

THE PEOPLES OF AMERICA AND THE INCAS



How people moved
from Asia
to America

Tawantinsuyu was the last of a series of Native American civilizations that existed in the modern country of Peru.

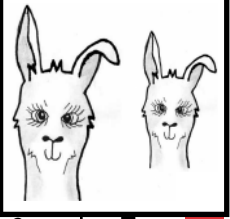
Until about 30,000 years ago America was empty of people. It was cut off from Asia, where there were people, by over a hundred miles of ocean.

Then the most recent of the Ice Ages occurred. An ice sheet, that covered much of the earth's Northern Hemisphere, joined Asia and America together. The sea level fell, due to the vast quantity of ocean that had been turned into ice. It is possible that hunters made

their way by sea around the ice sheet into North West America, perhaps by boat, before 30,000 B.C.. We know for certain that around 12000 B.C. the climate became warmer, and a 'land bridge' appeared, allowing people to travel from Asia to America.

Later still the connection between Asia and America was cut.

Over thousands of years the number of people in America grew, and they spread South. Eventually the whole of the American continent was settled. The so-called 'Red Indians' of North America, the great



civilizations of Central America, and the Incas of South America were all descended from these original settlers. Over time there came to be hundreds of different peoples and tribes, speaking many different languages.

With the end of the last Ice Age came rising sea levels. The Native Americans were separated from the rest of the human race who lived in Asia, Europe and Africa. This had two important consequences.

(1) First, they developed their own way of life. They arrived in America during the Stone Age, when all people lived by hunting animals and gathering plants. Then they discovered how to grow crops and domesticate animals. By the 15th Century AD, when the Incas created their empire of Tawantinsuyu, the Western coast of South America had a large population, with

agriculture, towns, roads, temples, and powerful leaders. This and the rest of their way of life were achieved by Native Americans themselves.

(2) Secondly, the 30,000-year separation of the peoples of the 'Old' and New Worlds had a potentially devastating effect on their health.

The majority of Native Americans had no immunity to diseases of Europe, Asia and Africa.. The moment Europeans appeared in South America their diseases spread. The diseases produced similar effects to the Black Death in England in the Middle Ages – millions of Native Americans died in a short period of time. This was one reason why Tawantinsuyu collapsed so quickly in 1532.



The most important world states in 1492