

Ancient egyptian civilization and culture history essay



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Ancient Egypt was one of the oldest cultures that ever existed. It was around 5000 years ago! This land flourished because of the Nile River. Its annual inundation created fertile lands that supported life. The Ancient Egyptian worshipped many gods like Re, (the sun god) Isis, Seth, and Horus. Ancient Egyptians had a supreme and powerful ruler called the Pharaoh. The pharaohs were considered to be a god of Egypt. The pharaohs ruled the Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, and the New Kingdom. There were also much more cultural activities like, the custom of mummification, written language like Hieroglyphics, the use of spices, medicine, and papyrus, which was unique to ancient Egypt.

Egyptian Topics

Mummies

The belief about preserving the body and afterlife

Mummies are preserved bodies that do not rot. Egyptians believed that mummies keep living in another world even when they are dead. Back then, the Egyptians believed that the Egyptian gods weighed the person's heart when he/she tries to enter the next life. They also believed that pharaohs became gods after mummification, and they would need their bodies.

Mummification process – Mummy recipe

To preserve the mummies' body, Egyptian embalmers first cleaned the body with palm wine. Then took all the organs out of the body, then they took the brain out through the nose using a long metal hook. They took every organ out except the heart. The heart remained in the body for the gods to measure. The organs were packed with natrons and spices and were put into

four canopic jars, and later placed in the tomb of the mummy. Next the embalmers put natron salt inside and they rubbed it with oils and spices, while saying prayers as well. After 70 days, the body was taken out and wrapped around in papyrus or thin strips of linen. The embalmers then placed Egyptian spices around the mummy. Then sculptors made masks and coffins for the mummy, and would embellish it with jewels and paintings. The mummy's coffin was then placed inside a tomb. Over the tomb, colossal pyramids were built for important people like the pharaohs and their family members.

Interesting Mummy Facts

A total of about 70 million mummies were made in 3000 years! Mummies are made naturally or by embalming. Natural mummies just become dried out in the sun or buried in the ice or get smoked. Mummies are dead rulers, poor people or animals. It is believed that pharaohs became gods after mummification. In 1929, in the Valley of Kings, Mr. Carter and his team discovered the intact tomb of King Tutankhamun, and his mummy. This discovery made us more aware of some of the Ancient Egyptian way of life.

Ancient Egyptian Gods and Goddesses

Belief and Mythology

Ancient Egyptians worshiped many gods and goddesses. They existed in people's minds to give them explanation for everyday event of life and give the confidence to conduct their every day activity. This strong belief led them to respect their gods. They made it a practice to offer gods their prayers, offering and other sacrifices. There are many interesting myths

about the ancient Egyptian gods and goddesses. This is a Lower Egyptian myth. At the beginning, there was only the ocean. Ra or Re, the sun god came out of it. He spit out four children. Shu and Tefnut became the atmosphere. Geb was the Earth and Nut was the sky. Geb and Nut married and had two sons called Seth and Osiris, and two daughters called Isis and Nephthys. Seth became the god of the chaotic world and Osiris became the underworld god. Isis was the mother of all gods, who resurrected and married her brother Osiris and their son was Horus the sky god. He was believed to be Re himself and considered very powerful. Nephthys was the goddess and a friend to all women and the dead.

Gods and Goddesses

There were many gods in ancient Egypt. Some of the important gods and goddesses are: Re (Amun-Re, Amon-Re) was the most important god to the ancient Egyptian people. He was the most powerful king of the gods and was often pictured as a falcon flying through the beautiful sky. Hapi was the god who brought inundation to life. He was shown as man with a papyrus plant growing from his head. Aton was the sun god the Pharaoh Akhenaten worshiped. He was believed to have been frequently neglected due to his deformity. Osiris was the underworld and death god. He was killed by his own brother Seth, who was very jealous of Osiris. It is thought all pharaohs became Osiris when they died. Isis was a popular goddess of ancient Egypt. She was the god of motherhood and children. Horus was the child of Isis and Osiris. He is shown as falcon and was the sky god of ancient Egypt and the one who gave power to the pharaoh. Bes was a very important god who protected the women and the child during childbirth. Khnum was the god

who was supposed to have created mankind on a potters' wheel and breathed life into them. Seth was the god of chaos who killed his brother and plucked out one of Horus's eye, but the Egyptian still respected him. Anubis was a superior god. He was the god of funeral, supervisor of embalming and the protector of the death. He was usually painted on the walls of tombs and shown as a god with a jackal or wild dog head. Throth was the god of wisdom, Sekhem was the god of medicine, Hathor was the goddess of love and dancing, and Sobek was the god of water.

Temples to the gods and goddesses

There were many temples that were dedicated to gods and goddesses in ancient Egypt. The Temple at Abu Simbel was built by Ramses II, honoring Amon-Re, Ptah and Harakhte. The Luxor Temples has hundred gates, and the Temple of Karnak was dedicated to Amon-Re. The Temple of Narmuthis was dedicated to Sobek and was built by Amenemhet III. The Temples of Hathor or Dendara was devoted to goddess Hathor. It has big columns and pillars. The famous Temples of Kom Ombo was built to honor Horus and Sobek.

Rulers

Queen Hatshepsut – the famous woman pharaoh

Her family

Hatshepsut was a famous women pharaoh of ancient Egypt. She had been seen as a successful and peaceful ruler. She belonged to Eighteenth Dynasty of the New Kingdom. Her father was Pharaoh Tuthmose I and her mother was Pharoah Amenophris I's sister queen Ahmes. She married her half-brother Tuthmose II and they had a girl called Neferure.

Her Reign

Hatshepsut was Egypt's Pharaoh for twenty-one years, approximately from 1479-1458 B. C. After the death of Hatshepsut's father, her half-brother and husband Tuthmose II succeeded to the throne. Tuthmose III, her stepson was very young, so she became the co-ruler of Egypt. Later she imprisoned Tuthmose III and proclaimed herself as the Pharaoh of Egypt. To make herself more suitable and agreeable to the people and priest of Egypt, she dressed and acted like a male pharaoh. Hatshepsut must have been an exceptional person to rule in a male dominated society, but she was helped by many advisors like Ineni and Neshef. During her prosperous reign, she performed the duties of the traditional pharaohs. She headed both the priesthood of Amon-Re and the administration. She overlooked the tax system. She also waged wars with neighboring kingdoms. She sent out two military expeditions into Nubia (Kush). Her expedition to Punt brought in wealth like gold, ivory, ebony, and leopard skins. It also greatly changed the trade system. The middleman system was eliminated, and the merchants could bring in as much wealth as the warriors. She was also a great builder and her reign reached great architectural achievements. Many of Hatshepsut's strategies worked and were well accepted by her court and the priests.

End of her rule and death

Hatshepsut disappeared mysteriously after about twenty-one years of ruling Egypt. She was said to be in her middle age, when she died, but the cause of her death remained a mystery. Her step-son, Tuthmose III succeeded her to the throne of Egypt and he destroyed most of Hatshepsut's work. Recently,

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her mummy has been identified, using a tooth as evidence. Scientists say she was fat person, and the probable cause of death was diabetes.

Pharaoh Amenhotep IV (Akhenaten)

His family

Amenhotep IV was born around 1370 B. C. His parents were Pharaoh Amenhotep III, and Queen Tiy. Amenhotep IV was raised in a very traditional Egyptian manner. He learned all the skills a pharaoh needed to know. Later, Amenhotep IV married a beautiful woman named Nefertiti. She was believed to be Egypt's most beautiful and powerful women. After he got married, Amenhotep IV had six daughters through Nefertiti. King Tutankhamun was his son through another wife Kiya, who was also his sister.

Akhenaten's Reign

Amenhotep IV was one of the most profound and controversial pharaoh that ruled Egypt. He led Egypt in a way that tagged him as a " Heretic Pharaoh". He ruled during the Amarna period. His rule started at around 1382 B. C. Akhenaten believed in only one god, Aton. To honor his god, Amenhotep IV called himself Akhenaten. During Akhenaten's reign, the other gods were banished. Just the sun god was worshipped. In order to disconnect with the other gods, Akhenaten made a new capital city called Akhenaten, now Amarna in honor of the god, Aton. He promulgated he was the only person able to discourse with his son god. He stopped the worship of Amon-Re, and shut down all the other sacred temples of Ancient Egypt. Many people were unhappy about this. The art during the Amarna period saw a big change and people were represented as they were. He was different from most

pharaohs. He depicted himself as a human rather than god. This helped him to understand his surroundings. Bek was his chief artist. His paintings were very unique, and detailed and full of life. This not only showed Akhenaten's naturalness, but also his respect for nature. Akhenaten built a huge temple for Aton in his own capital city, Akhenaten. Not believing in the other gods of Egypt and the change of the rule began to outrage the people of Egypt. This left the population uneasy, and unhappy. Many cities in Egypt were denied of their estates and plantations. Corruption had increased, and the entire Kingdom was in chaos.

End of his rule and his Death

Akhenaten's reign ended with his death in about the year 1338 B. C.

Scientists believe that he was murdered. His son, King Tutankhamun restored the old gods, and the old capital city. The name of Akhenaten and Nefertiti was hated and they were erased from inscriptions. Their temples were destroyed the new capital city, Akhenaten was ruined. His mummy was never been found. But now, scientists think they might have identified the mummy of this " Heretic Pharaoh".

Pharaoh Tutankhamun (King Tut)

His Family

Tutankhamun, better known as King Tut, was born was born around 1343 B. C. and he was probably born in Amarna. His father was Pharaoh Akhenaten and his mother is believed to be Kiya. His original name was Tutankhaten with means " The Living Image of Aton". He married his half-sister Ankhes, who was the daughter of Akhenaten and Nefertiti. Tut had two daughters

who were stillborn at birth. The young Tutankhamun is thought to have received the best education along with other royal family members. The art of writing in hieroglyphics was an important part of his education. He would have also enjoyed sports, board games, hunting and fishing.

His Reign

Tutankhamun became Egypt Pharaoh approximately in 1333 BC. He was a pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and the time was The New Kingdom period. He was nine years old when he ascended the throne. After his father Akhenaten's death, Egypt was in great confusion. Around 1330 BC, to calm the people, and from the probable pressure from the priests and traditionalists, Tutankhamun and his queen moved the capital back to the old capital city of Thebes which was the center of worship of Ancient god Amun. To show his loyalty to Amun, he also changed his name from Tutankhaten to Tutankhamun. He was a great builder and constructed temples and other monuments at Thebes and Karnak, and dedicated them to Amun. He restored many old traditional customs and ceremonies. He waged wars with Nubia, Syria and Hittites and restored stability and added wealth to Egypt.

His Death

Tutankhamun ruled Egypt for about ten years. Around 1325 BC, after the war with Hittites, he died suddenly. People believed that he was murdered, but the reason for his death remained unknown. In 1929, Mr. Howard Carter and his team discovered Tutankhamun's sealed tomb with his intact mummy in the Valley of the Kings. Scientists think that he might have died due to a crippling disease, weakness and as a product of incest. But still the real cause of his death is not ascertained as Tut holds on to his secrets. Tut was <https://assignbuster.com/ancient-egyptian-civilization-and-culture-history-essay/>

the last in his family-line, so he was succeeded to the throne by his grand vizier, Ay, who became the new Pharaoh.

Conclusion

The ancient Egyptian civilization was one of the oldest cultures that existed. From the many archeological finds, and from the great monument left behind by ancient Egyptians, we have learnt many facts including their food, gods, their rulers, tradition/ceremonial ways, writing system, sports and their general way of life. All evidences, point out to the rich culture the once flourished in ancient Egypt.