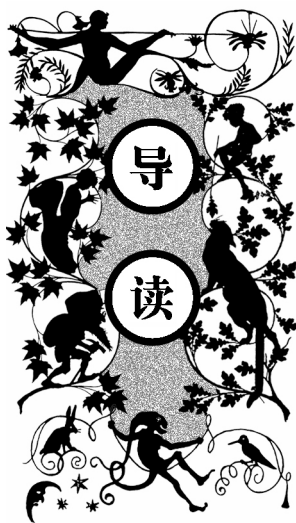


3. 史前太平洋

The Prehistoric Pacific



导

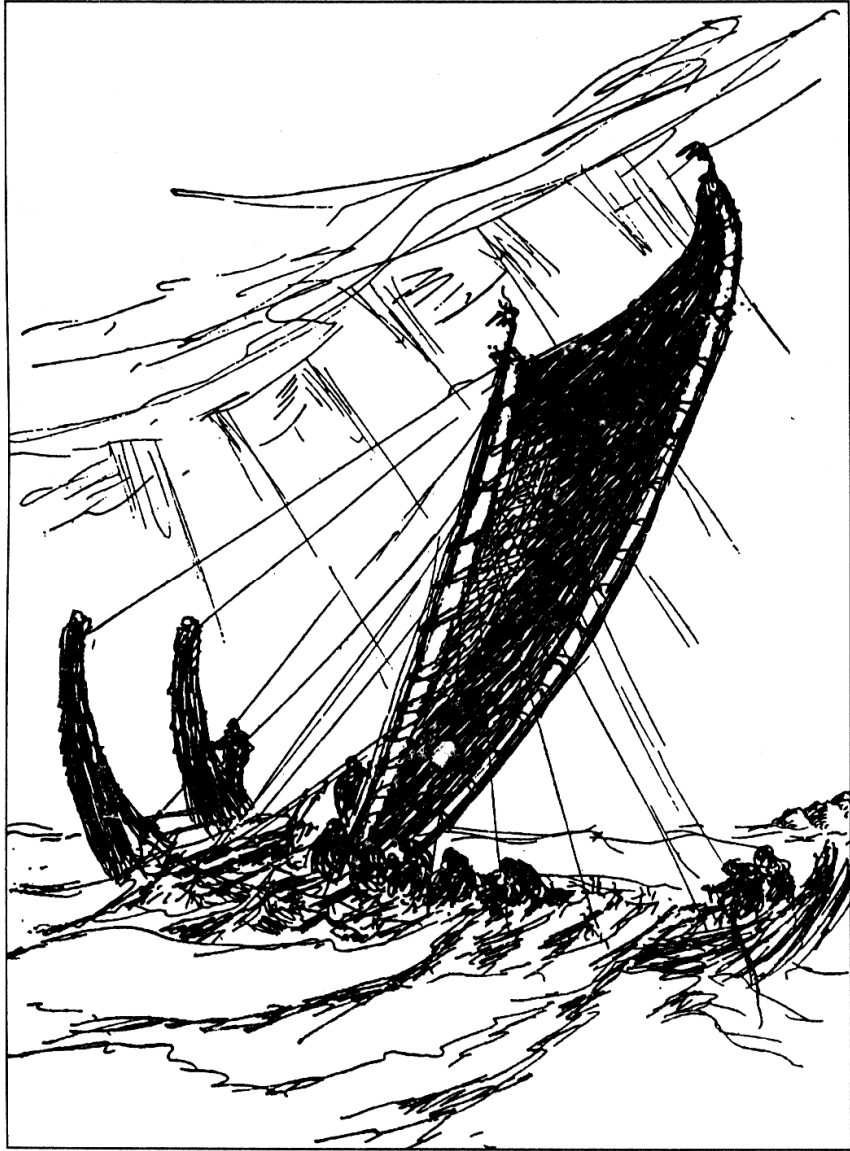
读

在太平洋地区除了当地人，外人无法真正地融入他们的圈子。也只有被当作是当地人，才能够知道那些即使是善意的、装备精良的欧洲人永远也接触不到的事情。他可以通过自己的家族关系获取信息，而他所受到的欧式教育将帮助他整理筛选出正确有用的信息。

那里的波利尼西亚人天生有礼貌，与陌生人观点不一致对他们来说是不礼貌的，因此对于远方游客的任何评价和说法，他们就会礼貌地随声附和，至于真相究竟是什么已经不重要了。

如果想知道哪些是事实，而哪些只是由于礼貌而说出的善意的谎言就需要认真地比较和分析，最后才能够得出一个似乎合理的结论。这对于大多数人来说是一件相当烦琐的工程，通常情况下他们被各种矛盾的说法所激怒，然后谴责那些可怜的野蛮人都是无可救药的撒谎者，而那些野蛮人也会因为自己的好心没有得到应有的效果而心生怨恨。他们再也不会开口说话，除了开口告诉那些外国人一些荒谬的无稽之谈之外——他们确信，那些外国人只接受这样的无稽之谈。

对于许多饱读诗书的印第安学者来说，最难办到的事情就是在一个新生刚入学的时候让他从忘掉曾经学过的一切开始。同样，这里我也要求读者忘记记忆中关于太平洋早期历史的一切。那些在航海史上占据了大量篇幅的著名的欧洲航海家们仅仅是蹩脚的外行和初学者，他们和那些无名的



伟大的太平洋发现者

波利尼西亚的探险家相比将逊色很多。早在白人来到这里前一千多年，这些探险家就发现了从塔希提岛到夏威夷群岛、新西兰群岛以及广阔海洋上其他地方的航线。

最初船上的一些物质装备仅仅是一些简单的东西，以我们现代人的眼光来看并不奢华，只是一些船上必备的东西，当时也没有罗盘等可供指示方向的东西，早期的波利尼西亚水手在只有最原始的帆的情况下，在敞篷船里穿过几千平方英里的未知海域寻找他们的航线，除了一些淡水之外，其他的一无所所有。可是在这种情况下，他们不但到达了遥远的复活节岛，还在一个曾经到达的岛屿上定居了下来，并且能够和他们曾经到达过的岛屿保持联系，即使这种联系可能会中断半个世纪左右，但是那些岛屿一旦被发现了就再也不会不为人所知了。

波利尼西亚人和世界上其他的土著人并没有什么两样，他们一旦和白人面对面地接触，就开始变得自卑，在他们看来，白种人是上帝，他们做的每一件事情总是比其他的人种要做得出色，于是无论自己历史上祖先留下什么，他们都会把他们毁掉或者藏起来，任其自生自灭。他们甚至觉得白人制造的任何东西都比其他的任何人种建造的都要牢固更坚固。

但是白人带来了自己的军队，给他们的世界带来了动荡、痛苦、死亡和破坏，这些终于让他们觉醒了。最后，那些厚颜无耻的白人又以一个新的面孔出现了，他们不再是商人或是传教士，而摇身变成了侵略者和冒险家，他们将自己的旗帜插在土地上作为某种宣告着自己占领的记号，他们在那些被插上旗帜的土地上寻欢作乐，随意找一名女子填补没有妻子的空白。很快，不同颜色的旗帜出现在这个岛屿的海域周围，不同地域的白人用炮火和战争决定谁是这块殖民地的主人。

为了荣耀，大多数的波利尼西亚人宁可选择死也不投降，这种绝望和空虚的情绪感染了大多数的波利尼西亚人，他们对于没有意义的过去不再感兴趣，结果，他们发现了史前太平洋的最早资料，我们对于这些却知之甚少。因为那些是以口头的形式流传下来的，在和白人接触之前，那些海岛的居民没有发明一种符号或文字来保留只言片语。

A chapter which makes our own western explorers look like rather

clumsy amateurs

THE errors in this part of my book are of my own making. The truth it contains I borrowed from others, more familiar with the subject than I am. And to no one am I more deeply indebted for my borrowed plumage of erudition than to Dr. Peter H. Buck, whose book, *Vikings of the Sunrise*, is a book which every visitor to the Pacific Ocean should have somewhere in his luggage and which he should read before he starts upon the bundle of detective stories which loving relatives have bestowed upon him to wish him (or her) a *bon voyage*.

This distinguished doctor and ethnologist was a lucky fellow. He had a European father but his mother was a Maori and he was brought up in New Zealand among his mother's people so that he knows his Maoris as well as I know my Dutch and he was able to become one of our few ethnologists who are not obliged to look at strange races from the outside, but who are able to do so from the inside. And what that means, few people can understand quite as well as the present author. For he too leads a double life. He is completely at home in his adopted American world, but let him go back to his Zealand village and for all his neighbors can tell, he has never been away at all. He still has the "feel" of his former environment and that is the only way in which one can ever hope to understand another race.

The eminent Peter Buck told me that he fully agrees with this statement and that it is nowhere as true as among the Polynesians. All over the Pacific, one has to be a native (or one must at least be fully accepted as a native) before it is possible to get into real contact with the original population. Wherever Dr. Buck went, his maternal antecedents made him a member of the clan. He was not considered an outsider and consequently could learn things which would forever remain hidden from even the best-intentioned and best-equipped field workers who were of European stock. At the same time, his European training made it possible for him to sift and classify all this information which he obtained by the family approach and to know how much must be deducted on

account of racial pride, faulty memory or the desire to please the stranger. For these poor Polynesians, until exposed to the influence of the whaler, the trader and the missionary, were a people endowed with a most delicate sense of courtesy. They did not consider it good form to contradict a stranger. If the visitor from afar said, "Oh, that beautiful statue must be at least a thousand years old!" one bowed politely from the waist down and answered, "Your venerable worship, it is exactly a thousand years old." It made no difference that one had been present as a child when the village sculptor hacked this deity out of a piece of local sandstone. The foreign visitor believed it to be a thousand years and so it was a thousand years old.

There was only one way in which one could arrive at an approximation of the truth. Collect all the available evidence, collate and compare the different items and then by carefully gauging the local sense of civility, reach a final conclusion that seemed to make sense. No ordinary White Man could ever hope to do this. He would soon be exasperated by all the conflicting statements he heard and would denounce the poor heathen as incorrigible liars. The heathen would resent this reflection upon their surely praiseworthy "desire to please" and thereafter would never again open their mouths, except to tell the stupid foreigner some cock-and-bull story which they were sure he would swallow if only they made it preposterous enough. Hence such delightful yarns as that one about the famous calabash which the Hawaiian navigators were said to have used as some sort of primitive sextant while finding their way across the Pacific. There was not a word of truth in it, but an Oahuan chieftain, who knew his White Men and who saw a marvelous opportunity to put something over on one of his cocksure guests, invented it on the spur of the moment, and ever since, that calabash with its holes and its watery contents has made its appearance in every handbook on the Pacific and no matter how often contradicted, it will undoubtedly be repeated until the end of time.

I fully appreciate the attitude of this beautifully browned brother, for I have often been guilty of that sort of thing myself. Whenever, in the days of my youth, the inevitable ladies of uncertain age and good intentions but doubtful

brain power used to descend upon my unfortunate native land in search of “local color” for still another book on “picturesque little Holland”, and when all attempts to tell them the truth had failed, then I took a malicious delight in filling them with a staggering collection of assorted nonsense. And as the natives, noticing what was going on, would invariably join me in this delightful auto-da-fé, the results were apt to be almost as startling as those revealed by that famous Dutch classic known as *Hans Brinker; or the Silver Skates*. Ever since that book appeared, well-meaning Hollanders have sweated blood trying to convince the American public that it comes about as close to the truth as a story about America in which befeathered Indian warriors should race up and down Broadway while the President of the United States, in a buckskin coat, was amusing himself by shooting at buffaloes from the windows of the White House. But all to no avail. *Hans Brinker* for four successive generations has taught our people all they will probably ever know about “Life in the Low Countries”. And when a better-informed critic dares to raise certain modest objections, he is told to hold his peace, or he is suspected of envy because he himself was never able to write a best-seller of such astounding vitality.

And so we poor natives have ceased to bother and long may they live—the Hans Brinkers of the North Sea and the Hans Brinkers of the Coral Sea. For no person on earth can hope to defeat our female colleagues, once they are in search of local color and glamour. And so here is luck to them and to the dear lady of New Guinea who has made quite a reputation on “man-eating flowers”. She at least had the delicacy to leave for the interior when she heard of the approach of a few real botanists.

The learned Indian Swamis, whenever they accept a new pupil, ask him to begin by forgetting everything he has ever learned. It is one of the hardest things to do. Nevertheless, I too shall hereby request that you try and forget everything you ever knew about the early history of the Pacific. Forget what little you were taught at school. Forget such names as Magellan and Tasman and Captain Cook and all the other famous European navigators who fill so many pages of our histories of navigation. For they were mere miserable

amateurs, mere beginners. Even such a highly competent skipper as James Cook, probably the most intelligent and undoubtedly the most humane of all the men who ever sailed the Seven Seas, dwindles down to very modest proportions when we compare him to those unknown Polynesian explorers who a thousand years before the arrival of the White Man had found their way from Tahiti to Hawaii and New Zealand, and every other part of this vast ocean.

In the first place, there was the matter of equipment. The Europeans had regular ships. Not very luxurious from our own modern point of view but ships with decks and cabins and storage rooms and water kegs and masts and sails and pulleys and compasses and places where you could sleep and dry your clothes. Whereas the earliest Polynesian mariners had been obliged to find their way across thousands of miles of an uncharted sea in open boats with only the most primitive sort of sails, without any real shelter in case of bad weather, no compasses or any other sort of nautical instruments and nothing but a few calabashes in which to carry the necessary water. And yet they not only were able to reach such remote spots as Easter Island (which may have been just a piece of dumb luck), but once they had established themselves on a rock, about as conspicuous as a needle in a haystack. they were able to keep in touch with the islands they had come from. Often such communications were interrupted for half a century or so, but once discovered, these islands remained discovered and were not lost again, as was the case with the Canaries and Madeira and with Greenland and America. which were so completely forgotten by the men of the latter half of the Middle Ages that they had to be discovered all over again when Europe finally braved the displeasure of the learned doctors of theology who had declared that a belief in the existence of the Antipodes was a gross case of heresy.

About the earliest boats and the methods of navigation used by their Polynesian skippers, we of course know nothing. Theirs was a civilization of wood and of stone. They did not discover the use of metal until after they had come in contact with the White Man.

Stone implements, except in the form of weapons, of axes and spear points,

were much too heavy to be carried on board such frail wooden craft. Therefore, everything connected with the old Polynesian boats was of either wood or hemp. It had been either hammered or woven. Even fire did not play any part, for whereas it is possible to burn a narrow groove into the trunk of a tree (a method employed by our own ancestors along the shores of the North Sea and the Baltic) the canoes these navigators needed for their trans-Pacific trips had to be much longer and wider than those that could be made out of a single tree trunk. The tree-trunk canoe still survives in New Guinea and in some of the smaller islands, but as a rule, it is now only used as a toy to teach very small children how to paddle and it is about as seaworthy as the rubber horses which we give to our own infants when we want them to get familiar with salt water.

Of course in one respect, the Polynesian was not different from the natives in every other part of the world. After he had come in contact with the White Man, he began to despise the work of his own hands. I shall have to come back to this a little later. It is a phenomenon one can observe in every part of the world. Primitive man is invariably struck by a most devastating sense of his own inferiority the moment he comes face to face with the White Man. The White Man is a god who can do everything better than the brown man or the yellow one or the copper-colored one can ever hope to do. Suddenly the native feels deeply ashamed of his own accomplishments. Whatever his ancestors have bequeathed to him is either destroyed, hidden or allowed to go to ruin. The most marvelous pieces of sculpture are left to molder away in the jungle. Boats that are museum pieces, so cleverly have they been constructed, are pulled on shore and allowed to rot away. One tenth-rate blunderbuss of modern construction is a treasure, but a spearhead, carved with infinite care from a piece of flint, is thrown among the kitchen rubbish. No longer will anyone wear those woven garments which were as beautiful as they were practical and which are now replaced by hideous cotton Mother Hubbards, which are fatal to the health and make the women look like scarecrows.

One could continue this dreary list until one had mentioned practically every article of wear or ornament. And this pathetic sense of humiliation does

not stop inside the tangibles of life, but also penetrates into the realm of the spirit. Gods that have shaped the destinies of the tribe for thousands of years are denounced as impostors and the desert deity of Moses takes their place, together with his Son-who-died-on-the-Cross and whom the Christians regard as the founder of their own faith. The desert god is at least more or less familiar to the Polynesians, for he is quite as bloodthirsty, as vindictive and as ruthless as any of their own heavenly potentates and the Old Testament speaks a language which all primitive peoples have understood—the language of hatred and intolerance and of arrogant contempt for everything foreign.

But what, so one asks oneself, can these poor heathen have found to attract them in that New Testament with its gospel of love and kindness and forbearance? The answer is that the first Whites who reached these regions were as orthodox in their beliefs as the skipper of Charles Darwin's vessel of exploration and that most of the earlier missionaries too were followers of Jehovah rather than disciples of Christ and that therefore the Polynesians were not really forced to make as abrupt a change as it might seem. And then there is that other fact which we should keep in mind while studying this highly interesting subject of the early interrelationship between the White Man and the native: the White Man's magic worked. Indeed, it worked infinitely better than that of the benighted heathen.

The magic of the White Man allowed him to build faster ships and stronger ones than those made by the Black Man. His guns were more deadly than the arrows and slingshots of the natives. His medicine really saved the lives of all those who were brave enough to swallow it. Indeed, everything that the White Man had created for himself was more efficient than that which was at the disposal of the colored man. Including his god, who always gave him the victory (usually a very easy one) over all his enemies.

And then, one day, he woke up. The White Man had not only brought him all the accursed camp followers of the great army of Progress, carrying misery, death and destruction among these poor creatures who had never been able to work up any sort of resistance against the ailments of the Old World, but now

the White Man appeared in a new role. He came no longer as the trader or the missionary but as the conqueror and the explorer. He brazenly planted his own flag amidst the lands which since time immemorial had belonged to the descendants of the earliest settlers, as a record of their foolhardy bravery. He surrounded his flagpole with walls of masonry. Along the top of his parapets he planted heavy bronze cannon, and these destructive monsters were served by the lowest dregs of the White Man's slums—great big strong creatures who came to those islands without wives of their own and who helped themselves to the daughters of the natives with the same unconcern with which their masters had helped themselves to the natives' lands. And quite often other ships, flying a different flag from that which was limply hanging from the flagpole of the now familiar fort, would appear in the harbors of those islands and during the ensuing battle, the natives had to run for shelter or take a risk with those high explosives upon which the White Man depended for his ultimate success as a "colonizer".

Then there arose among the older and brighter of the natives a faint suspicion that they had committed a grave error when they had so eagerly discarded their own gods for those of the paleskinned miracle-makers who had come to them during the days of their grandfathers. And here and there they had made a feeble effort to save themselves by a return to the standards and the traditions of a bygone age. But the hands of the clock of time cannot be set back and the attempt only resulted in further humiliation and defeat. There was no way out. One either had to accept the inevitable or die.

Be it said to the everlasting honor of most of the natives that they seem to prefer death to surrender. And those about to depart this world, with a sense of such utter futility as then descended upon most of the Polynesians, no longer care about a past that has lost all meaning. As a result, what little we know about the early history of the Polynesian discoverers of the Pacific has come down to us in the form of circumstantial oral evidence. For these islanders had not yet devised a method of preserving speech by means of the written sign or word when they came in contact with the members of our own race. And when

they accepted the White Man's alphabet, it was the alphabet of the Bible and the hymnbook, for the white teacher (with a few notable exceptions) was not interested in the early chronicles of these sea wanderers who fitted so badly into his own scheme of cheap labor and easy profits. And so we have nothing but the endlessly repeated stanzas of the Samoan and Tahitian and Maori sagas to give us a clue to the terrific drama of their great age of exploration and conquest. These have now been collected, classified and studied by a few of the descendants of the men who wrote these chapters with their own flesh and blood. And so, while we still know very little, we can at least do a little guessing without the risk of wandering too far away from the narrow path of historical accuracy. But it is pitifully little, what has been preserved. The rest lies somewhere—God knows where—or it was drowned in the White Man's gin and rum.