

To the headmaster, honoured educator and keeper of secrets

From his majesty Mansa Sino'otollo, the Shark-Binder, Voice of the Navigators, High King of the Three Fleets, Ruler of the Four Seas, Lord of the Eight Islands, the Starblessed, Councillor of the Cnidarians, Good Buddy, Binder of Men, Cleaner of Latrines, First Sword of the Surf, Brine-bound and Iron Willed. May the salt-sea bring his words to you this day, so that you may hear them and marvel

Your kind words and generous offers do you much credit, although I'm afraid secrecy is not the way of my people as it seems to be of yours. My councillors urge me to respect that your ways may differ from ours in that regard. The gifts you send are wonderous, a rich bounty that shows the talent of your artisans and of your ~~wizards~~ wizzards, and I will send you the eye of mighty Sajri'anar, a leviathan spawn bound by my grandsire, in the hopes that it will exceed your graceful gifts.

Your offer of these pathways intrigues and excites me, for they seem a mighty tool that could open the world to my people. However, I will be frank (for in my lands this is a virtue). I believe such a thing could be a mighty boon to my people and yours, a kauri tree from which to carve a boat of friendship, but it is a saying amongst my people "do not ride a leviathan-spawn without knowing the man to whom it is bound". My councillors worry that those who leave with you might not return, or that you will open a route into our capital from which enemies can strike.

You see, we have very few of what you might term mages, and their talents are largely devoted to the diving and taming of wind, wave and beast. I have spoken to some of the youngest Navigators, and they express interest in learning of this "magic" your academies teach. Are they open to those of other nations? Perhaps if we knew more of it, we would be able to put more faith in these pathways you offer to us? I am plagued by a clique of our youngest unbound who follow a so-called adventurer and mess with the ruins that dot our islands - perhaps they can accept your offer to travel the pathways instead, and study at the academies of your people?

I am of mind to accept your proposal, though I would need to know more. How would my people access these pathways? Can you already travel to any land with these pathways, or do they need to be

established upon our shores? Who else knows of these routes? Can enough men and material be moved by the paths that it presents an opportunity (or risk) of conquest? I assume you have made similar nations to other nations, and I have my own thoughts on this which we can perhaps discuss another time. For now, know that I would consider ignoring my advisors and accepting your proposal, providing our pledge to aid you in war in exchange for access to the paths and the ability to trade the lands beyond the Labyrinth. However, I will have an easier time persuading them if I - and my people - know more.

As I spoke of in my previous letter, we know little of your lands, and the stars know that it is a cherished wish of mine to hear of them. The herlads say you are a learned people, with much power and knowledge, but few swords. How did your people survive the age of chaos? My own people survived, not through force of arms, but by careful study of the stars and seas. Perhaps you used the same approach? What do those not blessed with magical talents do in your lands, and what trade goods might you wish of us?

Under the light of the stars, my words are bound

*Mansa Sino'otollo*

May he rule in glory, until he is replaced by someone better.