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A Short History of the World

世界简史



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马传禧 注释

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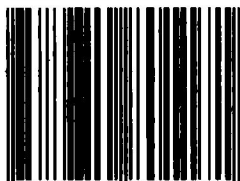


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《世界简史》是英国著名作家H.G.Wells撰写的一部颇具特色的世界史,内容上溯人类文明的开端,下至第二次世界大战。对古代埃及、古代希腊罗马、欧洲文艺复兴、宗教改革、英国工业革命、美国独立战争、法国大革命等,都有独到的叙述。对东方文化,包括儒家和道家,均有所涉及。

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1

The Beginnings of Cultivation

We are still very ignorant about the beginnings of cultivation and settlement in the world, although a vast amount of research and speculation has been given to these matters in the last fifty years. All that we can say with any confidence at present is that somewhere about 15000 and 12000 B.C. , while the Azilian people were in the south of Spain and while the remnants of the earlier hunters were drifting northward and eastward, somewhere in North Africa or Western Asia or in that great Mediterranean valley that is now submerged under the waters of the Mediterranean sea, there were people who, age by age, were working out two vitally important things: they were beginning cultivation and they were domesticating animals. ^[1] They were also beginning to make, in addition to the chipped implements of their hunter forbears, implements of polished stone. ^[2] They had discovered the possibility of bas-

[1] domesticating animals 驯养动物

[2] implements of polished stone 刨光石制工具

network and roughly woven textiles of plant fibre, and they were beginning to make a rudely modelled pottery.

They were entering upon a new phase in human culture, ^[1] the Neolithic phase (New Stone Age) as distinguished from the Palæolithic (Old Stone) phase of the Cro-Magnards, the Grimaldi people, the Azilians and their like ^[2]. Slowly these Neolithic people spread over the warmer parts of the world; and the arts they had mastered, the plants and animals they had learned to use, spread by imitation and acquisition even more widely than they did. By 10000 B. C., most of mankind was at the Neolithic level.

Now the ploughing of land, the sowing of seed, the reaping of harvest, threshing and grinding, may seem the most obviously reasonable steps to a modern mind just as to a modern mind it is a commonplace that the world is round. ^[3] What else could you do? people will ask. What else can it be? But to the primitive man of 20,000 years ago neither of the systems of action and reasoning that seem so sure and manifest to us to-day was at all obvious. He felt his way to effectual practice through a multitude of trials and misconceptions, with fantastic and unnecessary elaborations and false interpretations at every turn. Somewhere in the Mediterranean region, wheat grew wild; and man may have learned to pound and then grind up its seeds for food long before he learned to sow. He reaped before he sowed.

And it is a very remarkable thing that throughout the world wherever there is sowing and harvesting there are still trace-

[1] They ... culture. 本句意为“他们正进入人类文化的新阶段”。

[2] the Azilians and their like 旧石器时代。现在仍用在指尼安特人甚至始石器时代的工具。人类史前的年代称作“古石器时代”，真正的人使用未经刨光的石器的时代称作“新旧石器时代”。

[3] Now the ploughing of land ... round. 本句意为“犁地，播种，收割，打场和碾米，对于现代人来说这些明显合理的步骤其道理就像地球是圆的那么普通”。

able the vestiges^[1] of a strong primitive association of the idea of sowing with the idea of a blood sacrifice, and primarily of the sacrifice of a human being. The study of the original entanglement of these two things is a profoundly attractive one to the curious mind; the interested reader will find it very fully developed in that monumental work, Sir J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough*. It was an entanglement, we must remember, in the childish, dreaming myth-making primitive mind; no reasoned process will explain it. But in the world of 12,000 to 20,000 years ago, it would seem that whenever seed-time came round to the Neolithic peoples there was a human sacrifice. And it was not the sacrifice of any mean or outcast person; it was the sacrifice usually of a chosen youth or maiden, a youth more often who was treated with profound deference and even worship up to the moment of his immolation^[2]. He was a sort of sacrificial god-king, and all the details of his killing had become a ritual directed by the old, knowing men and sanctioned by the accumulated usage of ages.

At first primitive men, with only a very rough idea of the seasons, must have found great difficulty in determining when was the propitious moment^[3] for the seed-time sacrifice and the sowing. There is some reason for supposing that there was an early stage in human experience when men had no idea of a year. The first chronology^[4] was in lunar months; it is supposed that the years of the Biblical patriarchs are really moons, and the Babylonian calendar^[5] shows distinct traces of an attempt to reckon seed-time by taking thirteen lunar months to

[1] vestige 痕迹;遗迹

[2] immolation *n.* 杀……作祭品

[3] propitious moment 吉祥的时刻

[4] chronology *n.* 年代学;年表

[5] Babylonian calendar (古代)巴比伦人的日历

see it round. This lunar influence upon the calendar reaches down to our own days. If usage did not dull our sense of its strangeness we should think it a very remarkable thing indeed that the Christian Church does not commemorate the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ on the proper anniversaries but on dates that vary year by year with the phases of the moon.

It may be doubted whether the first agriculturists made any observation of the stars. It is more likely that stars were first observed by migratory herdsmen, who found them a convenient mark of direction. But once their use in determining seasons was realised, their importance to agriculture became very great. The seed-time sacrifice was linked up with the southing or northing of some prominent star. A myth and worship of that star was for primitive man an almost inevitable consequence.

It is easy to see how important the man of knowledge and experience, the man who knew about the blood sacrifice and the stars, became in this early Neolithic world.

The fear of uncleanness and pollution and the methods of cleansing that were advisable, constituted another source of power for the knowledgeable men and women. ⁽¹⁾ For there have always been witches as well as wizards, and priestesses as well as priests. The early priest was really not so much a religious man as a man of applied science. ⁽²⁾ His science was generally empirical and often bad; he kept it secret from the generality of men very jealously; but that does not alter the fact that his primary function was knowledge and that his primary

[1] The fear ... men and women. 本句意为“对肮脏和污染的恐惧,以及恰当地保持清洁的方法,构成有知识的人的另一个权力源泉”。

[2] The early priest ... applied science. 本句意为“早期的僧侣,与其说是从事宗教的人,不如说是具有实用科学知识的人。” not so much ... as ... 这个搭配关系意思是:与其说……不如说……。

use was a practical use.

Twelve or fifteen thousand years ago, in all the warm and fairly well-watered parts of the Old World these Neolithic human communities, with their class and tradition of priests and priestesses and their cultivated fields and their development of villages and little walled cities, were spreading. Age by age a drift and exchange of ideas went on between these communities. Eliot Smith and Rivers have used the term "Heliolithic culture"^[1] for the culture of these first agricultural peoples. "Heliolithic" (Sun and Stone) is not perhaps the best possible word to use for this, but until scientific men give us a better one we shall have to use it. Originating somewhere in the Mediterranean and western Asiatic area, it spread age by age eastward and from island to island across the Pacific until it may even have reached America and mingled with the more primitive ways of living of the Mongoloid immigrants coming down from the North.

Wherever the brownish people with the Heliolithic culture went they took with them all or most of a certain group of curious ideas and practices. Some of them are such queer ideas that they call for the explanation of the mental expert. They made pyramids and great mounds, and set up great circles of big stones, perhaps to facilitate the astronomical observation^[2] of the priests; they made mummies of some or all of their dead; they tattooed and circumcised; they had the old custom, known as the *couvade*^[3], of sending the *father* to bed and rest when a child was born, and they had as a luck symbol the well-known Swastika.

[1] Heliolithic culture 指太阳和石头的文化

[2] the astronomical observation 天文观察

[3] *couvade* n. 父亲假做娘(一种原始部落的风俗,当妻子分娩时,丈夫应卧床)

If we were to make a map of the world with dots to show how far these grouped practices have left their traces, we should make a belt along the temperate and sub-tropical coasts of the world from Stonehenge and Spain across the world to Mexico and Peru. But Africa below the equator, north central Europe, and north Asia would show none of these dottings; there lived races who were developing along practically independent lines.

2

Primitive Neolithic Civilisations

About 10000 B.C. the geography of the world was very similar in its general outline to that of the world to-day. It is probable that by that time the great barrier across the Straits of Gibraltar⁽¹⁾ that had hitherto banked back the ocean waters from the Mediterranean valley had been eaten through, and that the Mediterranean was a sea following much the same coastline as it does now. The Caspian Sea⁽²⁾ was probably still far more extensive than it is at present, and it may have been continuous with the Black Sea to the north of the Caucasus mountains⁽³⁾. About this great Central Asian sea, lands that are now steppes and deserts were fertile and habitable. Generally it was a moister and more fertile world. European Russia was much more a land of swamp and lake than it is now, and

{ 1 } the Straits of Gibraltar 直布罗陀海峡

{ 2 } the Caspian Sea 里海

{ 3 } the Caucasus mountains 高加索山脉

there may still have been a land connection between Asia and America at Behring Straits^[1].

It would have been already possible at that time to have distinguished the main racial divisions of mankind as we know them to-day. Across the warm temperate regions of this rather warmer and better-wooded world, and along the coasts, stretched the brownish peoples of the Heliolithic culture, the ancestors of the bulk of the living inhabitants of the Mediterranean world,^[2] of the Berbers^[3], the Egyptians and of much of the population of South and Eastern Asia. This great race had of course a number of varieties. The Iberian or Mediterranean or "dark-white" race of the Atlantic and Mediterranean coast, the "Hamitic"^[4] peoples which include the Berbers and Egyptians, the Dravidians, the darker people of India, a multitude of East Indian people, many Polynesian races and the Maoris are all divisions of various value of this great main mass of humanity. Its western varieties are whiter than its eastern. In the forests of central and northern Europe a more blonde variety of men with blue eyes was becoming distinguishable, branching off from the main mass of brownish people, a variety which many people now speak of as the Nordic race^[5]. In the more open regions of north-eastern Asia was another differentiation of this brownish humanity in the direction of a type with more oblique eyes, high cheekbones, a yellowish skin and very straight black hair, the Mongolian peoples. In South Africa, Australia, in many tropical islands in the south of Asia were remains of the early negroid people. The central parts of Africa

[1] Behring Straits 白令海峡

[2] the ancestors ... world 本句意为“地中海地区大部分居民的祖先”。

[3] the Berbers 柏柏尔人(北非地区的人)

[4] the Hamitic 哈米特人

[5] the Nordic race 北欧人

were already a region of racial intermixture. Nearly all the coloured races of Africa to-day seem to be blends of the brownish peoples of the north with a negroid substratum.

We have to remember that human races can all interbreed freely and that they separate, mingle and reunite as clouds do. Human races do not branch out like trees with branches that never come together again. It is a thing we need to bear constantly in mind, this remingling of races at any opportunity. We shall be saved from many cruel delusions and prejudices if we do so. People will use such a word as race in the loosest manner, and base the most preposterous generalisations upon it. They will speak of a "British" race or of a "European" race. But nearly all the European nations are confused mixtures of brownish, dark-white, and Mongolian elements.

It was at the Neolithic phase of human development that peoples of the Mongolian breed first made their way into America. Apparently they came by way of Behring Straits and spread southward. They found caribou^[1], the American reindeer, in the north and great herds of bison^[2] in the south. When they reached South America there were still living the Glyptodon, a gigantic armadillo^[3], and the Megatherium, a monstrous clumsy sloth as high as an elephant. They probably exterminated the latter beast, which was as helpless as it was big.

The greater portion of these American tribes never rose above a hunting nomadic Neolithic life. They never discovered the use of iron, and their chief metal possessions were native gold and copper. But in Mexico, Yucatan and Peru conditions existed favourable to settled cultivation, and here about 1000 B. C. or so arose very interesting civilisations of a parallel but dif-

[1] caribou (北美)驯鹿

[2] bison (北美)一种野兽

[3] armadillo *n.* 犴獾