

The life of peasants in ancient egypt



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Egypt in ancient time was a very glorious empire. It left many wonder legacies for the world. The pyramid is the most recognizable symbols of the civilization of ancient Egypt. Beside pyramid, there are many achievements of the ancient Egyptians including the temples, stone pillars, irrigation systems, agricultural production techniques, a practical and effective systems of medicine and new forms of literature ect.

Egypt was a powerful nation during the ancient times under the rule of the Pharaoh. He lived in the great splendor stood at the top of society. He was regarded as a king or god. As a supreme ruler, he was responsible for all aspects of Egyptian life and his words were law. He lived in a great palace with many intellectuals and servants served divinely. Contradictorily, peasants who are the majority of the whole population, their lives status were very far different to their king. How their life conditions looked like? And how their relationship with Pharaoh was?

Socio-economic life

Social Status

Peasants' position in society

Peasants were the majority number of the whole population stood at the lowest class in the society. They worked as farmers on the pharaoh's' and nobles' land. Even though, they had few comforts but they usually had enough food to eat. In the flood season, when they could not work in the farm, they worked in building project for the pharaoh as workers in building tombs, temple, dikes, and canals and other construction works.

Leisure Actives

The ancient Egyptians enjoyed many leisure activities. Both men and women loved swimming especially in the Nile River and sailing on the Nile was a popular family activity. The men like fishing and hunting. Sometime, they adventurously hunted lions, crocodiles, hippopotamuses, and wild cattle in the forest. Besides, many Egyptian men enjoyed wrestling, boxing and archery. At home they played a kind of board game called Senet which similar to backgammon.

Egyptian children loved playing similar games to what children play today. Commonly, they played with toys like: dolls, ball, wooden animals, spinning tops, marbles, and knucklebones (which were thrown like dice).

Economic status

Living Standard

The peasants lived very simply. Their homes were low, thick-walled buildings made of sunbaked mud bricks. They furnished their few rooms with a bench, a bed baskets, pots for cooking, and utensils for grinding grain. Most children did not go to school. The boys learned farming or other trades from their fathers. The girls learned sewing, cooking and other skills from their mothers or families. Usually only the wealthy Egyptians could send their children to school. Among the subjects Egyptian children studied were writing, reading, geometry and arithmetic.

Livelihood

It is similar to other early civilizations, ancient Egypt was an agricultural society. Most of Egyptians are peasants and they lived in the countryside and

earned their living by farming while some worked as the servants in the homes of wealthy nobles. The most important crops they grew for food were wheat and barley. Their wealth was earned mostly from agriculture by growing grain, vegetables, and fruit; and raising cattle, goats, pigs and fowl, and catching fish at the Nile River. As workers, they were paid wage which barely sufficient to keep them and their families alive. The surplus products after deduction for various taxes to the Pharaoh, they sold them in the markets.

Political Life

Rights, Freedom and Responsibilities

In the life field of peasants, the social mobility was not almost impossible. There were a small number of peasants that could move up the economic ladder. In order to mobilize their living standard, the families had to work hard for children. They saved the money to send the sons to village school for trade learning. The schools were run by the artisans or priest. The boys who learned to read and write could become scribes in the future, and then they could gain employment in the government. Working in the bureau of the government they could get the well-paid.

Relationship with Pharaoh

Economically, the pharaoh took control key figure in ancient Egypt. He owned the majority of the land, people, and possessions. The pharaoh directly controlled the vast bulk of the land, and entrusted to the royal officials to manage.

The peasants came to relate with the Pharaoh only when the Pharaoh needed them to do some work, especially the rich peasants, the Pharaoh demanded them to do the farm work on the rich lands. They worked as either gleaners or reapers. The reapers went through the fields first and they did work such as plowing the field to loosen the dirt for the seeds to go in or they would winnow. Winnowing means to remove chaff from.

Relationship with Middle class.

The relationship between the middle class people based on the commercial relations. These two classes happened to involve with one another when the peasants needed to buy goods from artisans and traders. These people were the merchants and storekeepers who sold goods to people in the public.

Religious Belief

Gods and Goddesses

The ancient Egyptians religious believes reflected the importance of nature in their lives. Egyptians believed that different gods controlled the forces of nature, giving good harvests or causing crops to die. They thought gods had the power of life and death over everyone. Egyptians were polytheistic.

People in each village worshiped a village god in addition to other gods. They also identified certain gods with animals such as cats.

The sun god Amon-Re was the most important Egyptian god. The east, where the sun rose, symbolized birth to the Egyptian. The west, where the sun set, represented death. Thus, Egyptians always built tombs and funeral temples on the west bank of the Niel River.

Another goddess that people paid very special attention was the Isis, the goddess of the Nile and the goddess of the dead, who weighed each person's heart in judgment. She was the goddess of magic, who people considered to be the goddess of fertility.

“ One of the most famous legends involving Isis putting the body of her husband back together after he was killed by Seth the Egyptian god, impregnating herself with his body and giving birth to their son Horus Egyptian falcon god”.

Birth

Egyptian believed in rebirth of the life after death. They regarded burial rites as of supreme importance. It was believed that by doing good deeds in the first life, the dead would be assured a place in eternal paradise.

Death

The bodies of the rich people were preserved and mummified so that they would stay in good condition before putting in a tomb, which was then filled with food and offerings that they believe it might be needed in the next life.

It was believed that once the body arrived in the Kingdom of the Dead, the ka, or double of the earthly person, would be judged by Osiris and was either condemned to torture or sent to a heavenly realm.

Sources:

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