

Culture and Science of Acorns XII -Acorns in Europe and America 5-

Toshio Mitsunaga

Professor Emeritus of Kinki University

101-3, Kashiwabe-cho, Shimogamo, Sakyo-ku, Kyoto 606-0815, Japan

Summary

In the glacial period, ancient Mongoloid ancestors migrated from Siberia to the America Continent by crossing the land bridge of Beringia. These mammoth hunters were the ancestors of the aborigines in the Continent. In those days the North America Continent was rich in many species of the animal kingdom and especially large animals such as the mammoth. At the end of the glacial period such large animals were extinguished in the Continent because of their indiscriminate hunting and the change of climate. However, this was accompanied by the appearance of temperate and subtropical zones where forest belts and prairies became extensive, and acorns provided sustenance for various small animal types. Further, the coasts, rivers and lakes became fishing grounds. Thus there was a change from mammoth hunting to a hunter-gatherer-fisher life style. People moved from place to place as groups or tribal units, interacting with the natural surroundings in the Continent and developing their own cultural territories. The gathering-hunting-fishing culture was then retained with some limited cultivation until the end of 15th century when Europeans first advanced into the Continent.