

The Wayo Kapi

Today is the 4th Day of Sivan, in the year of our Lady Ha-wen-ne-yu and Her only manifested son, Sotuknang, 5410.

There, that ought to keep the religious zealots happy, Zvi Wahta thought, dipping his quill once again into the ink before putting it to the paper.

The Priests of the Temple Our Lady of Awanata beseeched me to write these *Histories* as an appendage to the *Books of Angwusnasomtaqua* because I'm the only living descendent of Tasunke, the son of Chansomps and Shmuel's, thus, the only blood relative of the Prophet Adahy.

I studied religion at Potapoco Universita (Baltimore), the Eastern Regional Capital city, situated on the shores of the Wahunsonacock Bay (Chesapeake). Because of its geography, it has become the most important port city, not only for the Eastern Seaboard, but the entire nation. After the first year, the Priests-Teachers found I had no aptitude for religion; instead, I took to the study of the history of Our Confederated Peoples and of other peoples whose maturity has influenced our own development. I graduated in 5403 from Potapoco and did my post-graduate studies at Tenochtitlan Universita in the Southern Region. While at Tenochtitlan (Mexico City), I released a series of essays entitled *The Histories and Conflicts of the Southern Region*. Thus, when I completed my studies there, I was offered a position at Tenskwatawa Universita.

Having lived near the seas my entire life, first in New Jerusalem then in Potapoco (Baltimore) and after in Tenochtitlan, relocating to the interior of Yvateamerika (North America) was a considerable shock to both my wife and me. After the first year, however, we adjusted to our surroundings and have come to enjoy our life here.

What was to enjoy, he asked himself for the millionth time. Other than the Mnisose (Missouri) River, flat land, and burning summers, there wasn't much of anything for Zvi and Ayita Wahta to take pleasure in here. But *here* they were because of a falling out he had with his Professors at Tenochtitlan Universita over his unauthorized and controversial publication of *The Histories and Conflicts of the Southern Region* without their consent. Even though he had done so under a pseudonym, Head Master Sassacus had easily seen through the ploy and summoned him to his office.

"You wish to see me, Head Master?" Zvi had knocked on the door, and opened it when told to do so. He stood before the elder, not unlike the time he was eight and taken to task before the Leader of the New Jerusalem Primary Talmid. Then, he'd been called to the office for throwing mud balls at – he couldn't remember her name – who had questioned his ability to run faster than she did.

"What is the meaning of this?" Sassacus threw printed bundles of papers on his substantial desk.

Zvi Wahta glanced down at the documents and immediately recognized it for what it was: his work. "Well . . . er . . . that is . . ."

The Head Master threw up his hand to silence the about-to-graduate student. "Releasing this using the pen name *Gladium Fortior Calami* was hardly much of disguise. You know, don't you, that we're under constant scrutiny by the Priests for radical publication? You do know that, don't you? This would be all they would need to take over or close down this Universita!" His face had turned dark as the blood rushed to his face.

Again Zvi attempted to speak on his own behalf only to be silenced once more by the Head Master. "And here! Right here! What do you write?" he snatched the offending pages

from his desk, flipping through the pages until he found what he was looking for. “*There can be little doubt in our conclusions that the Priests of Ha-wen-ne-yu precipitated and continue to foster the conflict between Our Confederated People of the Yvateamerika and those of the Aymara (South America), thus causing a flash point where the two continents bridge the Amerindian (Western Hemisphere), for their own nefarious purposes.*” He was so angry, that Sassacus’ saliva stained the pages he held in his hand.

After 5253, a wave of religious puritanism swept the Nation and still loomed large even today. The purists took for themselves the name *Old Believers*, even though that appellation was first applied to those who would not reject their ancient gods in favor of Ha-wen-ne-yu. For the Old Believers if it wasn’t addressed in the *Books of Angwusnasomtaqua*, then it must not have been of sufficient importance for common people to ponder and, it followed, those decisions must be delegated to the Priests.

For the better part of 150 years, these zealots had been opposed by the Iskodaywatomi, meaning Fire People, but in this context more like fire brand people, whom the Old Believers thought were radicals bordering on heretics. The Iskodaywatomi thought the *Assurances* were mostly myth – but that didn’t keep them from hiding behind the *First Assurance* in order to keep the Old Believers from dragging them into religious courts and prosecuting them as unbelievers; The Law was fine for its time, but outdated and badly in need of revision; and the Priests themselves were an affront to civilization.

As a Jew, Zvi’s religious position was somewhere between the two opposing positions. As an academician, he felt stifled by the Old Believers’ notion of right and wrong, and their power to enforce their decisions without recourse or penalty. Something he couldn’t quite put his finger on about the Iskodaywatomi kept him from embracing them very closely, although he

had many friends during his college years that followed that course of thought. After all, when they were making jokes about the *Assurances* and The Law, they were making fun of his ancestors.

Zvi couldn't bring himself to look the Head Master in the eye, so he looked over his head. "I don't know what to say," was the best defense he could manage.

"I know what to say," responded Sassacus. "At one time, we had high hopes for you and your career. No more! The position you were to have here no longer exists. I wish I could drop you from the program all together," he said mostly to himself, "but there would be too many questions asked, if I did that. Last, you will stop seeing my daughter."

The Head Master got two out of three of his wishes. Zvi graduated, but without distinction or honors. He didn't get to stay close to the conflict between the two continents; thus, he was denied his ability to do additional research. But he did get Ayita, and that was better than the other two put together.

Zvi muttered at his fate. **Adahy and Shmuel had done what was expected of them: they had spread the *Assurances* and The Law to as many as they could, walking the length and breadth of Yvateamerika. After their time, their disciples carried on with the message; and after them, the next generation of followers passed along the good news. The fundamental problem was that those who received the commandments failed to understand how to implement the *Assurances* and The Law.** *What horse manure!* Zvi thought. *The problem was that we had a national framework, but no direction how to get there. How should we organize at a tribal, regional, and sectional level and how would they finally mesh?*

BOOK I

And it came to pass, that Sotuknang, first son of Lady Ha-wen-ne-yu sought a single messenger to bring the tribes to a central campfire and to unite them. The God Sotuknang found what He sought in the person of Avonaco, the Uniter.

Avonaco found himself squatted in front of a campfire, idly stirring the ashes with a stick, as if his actions would provide him answers to his questions. It didn't. As foretold, the Heviqsnipahis, the Sotaeoo and the Masikota tribes had combined over the last 200 years into the Tse-tsehestahese – commonly called the Cheyenne by other tribes; but other than his band, there had been few other successes of a political nature on the Continent.

A deeply religious man, this troubled Avonaco greatly. The Great Law Giver Adahy had shown them the way towards achieving one nation under Ha-wen-ne-yu; and yet, the people had rejected that path. Certainly, there had been technological advances. The people with whom he'd come in contact weren't irrational. They understood the advantages of a pulley and put it to use. They recognized the brilliance of an education, built schools in their own villages and sent their best and brightest children to the central facility to learn and take back home those lessons. Since first introduced, the horse and other domesticated animals were immediately incorporated into each tribal society, and that alone, had made a significant impact on their civilization

But political unification eluded them. The Great Council escaped their grasp, simply because there weren't enough leaders that shared the same vision at the same time. Most of the tribal leaders were selfish of their own prerogatives and positions and saw no need to share their power with anyone else. That had to stop if Sotuknang's, first son of Ha-wen-ne-yu, vision was to be realized.

"I said you need to come in now, father," he became aware of a voice and a gentle hand shaking his shoulder.

Avonaco stopped his stirring and looked up, pleased by what he saw. “Meturato, my son,” he smiled. *No father ever had a better son*, he reflected. Meturato, a mere infant at the time, had been captured in a raid along with his mother, Peta, against the Black Foot. Avonaco had traded two horses and a particularly nice buffalo robe, married the woman and adopted the son. *Two years now Peta got the cough and died*, he grunted. By then, of course, Meturato was sixteen and more than capable of caring for himself, but he missed his mother as much as Avonaco longed for his wife.

“Come inside, father. The night air has a chill in it and it’s not good for your health,” his son encouraged.

Avonaco laughed. *So much like his mother. So attentive. A man should be so fortunate*, he thought himself lucky. “Yes, it’s about time. Tell me, Meturato, where are your friends?” His son was seldom without multiple friends in tow.

Meturato looked about him, as if he expected to see his friends, but then said, “Fishing, I think father. They wanted to do that earlier, but I wanted to make certain you were in good spirits.”

Avonaco grunted his appreciation. “Go get them, if you will my son,” his father gently ordered. “I have need of them and you as messengers.”

On the 28th of Elul, 4116, Avonaco the Uniter brought together the four most powerful chiefs on the continent. There was Anakausuen of the Algonquin, known for his interest in fairness when dealing with tribes in his region of the continent. Ciqala of the Dakota who ruled his nation with an iron hand, but included a tenderness and mercy that belied his outward actions was summoned. Gad of the Navajo was certainly the strongest of all, commanding the military organization that Adahy had hoped to develop. Last was

the diminutive Espowyes of the Nez Perce. The other three were genuinely surprised to see him in attendance. They could understand each other. Religion, wisdom, and strength were key components which preceded any such meeting. Yet, Espowyes possessed none of these. In fact, if there were an average indigenous leader, it was he.

In the two centuries since Adahy's passing, the continent's natives had developed a universal language. Based on Latin, it had many exceptions to the linguistic rules of Europe. Indeed, there were almost as many words of various tribes, mostly nouns, as there were of the root language. Around their own council fires, the chiefs spoke their native language, but even that was fading as more and more generations were being taught a distinctive Yvateamerika language.

“We’re here,” Anakausuen announced without ceremony as soon as he dismounted his horse. He thought he was the last to have arrived, only because he had the furthest to travel. He saw and acknowledged Ciqala and Gad, who were seated with Avonaco.

Avonaco shook his graying head. “Not so.”

The Algonquin squatted by the fire and ripped a hunk of deer from the spit. “Who’s missing,” he mumbled around the wad of meat in his mouth. The four of them represented the real power of the continent. Any two tribes could smash all the other tribes combined, and some past leaders – and present chiefs, if the truth be told – would have done so, if it wouldn’t have weakened them to the degree the two tribes that had reframed from warfare could easily defeat them in return.

“Espowyes,” Avonaco said for the benefit of them all.

“That old woman?” chortled Ciqala. “Why did you invite him? His words are as unimportant as a swarm of gnats.”

“Because. Because he’s necessary,” replied Avonaco with such authority that the others left it alone.

The Cheyenne leader tossed the bone he was chewing on, stood, and belched. “Come, the buffalo are running to the south,” he suggested. Privately, he wondered how long it would take before the needs of the growing communities started taking away the land, the bison and other wild game needed to exist. *Long after I’m gone, I suppose*, unhappy with his own observation, which would just leave the problem to yet a different, later generation.

The days were spent hunting and fishing, and the evenings filled with laughter as the four mature men gambled with dice carved from an elk horn. There was wine, of course, which had been introduced to the Yvateamerika by the Hebrews. Some drank not at all; others sparingly. Yet for others, the fermented grapes seemed to have no ill affect.

Avonaco did not drink. As the leader of his nation, he thought it unwise to have alcohol affect any decision he might make. Additionally, he consciously wanted to set a good example for his son and the rest of his clan. Gad didn’t drink wine either; and Anakausuen and Ciqala only in moderation, although those two refilled the cups of the women that came to watch them game as often as they could. The Cheyenne chief did not object. They were far from home and the girls more than happy to have the attention of a senior leader, regardless of the tribe.

Gad had arrived alone. With his military engaged in the Southern Region; that was to be expected. He could not justify taking away a single warrior from the conflict. Anakausuen had traveled with one warrior, his son, and his chief advisor. Ciqala had brought four; but two of those were teachers who would remain after he returned. Avonaco was attended by Meturato, but only so the chief could experience these negotiations. Not so Espowyes of the Nez Perce. He arrived nine days after Anakausuen with an entourage of hundreds and triple that number of

horses. It took hours for all of the Nez Perce to arrive, which gave Avonaco enough time to find space for their tents and send hunters out for fresh game.

The five men had met once before, when Sicheii, the famous Navajo leader, had gone to spend time without end with Ha-wen-ne-yu. As The Law required, the women selected the next leader. As custom dictated, they did so not from one of the wealthiest families or the most educated or the most celebrated, but a modest, hard-working family whose bravery in battle could not be disputed. Gad fit that description completely. Short, squat, almost a square of muscle with no neck and visible scars of many battles, he had proved to be an exceptional governor of his tribe. As tradition directed, other tribes of power and influences sent emissaries to the celebration. Ciqala had already been elected leader of the Dakota, so it was natural that he go, as was true for Espowyes. Anakausuen and Avonaco were minor chiefs of their tribes; but with a general consensus of their tribes' women that they would be advanced sometime in the future, they too were dispatched for the celebration.

It was another four days following Espowyes' arrival that the Nez Perce Chief felt rested enough to engage in a parley. The councilors and aid-de-camps remained close at hand, but were not directly involved in either the discussion or decisions.

"We're here, and I need to return to my forces," Gad seethed at the delays he'd been forced to endure. That he'd remained this long was attributed to the respect he afforded Avonaco.

"Thank you, my friends," began Avonaco, and continued without hesitation. He'd spent many years considering his next words and they flowed with ease. "I've asked you to come here to decide the future of our nation and . . ."

"My nation is at war," Gad insisted.

“Your tribe is at war fighting a fight that is rightfully all of ours,” countered the Cheyenne. “When you leave here, you will be traveling with half of this tribe’s military force. My own son will command them, if that pleases you.”

The Navajo nodded his agreement and appreciation.

Avonaco continued. “The reason I asked you to come here is that we have failed to follow the commands of Adahy to unify this continent under one banner. We are each influential in each of our regions, but still suspicion and pettiness prevents a true confederacy. We are Our Confederated Peoples in name only. We are followers of Lady Ha-wen-ne-yu and Her only manifested son, Sotuknang nominally. We follow the *Assurances* and The Law as it pleases us, but likely not as it would please Adahy. How long will it be before our own tribes’ power wanes as if dying stars and break apart? No, my friends, I have seen the future and the moment to unite is now. Now, under one banner as one people is the path we must pledge ourselves to take.”

Anakausuen of the Algonquin responded first. “We are one people under Lady Ha-wen-ne-yu,” he insisted. “We . . .”

“We say so, but that doesn’t make it so,” answered Ciqala of the Dakota before Avonaco could reply to the charge. “Everything that was written in the *Assurances* and The Law that foretells the future of Our Confederation Peoples has come true in its time. Why would we not too believe that we risk conquest by people we cannot yet know, if we do not come to an agreement?”

“As you know, I am a warrior and not a diplomat,” joined Gad of the Navajo. “I study The Law and the *Assurances*. Truly the message brings joy to my heart. But as I read the words, I cannot begin to understand how it can be so. The Books say we are one people, but we’re not. The Books say we should work together and even tells us how, but we do not. To me, no matter

how perfect the words, they are just that – words. They hold no meaning, because it cannot be so.”

“Espowyes, you remain silent on the topic,” Avonaco noticed aloud.

The Nez Perce had, indeed remained silent to this point. His regional influence was the western coastal regions of Yvateamerika, and they’d just begun to experience trade with the people across the great sea. If their tales were true, there were more of them than the stars in the heavens and he wondered how long it would be before trade led to invasion.

Espowyes rose from the position he had been lounging in. He wasn’t as tall as the Cheyenne or as muscular as the Navajo. He had neither the drive of the Algonquin nor the savvy of the Dakota. What he did have was the skill of an administrator. He’d long since resigned himself that he wasn’t going to be the bravest or fastest or smartest or boldest, but he could be the one who could identify those virtues in others and use them towards a common end.

“What Avonaco has said is true, but so too is what Gad and Ciqala have said on this matter . . .”

“But?” the Cheyenne prompted.

“But the true unification of Yvateamerika, followed by the eventual amalgamation of Aymara to form the Amerindian must have a center,” Espowyes spoke of things that only his vision had allowed him to see, something beyond what even Avonaco had been allowed to see. “For that to occur, something must happen before that. And before that? Something else. And before that? The reason Avonaco has brought us together,” he sat back down.

The Cheyenne now spoke. “What our friend says is true. We are at a time we must come together or we will fall apart. Together with our allies, we are stronger than all the other tribes

combined. I propose that now is the time to use that power to force – if necessary – the will of Sotuknang as revealed by Adahy through The Law.”

“But who will lead this nation?” Anakausuen asked suspiciously. To ask a man to take a lesser role in a greater society was no small matter.

“You. Or Ciqala. Or Gad,” he paused to give them a moment to consider that option. “Any and all of you would be perfect. But I propose we divide Yvateamerika into four regions. Each of us would control one of those regions according to the *Assurances* and The Law.” He saw that he had their full attention now and pressed further. “Espowyes would be the ultimate leader and would break any tie votes of we four . . .”

“His land is too far away to rule Yvateamerika,” commented Gad.

“True,” Avonaco allowed. “I will vacate this town and here . . . here will be his capital for our nation.”

The other four took immediate notice. To voluntarily relinquish control of any land was an important signal. To willingly part with the heart of one’s nation indicated a complete commitment to the idea.

“Should we not ask Espowyes’ views on this?” inquired Ciqala. His land was closest to the Nez Perce and it would naturally fall into his region in this proposed division.

“Why?” Ciqala asked cynically. “Just because he gets to be the first ruler of Our Confederated Peoples, doesn’t mean he has anything to contribute.”

The others laughed at the small joke, but not Espowyes. He knew that he might only rule in name only for his generation, but for those who followed he’d set a firm precedent.

Thus, Avonaco the Uniter relinquished control in order to firmly establish the tetrarchy, which served as the cornerstone of Yvateamerika’s development. The decades,

indeed the centuries that followed are universally known as the Golden Years of Our Confederated Peoples. Of a certain, in the beginning there was resistance to the idea to the point of rebellion, but these were dealt with quickly and to a degree of finality. Within a century, there were no further insurgencies in the nation, allowing it to develop internally at a great and rapid rate.

BOOK II

During the Era of the Tetrarchy 4116 – 4763 the nation prospered substantially and technologically. A full accounting of the technical and scientific developments is written as an appendage to this full work. Rather than dwell on those aspects of our culture, it seems of more importance to examine the three most important events occurring during these years: the invasion from Aymara (South America), expanded trade with the people living over the sunset horizon, and establishment of trade with what most historians agree are the ancient cities of Melitta, Karikon Teichos, Arambys, Akra, and Gytte, through the efforts of Yvateamerika's (North America) Jewish community.

Turning to the first of these three issues, let us examine the problems caused by the Aymarian invasion in 4485. Warriors of the Navajo and Cheyenne Military defeated the K'iche Empire in 4367, setting to the torch their great city of Teotihuacan and scattering the people as if so much chaff. But even as Lady Ha-wen-ne-yu allowed our just victory over the Mayans, yet an additional problem arose elsewhere that would affect the events in the southern most portion of the OCP.

For over a hundred years, the peace was kept in the southern region. Then, the Wari Empire, located on the western coast of that continent began to expand northeast for some inexplicable reason, but resulting in the indigenous peoples to the north of the Wari pushing against one another until the Kuna had no place left to go but to cross the land bridge between the two continents in violation of an understanding between them and the

OCP (Our Confederated Peoples). The just government dispatched ambassadors to the region to advise the Kuna they must quit the area and return to their point of origin. Savagely, the barbarians attacked the emissaries and killed them all. As decreed by The Law, the government immediately mobilized forces to retaliate against the atrocity.

Forced from Aymara because of constant pressure and warfare from the south, the tribe moved from that continent to Yvateamerika. The event had been of no notice to Sahila Aiban, the leader of the Kuna. All the Sahila needed to know was that it was a matter of survival for his nation. There was no remorse leaving their ancient lands. Yet, the land itself had conspired to keep the Kuna trapped inside the southern continent. Vast plains of grassy swamp had to be overcome, and were with canoes, but that took time and necessitated a rear guard be maintained until the tribe was able to move in unison. And once they conquered the marsh and a rather substantial river, they found themselves facing a mountainous rain forest on the other side.

Aiban was thankful that his tribe had finally found this resting place. The game was plentiful and the fishing abundant. And, frankly, Aiban was happy that his tribe was away from the craziness that was happening in his home territory and delighted to stay out of history's way. Indeed, he was overjoyed to see his tribe rested after years of occupying the land, his children grown, and in he was in anticipation of the next generation taking his place when the time came.

All was well until the late spring morning, ten years after they arrived, four months ago, when scouts reported that a small band was approaching from

the north. Expecting that sooner or later the tribe who owned this land would inquire into his intentions, he ordered fresh fruits and meats be available and that a suitable place for the meeting be arranged.

“I am Makkapitew,” the leader of the band from the north began through an interpreter, Sotuknang having long since withdrawn the ability of different peoples to directly communicate with one another. He did not bother to introduce the other two dignitaries with him, and certainly not the lesser personages accompanying him. “I represent Our Confederated Peoples of the Yvateamerika.

“I am Aiban, Sahila of the Kuna,” he responded in Dulegaya, the language of his people through his Arkarmar Turpana, the tribe’s most skilled interpreter. “This is our Suar-ibetmar (order keeper) Kwepti, and my sons Kukle and Toyo,” he introduced his oldest and youngest in that order.

Makkapitew nodded to the introductions before continuing. “The Great Council demands to know why you’ve crossed the Amerindian Bridge and invaded Yvateamerika,’ he said in a neutral voice. While the voice was dispassionate, the perspiration dripping from the OCP’s interpreter gave evidence of the seriousness of the accusation.

The Sahila’s hand blurred to restrain that of his youngest, who reached for a knife in response to the insinuation and insult.

“Makkapitew of the OCP, we haven’t invaded your nation; we’ve been forced from ours by the Wari,” Aiban spoke the truth. “We had nowhere else to go and certainly intended no harm. We’ll make whatever reasonable concessions your Great Council requires to remain here and raise our children and our crops.”

The Ambassador considered that for a moment before speaking. “You’d pay tribute to the OCP?”

“Yes, gladly,” answered Aiban eagerly.

“And one in five of your young men would volunteer to join the military for a period of not less than ten years?”

“Your enemies are our enemies,” the Sahila responded with equal enthusiasm as he’d answered the first question.

“And you’d worship the Lady Ha-wen-ne-yu and Her only manifested son, Sotuknang as the one true God?”

“We would revere Ha-wen-ne-yu and Sotuknang. We would celebrate your holidays to them. We’d even offer sacrifices to them, if you required. But . . . but, Paba Tummat is our god, and we can have no other,” Sahila Aiban replied at length.

“A hundred years ago, the OCP defeated the K’iche Empire just north of here,” Makkapitew said reasonably. “They too refused Ha-wen-ne-yu and because of that it was necessary to destroy them.”

Aiban furrowed his brow in understanding. “Ambassador, surely you know that within a few generations that intermarriage between the Kuna and the OCP will lead the young people to find the religion most suitable for them. Why, in a few generations, you will have achieved what you want without warfare. And in the meantime, we’ll pay our taxes and reinforce your military with our bravest warriors,” he offered. “In time, I would think the Kuna would seek to join the OCP as a member tribe, but until then we will prove to be your staunchest allies.”

Sadly the emissary shook his head from side-to-side. “You seem to be a good and decent man, Aiban. You give good governance to your tribe and you raise fine sons, even if that one wants to kill me for delivering this message,” he indicated Toyo. “Be wise in this matter, too, Sahila. Be wise. We will camp across the river and leave in the morning to report to the Great Council. I would like to report that the Kuna has agreed to join us politically AND religiously,” he concluded the meeting, everyone rising as he did so.

Aiban spent a troubled night during which he vacillated back-and-forth between his faith in Paba Tummat and the offer to join the OCP under the banner of Ha-wen-ne-yu and Sotuknang. His faith in Paba Tummat’s guidance had been the foundation upon which his leadership rested. But if he remained steadfast to his faith, whom would he then lead? He knew of the K’iche Empire, many times more powerful than the Kuna, and the OCP had destroyed it. *How long would it take for them to massacre the Kuna, rape our women, kidnap our children?* By dawn, his duty became clear to him. He would cross the river, announce his decision to accept the gods of the OCP and then paddle back across to explain his decision to his people and accept their punishment – death, banishment, whatever penalty they wished to extract.

It was a still morning, as he paddled his canoe across the great river. The birds had not yet taken flight and other than an occasional jungle noise, all was quiet in the great emptiness of the crowded forest. Not quite half way across the river, Aiban spied the campfires of his guests. He wasn’t surprised. Makkapitew and his entourage would want an early start to return north. From what the Sahila

gathered talking to others from the group, it would take a moon or more, even on horseback, a herd of which they'd wisely left on the other side of the river rather than to subject them to the hazards of shipping them across the water.

The desolation had been complete: the tents slashed and burned, the throats of Makkapitew and party cut and their hearts crudely removed, and the bodies piled upon the burning fires. Aiban raced to pull the smoldering body of the Ambassador from the fire; not to save him, it was many hours too late for that, but to give him the dignity of a proper burial. The other corpses were too far consumed by the flames to retrieve more than an occasional limb and one single head. Nothing else remained.

Aiban scooped open the earth and used his hands to scoop the dirt from the emissary's intended grave. Because much of the customs and traditions of the Kuna revolved around their hammock, the rightful thing for him to do would be to lay Makkapitew in the ground upon one. Yet lacking the hanging bed, he improvised with large leaves to emulate the act. What personal possession he could find strewn about, he placed in the grave to speed the ambassador's journey to paba nega. Custom dictated that he build a shelter above the grave once the dirt was replaced, and he did so with skilled hands. Aiban was not a masar of the tribe, but he knew the sacred chant as well as his own name. The mantra was so long, he completed it just after sunset, knowing he must have forgotten some of it since it often took an entire day to complete the chant.

His duty as he saw it done, Aiban returned to his canoe. *Now, I have to return to my tribe and tell them all why they must die*, he thought soberly, paddling across the great river. *What are*

my choices? I can tell them what happened – what I think happened – and they will kill Toyo and perhaps his friends, but what will that do to stay the onslaught of the OCP? Nothing, he answered himself pragmatically. The Sahila shifted the paddle to the other side to correct his canoe's drift. *I'll tell them what I found and let them draw their own conclusions,* he finally decided. It was disingenuous and he knew it and he was helpless to change his mind.

Now, a little more than four moons later, Aiban was beginning to doubt his own wisdom. Arrayed below him on the valley floor was the representative strength of the OCP.

Much has been written about the OCP's military, and I refrain from writing much more only because it would detract from these Histories and is well documented elsewhere. That is not to say that I, indeed all citizens of Our Confederated People, don't appreciate our military and celebrate their success and extend my appreciation for their defense of this great nation. *If there hadn't been a military, there would be no conflict along the land bridge dividing our continents. Then the two worlds would have had to resolve their differences in a much more peaceful, and less expensive, way,* thought Zvi. And he WAS proud of the armed forces of his nation, but the taxes to support them was oppressive and the money better used on internal improvements.

Yet, one event which does bare mentioning are the contributions of the mighty Atticus Maximus, for it was he who saw the need to modernize the military and naval forces of the OCP, and he set into motion the procedure for constant improvements that are seen even today.

Atticus Maximus had been born Dov Bar-Lev to a family of the great unwashed in Rome 175 years earlier. His father had been a drunk and his mother a prostitute who plied her trade near the city center. Father was beaten to death for stealing bread from the local market and

mother's throat was cut when she failed to adequately perform the act of fellatio for a patrician client. Eight-year-old Dov was alone, save his imaginary friend Popii and his real friend Juliana, a raven haired little girl his own age. Juliana had the time to spend with Dov simply because her mother was constantly at the court of the Emperor and her father was a Legati Legionis assigned to duty on the frontier. As members of the aristocracy, it was an expected occupation for both of them.

It wasn't until more than a year that her mother noticed little Dov was actually living with the family and another six months before her father had come home and noticed the new resident. There had been two pivotal moments in the general's life. First, he had witnessed more barbarism on the frontier than he thought a thousand men should see in their lifetimes. The sheer carnage was bad enough, but the residual effects: starvation, orphans and disease drove him to contemplate two important matters in his life. He'd come to believe wars should be fought between armies – minimizing the involvement of the civilian populace whenever possible. The second conclusion he'd come to was that every Roman male, young and old; high-born and poor, should be conscripted into the army for a relatively short period of time to experience what war was, and, thereby, come to hate it as much as he did, yet able to defend their nation if necessary.

The second seminal truth that he'd found was a conviction in faith that Jesus the Christ was his Lord and Savior. It had taken Septimus Maximus and the head of the Christian underground in Rome – himself an aristocrat - many months to convince Septimus' wife, Virginia, of the true way to salvation laid through a belief in the Jewish carpenter. But once she accepted Jesus into her life, Virginia was as if a new-born child, fascinated with every aspect of her contemporary religion.