

Anthropology: human and natural selection

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The chapter 2 in the textbook “ Cultural Anthropology” mentions about the reflection in culture of nonhuman primates onto human’s one. In this chapter, I really impress about the idea “ natural selection”. “ Natural selection is the process by which organism better adapt to the environment reproduce more effectively compared with less well-adapted forms”(“ The evolution of humanity and culture”) The “ natural selection”, for me, is the best explanation for the difference between our modern humans and nonhuman primates. From the beginning, every nonhuman species, including humans, had a common root.

However, because of the difference sources of food, they changed their body structures (teeth, intestine) to adapt to their dietary needs. For example, frugivores eat fruits, so their big front teeth make them easily bite foods. On the other hand, folivores have the very strong chewing teeth to help them break leaves into small pieces, easily to digest because of their richness of cellulose chemical. In the article “ Ancient Genes and Modern Health” written by S. Boyd Eaton and Melvin Konner, they also talk about the concept of “ natural selection” in another way.

They discuss about the change in height of ancient human compared to modern humans. According to them, the height of humans changed because of the decrease of protein intake in their dietary pattern. About 30, 000 years ago, the average height of men is about 5’9 (177. 1cm), women 5’5 (166. 5cm); compared to modern human nowadays, men average 5’8 (174. 4cm), women 5’4 (163. 4cm). In my opinion, this decrease in height is also a kind of “ natural selection”. Before, human food mostly obtained by foraging. All foods were absolutely savage. They contained higher protein.

The more agriculture developed, the less the protein intake in the animal meat was. Therefore, humans obtained less daily protein than before. After generations, the human genes tend to “evolute” to adapt to the new daily protein needs. The new genes made human body structures get smaller. As the result, with smaller bodies, humans needed less protein to maintain the daily activities. In this case, “natural selection” represents as a primary role in human body form. Next, another idea which I really like is the female role in the ancient sociality.

As I mentioned earlier, when human didn't know anything about agriculture, their food were mostly obtained by foraging. Most women went garaging, while men went hunting. However, because of the limit of hunting weapons, the hunting foods were not enough for the whole sociality. Therefore, women, who the ones gave majority of food, had power in the community. I think by the time women got power, the world was more peaceful. No war, no death, no tear. I believethat the world would be much better in the future if women, again, have the power, have a strong influence in the politic manner on the world.