

To the Most Glorious Immortal Rat King Nibbles of the Prodigal Ratlings, lord of Thongmadok, he who is red of tooth, long of tail, and wide of ear.

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, 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 rejoice.

Long have our legends spoken of your people, the rat-folk who fled under the tall peaks that lay to our north. I am glad that the stars chose for the great beast Ana'arak that separated us to fall in my lifetime, and that our two peoples should meet. My name will be recorded in the annals alongside yours, for good or ill. Perhaps you can appoint some diplomats whose names rhyme with 'otolo.

My traders and hunters tell me your kind resides under the bones of the earth, where you gnaw at the roots of the world. I cannot pretend to envy you, for the salt is in my blood and the horizon ever in my eyes, but the life of the Remora does not have to be envied by the Shark to bring it benefit. And, like the shark, I am willing to offer protection against the circling threat of *other* predators.

My people tell me they were turned away from trading with you, though other captains say your merchants later arrived in our ports and conducted profitable trade. I appreciate your natural suspicion, but we have no interest in your dirty tunnels, and no desire to delve into them to extract their wealth for ourselves. The lands of the Keitan are rich in fish, furs, fruits, fabrics, and many more products that unfortunately do not begin with F, but come from the open sky and the deep ocean. If there is mineral wealth in your mountains, particularly iron, I believe our peoples could benefit from a mutually beneficial trade. If you wish to proceed in a spirit of friendship, we can establish a regular trade route from your mountains to our settlements above the Fish Sea.

As a token of my regard, I have sent this envoy with seven Jakata fruit, which the lesser rodents and vermin of my land enjoy. I hope it brings you similar pleasure, as it is an example of the rich trade we could enjoy.

Under the light of the stars, my words are bound in salt and blood.

*Mansa Sino'otollo*

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