

I. Dynasty 305

Chapter 305: The Soldier Who Raises Pigs

Under the warm sun, Qingzhou's soldiers diligently worked the fields.

The idyllic scene felt like a breath of fresh air, but in the next moment, a shadow fell across Xiao Ming's eyes.

In such a brutal age, to protect this rare peace, he could only use blood and fire to defend it.

This time, the cotton seeds sent by the Chu King filled the holds of five merchant ships. Xiao Ming only spent the equivalent of half a cannon on the purchase of these cotton seeds. Besides the cotton, the thirty cannons also cost the Chu King over fifty thousand taels of silver.

The astounding trade surplus of industrial goods in exchange for agricultural products made Xiao Ming realize the tremendous profits that industrial goods could bring. This further solidified his resolve to continue flooding the Great Yu Empire with industrial products in exchange for various raw materials.

After keeping some of the seeds for Qingzhou, Xiao Ming instructed the soldiers to transport the remaining seeds to other slave-run plantations.

At the Official Farm

Together with Niu Ben, Xiao Ming visited a plot of land outside the official farm, where a long shed was being constructed. The shed was surrounded by brick walls, each creating a four-meter square enclosure.

“This is the Qingzhou Army’s pig farm,” Niu Ben explained to Xiao Ming, his expression more bitter than when they were planting cotton.

After having Qingzhou’s soldiers plant crops, the army had now taken on another responsibility—raising pigs.

Pang Yukun, seeing Niu Ben’s demeanor, suddenly burst out laughing. “Your Highness, look at General Niu. His face is as long as a horse’s tail. I think he’s imagining how hard his soldiers are working.”

“This is hard,” Niu Ben muttered. “I understand planting crops, but now we have to raise pigs as well. The Great Yu Empire doesn’t have pigs raised by soldiers.”

Xiao Ming became serious. “Old General, you’re thinking about this the wrong way. Do you think filling soldiers’ bellies is enough? We have to let them eat meat. If soldiers eat meat, they’ll have more strength for training. Why are we having the army raise pigs? Simple. The Qingzhou Army is not like the usual Great Yu army. Our army has logistical troops. These logistical troops are responsible for raising pigs to feed the soldiers. Otherwise, what’s the point of having logistical troops? We could just draft laborers for war efforts if that were the case.”

Niu Ben was at a loss for words after Xiao Ming’s barrage of questions.

Now that the Qingzhou Army was recruiting soldiers, some were directly assigned to the logistical corps, responsible for the army’s food supplies, procurement, and transportation.

After a brief pause, Xiao Ming continued, "And the Qingzhou Army will soon be equipped with flintlock muskets. The Qingzhou Army is going down a different path, and this means we must make the army more organized, with proper divisions of labor."

"Flintlock muskets?" Niu Ben exclaimed, his eyes wide with surprise. He had heard rumors about a new weapon being produced in the armaments workshop.

But since Xiao Ming had not told him about it until now, it seemed the timing had finally arrived.

"Yes, a powerful new long-range weapon," Xiao Ming said, explaining the specifics of the musket's design, its power, and how it would be used.

Niu Ben was stunned. "You mean to say that the sword-and-shield men, archers, and spearmen will be eliminated, and the Qingzhou Army will only have musketeers and cavalry?"

Xiao Ming nodded slowly. "That's right. Once the flintlock muskets are in use, there will be no need for those other units."

"Your Highness, this is absolutely unacceptable!" Niu Ben interjected urgently. "If we abandon close combat and only keep long-range shooting, what if the cavalry breaks through our formation on the grasslands? The remaining soldiers will be slaughtered. You must reconsider."

Pang Yukun also shared the same opinion. He frowned, unable to voice his concerns.

When a new technology emerges, it is often met with resistance from old practices. Xiao Ming had long since made up his mind and replied, “I don’t like talking; I prefer action. Once the flintlock muskets are issued to the Qingzhou Army, you will understand.”

Niu Ben and Pang Yukun fell silent. Since Xiao Ming was so confident, they could only wait for the musket’s deployment.

Having given Niu Ben a brief explanation about the flintlock musket, Xiao Ming turned back to the topic of the pig farm.

In the Great Yu Empire, there had been no tradition of professional animal husbandry, but now Xiao Ming was going to popularize modern agriculture in his domain.

“Master Pang, how are the piglets doing?” Xiao Ming asked.

“We’ve purchased a thousand piglets from the commoners, along with fifty adult sows and fifty boars. This should be enough for the pig farm,” Pang Yukun reported.

Xiao Ming looked at Niu Ben’s subordinate, a camp officer named Chen Feng, who was in charge of the logistics corps.

“Officer Chen, these piglets and adult pigs are under your care. Make sure you don’t let them die,” Xiao Ming ordered.

In this era, commoners didn't have experience with large-scale animal husbandry, so Xiao Ming took the opportunity to explain modern pig farming techniques to Officer Chen.

The biggest concern in modern pig farming was swine fever. Once the disease took hold, it could quickly spread throughout the entire pig farm, killing all the pigs, just like avian flu in poultry.

"The pigsty must be cleaned every day. If any pig contracts swine fever, it must be burned and buried immediately..." Xiao Ming continued, providing Officer Chen with detailed guidance.

Chen Feng nodded repeatedly, quickly grasping the techniques for pig farming. After all, he had experience in farming and raising chickens, ducks, and pigs.

"The manure from the pigsty will be funneled into the nearby fertilizer pit. This will be used as fertilizer for the official farm. We can also raise chickens and ducks next to the pigsty. They'll feed on the pig manure and help with pest control at the official farm. After all, the official farm is planting cotton, and chickens and ducks don't eat cotton," Xiao Ming added.

Officer Chen was dumbfounded by Xiao Ming's entire explanation. If it weren't for Niu Ben calling him "Your Highness," he would have doubted whether this man was actually the Qi King, the royal prince, who would be so well-versed in these matters.

Pang Yukun and Niu Ben smiled bitterly on the side.

They had lost all ability to argue. Not only did Xiao Ming understand celestial affairs and geography, but now it seemed he was an expert in farming and animal husbandry as well. The depth of his knowledge left them speechless.

With Officer Chen now well-versed in modern pig farming techniques, Xiao Ming could rest easy.

The pig farm was the key to starting Qingzhou's livestock industry. When these logistical soldiers retired, they would return home as skilled pig farmers, and their experience would spread to the common folk.

After spending some time at the official farm, Xiao Ming and Pang Yukun left. On the way, Pang Yukun remained deep in thought.

Seeing his expression, Xiao Ming asked, "Are you still wondering how I know about pig farming?"