

## Civilization 991

### Chapter 991: Below Cloud Serpent City, Conversation of the Dual Kings

The wooden and stone fortress perched high upon the mountain peaks seemed as if it would merge with the heavens. The treacherous cliffs blocked any climbers, like hundred-meter-high walls bestowed by the divine. The Cloud Serpent Mountain City stood as a bastion between mountain and sky, guarding the last descendants of the Tlaxcala Divine.

At this moment, thousands of Mexica warriors clad in armor were glaring murderously upwards from the mountain's base. The shadowy figures of the Tlaxcala warriors, on the other hand, were demonstrating atop the Cloud Serpent Outer City, raising their bows and javelins high in defiance. Warriors on both sides shouted fiercely, their voices loud enough to disturb the flocks of birds in the sky! Yet they remained separated by the terrain, halted on either end of the natural fortress, never truly clashing.

"O Chief Divine! Is this the invincible mountain stronghold, the ancestral land of the Tlaxcalans, Tepeticpac-Tlaxcala, the Cloud Serpent City?!"

Xiulote stood at the mountain's base, his mouth agape in astonishment as he gazed up at the two to three hundred meters tall mountain city. He calculated the height of the mountain city and surveyed the narrow and rugged mountain path, letting out a difficult groan.

Only upon witnessing it firsthand did he finally understand why Montezuma II in history had laid siege to this city twice, entrenching his forces for seven long years. Only when spirits broke, and a crisis of division erupted within the alliance, did Montezuma withdraw, leaving success one step away. This failure likewise directly led to the loss of Montezuma's authority, forcing him years later to take another path and invite hundreds of Spanish "Divine Descendants" into the Lake Capital City.

"Ah! Oh! ... The ancestors of the Tlaxcalans could truly find such a place in the boundless mountains!"

"In the hundreds of years since its construction, this Cloud Serpent Mountain City has never been conquered."

Aweit, wearing ordinary warrior leather armor, stood solemnly beside Xiulote. The two men were of similar stature, equally tall and straight, with somewhat similar facial features. Their faces were

imperious, standing atop a small hill at the mountain's base like two side-by-side divine eagles, gazing together at the "Cloud Serpent" nestled within the mountain stones.

At the same time, atop the wooden fortress of the Cloud Serpent Outer City, "Black Serpent" Teuctli stood with a longbow on his back, observing the newly emerged thousands of soldiers below the city. Even for a noble Divine Descendant, without the city and legion, one could only scrape by in the ancestral land, leading family warriors and serving as a minor squad leader defending the city.

"Huh? So many Aztec warriors in heavy armor?! ... I don't know what craziness the Mexica King is up to. Can he still not give up? The sacred ancestral land of the Cloud Serpents is the most solid protection of the God of the Hunt, and mere mortals cannot possibly breach it!"

Black Serpent Teuctli looked at the military formations beneath his feet with a serene and indifferent demeanor. These heavily armored elite warriors were the most powerful force in the Aztec legion. To most city-states in the world, they were the embodiment of walking "fear"! However, for the Cloud Serpent Fortress towering above in the clouds, such terrifying warriors could be easily dealt with using a human-head-sized rolling stone.

From over two hundred meters up, Black Serpent looked at the minuscule enemies below, as tiny as ants on the ground. He surveyed the center guarded by the ants but did not see any magnificent banners signifying identity, nor any feather umbrellas raised high.

At this moment, the Tlaxcalans did not know that among the warrior formations below were two noble kings. They were the core of the powerful alliance, the "Divine Kings" holding together hundreds of thousands from various city-states!

If the Cloud Serpent warriors could break through the three thousand copper-armored guards and capture the two kings in their prime, the Mexica Alliance, on the verge of unifying the world, would instantly disintegrate, fragmented into numerous city-states of varying sizes; even the core Mexican Valley might not be preserved...

"Xiulote, over the past few months, I've dispatched scouts and interrogated prisoners; I have roughly grasped the situation of the Cloud Serpent Mountain City."

Aweit, after a long gaze, finally spoke gravely.

"The ancestral land of the Cloud Serpent Mountain City is composed of two mountain plateaus, front and back. The front mountain has an outer and inner city; the back mountain has the rear city. The mountain path before us is the only road where large groups of warriors can traverse. Going straight up, climbing two to three hundred meters, you reach the front mountain's outer city. Although called an outer city, it is actually composed of several connected wooden fortresses and stone walls, together encircling most of the mountaintop, blocking all ascending paths. In the outer city, there are several springs and small mountain fields have been developed to support the warriors within the city."

"The Cloud Serpent Inner City is situated at the highest point between the mountains, the residence of the Cloud Serpent Divine Descendants. More crucially, it contains the most ancient Cloud Serpent Temple, rumored to be where the God of the Hunt appeared in person and blessed the ancestral land of the Tlaxcalan ancestors! All Tlaxcalan warriors, upon death, have their souls brought here by the God of the Hunt, leading them to the Divine Kingdom in the clouds... This temple, in reality, is the spiritual home of the Tlaxcalans, equivalent to the Great Temple of the Alliance!"

"The area of the front mountain plateau is relatively large, with about six thousand Tlaxcalan warriors and able-bodied men stationed there. To the northeast of the front mountain plateau is a narrow rope and wood path connecting to the back mountain plateau. The area of the back mountain plateau is slightly smaller, encircling the Cloud Serpent Rear City along its precipitous terrain. The cliffs there are even more treacherous, with only single-passenger paths and virtually no developed mountain roads. Yet the rear city contains several mountain springs and large fields, accommodating four thousand militia and women and children..."

Aweit looked into the distance, describing in detail. Xiulote listened intently, his face stern and his expression growing more serious.

"Whew! Such a precipitous mountain city would be a stone fortress city, a fishing city in the Celestial Empire, while in Japan, it'd be Inaba Mountain City, or Iwamura Mountain City... If a forceful attack is staged, the cost required might very well be beyond what the alliance can bear..."

"Xiulote, after I depart, the Cloud Serpent Mountain City is entrusted to you!"

Hearing the king's calm words, Xiulote pursed his lips, feeling a headache coming on. He extended his palm, closing one eye and then reopening it, once again estimating the height of the Cloud Serpent Mountain City. After a long time, he lowered his eyes and let out a deep sigh, asking softly.

"Father-in-law... How much food remains in the Cloud Serpent City?"

At the words, Aweit also lowered his eyes, silent. After some time, he opened his eyes, gazing into Xiulote's eyes, and answered calmly.

"Xiulote, I have already arranged for warriors to seal off the entire mountain range, allowing not even a single bag of salt to reach the summit... As for the Cloud Serpent City, they have enough food for at least ten thousand people for a year. Their mountain fields can support several thousand more; should the elderly and weak be abandoned, they could last even longer..."

"However, no matter what, we must take this mountain city, destroy the ancestral land of the Tlaxcalans! This is the most stubborn cornerstone of belief in all Tlaxcalan hearts and is the focus of attention from all tribes worldwide, even alliances and other states. Only by conquering this place can the four-state Tlaxcala Alliance be truly vanquished!..."

At this point, Aweit paused slightly, speaking softly.

"I know, the Kingdom Legion in the south of Tlaxcala has captured tens of thousands of young men, and has traded many captives with other city-state legions... Xiulote, if you wish to truly subdue these Tlaxcalan tribes, you must also capture this ancestral land!"

"Xiulote, my son-in-law, my student, my successor! No matter the challenges, no matter how long the siege, no matter the cost! You must capture the Cloud Serpent Mountain City, utterly annihilate the Tlaxcalan ancestral land! This is my royal decree, the indomitable wish of your ancestors, my only royal command! Destroy the Tlaxcalans, let the eternal rivals, the Cloud Serpent Divine Descendant, be completely extinguished from this world!"

Chapter 992: King of Kings, Aweit's Grand Blueprint

The mountain city stood tall, surrounded by copper armor. The mountain wind brushed against the brows of kings, the blazing sun shone on their faces, bringing the fierce intensity and somber mood of late summer and early autumn.

Xiulote's eyes were clear, meeting Aweit's gaze. He remained silent, feeling the fiery will and determination in the king's eyes. After a long while, he nodded heavily, knelt on one knee, and solemnly promised.

"Honored King, I obey your royal decree! I will capture White Snake Hill City and besiege Cloud Serpent Mountain City, until the divine descendants of our old enemy, the Cloud Serpent, are eradicated from the world! No matter how long it takes..."

"Good! Very good!"

Seeing Xiulote's obedient posture, Aweit nodded with satisfaction. He extended his hand, grasped Xiulote's hair, and gently rubbed his forehead.

"Xiulote, my son-in-law. Half of the royal main force from the northern route has already retreated. Within half a month, I will bring the last two royal legions back to the Lake Capital City. Then, I will summon the new High Priesthood and hold a grand festival to celebrate the victory of the eastern campaign... As for the remnants of the mountain tribes in the Tlaxcala's Four States, it's up to you to pacify them!"

When mentioning the High Priesthood, the king paused slightly, using the word "summon." Xiulote did not have time to think deeply, he only tightened his expression and repeated it in his heart.

"A grand festival to celebrate the victory of the eastern campaign?!"

Endless mountains of corpses and seas of blood seemed to approach, making Xiulote smell the scent of blood at the tip of his nose. He tightly pressed his lips together, hesitated slightly, then spoke out to advise.

"Father-in-law, I've heard in the grand festival of the eastern campaign, there will be thirty-six thousand sacrifices. Among them, six thousand are Cloud Serpent divine descendants, and thirty thousand are men from various tribes!... Cloud Serpent divine descendants are sacrifices favored by the Chief Divine, and are the alliance's most stubborn enemies. For the stability of the alliance's conquest, they indeed should be thoroughly eradicated!... But, perhaps we could slightly reduce the number of ordinary men offered as sacrifices..."

"Hmm?"

Aweit's eyes sharpened, he looked over at the sound. His gaze was as sharp as a hawk, making others dare not meet it directly. In an instant, the small hill was silent. After a moment, Aweit looked at Xiulote's calm face and spoke plainly, reproaching in a calm voice.

"Xiulote, I heard about your sacrifices in Cholula's Holy City before, and thought you might change... You need to know, what the current Mexica Alliance needs most is a major festival to appease people and suppress all directions!"

"...The Great Temple's expansion needs divine sacrifices! Immortal ancestors going to the Divine Kingdom need sacrificial offerings! The revered High Priest was assassinated in Cholula City, requiring sacrificial revenge! Returning victorious from the eastern campaign requires celebratory sacrifices! And the alliance's autumn harvest has just ended, also needing harvest sacrifices!..."

"Adding all these sacrifices together, a mere thirty thousand captured populations, all being lowly Tlaxcalan captives, is hardly significant!"

"Yes... Honored teacher, I follow your guidance!"

Hearing this, Xiulote slightly bowed his head, showing no sign of resistance at this time. His advice was entirely in line with his inner principles, not out of contention with the king. A true king naturally acts according to his own will, but must pay attention to strategy...

The young king pondered for a while to reorganize his thoughts, then advised the middle-aged king.

"Teacher, I've heard that when the Four States are stabilized, my brother-in-law Chimalpahin will be enfeoffed here, succeeding to the Cloud Serpent divine position?..."

The enfeoffment matter concerning the Four States involved numerous nobles, certainly creating leaks. Xiulote, as a royal branch and heir to the alliance, getting early news is unsurprising. In this matter, Aweit was open and had nothing to hide.

"Indeed! The eastern Tlaxcala Four States, besides these two serpent cities, have been completely conquered. According to the alliance's convention, it should be enfeoffed with a prince to succeed the

Cloud Serpent divine position! And after much thinking, although Little Chimalpahin is still young, he is a suitable choice."

"Teacher, to ensure a stable enfeoffment to a foreign land, ample tribal populations are needed. If that's the case, why not give these thirty thousand populations to Chimalpahin? With these populations, he could support two thousand samurai, stabilizing his position in the Four States much further!"

"Hmm? Give the thirty thousand populations to Little Chimalpahin?"

Upon hearing his son-in-law's suggestion, Aweit expressed surprise for the first time. He wasn't surprised by the proposal itself, in fact, Female Snake Gillim had once offered similar advice. What truly surprised the king was that such a suggestion came from his son-in-law!

"Hmm... Xiulote is the elder brother, Chimalpahin the younger brother... brotherly love, just like elder brother Asayacatl and me..."

Aweit lowered his gaze, recalling scenes from the past. His heart warmed slightly, his eyes softened. After a while, the supreme king smiled faintly and said calmly.

"Xiulote, your suggestion has merit. I will seriously consider it... As for Little Chimalpahin, he truly won't be officially enfeoffed to the east until two years later. During these two years, the lake area directly controlled by the royal family needs further expansion, and the fiefs of great nobles within the capital's two hundred li must be gradually reassigned..."

"The newly acquired Four States land will primarily be used for settling the alliance's nobility, while migrating the populations they control, gradually absorbing the Tlaxcala tribes! Mexica's fierce tiger must settle in the fertile valley to the east. And Little Chimalpahin will be nominally the Tiger King!"

At this point, Aweit pondered momentarily before continuing to add.

"Of course, Little Montezuma has completed five years of priest studies, becoming a priest of the Chief Divine. He is Asayacatl's eldest son, over twenty, and already receives support from many nobles... Elder brother treated me very well during his life, and Little Montezuma is both brave and wise. In the near

future, when I sweep away the southern Mistec people, I'll enfeoff him three hundred li of valleys and forests in the south!"

"Sweep away the Mistec people and enfeoff Montezuma II?"

Hearing this, Xiulote was a bit surprised. But thinking it over, it seemed reasonable. According to the royal bloodline's closeness, Montezuma II indeed was a nephew highly favored by the king, inheriting the political legacy of predecessor monarch Asayacatl.

"Haha! The Primordial God united Himself, creating four chief divines. The East is the white Cloud Serpent, the West is the red-tongued Black Wolf, the South is the emerald green Hummingbird, the North is the black Night Breeze, thus the world was born!"

Beneath the Cloud Serpent City, Aweit was enthused, gazing at the high sky, and sang an ancient sacrificial hymn. His ambition, like the Primordial God, was to redefine the boundaries, unite the world!

"The royal family's direct domain is the Mexican Valley, located at the world center! And Xiulote you rule over the Western lake region, Little Chimalpahin over the Eastern Four States land, Little Montezuma over the Southern mountain forest lands... And when Little Xiu Hua grows up, he can rule either the Northern highland or the Eastern seaside. As for the rest of the royal branches, they will be enfeoffed far afield, occupying every fertile land..."

Listening to the king's grand plan, Xiulote lowered his head, pressed his lips tightly. A myriad of thoughts surged in his mind, like witnessing the establishment of Huaxia by Zongzhou, the enthronement of myriad lords.

In this era of geographical isolation, without highways, before the spread of horses and fast ships, the distance of direct rule was always very limited, making highly centralized American Empire almost impossible. Therefore, in Aweit's grand imagination, it was to unify the seas and grant enfeoffments to the world!

"Three thousand li north and south, two thousand li east and west, all must be enfeoffed to the Mexica royal family's kings!... In this way, decades later, the entire world will belong to the Mexica royal family, gradually assimilated into one! And I, Ahuizotl, will personally sever the world's divine descendants, unify all tribes, no longer be a mere alliance leader, but the ancestor of kings, the king of kings!"



The bold declaration sounded in the ancestral land of the Tlaxcala, rising into the high clouds. King Aweit spread his arms, gazed upward into the sky, like the Divine Bird flying to the Nine Heavens, becoming the Sun! Xiulote bowed slightly, standing behind the king, akin to the Divine Bird's wings, steady and powerful.

"What kind of scene lies above the Nine Heavens?"

The skyward Aweit did not know the answer. He only resolved to become a burning bird, flying to the highest point! The downward Xiulote knew the answer. He patiently climbed the mountain, waiting for the summit to pierce the clouds.

Chapter 993: Eastern Expedition of Martial Prowess, like Qin's Annihilation of Zhao

The Samurai armor leaves clanged, the militia prostrated on the roadsides, and the birds and beasts hurriedly retreated. Combined, it marked the return of the kings. By sunset and moonrise, with bonfires blazing, the two had returned to Tree Snake City and entered the Temple of the Telascallans together.

Looking around the great hall, the blue-green abyss melded with colors, and the decorations were splendid. The golden statue of the God of the Hunt was gone, replaced by a newly carved statue of the Chief Divine. The sculpture seemed hastily made, rough in appearance but exuded the awe-inspiring and majestic aura of the Mexica's Chief Divine. Half of the murals on the hall's walls were covered, unable to depict new scenes, so they substituted it with the Sun Hummingbird of the Chief Divine, inscribing mysterious square pictograms.

"The profound desire to expound upon the Universe's vastness. Those who adhere to the Divine shall ascend to Heaven, eternally at peace. Those who defy the Divine shall sink into the Abyss, turning to stone, never to be freed. Believe in our god Huitzilopochtli; His power is boundless, controlling all existence from past to future until the final day comes!..."

Xiulote whispered, reciting the opening Chapter of the fundamental scripture, the Book of Ama Colley. From the perspective of the Chief God Priests, inscribing such sacred scriptures in a conquered temple was most fitting!

"With the cycles of sun and moon, constellations poised in full array. The ever-changing phenomena of the heavens, too, are manifestations of the Chief Divine's power! He controls the phases of the moon,

orchestrates the stars, imparting the truth guiding all things to the faithful priests. He incarnates as the sun, bestowing sunlight, granting the authority to govern the world to the immortal Divine King!"

Aweit's face revealed a faint smile. He softly recited the second passage of the scripture, with an added description at the end. This line was personally written by the newly appointed High Priest Uguel after the elder's passing, dedicated to the King. "Divine King" Aweit, after reading it, expressed great satisfaction.

The kings took their respective seats, Aweit at the head and Xiulote below. Then, the guards served two cups of clear floral tea, sipped lightly, leaving a lingering fragrance on the lips and teeth.

"Since the eastern expedition, the Northern Route Army has continuously attacked cities, suffering significant casualties. Conquering Feathered Serpent City resulted in twelve thousand casualties, including four thousand Samurai, mostly from the City-State Army. Conquering the Divine Pass resulted in seven thousand casualties, including two thousand Royal Warriors. Conquering Tree Snake City resulted in eleven thousand casualties, including five thousand Samurai, with two thousand from the Royal Legion and three thousand from the City-State. Conquering Oak Tree City resulted in six thousand casualties, including one thousand Royal Warriors and one thousand City-State Warriors... along with the forts encountered en route, the tribes cleansed, and the rainy season's diseases..."

At this point, Aweit paused slightly, presenting the final confidential statistics. This was the eastern campaign's details that only a very few individuals were privileged to know.

"This eastern expedition, the Northern Route Army suffered approximately fifty thousand casualties! Seventy percent were drafted militia, and thirty percent were allied Samurai. Among the fifteen thousand Samurai casualties, over five thousand came from the Royal Legion, and over nine thousand from various major City-States!"

"Fifty thousand casualties? A full fifteen thousand Samurai?"

Upon hearing these numbers, Xiulote was astonished, mouth agape with horror. This figure was nearly double, even close to triple, that of the Southern Legion! The Northern Two States were the core of the Telascallan tribes. Facing the Western archenemy's Divine War, the intensity of their resistance far exceeded Xiulote's expectations.

"Indeed. Xochitl... oh, now the Acidwood Legion of Huitzilihuitl, the Reed Legion of Xintle, the Canyon Gold Legion of Pachjo, the Mountain Legion of Izel, and the Western Allied Forces of Iskali and Tepopolo... These five City-State Armies engaged in the sieges, all suffering severe losses!"

A faint smile appeared at the corner of Aweit's mouth. He smiled faintly, yet his gaze was cold and indifferent. For him, these casualty numbers were just figures after all.

"Of course, the Telascallan tribes of the Northern Two States were also completely purged by the Allied Forces. Sixty thousand Telascallan tribes were either captured or killed, roughly wiping out nearly half. And among those executed, warriors and able-bodied men, were probably twice the alliance's casualties, about a hundred thousand or more!"...

"Captured or killed twenty-five thousand, executed over a hundred thousand able-bodied men. Mountains of corpses, mounds of heads..."

Hearing such numbers, Xiulote lowered his eyes in silent contemplation. Typically, ten people per three able-bodied men, the average lifespan in Central America was relatively short, roughly between ten people per three to four able-bodied men. The Northern Two States of the Telascallans, at most, had two hundred thousand able-bodied men. In a year's campaign, they had virtually wiped out half. In terms of eliminating archenemies, the Qin dynasty's obliteration of Zhao might have been similar!

Observing Xiulote's reaction, Aweit shook his head, laughing softly. Soon, his expression grew stern, addressing the bowed student with stern instruction.

"This eastern land, a nest full of rats, ants, worms, and snakes, entrenched for hundreds of years! Without setting a great fire, how could they be thoroughly cleansed? To build a new Eagle's Nest, to nurture new fledglings, one must not leave any hidden threat!"

Subsequently, Aweit's expression softened. He extended his hand, patting the son-in-law's shoulder, comforting him gently.

"Once the weeds are burned away, new sprouts will naturally emerge in the coming spring. Xiulote, you have done well in the Southern Two States. Especially with the handling of the Holy City and the sacrifices of those decaying priests, it greatly pleased me! These old decaying woods who bewitched people's hearts and opposed the Alliance deserved to be consumed by fire..."

"The High Priest's affair shocked me when I learned of it, and saddened me deeply. He was my respected uncle, one of the Alliance's most revered figures... If it were me, I would have shocked the world, seeing the entire Cholula City, with its tens of thousands of people, buried with the High Priest!"

These words were spoken from Aweit's true heart. While the High Priest was alive, he was a source of fear, always on guard. Upon hearing of his passing, he felt deep sorrow mixed with admiration and regret. This fearless elder had swept through the Alliance's ranks, clearing so many obstacles on his centralized path!

As for after the High Priest's death, the desolate ruins of bones left in Cholula Holy City held no further significance and were all sacrificed, thoroughly cleaned.

"Now, with the Southern Two States cleared, the sixty thousand Telascallan tribes are perhaps only half remaining. Once I have sacrificed six thousand Divine Descendants, and you have captured two Snake Cities, then the hundred-year-old eastern archenemy will finally be completely resolved!"

Hearing Aweit's words, Xiulote nodded, his expression returning to calmness. Since the eastern expedition, the Southern Legion had captured over twenty thousand, and executed tens of thousands more. The entire upper structure of the Telascallans had been wiped out. After burning the Holy City, his notorious reputation would likely spread southwards, continuously spreading eastwards, reaching the Maya Lands!

"My hands are already stained crimson with blood. My feet are soaked thoroughly with its color. Only my eyes see across the whole world, a hundred years of corn harvested in golden abundance..."

Chapter 994: The Aftermath of the Eastern Expedition, Handling the Country, The King's Arrangement

In the vast hall, there was a moment of silence. The bonfire flickered inside, casting shadows of the two kings, revealing the deepest shadows. The shadows swayed, but the people were silent. King Aweit raised the clay cup and sipped tea quietly. Xiulote gazed at the statue, silently reciting scriptures.

Only after finishing a cup did King Aweit put down the clay cup and speak calmly.

"The Northern Four States Army, during the eastward campaign, suffered heavy casualties. They even handed over a thousand elite Fire Warriors, reaching their limit, unable to continue the consumption. When I return to the capital city, these warriors from the Four States Army will be disbanded and return to their respective states. Of course, the more than ten thousand remaining militia from the Four States Army can be handed over to you to guard the camps or transport provisions."

The eastward campaign was declared over, and the city-state warriors of the Northern Four States were about to return home. They were forced to attack cities, suffered heavy losses, and were full of grievances, unable to be further compelled, or else they might truly rebel. As for the conscripted militia, they could be further burdened.

In the world of Central America, the endurance of the militia far exceeds that of the Celestial Empire, roughly comparable to India or Ancient Egypt. The reason is, on one hand, they devoutly believe in the divine, fear the divinity of the divine descendants, follow the guidance of the Priest, and pursue peace after death. On the other hand, they lack meat, lack training, do not possess crossbows or copper weapons. In front of well-trained warriors, the resistance of the militia usually amounts to nothing and can be easily suppressed, naturally considered no more than "people."

Of course, the spear militia and longbow militia formed by the kingdom, capable of defeating warriors, do not fall into this category.

"Yes. This time going north, I brought eight thousand 'Yu Yan', eight thousand 'Huashu', four thousand 'Imperial Guards', a total of twenty thousand. These armies are not enough to control two states, but with over ten thousand militia, it is more than enough to besiege two Snake Cities!"

Xiulote looked at the king and reported earnestly. The king should have long had intelligence on the movements of the Southern Army.

"In the southern two states, there are thirty thousand warriors and militia. They must guard various forts and guard against the Mixtec people, unable to move freely for now. However, the Divine Stone City in the southeast, having witnessed the Alliance's military might, sent envoys to surrender. Most Mixtecs are fearful, and when Black Wolf's army returns north, another army can be drawn to move north..."

"Ha! Caught between two sides, betraying their suzerain... The Mixtecs and the Zapotecs are just field mice hiding in the mountains and forests!"

Hearing this, a flame flashed through Aweit's eyes.

"When I return to the capital city and stabilize the Alliance's situation, we will accumulate provisions for a few years. The Alliance will once again dispatch troops, sweeping southward for nine hundred miles, until the Oaxaca Valley! I want to offer sacrifices to the Cloud Divine Descendants at Mount Alban Pyramid Temple, establishing the emblem of the Chief Divine!"

"Sweep nine hundred miles southward, an expedition to the Oaxaca Valley?"

Xiulote's heart trembled. He lifted his head and saw the king's cold and hard expression, pursed his lips, wisely kept silent.

The Oaxaca Valley is the old stronghold of the Zapotec people, located southeast at the edge of the world. In history, King Aweit once led warriors a thousand miles southward to conquer, reaching the edge of the Oaxaca Valley, even touching the Maya Tribe in Guatemala. However, the fierceness of that conquest, the great losses of marching through the rainforest...

"Teacher, how should we deal with the Totonac city-states in the East that have shown upheaval during the eastward campaign?"

Upon hearing this question, Aweit pondered for a moment without immediately responding. According to his thoughts, the Totonac people are also untrustworthy turncoats. They were incited by the Holy City Cholula during the eastward campaign, gathering over ten thousand warriors to subtly threaten the Northern Route Army.

However, from beginning to end, these seaside city-states never came into direct conflict with the Mexica Alliance. After the conquest of Tree Snake City by the Alliance, the neighboring Totonac Tribes immediately withdrew their warriors and offered tribute. In other words, these subordinate city-states are still fairly obedient and clever, not directly offending the Alliance's majesty. The ones who directly offended were those who rebelled and sent troops in the South.

"The Totonac tribes, sooner or later, will also need to be cleaned up. But for now, the first to be punished are the southern Mixtec and Zapotec, the so-called two tribes among the clouds!"

After a moment, Aweit's eyes sharpened, and he made his decision.

"Send envoys to make the Totonac city-states convert to the Chief Divine, hand over the divine descendants to the Lake Capital City as hostages! As for other punishments... Xiulote, you shall handle it!"

"Following Your Majesty's order!"

Xiulote bowed to the ground respectfully. His eyes flickered, thinking of the locations of the Totonac tribes, a thought buried deep in his heart, persistently emerged.

"Punishment for the seaside tribes... the eastern seaport..."

"Yes. After I return to the capital city, the Western Weisoqinke State will be managed by Commander Stanley of the Eagle Legion. He still has a Royal Legion and a City-State Army, which can come to your aid if necessary."

King Aweit lowered his gaze slightly, returning to the main topic. Although Weisoqinke State had been captured by the alliance's auxiliary forces, the remaining Tlaxcala Tribes in the mountains had not yet been cleared.

Aweit had once intended to hand these two armies over to Xiulote. But after much thought, out of the king's instinct, he decided to separate the military authority of Weisoqinke State from the Tlaxcala State. Weisoqinke State controls the western strategic pass, essentially maintaining the grain route to the Tlaxcala State, a mutually assured guarantee.

"The frog god Sochipili said that a wise elder never places the sacrificial venison before a young hound. The young hound need not be tested, nor necessarily withstand the test..."

"Good! I will work well with Commander Stanley to stabilize the situation in the northern two states!"

Xiulote nodded, contemplating. Perhaps the business of trading population could also be done with the two armies in the west.

As the two kings discussed, the major matters after the eastward campaign were settled. The direction of the world and the life and death of the people were, after all, decided by a word from the true rulers.

After discussing military and political matters, the atmosphere in the hall relaxed. Aweit gestured, and guards added drinks, served dried fruits, and some snacks and confections. The two of them ate and drank casually and discussed the royal family's matters.

"After the elder's passing, Uncle Cacamatzin assumed the position of Chief Minister. Uncle has always been low-key, rarely involving himself in the alliance's major affairs or interfering in important positions. So, this time, let him have a larger share of the eastward campaign's spoils of war..."

"Good! Great-uncle presided over my and Alisa's wedding and is my elder. I have a pair of turquoise armbands, smooth and clear, about the size of a human head, said to have the effect of calming the mind, so let me entrust you to give them to Great-uncle!..."

Xiulote smiled, mentioning Uncle Cacamatzin, whom he always remembered fondly. Aweit nodded slightly, recalling the long-term feudal plan, his expression flickered, and he spoke again.

"After this year, Little Quetelawak will be thirteen, old enough to be betrothed to noble ladies from various states. During this eastward campaign, to avoid threats to the rear, I detained the leaders of the Vastec southern city-states... Now that the eastward campaign is basically over, let Little Quetelawak marry a princess from a Vastec city-state to soothe their people's hearts."

Little Quetelawak is Montezuma II's brother, the legitimate heir of Predecessor Monarch Ashayacatell. Historically, he was once supported by the capital city's nobility to fight against the invading Spaniards. He drove Cortes out of the capital city and pursued them hundreds of miles. But after more than two months, he died of smallpox spread by the colonizers.

Upon hearing this, Xiulote's eyes flickered. He knew little about Quetelawak, and these royal marriages were now determined by the king. However, mentioning the Vastec people, he also had his thoughts, which needed to be guided by the situation.



"Teacher, the southern Vastec have more than a dozen major tribes. For Quetelawak's marriage, who do you consider?"

Upon hearing this question, Aweit pondered slightly. Soon, a submissive and elder face appeared in his mind.

"Then... the Silver Raven Tribe!"

#### Chapter 995: The King's Farewell, The Long Siege, The Breeding of Gods

The autumn air was crisp and refreshing, and the weather gradually turned slightly cool. A fortnight passed in the blink of an eye. By late October, the last fully assembled Royal Legion finally set out from Tree Snake City, surrounding the Mexica Royal Banner of the Evil Spirit Commander.

"Xiulote, when we return to the Capital City, I will personally go to the Temple of the Sun on the Holy Mountain to pray for little Xiu Hua!"

Aweit, dressed in royal attire and carrying the Royal Banner, stood among the copper-armored Samurai. Mentioning his grandson brought a genuine smile to his otherwise stern face.

"Yes, I will also arrange for the royal doctors to keep an eye on little Xiu Hua's health at all times. He will be the new Divine Tree, growing strong under the sun's rays!"

"Xiu Hua, my son..."

Hearing this, Xiulote looked to the West, with deep expectations on his face, yet filled with strong worries and anxious fatherly love. In this era, the probability of infant mortality was indeed too high. Fortunately, the Alliance's knowledge of herbs was quite advanced, unlike the so-called "humorism" used in Europe at this time.

"... you are the spirit of light, a gift from the Chief Divine. May my life be exchanged for your healthy growth!"

Xiulote grasped the Sun Amulet and prayed sincerely for a moment. Then, he dispatched two trusted Prepetcha doctors to return to the Capital City with the Royal Legion.

"Chief Divine bless!"

"The Chief Divine will surely bless!"

Aweit smiled confidently, then turned and left. The eight thousand strong Royal Legion, guarding the supreme King, with the Great General alongside, embarked on the westward journey. The copper armor shimmered like mirrors, copper spears stood like forests, longbows stretched like vines, and samurai gathered like mountains and seas, all declaring the unstoppable power of royal might!

At the end of the eight thousand strong Royal Legion were the newly formed two thousand Tonsured Guards. The Turquoise Great General Texiwhit had shaved his head, bowed slightly, and marched among the elite Imperial Guard. Wearing leather armor, holding a copper spear in hand, and a longbow on his back, he looked extremely valiant. Beside him were a few similarly attired trusted aides, all from the Acid Wood Legion.

"The mountains rise layer upon layer, high into the clouds..."

Turquoise Texiwhit halted his steps, gazing northward at the endless mountains. In those mountains lay the towering Cloud Serpent Mountain City, and perhaps, the archer who had escaped by fate.

"Respected Turquoise Captain, we should proceed!"

"Yes. Let's go!"

As the famous Samurai of the City-State and the Head Warrior of the Xochitl family, Texiwhit was not only exceptionally brave but also had the capability to lead thousands of samurai. Now, he served as the squad leader among the Tonsured Guards, effortlessly managing a hundred-man team from the Acid Wood City State, enough to win people's hearts.

"Praise the Chief Divine's blessing, and thank the King for his generosity!... Yun Shan Huitzilihuitl, I will definitely uncover the truth of that night!"

Texiwhit gazed at the sky, silently praying to the Sun. He then looked at the King's banner, his eyes filled with sincere gratitude, his expression loyal and steadfast like a rock. As the Royal Banner headed west, the Tonsured Guards followed closely, treading the road back to the Lake Capital City.

By early November, Xiulote organized the various stationed troops, rearranged the siege plan, and raised the Royal Banner within Tree Snake City, establishing the Commander's camp. He carefully observed the two Snake Cities, deciding to focus on blockade as the primary strategy and targeting the relatively weaker White Snake Hill City first.

Subsequently, tens of thousands of militia busily used simple stone and wood tools to dig encircling trenches around White Snake Hill City. In Xiulote's plan, this ten-mile-long trench was just the beginning. Once completed, defensible wooden barricades would be constructed, with thousands of samurai and militia stationed. In essence, he aimed to completely cut off any opportunity for White Snake Hill City to send out samurai and contact the outside world!

As for the Cloud Serpent Mountain City in the mountains, it concealed many hidden and perilous paths crisscrossing the vast mountains. Even with large samurai deployments, it was still difficult to sever all connections, not to mention the risk of ambushes.

Xiulote pondered for a long while, then divided sectors around the mountain city, dispatching large groups of samurai to hunt mountain beasts and relocate the remaining tribes within a twenty-mile radius, severing any possible food supplies.

He then sent the War Priest to oversee the salt consumption of the City State Army... With many nobles in the City State Army, if Cloud Serpent City offered exorbitant prices, there was a chance someone would secretly venture into the mountains, risking decapitation to smuggle salt to the enemy.

"The siege of Cloud Serpent Mountain City is destined to be a prolonged affair. In the short term, I fear I cannot extricate myself. However, since there is no rush, I can prepare for long-term strategies!..."

Speaking of long-term, crop breeding became the foremost priority. With autumn deepening, the maize outside Water Valley City was basically harvested, ready for storage.

Xiulote dispatched dozens of trained trusted aides to tally the autumn harvest. Then, he ordered them to select bigger cobs of maize from the harvest, with relatively plump grains and slightly higher yield as seed stock. Such work had actually begun in the Kingdom of the Lake. However, this fertile Eastern Valley might have high-yield corn crops with advantageous varieties.

"Besides individual yield, germination rate must also be considered... I seem to recall something about a selection process?"

Vague memories flashed in Xiulote's mind, though indistinct. He contemplated for several days, finally deciding to start with what he remembered, laying the foundation for breeding and hybridization, which is Mendel's Laws of heredity, the divine revelation version.

"... The Chief Divine bestowed divinity, with light and dark entwining (genes), embedded in all things, passing to offspring. Light's divinity exceeds darkness, thus it is dominant... And the light and dark pair, separating and merging, continuously propagate for two generations, leading to three of light and one of dark. The reason being, when light and dark match, the light emerges... And two pairs of light and dark stacking result in three-to-one, from light to dark, as nine-three-three-one..."

Having compiled this, Xiulote furrowed his brow, feeling some inadequacy, yet unable to clarify at the moment. Nonetheless, such a description would inspire future generations, even if not entirely accurate, it might save several centuries of detours. So, he bowed his head and continued his contemplative writing.

"All things persist, the source of life's propagation. Light and dark divinity freely combine, yet independently distribute, determining appearances... Like the pyramid of the Great Temple, constructed with thousands of bricks. Each brick, sculpted externally, flat internally, positioned fixedly, determines a part of the temple. United, the myriad bricks form the pyramid's entirety. Likewise, the interplay of divinity within the human body is the same!..."

After completing a section, Xiulote paused for a long time. He was uncertain whether such descriptions could be understood by others. But he felt he understood it himself, so he continued crafting the narrative.

"Myriad entwined light and dark, manifesting and concealing, each determining a part of the body... Twenty-three laws congregate within, with twenty-seven thousand pairs of divinity dispersed into the

laws, congealing into human form! This is the Chief Divine's secret of creating man, and the same principle extends to all things!"

#### Chapter 996: Divine Revelation 5,000 Miles Away

The temple was broad and bright, with the divine statue shining with golden light. Divine runes were engraved on the walls, and divine flags were raised high on the ceiling. The king sat cross-legged, sitting high under the divine statue, with everyone bowing their heads, listening to the teachings of the divine revelation.

"Breeding means selecting stable and advantageous divine traits (alleles) from generations of seeds. These advantageous traits in corn manifest as bearing more fruit, shorter stalks that are less prone to lodging, less disease, and reduced yield loss when rainfall is insufficient..."

"The beneficial divine traits for planting must be accumulated over generations. From the superior corn, select good seeds, cultivate them in small patches of land, harvest, select seeds, and repeat the process. This patch of land is best isolated in a lake, separated from other cornfields. This ensures the stability of the divine trait transmission... The breeding process needs to continue for a long time, ten years, several decades, even a hundred years. When there are enough advantageous traits, further hybridization can lead to special breakthroughs..."

"In fact, three thousand years ago, during the Olmec Era, the corn they planted produced ears much smaller than those cultivated by the current alliance and states. At that time, corn yields were also less than they are now. At the beginning of the first era, the initial corn was slowly domesticated from fruitful grasses by the ancestors thousands upon thousands of years ago!..."

Upon hearing this, everyone present exchanged glances, their expressions changing. They knew that in ancient mythology, corn was a gift from all gods. If anyone else dared to speak such disrespectful words about the divine, the consequences would be...

"Ahem. Of course, the initial corn was also a divine revelation granted to the ancestors by the Chief Divine!"

Xiulote lightly coughed, quickly added a sentence. Then, with a serious expression, he gazed at the priests and trusted aides present, and spoke earnestly.

"You must remember! The pairs of divine traits of light and dark exist within all things. They can accumulate and be selected, leading to different directions, and causing all things to undergo different changes. The divine created all things, bestowing only the initial divine traits. As all things continue to reproduce, the divine traits of light and dark are born and die, and changes also occur! This change can also be called evolution..."

"Four eras cycle through birth and death, and every era's all things are different. Breeding is about mastering the divine traits of light and dark! What we need to do is to let humans choose the direction of changes in all things and make these changes meet our needs!"

After the speech, the temple was silent. Only the soft sound of the priests recording on grass paper, and the long wind blowing through the divine curtain, could be heard. All the teachings were under the watchful eyes of the Chief Divine. And what is called divine revelation, is to enlighten all living beings in the name of the divine!

"...The divine created all things, bestowing the initial divine traits. All things reproduce, the divine traits of light and dark are born and die, changing in different directions..."

Maya merchant Tikalo muttered to himself, his eyes flickering with the light of wisdom. He couldn't help reaching out and touching his elongated and divine head, feeling the smooth and unimpeded touch, a unique feature of the wise.

"Divine traits of light and dark, evolution and selection..."

Tikalo silently pondered, comprehending a certain mystery contained in His Highness's words. His keen intuition repeatedly reminded him that behind His Highness's description, there must be an extraordinarily complex and all-encompassing grand system.

"This feeling is like the base-twenty multiplication table inherited over thousands of years, or bits and pieces of astronomy and constellations... yet, I wonder what glorious feats the ancestors of the City of the Gods accomplished with these thousands of years ago?... Ah! His Highness, His Highness must be the same! He looks at the towering Tree of Life but can only describe fragments of branches and leaves, struggling to explain to us..."

Thinking of this, a strong sense of greed and desire appeared in Tikalo's eyes, the instinctual pursuit of mysterious knowledge by the ancient Mayan nobles. He couldn't help lowering his head, quietly clenching his fists.

"...Ah! That's the mystery of the divine! If I were the one receiving the divine revelation and seeing the Tree of Life... how wonderful that would be!..."

Two steps away, the old militia Chiwaco stood in the corner, with his head bowed, adopting a respectful stance. He smirked with an old face, grumbling in his heart.

"...Ha! Wild pigs farting all over the ground. His Majesty is spouting nonsense again. I've been farming all my life and have never touched any divine traits..."

"???..."

Beside the old militia, Huitu Puapu looked utterly bewildered, like a sleepwalker. He heard Your Majesty's words and understood every word, but strung together, they were like the priests' summoning spells, only ghosts could understand.

Xiulote glanced around at everyone, looking at those lost in deep thought or blankly staring expressions, and touched his smooth chin. After thinking for a moment, he slightly tilted his head and pointed out with his hand.

"Chiwaco, you are the one most skilled in planting among everyone. Did you understand what I just said about breeding?"

"Ah!... uh, this!..."

Being singled out, Chiwaco trembled all over, shocked, almost believing His Majesty could read minds. He stammered cautiously in response.

"Your Majesty, I don't understand that... divine trait. I only know how to dig holes and plant. Uh, choosing good, plump seeds while planting is necessary. As for the rest... uh... during tasseling, it's best if there's wind. Too much rain or drought can lead to fewer kernels or bald tops..."

"Hmm?... Let me think. Right! The pollination of corn relies on the wind... Its divine trait transmission depends on the wind's force, transferring from the male flower to the female flower. Of course, it can also be done by manual pollination, with just a touch on the stigma..."

Xiulote thought for a moment, and then added a few sentences. He spoke whatever came to mind, regardless of whether he remembered correctly, pouring it all out to the priests. Finally, he used a charcoal pen to draw the structure of a flower on a wooden board, describing some plant physiological knowledge.

"...Flowering results, the transmission of divine traits of light and dark. These flowers are divided into male and female flowers, stamens and pistils. The transmitted divine traits of light and dark are nurtured between the stamen and pistil. Typically, each contains half. The stamen produces pollen, which falls onto the pistil's style, akin to male and female reproduction, forming offspring... Oh, right! The process of male and female harmony is similar, with each contributing half of the divine traits of light and dark, combining to create the origin seed of life, then developing into a new fetus..."

The priests lowered their heads again, noting down the king's sketches. Everyone was meticulous and respectful, as if recording divine symbols.

Not until the setting sun inclined to the west, and torches were lit in the temple, did Xiulote wave his hand to let the priests and trusted aides leave. Then, he curled his lips, looking at the old militia Chiwaco, the Gray Soil Noble Puap, and the Mayan merchant Tikalo, softly smiling.

"The Chief Divine bears witness! I summoned you here from a thousand miles away for a critically important divine enlightenment!"

Hearing this, the old militia felt a chill run through his body. An ominous premonition swept over him, like clouds blocking all the sunlight. However, His Majesty remained sunny and warm in his smile.

"That divine revelation is a bit distant... approximately in the east, hmm, five thousand miles away..."



Chapter 997: Militia, Samurai, Merchants, and Priests, Expedition Fleet Heading to the East!

"Five... five thousand miles?!..."

The old Militia, Chiwaco, trembled all over, even his voice was shaking.

"Five thousand miles to the East... wouldn't that be... the endless Eastern Sea?"

Puap showed surprise; in ancient myths, the Eastern Sea was tumultuous, inhabited by terrifying sea creatures, the final place where the Feathered Serpent Divine departed.

"Ah!... the homeland in the East, the ancestors' dwelling, and the Serpent Island in the sea..."

The Mayan merchant, Tikalo, showed changing expressions, nostalgia surfacing in his heart. He was only a naive child when his parents took him away from the homeland, Tutulxiu-Mayapan, and now it has already been over forty years.

"Hmm. Tikalo, do you remember? You once presented me with two gems from the Eastern Snake Island in the Lake Capital City! Those two gems attracted and repelled each other, born from the cluster of black hard stones..."

Xiulote's expression slightly moved. He recalled those two perfect chromite spinel gems and felt a strong yearning surge in his heart. They were critically important, capable even of changing the world with the great Cuba iron ore! The reserves of Cuba iron ore were so large, its purity so high, and the accompanying metal so precious, it could usher the powerful Central America Empire into the Industrial Era!

After a while, Xiulote's thoughts returned from the distant longing. He had enough patience to complete this grand vision step by step over several decades.

"This time, you are heading to the Serpent Island in the Eastern Great Sea! You must locate the position of the black stones, leave enough manpower, and establish bases and sentry points!... Well, Puap, you once discovered a small patch of black stones with Black Wolf Torc at Black Rock Mountain, you should remember the appearance of those stones."

"Yes, esteemed Your Majesty. If I see such black stones again, I'm sure I can recognize them!"

Puap stood upright, akin to a gorilla, patting his chest vigorously. He remembered the Tecos Priest covered in stones, making black stones fly and form eerie stone spheres, frightening even the Black Wolf General to the point of not daring to act... eventually, he charged and slew him with a single blow! He could boast about this experience for a lifetime.

"Excellent! You must document the waterway along the route and record the Maya city-states you pass through. For this, you must rely on the Maya guides... this voyage is just the beginning, and as it progresses, you can transport more samurai! Tikalo, I once promised you, it will surely be fulfilled!"

Xiulote looked calmly at the Mayan merchant beside him, with an unyielding will in his eyes. Seeing this, Tikalo pressed his lips tightly and lowered his divine head to the fully mature King.

"Your Highness, obey your will! I will bring the old sailors from the trading group to join the Kingdom's exploration fleet. They are very familiar with the waterways along the Eastern Totonac coast to the Yucatan lowland. However, to reach the sea Serpent Island from the Yucatan lowland, you must arrive at the easternmost Echabovana, connect with the local Maya trading groups, and find an experienced guide... the trading group's fleet has never truly sailed that route..."

In the Maya Lands, there are numerous city-states and many trading teams. Each Maya trading team usually has a fixed route with stable trading and output. Like Tikalo's trading group, they trade within the Mexica Alliance, selling goods shipped from the Totonac coastal ports.

Throughout Central America, the Mexica Alliance is a gathering place for wealth, the richest place in the world! Tikalo's trading group has influence and channels here, while other Maya trading teams need to sell goods through them and generally wouldn't easily offend them. Of course, behind the large trading groups, there are surely city-state nobility whose attitudes are often very changeable.

"Hmm. The Chief Divine once bestowed a Divine Revelation upon me, the slender Serpent Island lies directly east of the Northeastern Echabovana of the Yucatan! That Serpent Island extends one to two thousand miles east to west. As long as the fleet heads east, it will definitely not miss it!... Of course, finding a familiar guide will be more stable. Additionally, in this expedition, besides dealing with the Maya city-states, you must also connect with the Taino tribes on the island. As for the content of the connection..."

At this point, Xiulote paused slightly and then summoned a trusted aide, whispering softly. Soon, a priest in a white robe appeared before everyone.

"Esteemed Divine Revelator, Chief Priest Sir, Second Level Priest Tomate greets you! Praise the Chief Divine!"

Tomate's meaning is quite straightforward, as "Tomato." In the Mexica Alliance, tomatoes are common fruits, and due to their blood-red juice, they hold some symbolic religious significance. From Tomate's name, one can see that he isn't from a noble family but likely originates from an ordinary priest family.

"Praise the Chief Divine! He watches over us!"

Xiulote uttered a prayer, smiling and nodding, looking back at everyone.

"On this sea journey, Tomate will lead over ten pious Chief God Priests, carrying printed scriptures, to accompany you. When the fleet finds the iron deposits of black stones and establishes a base, they will remain there to spread the faith of the Chief Divine to the surrounding Taino people!... Similarly, you must leave enough samurai to protect the priests' safety and collect food from the nearby villages."

Militia, Samurai, Traders, and Priests - this is the composition of this expedition team, marking the beginning of the Kingdom of Lake's first eastward colonization. What kind of cost will such an exploration entail, and what kind of returns? Xiulote was not yet clear. However, to preemptively address the dangers from across the sea, he had to do it! He also had enough strength and resources to bear it all!

"By the way, Tomate, this time at sea, you should bring more dried tomatoes. They are a gift from the War God, using their red divine juice to replenish your blood..."

"Follow your guidance, Chief Priest Sir! The light of the Sun Supreme God will surely dispel the darkness of the Feathered Serpent Long Island, resisting the evil from the sea to the East!"

Tomate knelt down, bowing his head respectfully. The prophecy of His Highness to the East had already started small-scale spreading among Kingdom Priests. As an appointed pious priest, he was ready to dedicate, even sacrifice, his life for the Chief Divine! Wherever that may be...

"Excellent! The light of the Chief Divine will illuminate the sky and sea, defending against all evil!"

Xiulote satisfied, extended his hand, and grasped Tomate's hair. Then, he turned to look at the old militia.

"Chiwaco, how are the seven longships of the expedition fleet doing?"

"Your Majesty, the seven longships have been repaired in Water Valley City for nearly a month; all have been restored. Now, they are docked not far outside Tree Snake City, in the Valley Water River, ready to set sail anytime."

Chiwaco bowed his head, reported carefully. From Water Valley City to Tree Snake City, the road is only over a hundred miles, but the waterway is nearly doubled. He led the fleet, twisting and turning, entering the Valley Water River to reach Tree Snake City's Valley Water River (Rio Zahuapan). In Navajo, Zahuapan means "water that heals grain."

"Water Valley City... Valley Water River... Tree Snake City..."

Xiulote touched his chin, deep in thought. Organizing tens of thousands of civilians to dredge the river and dig canals could halve this two hundred mile winding waterway. Unfortunately, these Four States wouldn't be his to possess.

"Your Highness, when I arrived, I also saw the longships in Valley Water River; indeed, they are large and long, even three-tenths larger than the paddle-sailing ships of Yucatan city-states! Truly a gift from the divine!"

Tikalo bowed, sincerely praising for a while. Then, he cautiously asked.

"Just... Your Highness, Valley Water River only circulates within the Four States territory. To reach the Totonac shore from Tlaxcala State, there are only the slightly north Cat Owl Great River (Rio Tecolutla), the mid-angle Great River (Rio Filobobos), and the southern flat sand Great River (Rio Colipa). These three tributaries do not connect with Valley Water River... how can the seven longships reach here?..."

"Haha! Don't worry, I have a plan, and have prepared sufficient manpower!"

Xiulote smiled confidently, full of assurance.

"You shall travel along the Valley Water River, until the eastern end... then, enter water at the source of Cat Owl River's tributary, at Lake Tenexac (Tenexac)!"

"Ah? Your Highness, the end of Valley Water River is still dozens of miles from Lake Tenexac! There should be no waterway connection there..."

"Hmm. I have sent people to investigate it. There is approximately thirty miles of land between the end of Valley Water River and Lake Tenexac."

At this stage, Xiulote looked toward the East, and a not-so-distant story surfaced in his mind.

"Haha! The Chief Divine's blessing! For this thirty-mile distance, we shall voyage overland, re-create the East!"

Chapter 998: Sailing on dry land, heading to the Eastern Sea!

"Hey, yo hey!"

On an autumn day, the vast plains stretched wide. Thousands gathered, chanting in unison, dragging land vessels. With the laborers' arduous steps, seven longships slowly moved forward on the flat plain. As the longships dragged forward, there were rustic logs rolling underneath. At both ends of the longships, laborers continued busying themselves with moving the round logs passed underneath the ship to the front.

"This is Your Majesty's idea, saying that rolling logs will save effort."

Puap, wearing leather armor, accompanied by a hundred Prepecha Warriors, supervised the thousand laboring civilians. Tikalo stood by, looking at the rope harness on the laborers and the rolling logs under the longship, somewhat enlightened.

"Praise the Chief Divine! Your Majesty is truly divinely inspired!"

"Praise the Chief Divine! Praise Your Majesty!"

Puap bowed his head, muttering a prayer. Then, with a stern gaze, he surveyed the toiling crowd, and laughed while speaking to the Mayan merchants.

"Your Majesty is benevolent, telling us not to rush. By divine inspiration, he cherishes these captives and invented such an efficient method!... But actually, each longship isn't very heavy! If tens of wooden beams were placed beneath each longship, and four hundred laborers carried it from the river without resting, in just three days, it could cover these thirty miles!... At most, it would just mean a few hundred laborers might die of exhaustion after finishing..."

The kingdom's latest crocodile oar-sailed longship is now 25 meters long and more than 6 meters wide, with a length-to-width ratio of about 4:1, and draught just over 1 meter. It has a single bottom deck, a top deck, and two masts at the front and back. This longship resembles the Vikings' and can carry over 80 sailors, a load of about 30 tons, and weighs less than 50 tons itself, or about a hundred thousand pounds. Its size and weight are about twice that of the Viking Snekkje ship from a thousand years ago, and compared to the Ottoman ships, which are often tens of meters long and hundreds of tons heavy, it is insignificant.

And a hundred thousand-pound ship, placed on supporting wooden beams for more than four hundred laborers to carry, means each person bears a burden of around three hundred pounds. Such a burden would be hard to endure for an ordinary robust man in a modern gym. However, in this era, it is a weight that short and lean laborers can continuously bear. Because they carry it with their lives! Failing to carry it would result in death...

"Hey, yo hey!"

The uniform chant resounded from the laborers' mouths, bearing a distinctive Mistek accent. Among the crowd, the tribesman Didi was bending low, with a bowed waist, tilting his body forward, laboriously dragging along. He had bare shoulders, a piece of fabric wrapped around his waist, and his right shoulder covered with thick calluses, held in a circle of coarse, hard sisal rope. The indentations from the rope cut deeply, almost biting into his flesh, causing pain just to look at.

Large droplets of sweat trickled one by one down Didi's cheeks, falling onto the moist plain beneath. The slightly salty sweat rolled over his forehead, stinging unbearably. He tilted his head slightly, revealing a blood-red mark on his forehead, a newly inscribed "Sun Hummingbird."

This "Sun Hummingbird" was tattooed on his forehead by the Canine Descendant hunter Chabo. After the Dog Clan Army escorted thousands of captives to Water Valley City, two Canine Descendant hunters took him, removing the heavy bamboo basket from his back, along with his chieftain's garments, leaving Didi with nothing except a chieftain's loincloth.

However, before departing, the red-haired hunter Chabo thought for a moment and decided to bind him, then took out a sharp obsidian dagger. In Didi's terrified gaze, Chabo carved with firm strokes onto his forehead, inscribing a sacred divine emblem with excruciating precision, leaving Didi in agonizing pain, unable even to scream.

"Little fellow, this is our wilderness's coming-of-age ritual! The sacred symbol is like a water pit in the wilderness, able to receive the divinity fallen from the sky! This symbol is red, it is blood, and it will turn you into a real man, a fearless wolf!"

As he spoke, Chabo pointed to his own forehead, where a red divine tree was also inscribed. The branches of the divine tree extended across his face, almost covering the entire visage.

Didi glanced, fearfully lowered his head. He didn't know how painful such marking would be; it was only when Chabo used red dye he carried to color the mark on Didi's face that the pain overwhelmed him, and he fainted.

"Haha! Only with the red of the wilderness will your wounds not fester. Though it stings a bit! Farewell, may the Chief Divine protect you, little wolf ant!"

The hunter Chabo laughed heartily, giving Didi's face a light smack at the end. This red mineral dye contained copper salt commonly found on the wilderness, plus readily available silver powder. These two heavy metals effectively disinfect, but naturally will also leave indelible scars—forever.

Waking from unconsciousness, Didi realized he had changed, he was truly different. Other captured able-bodied men from the tribe, seeing the red mark on his forehead, no longer dared to touch him, even fearing him somewhat. The supervising Tiger Men, Eagle Men, and Dog Men also softened considerably, no longer striking him at will upon seeing his forehead's mark.

From that day onward, no one dared steal his food or trample him, urinating on him. When he walked, he started carrying himself upright and began to spit at the strong men of the tribe when they bumped into him. Although he remained frail and unable to win any fights, his heart had gradually transformed. The wilderness's coming-of-age ceremony indeed infused a humble ant with the ferocity of a wolf!

"Puh!"

Didi spat heavily on the ground, dragging the longship behind him with even more effort, even pushing half a body length ahead of the other civilians aligned parallel to him. That ship was so long, so large, it must be a divine object bestowed by the Chief Divine, possessing immense divinity!

"It is even bigger than the priests and chieftains from the past tribes! No, in front of the supreme and mighty Chief Divine, what are the Divine Descendants of the Rain Divine, what are the Rain Divine priests, they are all tiny and short, just like the severed heads of those they decapitated!"...

The huge mound in front of the Cloud Temple always haunted Didi's mind, just as it lingered in the hearts of tens of thousands of Mistek prisoners. Only, when dreaming of it in his dreams, Didi slowly ceased to fear. He repeatedly chanted in his heart, encouraging his spirit, just like he did when resting from dragging the ship, chanting to the sun.

"Ah! Larger than the sky, wider than the earth, the Chief Divine who can press the Rain Divine beneath Him! Praise you!... Feed the peculiar radish!..."

"Hmm?"



The old militia Chiwaco, wearing a straw hat, led the Dark Snake, standing not far from the civilians. He heard the indistinct sound of prayers and looked in the direction the voice came from. A skinny, short Mistek civilian praying with his head raised soon entered his eyes.

That civilian was as ordinary as an ant, with no features at all. The only striking thing was that his forehead was inscribed with the emblem of the Chief Divine in blood.

"Hmm..."

The old militia watched for a moment, saying nothing. When the brief rest time passed, the Mistek able-bodied men pulled the ship forward again. And that ordinary civilian, leaning forward, shouting the chant, worked harder than anyone else.

Hauling boats across dry land, heading to the East, day after day. The prisoners tugged at the tow ropes, from the first light of dawn until the last light disappeared. Soon, the sound of rushing water could be heard at night. And the oncoming wind also began to feel increasingly moist.

In just five or six days, they had traveled thirty miles to the northeast, successfully pulling seven longships into the nearest Lake Tenexac (Tenexac). At the northern mouth of the herbal lake, a meandering river extended out. This small river was an upper tributary of the Cat Owl River (Rio Tecolutla). From there, downstream for five hundred miles to the northeast, there was the mouth flowing into the Caribbean Sea!

In the Navajo language, Tenexac means "herbs, a place with many plants," and Tecolutla means "wetland where owls frequent." The names of these rivers and lakes were given by local tribes, related to the geographical environment of the rivers and lakes. Perhaps when the Alliance unites the world, they will rename the mountains, rivers, lakes, and seas of the world!

"Whew! Hauling boats overland, such a hassle... The exploration fleet has finally entered the water again!"

Watching the longships splash into the water, the kingdom's expedition captain, the old militia Chiwaco, finally relaxed, letting out a long sigh.

"Next, according to the instructions of the blind Majesty, follow the guidance of the local guide, heading to the eastern seashore... And once at the shore, the long-haired merchants said, there will be Mayan guides to again lead the fleet along the coast, sailing eastward..."

"As for the Vastec and Mistek city-states along the way, His Majesty has already sent envoys, demanding support and supplies for the fleet... With the cannibalistic Mexica legion as a backup, these chaotic coastal city-states should not cause any trouble..."

"Captain, I have checked with Priest Mekate. In these days, a few sailors in the fleet have been injured or fallen ill; now we're short by eight!"

The Dark Snake, panting, came to the old captain's side, weakly reporting. He was fluent in arithmetic, calendar calculations, and astronomy, so Chiwaco arranged him to follow the Priest Mekate of the fleet, avoiding the hard physical labor.

Priest Mekate, having participated in the first exploration and recorded the northward route and latitude, had been promoted by His Majesty to Second Level Priest, equivalent to the newly boarded "Tomato" priest, Tomate.

Of course, the two priests do not command each other. One is responsible for maritime navigation as the Divine Revelation Priest, the other for preaching as the Preaching Priest. Their merits in promotion vary as well. But regardless, sea exploration, though dangerous, is a shortcut for priests' advancement!

"Hmm? Still short of eight sailors?..."

Hearing the report, Chiwaco scratched his head. After thinking for a bit, he selected a few strong men from the Mistek prisoners dragging the ships. Finally, he hesitated for a moment, looking toward the corner of the crowd. There, a solitary civilian, forehead engraved with the emblem of the Chief Divine, was muttering his chant.

"The last one, let's choose him!"

Chapter 999: Vanguard Battle Maniac, 7th Kingdom Legion

The dry north wind blew over the Mexican Plateau, bringing a bit of chill. Now, in the blink of an eye, it's already the beginning of December. The tropics have no winter, only a prolonged deep autumn. The northern part of the Tlaxcala Valley is filled with an extremely deep sense of autumn. As far as the eye can see, the fields are half withered yellow and half cold green, with an endless high sky.

Beneath the high sky stands the peak of Cloud Serpent Mountain. Cloud Serpent City remains sturdy and majestic, like an unyielding fortress, only now tinged with bleakness and deep yellow.

Further down, White Snake Hill City stands eight or nine miles away. Among the undulating hills, the vegetation is slightly yellow, with no flying birds or wandering beasts to be seen. A deep trench and spaced fortifications have already surrounded the entire White Snake Hill City. From the city head of White Snake City looking down, the Mexica's trenches resemble the giant open maw of an abyss worm, and their fortifications are like a mouthful of venomous fangs, poised to slowly swallow the entire hill city.

Beyond the hill city lies the plains with evergreen trees, and amidst the green trees is Tree Snake City. Water Valley River flows quietly, heading northeast. The Mexica legion's camp stretches along the river for several miles, like a water python waiting patiently.

Xiulote stood at the seven-inch mark of the "water python," under the royal banner atop Tree Snake City. He looked into the northeast, his thoughts drifting far. The Kingdom's expedition fleet had already set sail after launching a few days ago. At this moment, having replenished their provisions, the fleet hoisted the alliance flags and set out, steering towards the lower reaches of Cat Owl River. Their first target was four hundred miles away, the southern ancestral land of the Mistec, Crow City. And controlling Crow City was the Silver Raven Tribe, the great tribe of the Mistec engaging in an alliance marriage.

"The Kingdom Fleet carries the envoy of the alliance, conveying the joyful news of the royal family's marriage. Silver Raven Papata has always been submissive, and will surely obey the alliance's instructions to help the fleet refit and resupply..."

Xiulote mused for a moment and relaxed slightly. Besides the Silver Raven Tribe, he had also dispatched alliance envoys to the coastal Totonac states.

At this moment of great victory in the eastern expedition, with the recent destruction of the Four State Alliance of Tlaxcala, there shouldn't be any city-state daring to openly revolt against the alliance and

attack the Kingdom's fleet. As for further on, marching over a thousand miles east, past the easternmost Hidden Serpent City of the Totonac people, there lies the western Yucatan Maya city-states...

"Those, however, are beyond the reach of the current alliance... They can only rely on the Maya guides within the fleet, and the axe and spear in warriors' hands..."

Xiulote gazed with a distant expression eastward. He hurried, racing against time, and urgently sent out this fleet, uncertain about how it would turn out.

"Perhaps they will all be drowned in the Caribbean Sea's storms. Or perhaps attacked by coastal Maya city-states and disappear completely. Even, they might lose their way, drifting to northern Florida or southern Panama, until decades later when the last remnants will be found by the alliance..."

"This season, the ocean currents move north, while the monsoon blows south, anything is possible... May the Chief Divine protect them!"

Xiulote closed his eyes and murmured a soft prayer for a while. Then, he turned around, descending from the city tower, heading towards the temple in the city.

A month passed, and Tree Snake Temple didn't change much, merely has more black persimmon wood furniture in the center, and more drawings of the Chief Divine on the walls, all favored by the King.

Soon, Xiulote settled down in the center, sipping hibiscus tea delivered by Nashu, and perusing Kingdom documents coming from afar.

The first document was written by Bertade, recording the progress of prisoner transfers in the past three months.

"Honorable Highness, since September, the southern route naval forces have been transferring prisoners day and night, moving 60,000 Tlaxcala youths and adults. These captives have witnessed Your Highness's majesty and experienced autumn harvest during their station outside Water Valley City for several months. Their morale is relatively stable, and few have escaped, making them easier for the Kingdom to assimilate..."

"Your Highness, perhaps it might be possible to select two battalions of warriors and militia from these captives to manage newly established Tlaxcala villages, and train them during agricultural downtime... All Tlaxcala states have a foundation in bow and arrow skills, and are excellent sources of archers..."

Seeing this, Xiulote thought for a moment and slowly nodded. So far, 210,000 Tlaxcala prisoners have been transferred to the Kingdom of the Lake, with over 180,000 people moved. Counting losses and transfers stationed in towns along the way, approximately 160,000 reached the Kingdom's heartland, forming camps divided into settlements across two southern counties. The remaining prisoners, plus over 20,000 captured Mistec youths brought back by Black Wolf, amount to around 50,000. These young people will be completely transferred within three months.

"The area under the Kingdom's expansion is getting larger, with battles on all fronts, requiring increasingly vast military forces! Within a few years, Bertade will head to Cuba, needing to take thousands of samurai with him. The establishment of a new legion is imminent!... These newly acquired over two hundred thousand people are enough to support a semi-professional legion of eight thousand... Hmm, at least eight thousand..."

Pondering this, Xiulote stroked his chin, contemplating the composition of the eight thousand-strong Tlaxcala legion.

"Over a month ago, Black Wolf already returned from the South. The Tlaxcala surrendered army camp in his hands still has more than two thousand people. These defectors are all experienced in battle, hands stained with blood, warriors who court death. Now, with the conflicts temporarily paused, the Guajili Legion is resting in Water Valley City, it's an opportune moment to separate this surrendered army camp out. Then, select War Priests and officers from the Imperial Guards for re-training."

"Two thousand warriors courting death, as the central core, equipped with leather armor, bronze axes, and copper spears. Then, draw a thousand kingdom warriors from the Imperial Guard Legion as the personal army of the main commander. Further conscript two thousand five hundred archer militia from the hundred-thousand tribes who participated in half a year of farming, equipping them with paper armor, long bamboo bows, and short spears. Lastly, conscript a further fifteen hundred archer militia from the remaining hundred thousand people. This way, it forms a fully staffed legion of eight thousand! Of course, to appease the two thousand core warriors, you still need to grant them land and slaves..."

Drawing warriors from the Imperial Guard Legion aims to strengthen control over the legion. After the transfer, the remaining vacancies must be selected from the surrendered army to be placed next to the King for training. This scheme partially draws inspiration from the Khitan's imperial tent army, aiming to strengthen the monarch's command over local legions.

Xiulote made up his mind and reached out slightly. Nashu lowered her jade-like head, astutely offering a paper and pen while prepping black and blue ink. The King nodded slightly, dipped his pen in the black ink, and then wielded it like a dance of dragons and serpents, the strokes like ghostly symbols.

"Royal Decree: Form the Long Serpent Legion, with a limit of eight thousand. The entire Tlaxcala surrendered army camp of two thousand people shall be granted Second Level Warrior titles, awarded 20 acres of land, and one slave. From the two thousand, select five hundred warriors based on merit to be granted Third Level Warrior titles, awarded 100 acres of land, and five slaves. The Kingdom Warrior camp of one thousand shall be selected from the Imperial Guard Legion, half being Mexica and the other half Prepecha warriors, with their ranks unchanged. Choose five thousand longbow militia from... those brave and excellent in archery shall be granted First Level Warrior titles!"

In this way, from the two hundred thousand Tlaxcala people, the most combative eight thousand are drawn out and integrated into the kingdom's ruling echelon. These people leave their homes a thousand miles away to resettle. Stationed in the heavily fortified heartland of the kingdom, with a new warrior identity, land, and slaves, the thought of rebellion or escape would lessen considerably.

"Of course, the quickest way to fully win over the hearts of this legion is to ensure they gain real benefits! Let them engage in battles with fewer losses, plundering other tribes to earn more military merits, land, and slaves, witnessing the pathway to advancement! And these are things previously monopolized by the hereditary Divine Descendants and nobility within the original Four States Alliance, impossible for them to obtain..."

"As long as they earn military merit and become part of the kingdom's ruling fabric, even as a Second or Third Level Warrior... their loyalty will be greatly solidified, just like the current Prepecha warriors!"

With this thought, a hint of self-satisfaction appeared on Xiulote's face. The method of ruling the kingdom is actually not complicated, it's all war, war, war! As long as victories are achieved continually, fulfilling the military merit promises of granting land and slaves, the military group of the Kingdom of the Lake will become more solid and powerful!

"That being the case, the station for the Long Serpent Legion will be at the Tarsus outlet near the Black Rock Mountain iron ore. From there, marching northwards along the river, they can plunder over ten city-states of the Northern Ticos tribes, with a population of hundreds of thousands, as well as the Sea Woman City on the southeastern coast! The old account of the kingdom's expedition being attacked

needs to be properly settled. Meanwhile, the nearby Fire River City tribes should also be gradually influenced and slowly brought under control!"

Contemplating this, Xiulote's mind whirled, swiftly writing the Royal Decree. Soon, the decree establishing the seventh legion was written, except for one final difficulty: the choice of the legion commander.

"The Legion Commander of the Black Serpent Legion... Well, since the legion mainly comprises defectors and captives, the main commander needs to be loyal. In the kingdom, possessing such qualifications and abilities are only the Eagle Warrior Balda and the Temple Guard Captain Elvi, both currently serving as Camp Commanders in the Imperial Guard Legion... Who should I choose?"...

Xiulote closed his eyes, pondering silently. Seeing the contemplative His Highness, Nashu knowingly and softly smiled. She lit calming incense, brewed a cup of honeyed herbal tea, and patiently knelt by the side, waiting with her head down.

"Loyal and unwavering... If I rise... facing the supreme... between the two, who will follow without hesitation, swearing allegiance until death?... Alas! Why do I harbor such disrespectful thoughts?!"

The gentle aroma seeped into his heart. Xiulote clenched his lips, feeling guilty. But when he opened his eyes, he no longer hesitated, immediately taking up the pen to write.

"Royal Decree, Black Serpent Legion, stationed at Tarsus seaport. Legion Commander shall be..."

Nashu quietly opened her eyes, glanced at the Royal Decree on the paper. Then, she curled her lips into a faint smile.

Chapter 1000: Governing 1 Million People, Painting the World!

The delicate fragrance rises from the black clay incense burner, carrying a unique scent that seems to captivate the soul. Once a portion of agarwood burns out, Nashu adds another portion of Divine Smoke. Beside the incense burner, the young ruler puts down a scroll of illustrations and unfolds another one.

"Your Highness, Monkey Kuluka reports to you... In Rivermouth County, this year's autumn harvest is average, neither good nor bad! Based on the food collected from the villages, the Priest estimates that

the county's population is about 250,000, with four able-bodied adults per ten people. There are at least 2 million mu of farmland... The actual numbers might be slightly over or under, but since the villages are under our control, the grain tribute will not be lacking. Also, after the autumn harvest, the grain reserves are sufficient to support Qingqiu County in the North..."

Seeing this straightforward yet accurate report, Xiulote smiled with some relief. Then, he settled down to read it carefully.

"After the autumn harvest, fifteen Canine Descendant banners, oh, right, including the new one accepted from the North at the beginning of the year, making a total of sixteen... are clamoring for another raid on the Chapala Lake region. Their farming is a mess, and seeing the spoils of war brought back by the Guajili Legion makes their eyes red, filled with nothing but thoughts of battle and slaughter..."

"This year, there seems to be signs of the White Disaster in the North. The Wilderness Tribes are still moving south, and the Guamal Canine Descendants have also organized themselves. They have tasted benefits and agreed with us to join forces to raid the Feather region in Chapala Lake. I agreed... After the new year, Rivermouth County will send 4,000 Pike Warriors and 8,000 Canine Warriors west along the Lerma River. The Guamal people will send 20,000 tribal warriors, moving south from the Highland. Hmm, they've absorbed quite a few Wilderness Tribes, significantly boosting their strength, but they are very short on grain..."

"Your Highness, we will attack from both sides, plucking all the 'Feathers'. Then, the young men and women they capture will still be traded with the Kingdom. According to the old rules, fifty percent for grain, twenty percent for cotton cloth, and then weapons, salt, and gemstones, each for ten percent... Hmm, overall, the prices are cheap. Bringing these people back as agricultural slaves for the warriors or arranging them in villages, in just two or three years, you can recoup the costs..."

After a quick read, Xiulote silently nodded. The Kingdom of the Lake is more than a thousand miles from here, and information takes over twenty days to pass on. He has already delegated authority to the trusted county magistrates, combining military and governance, allowing them to make autonomous decisions. These documents are merely reports from each county's officials. Unless there's an extremely special major event, he generally won't interfere remotely.

"Rivermouth County, 260,000 population, four able-bodied adults per ten people, 2 million mu of farmland, about to raid west... Hmm, the monkey is doing well!"



Xiulote picked up a pen and carefully noted it down. The fields here all account for cultivated land, not including the area left fallow. Typically, fallow land is 1-1.5 times the cultivated area... Soon, Xiulote unfolded the next letter, a report from the Jaguar Olosh.

"Your Highness, by the autumn harvest, the Capital Region's population reached 450,000, with about 4 million mu of farmland. The 70,000 young Mexica adults promised by the High Priest have all arrived several months ago. Of those, 50,000 were settled in the Capital Region, and following your instructions, they were married to the Prepetcha people..."

"After several years of recovery and development, the Capital City Qin Congcan is quite prosperous, nearing its scale from ten years ago. The Patzcuaro Lake region has had a good harvest this year, and local villages and towns have accumulated quite a bit of surplus grain. Many new children have been born. The Preaching Priests estimate that in each village, there are about three able-bodied adults for every ten people."

"The Jingji Legion has stationed in the Patzcuaro Lake region for three to four years without engaging in battle. The warriors have long lacked military achievements, and watching other legions constantly fight and earn merits, they have some complaints. The officers entrusted me to write to you, seeking orders: the Jingji Legion is the most loyal wing of the Divine Eagle! No matter who the enemy is, they will fight and die for the king... So, Dear King, when can the wings be deployed?"

Reading this, Xiulote chuckled silently. Olosh, both overtly and covertly, expressed a desire for conquest. The Jingji Legion, indeed, has stayed guarding the capital for too long, eager to fight. It's known that without battles, there are no military merits, no promotion in nobility, no plundered wealth, and no allocation of land or slaves...

"Haha! Capital County, 450,000 population, three able-bodied adults per ten people, 4 million mu of farmland, warriors eager for battle..."

Xiulote recorded while pondering. After years of recovery, the Patzcuaro Lake region has slowly regained its vitality. And the Jingji Legion, stationed in the capital, suppresses the North and South. Although the legion desires to march out, given the current situation, it's not advisable to act rashly.

Moreover, the Mexica Warriors in the Jingji Legion have participated in the western expedition of the war of annihilation. Most have reached the threshold of Fourth Level Veteran Warrior or First Level Military Merit Nobility. If they gain further merits and are promoted another level, the amount of land and agricultural slaves required to be allocated...

With this thought, Xiulote's smile froze, and he immediately wrote back to Olosh.

"...My dear teacher, Marshal, and Legion Commander. The Jingji warriors have followed me through many battles, and now they've been allocated land, given fields, and have a multitude of slaves and concubines. After fighting for so many years, it's time for them to enjoy life! Hmm, stationed in the Capital Region, they intermarry with the Prepetcha people, and as long as they have more offspring, the kingdom's stability is assured..."

Next is the old General Etalik, a family warrior from the lineage of the Holy City.