

The history of cremation



The history of cremation Cremation, the practice of turning bodies into ashes, is a popular method of reducing human remains to basic chemical compounds in the form of gases and bone fragments, and it has a long history. A careful analysis of the history of cremation confirms that, in the archaeological records, it is a practice that dates back to at least 20, 000 years ago and the remains of a partly cremated body of the Mungo Lady was found at Mungo Lake, Australia. According to most scholars today, the history of cremation probably started during the early Stone Age, around 3000 B. C. and it most likely was practiced in Europe and the Near East during that period. The unearthing of decorative pottery urns in western Russia among the Slavic peoples in the later ages suggests that the history of cremation information was popular across northern Europe during the late Stone Age. " With the advent of the Bronze Age -- 2500 to 1000 B. C. -- cremation history moved into the British Isles and into what is now Spain and Portugal. Cemeteries for cremation developed in Hungary and northern Italy, spreading to northern Europe and even Ireland. In the Mycenaean Age -- circa 1000 B. C. -- the history cremation became an integral part of the elaborate Grecian burial custom." (Cremation History). By the time of Homer in 800 B. C., cremation turned out to be one of the most dominant modes of disposition and it became popular for reasons of health and expedient burial of slain warriors. Cremation was widely practiced during the time of the Roman Empire, i. e. 27 B. C. to 395 A. D. and the elaborate cremation urns containing cremated remains were found from this period.

During the middle ages, cremation was forbidden by law all through Europe and it was used as a means of punishment for heretics by authorities.

However, there were cases of mass cremations which were performed out of

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necessity during the times of contagious diseases, war etc. Although the practice was prevalent among the Romans, it was rare with the early Christians and the Jewish culture. " However, by 400 A. D., as a result of Constantine's Christianization of the Empire, earth burial had completely replaced cremation ashes and the use of cremation urns except for rare instances of plague or war, and for the next 1, 500 years remained the accepted mode of disposition throughout Europe." (Cremation History).

In the modern era, the history of cremation dates back to a little over a century ago and it was after years of experimentation that the practice was developed into a dependable chamber. " When Professor Brunetti of Italy finally perfected his model and displayed it at the 1873 Vienna Exposition, the history of the cremation movement started almost simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic." (Cremation History). The movement was fostered in the British Isles by Sir Henry Thompson who was Queen Victoria's surgeon and the Cremation Society of England was founded in 1874 by Sir Henry and his colleagues. In North America, cremation history started in 1876 and it was Dr. Julius LeMoyne who constructed the first crematory to make ashes in Washington. In the contemporary times, it is one of the most widely practice. " In 2006 the history of cremation accelerated to over 700, 000 cremations for a total of 32% of all American deaths ended with cremation. Now in 2009 and a ressession in the USA, the cremation rate is booming as it tops 40%." (Cremation History).

Reference

" Cremation History." Cremation Solutions. Retrieved 08 November, 2009, from <http://www.cremationsolutions.com/Cremation-History-c11.html>

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