unique, the Divine created the world, the Divine chose its citizens, the cycle of the Divine Kingdom, and the apocalyptic destruction.

The first aspect to emphasize was the exclusivity of the Divine or the conceptualization of eternity, which was the core of monotheism. In the Mexica mythology, the original Chief Divine was born from the Mother Goddess, emerging as an adult, battling the pursuing Moon God and numerous star divines... This part of the mythology needed to be entirely erased, borrowing from the pattern of The Cross Religion's doctrines, to be redefined and recreated.

In other words, the Chief Divine "exists eternally, singular and unique, omniscient and omnipotent, incorruptible, invisible..."

Next was the creation of the world. The creation myths of Central America generally consisted of four parts. First, the Primordial God gave birth to the War God, Feathered Serpent, Primordial Sun, and God

of Death. Then, these four divines killed the primordial sea monster Xipactli, creating land. Subsequently, each of the four divines became the sun, creating four eras that ended in destruction. Lastly, the four divines joined forces to create the fifth era, which is the present age.

Xiulote was aware of these mythologies and knew that in the original myths, the ancient War God and the Mexica Chief Divine were not the same deity.

In the new monotheistic doctrine, however, the Chief Divine became the sole creator god. He killed the primordial sea monster, created land. Then, he attempted to create the world four times, destroying each due to dissatisfaction. Finally, during the last attempt, he walked into the blazing fire himself, using his divine body to sustain the entire world, thus creating the era of humankind.

Upon reading this, Xiulote slightly furrowed his brows. This part of the creation myth was a highly integrated version of the old myths, yet failed to fully demonstrate the omnipotence of the Chief Divine. After pondering for a while, he added another ambiguous, profound doctrine.

"The Chief Divine is omnipotent and can create everything. However, human life is ultimately fragile and cannot withstand too much power. The Chief Divine is merciful, and for the continuation of the human world, He restrained his own power and bestowed divinity to the world, implanting it deep within human souls!"

"The merciful Chief Divine...the restrained power...the divinity of humans..."

The High Priest tilted his head slightly upon seeing this doctrine and pondered for a while, noncommittally.

Chapter 798: Alliance Secrets, Books and Documents Part Two

"The power of benevolence is enduring, divine dedication commands respect. The strongest force is embodied within the common people!...These are the truths of the river of time."

Xiulote looked toward his grandfather and gave a soft explanation.



Upon hearing this, the High Priest thought for a moment and nodded kindly. He patted Xiulote's shoulder and smiled calmly.

"My child, let it be as you wish."

Xiulote pursed his lips and nodded silently. He continued to read on, coming to the third part of the doctrinal system, "The Chosen Citizens," which was the theoretical foundation established by the Priesthood.

The concept of The Chosen Citizens is about being enlightened by the Chief Divine and blessed by Him. This concept is always making comparisons, with a strong aggressiveness. Those who believe in the Chief Divine, compared to those who do not, the believers are The Chosen Citizens. Among the devout believers, compared to those who aren't devout, the devotees are The Chosen Citizens.

And among the devout believers, the more Divine Revelations received and blessings bestowed by the divine, the more "chosen" they are. According to this logic, the Mexica people have received the Divine Revelations and blessings of the Chief Divine, so they are The Chosen Nation. The priests have more Divine Revelations, so they are The Chosen People.

The Chosen bear the innate responsibility of governing, to guide and enlighten the common masses. The Chosen priests establish the Priesthood to guide the myriads of citizens. Naturally, this is not for power and pleasure but to spread divine enlightenment and shepherd the people for the divine.

At the very top of this hierarchy are the Elders inheriting divinity, the High Priests, the Divine Descendant kings, and those beneath the Divine Revelation Hall!

Upon reading this, Xiulote pondered for a moment and felt admiration.

"This part of the doctrine is well articulated and logically transparent... Who wrote it?"

The High Priest lowered his gaze and spoke calmly.

"It was Elder Priest Acap."

"Ah? Acap..."

Xiulote was slightly startled and remembered his childhood friend, the young priest who used to serve his grandfather. He asked softly.

"Today in the great hall, I did not see Acap. It's been many years since I last saw him... Where is he?"

"Elder Acap has always been on good terms with the Priestly leader Petl of the Holy City of Cholula. At this moment, he has been dispatched to Cholula City to prepare for the eastern campaign after the autumn harvest."

Speaking of Acap, the High Priest's voice was very calm, without a hint of emotion.

"I see."

Xiulote nodded, his expression thoughtful.

"This diplomatic mission must not be easy! The Alliance is set to attack the Four States of Tlaxcala, directly threatening the Holy City of Cholula. The priestly leaders of Cholula will certainly not stand idly by, and I wonder if their anger will fall upon Acap..."

"Well, someone must be sent to try, even if just to stall for some time."

The High Priest smiled deeply.

"The Holy City of Cholula does not have much military strength. Their greatest force lies in being a banner, summoning the nobility of the Totonac, Mistec, and Zapotecs Tribes in unity to resist the Alliance. The mobilization of the three nobilities takes time, as does their coordination. If they arrive a few months late, perhaps the eastern campaign would already be over..."

"Correct! In war, the most important element is time... The priestly leaders of Cholula may not even have the courage to openly oppose the Alliance."

Xiulote pondered for a moment, then asked softly.

"I remember at the beginning of the western campaign, the Alliance negotiated with the Cholula Priesthood, promising them high-ranking holy offices within the Alliance?"

"Everything in the world changes with the alteration of the world itself... My child, how can the situation of the Alliance before the western campaign be compared to now?"

The High Priest smiled faintly, like a wise old fox.

"The Priesthood of Cholula is huge and influential, holding sway over the religious power for generations. They are completely different from the Otomi Priesthood... The current Alliance already has no place for them!"

Upon hearing this, Xiulote raised an eyebrow, understanding the unsaid harsh reality. His expression unchanged, he expressed his agreement.

"Indeed. At the beginning of the religious reform, the falsely exalted clerical positions granted to the priestly families from the various states of the Alliance must also be gradually purged!"

The grandfather and grandson exchanged a smile, filled with the resolve of blood and fire, and fell silent.

Xiulote continued to read through the doctrines, and the fourth section was "Cycle of the Divine Kingdom," outlining a complete afterlife world.

"Devotees ascend to the Sun God Nation, where their souls are fulfilled, enjoying eternal peace and beauty... Samurai who die in battle for the gods enter the Red Kingdom, beloved by the Chief Divine, and may be reborn as beautiful birds and flowers... Sinners sink into the Land of Death, becoming stone sculptures, forever suffering the torment of cold winds and the blade..."

Upon reading these assertions, Xiulote nodded slightly. These statements were distilled from the traditional myths of the Alliance, designed to soothe the followers' hearts and bring hope for the afterlife.

And the determination of a devotee's destiny after death naturally depended on their devotion and offering during life. This led to the derivation of "adherence to religious laws," "devotion and offering," "daily prayers," "confession and atonement," "regular worship visits,"... and many other specific faith requirements. The content of this section would continuously be revised in line with societal and temporal changes.

The final section was about "Apocalyptic Destruction." The concept of the apocalypse is an exceptionally important and indispensable component of faith systems, which is touched upon by religions worldwide. It addresses the question of ultimate fate, shaping the core goal of faith.

The universe will fall into silence, and everything will end. For what, then, does mankind exist? In religion, the answer to this question is the belief in God...

Similar ideas have long been present in the traditional myths of the Mexica people.

The births and destructions of the four Eras represent the apocalypse for the worlds within... The Sun God requires life force and blood to battle the malevolent Moon God and sustain the world's rotation; otherwise, the apocalypse would come... The rekindling of the Sacred Fire every 52 years also prevents the world from being destroyed by darkness... and the Mayas' Great Cycle predicting the world's end...

In the common people's understanding, the Alliance's continuous engagement in holy wars and the samurai's fearless approach to life and death are all for the salvation of the world!

Xiulote contemplated as he looked at the newly organized doctrines. He read aloud softly, savoring the final paragraphs.

"...In short, the Chief Divine's Divine Kingdom will eventually descend upon the earth. The Chief Divine will reveal boundless power to judge the faith of all people, believers, and nonbelievers alike!... The apocalypse is bound to come, survival or destruction? It will all be determined by faith!"

The High Priest smiled faintly.

"How is it?"

"Very good!"

Xiulote was somewhat surprised. He looked at the familiar saying and asked.

"Who wrote this?"

"I did. I used a phrase you said when you were a child."

The High Priest's face showed a smile, he reached out his hand, and fondly stroked his legitimate grandson's cheek.

"My child, when you were little, you spoke many words of divine revelation. I knew then that you were extraordinary..."

Xiulote's face flushed inexplicably. He changed the subject without a change in expression.

"...Unique God, Creation of the World by God, God's Chosen People, Cycle of the Divine Kingdom, and Apocalyptic Destruction... These five parts of the doctrine corroborate each other and have roughly formed a system, convincing enough for the populace. However, there are slight deficiencies..."

"Oh?"

A glint appeared in the High Priest's eyes. He looked at Xiulote solemnly.

"Where lies the deficiency?"

Xiulote pondered for a while, recalling the Buddha who attained enlightenment in Buddhism, the deity who resurrected in The Cross Religion, and similar descriptions in other religions... He spoke carefully.

"There also needs to be an example of the incarnation of the divine into the flesh honored by the devotees. To allow posterity to, hm... 'seeing is believing, to empathize.' Perhaps, we can mythologize the first leader of the Mexica people, Chieftain Tenochi. We can narrate the epic of his receiving Divine Revelation as a child, leading the tribes, and migrating south to the Valley to establish the Lake Capital City of Tenochtitlan..."

"Mythologize the first leader, Chieftain Tenochi?"

Hearing this, the High Priest grew serious and reflected for a moment. Then he shook his head, his aged face revealing a meaningful smile as he said.

"My child, you have been receiving Divine Revelation since you were young, naturally extraordinary... Let the stories of divine beings among men be narrated by posterity!..."

At these words, Xiulote paused, as if enlightened. He spoke no more, setting aside the booklet and opening the documents of the Alliance. The first document he saw was regarding "Divine Providence over the Alliance, Population, Farmland and Tribute."

Chapter 799: Alliance Secrets, Books and Documents Part Two

The sunlight slanted gently to the west, falling into the Priest Grand Hall. The incense in the censer had burned out, and a High Priest was about to add more when the High Priest waved his hand to stop him. Although the scent of the divinities was comforting, inhaling too much was not beneficial.

"Judging by the time, the capture within the city of Tlacopan must have already started."

The High Priest smiled calmly, stood up, and moved to the priests' inner sanctum for some simple refreshments.



Xiulote sat cross-legged in the grand hall, meticulously examining the Alliance's census and agricultural statistics.

These numbers were collected by local village priests and estimated based on the customary tributes of various places, accumulating layer by layer. It was obvious that the accuracy of these numbers wouldn't be high. Yet, in this era, they were important and scarce secrets, a foundation of governing the nation, and they reflected the central authority's control over the local areas. Apart from the centralized Alliance and Kingdom, the other parts of the world probably didn't even have such rough numbers.

"Bless the Mexica Alliance, reigning over all directions of the world... The Great Temple is the center of the world; its surrounding one hundred and eighty li form the Capital Region, directly governed by the Alliance, a fertile valley bestowed by the Chief Divine! The population of the Capital Region is over 1.5 million, with about 500,000 able-bodied adults; the Lake Region's milpas amount to ten million acres, and the total area of the chinampas in the Lake Region amounts to fifteen thousand hectares..."

At this, Xiulote slightly started. The Great Temple's surroundings stretched across one hundred and eighty li and were directly governed by the Capital Region? By this reckoning, the Holy City within a hundred li to the northeast of Lake Texcoco, his hometown Teotihuacan, was also included in the direct governance of the Alliance!... He lifted his head, wanting to ask his grandfather, only to realize that at some point, his grandfather had already disappeared.

"1.5 million people in the Capital Region! The agricultural level of the Mexica Valley in the Lake Texcoco Region truly surpasses that of all other regions!"

Xiulote inwardly marveled. Then, he silently began to calculate.

The Alliance used the smaller acre system, where one square kilometer was 2,500 small acres. Each hectare of chinampa could sustain twenty people, thus fifteen thousand hectares could sustain 300,000 people. If the remaining 1.2 million people were to farm the ten million acres of milpas, the average land allotted per person would be just over 8 small acres. Considering that at least half of the milpa fields required fallowing, each person's actual farming area was merely 4 acres. In contrast, in the sparsely populated Kingdoms, each able-bodied adult was allotted 20 acres, with an effective cultivation of 8 acres.

"Thus, it appears that the Mexican Valley was indeed densely populated, and the population in the vicinity of the Capital Region was at its maximum! Around Lake Texcoco, all the farmable land had been cultivated, and even the hillsides were planted with sweet potatoes. River silt and manure were also applied on the chinampas, sustaining an astonishingly high yield... The Lake Capital City housed a vast urban population, relying on the supply from the farmers of the Capital Region. The crops of America were already highly productive, and without fertilizers and large livestock, this must be the limit of what the Mexican Valley could support!"

Xiulote pondered quietly, reflecting on the current state of the Alliance's Capital Region and also recalling the once "future."

At the end of the 15th century, in the pre-Columbian era, the Mexican Valley around Lake Texcoco reached the pinnacle of its prosperity. When the Spanish colonizers arrived, they were astonished by the wealth and opulence of the area, having never seen such densely populated land rich in resources and abundant in gold and silver.

The sparsely populated colonizers, after conquering the Lake Capital City, out of fear of the large gatherings of Mexica people and for the sake of early rule, insanely destroyed the dikes of Lake Texcoco, causing salt water to backflow and eventually draining Lake Texcoco.

The abandoned chinampas in the lake and the milpas along the shores fell into desolation, permanently reducing the population capacity of the valley. By the mid-16th century, man-made famines and European diseases spread together, causing the population of the Mexican Valley to plunge nearly

ninety percent! The once flourishing civilization was thoroughly destroyed by foreigners, leaving countless exposed bones unburied. It was not until the beginning of the 20th century, around 1920, that the population of the Mexican Valley barely recovered to its pre-Columbian peak.

"A change of dynasties signifies a nation's demise; beastly rulers eating their people is the end of the world! When the Mongols moved south, they turned farmland into pastures and destroyed the irrigation channels along the rivers, a destruction akin to these events!"

With this thought, Xiulote slightly lowered his gaze, yet his expression turned even more resolute. After so many trials, he firmly believed in his heart: as long as he was present, he could change everything and rewrite the history of Central American civilization!

After a while, Xiulote calmed his surging emotions and continued reading.

"Beyond the Capital Region, according to tribute estimates, the combined population of the western city-states is over 500,000, with about 220,000 people in the Tepanecapan region, and approximately 300,000 in the Tollocan region. The milpa acreage should be between 3 and 5 million acres; the exact figures for agricultural land are not known."

Seeing this, Xiulote's brow raised, his mind pondering.

"The Tlalocan state actually has a population of 300,000! It seems that I have always underestimated the importance of the Mountain Family in the Tlalocan state..."

"The Alliance's secret guards have long been in place in Tlalocan."

The High Priest was impassive after finishing lunch, and he approached Xiulote. Glancing at the documents in Xiulote's hands, he casually reminded him.

"Izel of the Mountain Family is connected with the Alliance's secret guards, and this young man has great ambition. As for the Spring Rain Family who once defied you at the banquet, the High Priesthood has already dispatched the Temple Guards to administer punishment."

"The Spring Rain Family, Clan Leader Shaopan..."

Xiulote startled slightly, as past memories surfaced. He began to inquire.

"How will the High Priesthood administer punishment?"

"The entire tribe's men are to be executed, and the servants and womenfolk are to be exiled to Xilotepec City."

The High Priest said blandly, his face unchanged.

"By now, Clan Leader Shaopan should have been beheaded. It's a good opportunity to completely reclaim the power of the Priests of the Goddess of Spring and let the Chief Divine of Tlalocan take control of the city-state's religious authority."

"...Yes."

Xiulote nodded slightly with lowered eyes. He pondered in his heart; his grandfather's actions seemed rather hasty... Suppressing his doubts, Xiulote turned back to his documents.

"The southern city-states together account for 600,000 to 700,000 people. The southwest Razico state has 380,000 people, the southern Cuahuac state has 140,000, and the southeast Xochipeople state has 130,000. The Milpa amounts to 4 to 6 million acres, and the Chinampa roughly extends to thousands of hectares, the exact amount unclear..."

"Razico state is a major town in the southwest, with fertile land and a booming population. There are rivers and lakes scattered around, and Chinampa floating fields are also built there. Much of the Southern Army's food during the westward campaign came from nearby Razico state. As for the southeastern Xochipeople state, it borders the Alliance's arch-enemy, Tlaxcala. Its hills roll, fortress is dense, the people are fierce, making it a militaristic city-state on the frontier. Over the past few years, the Alliance has been invaded by Tlaxcala several times from the southeast, and the population has gradually declined..."

The High Priest smiled slightly and spoke again.

"Xiulote, my child. If you join the Southern Army, you will use Xochipeople state as a base to campaign east! I will issue a decree and write another letter, commanding the Chief Divine of Xochipeople to provide you with robust support!"

Upon hearing this, Xiulote nodded and smiled. He then looked at the next document.

"The northern city-states together have a population of 410,000. The northwest Metztitlan has 80,000, the northern Weyophethlan 130,000, and the northeast Atotonilco 200,000..."

Chapter 800: Alliance Secrets, Books and Documents End

The sunlight from the zenith shone down, landing on the bark paper documents. The words on the documents were clear and visible, and the details of the Alliance also came into view.

"The northern city-states, in total, count 410,000 people. Northwest Xilotepec, briefly Xipek, with 130,000; Northern Metztitlan, briefly Metlan, with 80,000; Northeast Atotonilco, briefly Alc, with 200,000."

Xiulote read it again and spoke in a deep voice.

"The northern city-states of the Alliance generally have smaller populations, all being frontier military city-states."

"The northern farmlands are somewhat barren, and due to the turmoil of war, the populations are not flourishing. But the military pressure on the three states of the north is significant, depending on the supply from the central Alliance, they have been quite loyal."

The High Priest quietly smiled, knowledgeable about all regions of the Alliance.

"Xiulote, my child. The Northern Metlan state is the place you passed through on your first return from capturing prisoners. There are only 80,000 people there, governed by the local glorious nobility. Further north lies the border with the Vastec people."

Hearing this, Xiulote nodded, sinking into memories. He still remembered passing through Metlan City on his first capture mission, where he encountered the Mayan merchant Tikalo of noble origin in the central market.

"The northwest Xipek state was taken during the campaign against the Otomi people, managed by a royal noble, the northern general Osellor. Xipek is a key stronghold in the north, near a tributary of the Tampen River, with fertile soil and much arable land. During the Otomi era, there were as many as 300,000 people there. However, after the fierce campaign six years ago, it has yet to recover."

As the High Priest reached this point, he paused slightly. He pondered for a moment before speaking calmly.

"Northern General Osellor has close relations with the Elder Priest Uguel, and he has also been acquainted with me. He is loyal to the great Royal Family of the Alliance itself, without any faltering, and is not willing to return to the Capital City to indulge in pleasure... Even far from the Lake Capital City, he still performs his duties earnestly, with quite inspiring intention. And the Divine Blessing Legion of Xipek has made great achievements in the western campaigns, fighting very effectively."

"Loyal to the Royal Family itself, without faltering, not wanting to return for indulgence..."

Xiulote listened intently with his ears perked up, grasping the unsaid intentions of his grandfather. He recalled the performance of General Osellor during the western campaign and made a judgment.

"It seems that General Osellor is a local magnate who holds his ground, does not meddle with the internal affairs of the Kingdom, and watches the situation from afar..."

"The northeastern state of Alc is located at the border between the Vastec and the Tlaxcala people, with many stone and wooden fortresses built. Over the past few years, the Tlaxcala have invaded several times. Alc has become a fierce battlefield, and its population has decreased by 30 to 40 thousand."

The High Priest glanced at Xiulote and said calmly.

"For the upcoming eastern campaign, the Northern Route Army will set out from here to campaign against our old enemy, the Tlaxcala. The central Alliance has already sent envoys, ordering the Vastec people to prepare nearby and supply some of the food."

"I've heard from the trade caravans of the Kingdom that the Vastec tribes suffered hurricanes last year, with a decrease in food production, and it seems somewhat unstable."

Xiulote was somewhat concerned.

"If the Alliance forces them to supply grain, we might end up driving the Vastec people to rebellion..."

"If they rebel, then we shall pacify them... The Vastec people are different from the various Nava tribes. They are a branch of the Maya people, worshipping the Mayan gods. The Vastec tribes are quite gentle in customs, samurai have low status, and their war power is weak, posing no threat to the Alliance."

The High Priest smiled indifferently, his calm words carrying a chilling resolve.



"The eastern campaign's Northern Route Army will be personally led by King Aweit, directly commanding at least sixty to seventy thousand warriors from various states. With the Vastec people providing food nearby, it will significantly lessen the pressure on the Alliance. Tlaxcala is mountainous and forested, with layered forts, making it difficult for a large army to deploy. If the Vastec tribes refuse, it will be just the opportunity to dispatch tens of thousands of troops to sweep through the Vastec towns and villages nearby!"

Hearing this, Xiulote slightly shook his head, refraining from giving his opinion. Although the Vastec tribes had long been submissive and paid tribute, they were never fully accepted by the upper echelons of the Alliance because of their Mayan heritage and beliefs. To the powerful Mexica Alliance, the Vastec tribes were just providers of taxes.

"My child, you need not worry. The Vastec tribes are currently under the threat of the Canine Descendants Tribes to the north; they are unlikely to rebel against the Alliance at this time."

The High Priest patted Xiulote's shoulder. His gaze shifted, indicating another matter of relevance.

"To the north of the Vastec people, beyond the mouth of the Tampen River, tens of thousands of Canine Descendants Tribes appeared last year. Bearing the banner of the Red Crow, they crossed the eastern Sierra Madre Mountains, recruiting more Canine Descendants from the northern wilderness while launching major attacks on the Vastec people. These Canine Descendants Tribes are extremely fierce and tactically flexible. After last fall's harvest, the chieftains of the Vastec tribes mustered eight thousand warriors, heading north to campaign against the Canine Descendants, but they were ambushed at the edge of the mountains, struck by arrows and killed..."

"Ah? The Red Crow Tribe!"

Xiulote was startled by the news. His expression changed, and he asked in a grave voice.

"These cunning Red Crow Tribes, so swift in their movements. They must be the Guajili Canine Descendants that escaped during my northern campaign!"

"Indeed, they are the scattered Guajili Canine Descendants."

The High Priest nodded slightly. The northern conquest by the Kingdom and the eastward advance by the Canine Descendants were back-to-back, certainly related, a point that did not exceed his expectations. He smiled faintly, saying with keen interest.

"After these tens of thousands of Red Crow Tribes defeated the Vastec leader's campaign, they began to settle in the northeastern plains and jungles. They have recruited many surrendered Vastec army and manage Vastec villages, with their influence growing rapidly... Interestingly, after establishing their footing in the northeast, a Canine Descendants chieftain named Amoxтли sent envoys to the Alliance, claiming a willingness to pay tribute and submit to the mighty Cactus Tribe."