

## I. Dynasty 222

### Chapter 222: Progress on the Galleon

The Governor's residence was bustling with noise as Xiao Ming returned.

Many commoners and merchants stopped to watch, their faces lighting up with excitement upon learning that the Prince of Qi had come back to Qingzhou.

Everything they had now was given to them by Xiao Ming, so naturally, they hoped he would stay in Qingzhou to continue providing them protection and convenience.

"What joyous news?"

Back in Chang'an, Fei Ji's "four great threats" had weighed heavily on Xiao Ming. Aside from the barbarians, there were also two troublesome neighbors along the coast. It seemed he was truly beset by misfortunes. Now, any good news was crucial to him.

"Zhang Liang came yesterday to report that the first galleon is nearly complete. He asked when Your Highness would return—little did he expect you'd arrive today."

"The galleon is almost finished?" Xiao Ming exclaimed in surprise.

"Yes."

Pang Yukun replied. He didn't have much of a reaction to the galleon, but seeing Xiao Ming so excited, he knew it must be important.

"Hahaha... Wonderful! Zhang Liang promised to deliver three galleons by the end of the year. After all these months, we're finally seeing progress!" Xiao Ming said.

His excitement wasn't just because the galleon would enable long-distance voyages—it was because its completion meant Qingzhou now had the capability to build galleons.

More importantly, it signified that Qingzhou had cultivated a group of skilled shipwrights capable of constructing large warships. This was an invaluable asset. With these craftsmen, he could formally expand and standardize the shipbuilding industry, laying the foundation for a future naval fleet.

At the same time, the training of specialized naval personnel needed to be put on the agenda.

Recently, Bowen Academy had been focused on recruiting talent, but many specific courses hadn't been established yet. After all, everything had been geared toward the war in Cangzhou. Now, it was time to prioritize education.

The true advantage of the Technology Crystal lay in education.

With the galleon making progress, Xiao Ming was naturally thrilled. However, like Pang Yukun, Lu Fei and Luo Xin showed little reaction. To them, a galleon was just a ship—nothing particularly special.

This attitude was precisely why the Great Yu Empire's naval development had always lagged—a fundamental lack of emphasis on maritime interests.

But this was understandable. Northern soldiers were traditionally weak in naval warfare, so it was natural for them to feel indifferent toward ships.

Xiao Ming, however, came from a modern background. He deeply understood how the sea could bring wealth and power to a nation, with trade routes being the most critical factor.

Now that the Silk Road was occupied by barbarians, cutting off trade between the Great Yu Empire and Western nations, a maritime route had become absolutely essential.

After a brief exchange with the officials at the Governor's residence, Xiao Ming had Ziwan and Lülao return first while he and Pang Yukun headed straight for the shipyard downstream of the Xiaoqing River outside the city.

Lu Fei, Luo Xin, and the cavalymen returned to the Qingzhou military camp.

Since assigning Zhang Liang to build the galleon, aside from allocating slaves and providing woodworking lathes, Xiao Ming had rarely interfered. From his perspective, he didn't want to micromanage his subordinates' responsibilities.

Doing so would not only exhaust him but also prevent them from truly mastering the technology he provided.

Thus, for the galleon, he had only supplied a set of blueprints. At the Machinery Department, he primarily taught in lecture format, leaving the practical application for them to figure out themselves.

“Your Highness, we’re here.” After half an hour on horseback, the two arrived at a bend in the river.

Here, the Xiaoqing River took a sharp turn, its surface swelling—wide in the middle and narrow at both ends. The water here also appeared deep, making it an ideal location for a shipyard.

Standing on the riverbank, Xiao Ming looked down. Moored in the river bend were three galleon hulls. On the vast riverbank, craftsmen were busy at work, while slaves transported logs, rivets, and other materials back and forth.

Near the riverbank stood a long, peaked brick building about a hundred meters in length. Craftsmen moved in and out, carrying processed wooden planks, while the sound of sawing wood came from inside—this was the main structure of the shipyard.

At the moment, Zhang Liang was on the riverbank, holding blueprints and pointing at the hull, seemingly correcting some issue.

Exchanging a glance with Pang Yukun, Xiao Ming descended the slope toward the shipyard.

The guards at the shipyard immediately opened the gates upon seeing Xiao Ming and Pang Yukun.

“Your Highness.”

Zhang Liang noticed their arrival and hurried over, his face beaming.

“Not bad. You’re almost ready to install the sails, right?” Among the three galleons on the riverbank, the first one was nearly complete, with craftsmen applying tung oil to the hull.

Wooden ships sailing in water faced significant corrosion, especially galleons at sea, where saltwater accelerated decay.

Thus, after completing the hull, craftsmen coated it with tung oil to waterproof it and extend the ship’s lifespan.

“Your Highness’s words only make this old slave feel more ashamed. Completing three galleons by year’s end will be difficult, but even if I have to forgo food and sleep, I will ensure it’s done for Your Highness.” Instead of being pleased, Zhang Liang seemed uneasy.

The three walked around the hull as they talked. Privately, Xiao Ming hadn’t held much hope for launching three galleons, but he couldn’t say that aloud.

Otherwise, morale would drop. So, he couldn’t relax the target.

“In that case, you’ll have to work harder.”

“Yes, Your Highness.” Zhang Liang replied respectfully. As a slave still under punishment, he didn’t dare slack off.

At the base of the ship, Xiao Ming patted the wooden scaffolding on either side.

These supports were built from timber, similar to construction scaffolding—a method explicitly detailed in the blueprints.

Traditionally, shipbuilding relied on A-frame ladders, but these were impractical for large vessels. Thus, scaffolding was erected first, allowing craftsmen to climb up and down easily to install planks, hammer rivets, and apply tung oil.

“Your Highness, this so-called ‘scaffolding’ is indeed very convenient. It has significantly sped up the shipbuilding process,” Zhang Liang said, his tone carrying admiration. He had no idea how Xiao Ming had come up with such a method.

“Naturally. Once the tung oil is applied, dismantle this scaffolding and reuse it for the next galleon. This is called ‘assembly-line work’—it saves materials and time.”

On the riverbank, all three galleons were surrounded by scaffolding over ten meters high—no small feat in itself.

Zhang Liang nodded. By now, he was used to hearing unfamiliar terms from Xiao Ming. However, he hadn't summoned Xiao Ming just to deliver good news—there were also some troubles to report.