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The Pacific Colonization by the Austronesians

The colonization of the Pacific by Austronesians may be one of the greatest accomplishments of pre-industrial humanity because it was a result of incredible engineering. Until humans evolved into homo sapiens and the climate was favorable, early man had neither the technological expertise nor the time nor resources to dedicate towards exploring in the way that they did in this time period, which resulted in the establishment of societies all over Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia. Homo sapiens even managed to spread as far as Hawaii and Easter Island, which are extremely far away from Southeast Asia and are where these early people began their journeys. We know that at least some of these people were Southeast Asian, because they share no genetic material with the people of Papua New Guinea. Evidence of the boats they used to travel still exist, and the designs are replicated even today. One of the most interesting boat models was that of the double sailing canoe, which could be built large enough to carry even forty to fifty people.

Developing canoes of this size was a necessity because there is quite a bit of evidence that the early people of Austronesia were warlike. Having large boats helped these people wage war, even between islands that are extremely far away, like Hawaii and Easter Island. Further, if one was able to build a large boat, they were also able to travel far away with much of their family to establish a new colony where they could be the leader. It is for these reasons that early colonization is so interesting, and perhaps may have been a reason that re-developing agriculture would be less necessary.

Primary and Secondary State Formation in East Asia

The difference between primary and secondary state formation has to do with *why* a state was established- while a primary state evolves without the influence of another preexisting state, a secondary state forms because of conflict with another state. A good example of primary and secondary state formation can be found in East Asia, particularly by looking at China, Korea, and Japan.

The story of states in East Asia begins with China. China had a tumultuous pre-history and early history, transitioning between the Xia, Shang, Zhou, Qin, and Han Dynasties. By the time China reached the Han Dynasty, it had developed a standing army, a central mint, broadly-based taxation, a system for awarding civil service positions, and overall political stability. Political stability, ironically enough, means enlarging one's domain, so conflict began with the villages in Korea. To combat Chinese advances, the people of what would later be Korea (I'll shorten this to "Koreans" going forward) established states. Koreans entered the Three Kingdoms period, with the kingdoms of Paekche, Silla, and Koguryo forming reflexing against China. Koguryo was founded first and is therefore located at the top of the Korean peninsula where the land connects, and Silla was the smallest, located the farthest south. Silla would later unite Korea with the help of the Chinese, in part because the land was blessed with iron deposits which made it competitive militarily.

The establishment of states in Japan occurred much later and was caused by the migration of Yayoi people who called their new settlement in modern-day Japan "Yamato". This state advanced quickly, likely in part because the Yayoi were already familiar with how a state should function and began building royal keyhole-shaped tombs. State formation also continued downwards in Southeast Asia, with the establishment of Angkor, but the primary reason for primary and secondary state formation remains conflict, above all.