

CALIFORNIA REPUBLIC – CHAPTER ONE

Before Time: The Early Peoples of California

“Ethnologically California may be said to be characterized by the absence of agriculture and of pottery... by an unusually simple and loose social organization...”

Professor Alfred L. Kroeber

Early population numbers

Studies of California, to include the Los Angeles basin and its famous La Brea tar pits indicate that human beings have occupied this area for at least 15,000 years and some evidence indicates occupation perhaps as long as 40,000 years. Two skulls uncovered in the San Diego area could bring ages as far back as 44,000 and 48,000 years ago to Southern California. In 1973 a human skull was discovered near Del Mar with a radiocarbon date of at least 40,000 years. Off the coast of Southern California one finds Santa Rosa Island, which may have been occupied as early as 29,000 to 34,000 years ago based upon carbon dating of cooking pits. All of these dates of course continue to be controversial. Discovered in these ancient ‘barbecue pits’ were the remains of dwarf mammoths, which had once roamed the island. At least one of the mammoth remains found in 1977 on the island was dated to at least 40,000 years old which was the effective limit of the radiocarbon dating thus these remains could be a great deal older. In the Arlington Springs site human bones have been discovered (Arlington Springs Man) dated from 10,000-13,000 B.C.

These discoveries not only helped establish a long presence of humans in the area, but it also showed how limited island resources could affect the development of a smaller species of mammoths in response to those limited resources. This also seems to have occurred on some of the islands north of mainland Russia to other mammoth populations, so this was not a unique event. However, these may not be the oldest direct evidence to suggest that Paleo-American Mesolithic* (or Middle Stone Age) hunters and gatherers, perhaps following the migrations of animals, came to the area which we now know as California. It is possible that at least some hunting groups came upon this area as long ago as 50,000 years. Some evidence pointing to the 50,000 year time period has been discovered in the Mohave Desert. If found to be correct this would place these people in the Paleolithic or early Stone Age.**

*The Mesolithic period is placed between the end of the Paleolithic period and the start of the Neolithic period of human cultural development. This is a period of change from simple hunter-gatherers to the gradual domestication of animals and plants with the start of settled communities. The Mesolithic period in Europe has been dated from about 12,000 to 8,000 B.C.

**The Paleolithic period ranges from the earliest tool using humans at 500,000 B.C. to 18,000 B.C. Man hunted with very crude stone tools. And although he dwelled in natural caves and made no structures during his nomadic life he did wear crude clothing and had fire to warm his night and cook his food.

Wandering bands of hunters would continue south, mostly, it is thought, following the herds with some small groups ending up all throughout central and south America to the tip of Tierra del Fuego. There is also the possibility that a fossil unearthed in Sunnyvale, California, dates to an astonishing 70,000 years old. If verified, this could pre-date any fossil finds yet uncovered in the Americas. However, the final acceptance of this date is not yet verified and is naturally quite controversial.

The question must then be asked: How many people were in this area and was the population stable over long periods of time? As for the question of how many people were in the area over time, only indirect evidence presents itself so the best method seems to be to establish a population count at first contact with Europeans and work from there. The problem of population counts before contact with Europeans is difficult due to the fact that there were so few to begin with in relation to modern eras. Secondly, evidence of organized tribal groups does not occur in California until a much later date than other areas and may indeed be a relatively recent development among the peoples of pre-European California.

Although pre-Spanish exploration and occupation population studies are at best educated guesses, it has nevertheless been estimated that the stable aboriginal population for the entire future State of California was on the order of 133,000, but some more recent estimates push the total to as high as 300,000. These early figures come from Professor Alfred Louis Kroeber (1876-1960), an anthropologist well known for his work on early America, focusing on California he also estimated the population of the Los Angeles basin at European contact to be around 6,000 at the very most. Dr. Kroeber is perhaps best known for his work with "Ishi" (c.1862-1916) (not the man's real name as he would never speak it) the last known member of the Yahi native tribe and possibly the last so-called 'wild' native in California, who walked out of his wilderness home in 1911. After teaching his anthropological benefactors about his way of life Ishi would die in 1916 from tuberculosis. Contact with Europeans had killed the last 'wild' native of California. As for Dr. Kroeber, he would go on to write about California tribes in his work titled *Handbook of Indians of California* (1925) as well as his 1939 work, *Cultural and Natural Areas of Native North America*.

Other historians and researchers would place the population figure for indigenous pre-Columbian peoples of California at somewhere around 120,000 to as many as 200,000 when Europeans first came into contact with the locals in the 1500s. Two modern football stadiums could hold this many people. Dr. Edward H. Spicer (1906-1983), professor of Anthropology at the University of Arizona, and the author of *A Short History of the Indians of the United States*, places the number at around 125,000. Theodora Kroeber (1897-1979), author of *Ishi in Two Worlds* places the number at between 150,000 and 250,000 at the top end, but certainly no more. This population could then be divided into some 250 or so separate bands, tribes and tribelets. Because of this great diversity among the native populations the Europeans who came to California from several nations were more alike than the natives to their neighbors in California.

To modern Americans who spend much of their lives in cities with populations in the millions, these population figures may seem small by comparison, however, these figures show California to have been one of the most densely populated areas in the United States before the Europeans arrived. It has also been reported that a population this large would make the area of California one of the most populated non-agricultural areas in the world. Surely with a stable food supply this must have been an Eden on earth in the eyes of the natives.

Hunter-gatherer societies generally tend to be rather nomadic in order to supply their needs. The California area however, seems to have been able to fully supply all of their needs in localized areas, so these individuals were able to settle permanently in one area. It should also be noted that throughout California the natives did not have large families and thus their children were most welcomed into the local groups. They did not over burden the local resources, which is a major problem, found in today's third world nations. These California natives knew how to use the available resources and how to protect them by not overstressing the environment. Whether this was intentional or simply a natural response to the local environment is debatable.

These are a bit more than simple wild guesses on population. There are archeological sites such as villages and aboriginal burial sites, which appear to indicate a stable population of at least 125,000, which may be about as close as we will ever come to the actual number of people living in the area before effective

European contact. This archeological evidence is coupled with studies, which seem to show that no major disasters or diseases decimated the very stable population for thousands of years. There does not seem to be any legends or myths told by any of the native peoples of the area of any major disasters or famines, which befell their people. There were also no known myths of when or from where they had come. There are no chronicles depicting long-term warfare. So for at least a few thousand years, the population of California was not only stable, but also seemingly protected from any real outside pressures. It should also be noted that there is no evidence as yet uncovered to show that these natives displaced others who may have arrived earlier. If others had arrived earlier they must have been few in number and subsequently did not make any effective occupation. It is not beyond belief that more than a few of these migrating peoples simply continued on to Central and eventually South America. Those people after all, had to come from somewhere, and there was nothing preventing Mesolithic hunters from continuing on south, perhaps leaving small groups in several areas over generations as they moved about. However, as far as science can so far show, the native groups in California at first European contact were for all intent and purpose the first Californians.

To contrast these numbers it has been estimated that before the Europeans arrived in the Americas the native population east of the Mississippi River was around 200,000 and the population in all of North America (Mexico is part of Central America) was around 500,000 to 600,000 inhabitants. Another way to look at population is to understand that there was four times the number of inhabitants per square mile in California than any other area in North America prior to European contact.

First Arrivals in the 'Golden State'

The question of how these Paleo-American peoples came to call this area home is still hotly debated. A land bridge across the Bering Strait, named Beringia by researchers, allowing groups of nomadic Mesolithic hunters & gatherers from Asia to follow the herds and wander into North America is cited as one possibility. This is the so-called overland route thought to have been primarily in use from 15,000 to 20,000 years ago. This theory relies on the last Ice Age pulling so much water from the world's oceans through evaporation that massive precipitation in the form of snow, which did not melt, back into the oceans, eventually forming massive glaciers. This lowering of the world's oceans, estimated to have been on the order of 350 feet, is calculated to have created a broad grassy plain from the exposed continental shelf, which links Asia with North America producing a 1000 mile long ice free corridor some 25,000 years ago. Even older ice free zones or land bridges seem to have occurred around 80,000 and 140,000 years ago. Certainly animals crossed these areas at those times, but the question remains, did ancient and primitive Paleolithic (Old Stone Age) humans also cross? If they did they don't seem to have left much behind to remember them by so this remains only a possibility yet unproven and possibly unprovable by modern science.

Recent studies of mitochondria DNA, which is passed from mothers to their children and nuclear DNA, which is passed down from the father and mother on native American populations show the possibility of a primary migration from Asia to America around 40,000 years ago. This DNA evidence appears to indicate a major three-stage land movement beginning with a migration out of Siberia into the Beringia area which was halted for some 20,000 years (a layover of sorts) as at least two major glaciers blocked the route east as well as west. As the glaciers melted the population, which would have been genetically isolated by the glaciers, was able to continue their migration east into North America around 15,000 years ago. This new genetic study of modern native Americans also indicates that as few as 1000 to as many as 5000 individuals were to become the ancestors of most, if not all, of Americas' original natives.

There is at least some archeological evidence to support this theory of later land migration by way of carbon 14 studies of campsites, some now covered by the waters of the Bering Strait. These campsites as

would be expected were not of one date, so several groups of hunters seem to have come to the Americas from the Beringia area. It was not simply one massive movement of a large group of individuals. It is also quite possible that some of these ancient hunters moved across the Bering Strait in crude canoes or ruff-made rafts and then following the coastline to warmer areas. This is the so-called coastal migration route. As the water levels lowered, this trip would have become easier over time. By around 14,000 years ago these ice sheets would have begun to retreat opening up some land, but once again flooding the Bering Strait corridor. Recent discoveries in an Oregon cave of fossilized human feces, known as coprolites, have been dated to 14,300 ago which could make this the oldest confirmed evidence of early humans in North America. Around 7000 years ago these ice sheets became relatively stable at nearly present levels having retreated considerably. It should be noted that during these periods of heavy glaciation, California's mountains also hosted several alpine glaciers, which sculpted the mountains and valleys of the "Golden State." Yosemite's half-dome and hanging valleys are but a few examples of these glacial cut landforms. A full-scale ice sheet for example would have covered the Sierra Nevada around 20,000 years ago. This was a time when the giant jaguar and the large and fierce dire wolf still held command of the area around Southern California. It would have been a dangerous place to live if one were a hunter-gatherer.

Language studies also seem to indicate that there was not a single mass migration as evidenced by the many languages spoken by the people who migrated into the area. Migration seems to have occurred over a period of thousands of years probably from several core language areas. These ancient migrations and groups have been divided up into three major time periods based upon sites containing human remains or human related artifacts. These include the pre-Clovis period described as being earlier than 13,500 years ago; Paleo-Indian dating from 13,000 to 10,900 years ago; and Early Archaic period dating from 10,000 to 7000 years ago when things were warming up considerably. It should be noted however, that these are arbitrary groupings and may not represent any particular group of distinct migrations. At this point there is much conjecture, which can only aid in discovering new facts. Certainly the natives of California were not aware of where they had come from so we could not ask them. They left no written record. Recent studies conducted at Texas A & M University and Stanford Research lab in Colorado note that the famous Clovis people arrived in North America around 13,125 years ago, occupying many areas for around 200 years before suddenly disappearing culturally. They represented a dramatic advance in the production of arrows and spearheads of very fine quality. They made very effective weapons which have been found among the remains of mammoths, bison and other large animals, most of whom are long extinct, but not due to the actions of these early natives.

Recent work on the ancient migration question, points to a movement begun in Africa and then on to Australia around 60,000 years ago. From Australia these ancient peoples may have arrived in Baja California by around 13,500 years ago, perhaps before Asian peoples from the north made it to the same area. Some finds dating to more than 11,000 years ago reassemble today's Australoids (native Australians), rather than Mongolian (Asian) people. What must it have been like for these Paleo-Americans from two very different areas of the "Old World" to meet in ancient America? Did they fight or did they trade?

From *West of the West* we learn a little of what these people looked like, but it is at best only a superficial look into a world long gone.

The California Indians were pale brown in complexion. They ranged in stature from the six-foot-tall Mohave of the Colorado River region of the southeast to the shortest, something over five feet tall, the Yuki of Mendocino on the northern coast. The shape of the head and face was varied as well: narrow-headed, broad-nosed Wailaki of Tehama and Trinity counties; the high-faced, broad-headed, narrow-nosed Hupa of Humboldt and Del Norte counties; the western Mono, high-faced, relatively narrow-headed, medium-nosed, in almost contrast to the eastern Mono, both residing on the Nevada border.

Professor Edward Winslow Gifford [1887-1959], writing on the physical types of the California Indians, made an ironic point when he said in 1926: 'In the living Indian population of today (totaling about 16,000 souls) five types and subtypes are distinguishable... As the Indians in the more thickly settled parts of California became extinct before anthropologists had opportunity to gather data from them, *it is necessary to rely upon skeletal material to determine the physical type of the aborigines in these parts.*

The natives of California at contact with the Europeans spoke 20 or 21 primary linguistic families (as different as English, French and German) and within these language families some 135 dialects (sub-languages) were developed showing that these diverse groups developed unique communications in small areas. These primary groups strongly indicate that these people had originated from separate core areas outside of California. There is also a great deal of physical diversity among the natives of California as well as across the entire United States. This could also indicate some 20 or so distinct migrations. By European contact there were around 250 distinctive groups of tribes and tribelets in California speaking many now lost languages. These many local language groups also point to a very long habitation of the California region by these people as it takes many years of occupation and isolation to develop this many distinct language variations. This speaks to a long, stable and isolated period for those in the area.

Other theories, and they are really no more than developing theories at the moment, place movement of Polynesian peoples from island-to-island moving eastward across the Pacific until eventually running into the American continent ending perhaps as late as the fifth century A.D. It is not beyond belief that these people could have made it to the Americas. There is however, very little to show that their suspected arrival effected the area culturally, which would have made it easier to support this arrival theory.

Focusing on their method of travel James Cornell wrote of their craft in *The First Stargazers*.

Western visitors from [Captain] Cook's time to the present have been amazed by the maritime feats of the Pacific islanders, not the least of which is how they originally spread throughout this vast ocean world. Their forefathers probably came from the coastal island chains of Southeast Asia sometime after 1500 B.C. From almost that time until the present, Polynesian and Micronesian sailors have gone to sea in great wooden craft more than sixty feet long, with reed-mat sails, and V-shaped hulls constructed of wide planks lashed together and caulked with breadfruit sap. For stability, the Pacific sea craft were either twin-hulled or fitted with outriggers. Using these crude craft, without any instruments, dependent only on their own senses, these people traveled freely over an area larger than the United States, Canada, and Mexico combined...

There is also a body of evidence that others came from Europe, Africa and India moving westward until they crossed, accidentally or otherwise, the Atlantic ending up in the Americas. Ancient Egyptians lost in the currents while fishing or even the hearty Phoenicians could have made it all the way to the Americas, but no one ever returned with a well-known record of the voyage. If these voyages occurred they seem to have been mostly one-way trips. There is one report however, by Diodorus Siculus (c. 90 B.C.-c. 27 B.C.) of Sicily, which states that the Phoenicians "venturing far out beyond the Pillars of Hercules" were blown off course trying to circumnavigate Africa and ended up on a large patch of land far to the west across the ocean where the locals seem to have had a good deal of leisure time. He does not mention exactly who these people were however, so we are left with only an interesting tale, and not much more.

Ocean going junks from China are also cited as coming to the west coast of America well before any Europeans arrived. Evidence of their travels are found in stories from monks who may have even described the Grand Canyon as well as physical evidence in the form of stone anchors found off the coast of California, some near Monterey. Ancient Chinese writings tell of the land of Fu-Sang on the far eastern side of the Pacific Ocean. They tell a word picture of California and other coastal areas to include the natives. That

information, including geologic reports could not have been guessed at or simply made up. Monterey would have been a good landing point, as the Japanese current would have pushed these ships close to that point of land. There are also some native stories of strange peoples coming from faraway lands, to include strange ships arriving well before the Spanish. Japanese and Korean sailors may have also visited the coast of California centuries before any Europeans arrived.

There is one very interesting story told by Spanish Captain Pedro Monge in a letter he wrote about the Coronado expedition. He wrote of a small patrol from the expedition probably led by Melchior Diaz (? – 1541) who met up with a group of men with “kinky hair working metal from slag brought from somewhere in the interior.” Found near the mouth of the Colorado River they indicated by sign language that they had come from the west and had crossed the vast Pacific Ocean. These men told the Spanish patrol that their ships had “carved golden pelicans as figureheads.” If the report is accurate, and we have no real reason to doubt this letter, then Diaz may very well have met men from Asia, possibly from China or Japan, deep within the southwest United States. It is also interesting to note that this report/letter seems to indicate that these men felt secure enough to be working metal in an area completely controlled and occupied by Native Americans. Some form of cooperation must surely have been agreed upon to allow them to work and live in native lands!

If these theories and legends are true, then it is possible that some of these early explorers may have become stranded along the coast and would, if they survived, have eventually mixed with the native population. However, it would be premature to assign any cultural development among the natives to a few possible lost souls from far away shores. They would have been few and far between, and certainly lost forever in time. Their impact seems, as far as historians can yet discover, to have been minimal. As far as can be discovered at this time, California natives developed and maintained a distinct and successful yet primitive way of life for many generations, all within the local areas they inhabited, despite the possible occasional visitor.

During later periods natives from areas outside of California may have also made their way to California, beginning a few thousand years ago, however their numbers do not seem to have been too great and few trade routes would ever be established with outside tribes, native nations, or native empires to any extent. For the most part the local California aboriginals lived and traded in what could be called ‘splendid isolation.’

A Middle Stone Age People

The Mesolithic bands, tribelets and tribes of California can by no means be referred to as advanced, for they led a very simple life of hunting and gathering. They were in fact very primitive even by native standards and at times have been referred to as ‘culturally backward.’ Adding to this thinking was the Eurocentric view that they were also “morally degraded,” and thus in need of oversight which more than anything meant religious conversion to “Christian values.” These people never developed anything close to large nations or empires. They built no large structures. As far as cultural development and social organization is concerned they were thousands of years behind the natives of Central American. They never developed any use of mined metals, thus the description as Stone Age peoples. There was little or no domestication of animals other than some dogs.

There was also very little agriculture, except along the Colorado River where seeds were dropped into the ground and simply left to grow. The Mohave and Yuma natives were known to have grown corn, beans, pumpkin and squash in this manner on the flood plains. This would have mirrored the simple agriculture of the natives of New Mexico and Arizona and their corn. (The so-called flood-plain

agriculturists.) It was simple and required no further movement of water to aid in the crop such as in an aqueduct, but it did work well enough to supply a good and regular food source to the natives. For this reason these natives alone can be viewed as transitioning into the beginnings of a Neolithic* (New Stone Age) way of life defined as a group developing a nascent agricultural society. They were the most advanced natives in the California area. Given enough time the Neolithic lifestyle would most likely have spread to the rest of California, but after thousands of years time was one thing the natives had almost run out of. There was also some burning or cutting down of some less desirable plants in order to encourage growth by plants deemed more desirable, but this was not true agriculture. It has also been suggested that some areas were burned to encourage certain game animals to use as habitat. Advanced thinking to be sure, but it did not lead to domestication of animals in California. There were no 'beasts of burden' used by the natives or for that matter any carts or ploughs to pull or push.

The large variety of natural foods to include acorns, allowed the locals to gather much of their food supplies with relative ease. It was indeed quite abundant for the population it supported. This natural food gathering coupled with primitive hunting made agriculture for the most part unnecessary, therefore there was no need to develop the technology. They had a very well developed subsistence economy. The oak groves of any one tribe or group, which contained the acorns, were of course greatly valued by the natives and would be defended in small wars if necessary. It was the primary staple food source for many of the people, but it was never domesticated. In fact, in all of California no grain crops were ever domesticated. The problem with the acorn, which was turned into meal and cooked into a tortilla by placing it on a hot rock, was that it could not be kept fresh for more than a day. It had to be prepared daily, which took a great deal of time and effort, not to mention skill. Generally but not always, the men hunted and the women gathered.

*The Neolithic period in Europe is dated from around 8,000 to 4,000 B.C. It would be Neolithic man who would develop finely flaked points and polished stone. He had the spear sling, bone needles and used the potter's wheel. Cultivation of the land and domestication of animals would come during this period. Relatively stable communities were developed as was the political organization of the people. This was the period of early civilization when the clan or tribe was replaced by the city-state.

Fishing did occur in many areas, almost exclusively by the men most prominently in northern California along the coast and on some rivers, but this was not a widespread or primary activity for all tribes. It was in the far north where it was of greatest importance to such groups as the Yurok, Huchnom, Karok, and Yuki. When fishing was conducted it was done with a certain amount of sophistication with the use of small nets, traps or a standard hook made of seashells and line. In the northern areas salmon was the chief goal and it was a much-prized catch. Fishing as with some hunting, became a highly developed art. The natives of the northern coast such as the Yurok used hollowed-out trees as fishing boats, which were very well crafted and did the job quite well.

It should be noted that the Yuki, or as they call themselves Ukomno'm (Valley People) of which there were around 3000 to 4000 at European contact, represent a very unique group. They are physically different than any other group of natives in California or for that matter all of North America, with a completely unique language. They were also noted for being the most warlike of all the native peoples in California. No one knows where they came from.

The natives of the central California coast, such as the Costanoan people, had no few trees to work with, so to build fishing platforms or primitive boats they simply lashed planks together, joining them and caulking the bottom. A double-bladed paddle would have been employed during use. In the southern areas, to include the natives of the Los Angeles basin, some reed rafts were constructed and used to fish the streams as well as conducting some ocean fishing, with salmon and trout as much prized. It is also felt that these primitive yet sturdy reed rafts could have been used to travel to, and trade with, the aboriginal peoples on Catalina, San Clemente and Santa Barbara Islands. Later reports by European explorers do support these

types of activities being conducted along the coast by the natives. Indeed, when Joao Cabrilho (c. 1499-1543) stopped off in present day San Pedro in 1542 men from the Tongva (Gabrielino) band rowed out to meet him in their small fishing boats known as *ti ats*.

Hunting activities were not highly developed in this area and were mostly used when local food sources became limited during gathering activities. The natives would simply burn the dry grasses on selected hillsides and capture just about anything that ran out to include rabbits, squirrels, lizards, fox, wild pigs, snakes, frogs, deer and even the larva of flies and other insects including grasshoppers. Crudely designed but effective traps were also deployed. The hunting of very large animals does not seem to have generally occurred at least there is no evidence as yet of such large organized hunting parties. However, the occasional wildcat or mountain lion would have been attempted and if they were lucky a fast moving antelope. More to the point, what else would they have hunted? The large mammoths were long gone. The local grizzly bear would prove to be far too ferocious to risk being killed over and to the natives it did have some 'human characteristics', which kept it in awe by the natives. Bow and arrow attacks on a bear could very well have been suicidal. However, there are reports of natives coming up on a sleeping bear and setting the area around it on fire and finishing it off with arrows – but it would have been rare and still quite dangerous.

Showing their ignorance of native life and what it took to survive in this area, Spanish explorers would report that the natives would eat anything that "walked, crawled, or crept." The Spanish did not hold the native population in high regard, and some did not even think of them as human beings.

Although the use of metals was never developed, the California natives did produce some magnificent baskets of very high quality, as well as some very useful stone bowls and stone instruments for hunting and fishing as well as day to day use. Baskets produced by the Maidu, Modoc and Pomo peoples were especially beautiful and well crafted, and are said to have been some of the world's finest. These baskets were not only used to cook food in, but many were made to transport and store food over long periods of time. Spears made of wood were produced as well as the bow & arrow. Two-pronged harpoons were also constructed for fishing and were used with great skill. When arrowheads and knives were produced they were made from volcanic obsidian with blades of up to 4 inches long, which were at times traded inside California, but little trade was developed outside of the area. Some wooden swords were also produced with imbedded obsidian flakes used as a cutting or chopping edge up to four feet long. They did not however, produce any pottery of note, at least no well made examples have been found to date. What has been found is generally of low quality and none were produced by natives in the Los Angeles area. It could be however, that with such fine baskets, pottery was simply not needed. It should also be noted that nowhere in California could one find a wheel. The natives had no knowledge of it. And needless to say, they never developed a written language.

Native Clothing and Shelter

The climate, as would be expected, played a major role in how these people clothed themselves. Many of the men, such as those from the Chumash and Shoshone tribes who lived in and around the Los Angeles area and points south, simply walked around without any clothes. This lack of clothing would lead some of the early explorers to believe for a while that they may have wandered into the Garden of Eden and that these locals were simply untouched by 'man's evil ways'. As weather became colder along the coast the men would wear rabbit skins cut and tied together to form waist-length cloaks. Fox and sea otter skins were also used. Longer capes would have been worn by the local chiefs of villages to distinguish them from other men of the band, tribe or village.

The women along the coastal areas would have worn an apron made of animal skins or perhaps woven from local plants. The garment would have come to above the knee and would have been slit on the sides to allow ease of movement. At times they would have worn rabbit fur covered skins on the upper parts of the body, but it would not have been an everyday situation, especially when it was hot.

During the winter, and indeed during any cold period, both men and women would have donned blankets made of fur. These people had also produced a special type of garment made of animal skins as a covering blanket against the rain. They were also able to produce reed hats to protect themselves from the sun. The weaving of cloth however, was never developed.

When not running around barefoot, sandals or single leather piece deerskin moccasins were worn in the southern areas and tied on to their feet. For travel in mountains as shown by the Shasta people a higher leather moccasin was developed which could be supplemented with reeds attached for movement in snow. As an adornment some native women decorated their clothing with small stones and seashells. The men did not use this type of decoration. Tattooing was also common, more so with the women than the men. Long hair would have been the norm for both men and women. The difference would have been that the men would have bunched their hair on the back of the head.

Homes were dependent on the climate and what local materials were readily available. A simple lean-to seems to have been sufficient in the southern areas where the climate was generally mild. In the central areas of California the same reeds, which were used for fishing, were also used to weave large sections, which were then combined to build single-family huts. These were small, but they served the purpose for peoples who spent most of their time outside. Some people along the coast seem to have developed no semi-permanent homes and if reports are correct, sheltered in thickets during storms and cold weather. An explanation is proposed which relies on these peoples moving around a good deal on food-gathering forays, but the evidence seems less than satisfactory. However, if this was truly a mobile Stone Age community then natural rock shelter or improved shelters would have fit the general pattern developed by many hunter-gatherer societies – if they were truly nomadic!

To the north the natives built a more permanent form of shelter using hand-split wooden planks lashed together, supplemented by bark planks peeled off of local trees. The Wintum people would have built these as well as other northern tribes. These seem to have been strong enough to support the residents from the cold rains, which came during the winter months. On the other climatic scale the natives of the Sacramento Valley who had to contend with high summer temperatures, built their homes out of the same local materials, but part of their shelters were below ground, which helped keep them cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

Some tribelets, such as the South Valley Yokuts and the Chumash built larger communal shelters that could accommodate several families. These would have represented the highest and most organized construction in California before European intervention.

Despite the many variations on the shelter theme it seems that one problem was an almost universal plague among the California natives – fleas. Early reports by explorers almost universally mentioned in their reports a constant problem of fleas in the homes of the natives. The solution seems to have been simple, but not long lasting. The natives, particularly noted in the more southern areas, simply burned down their shelters to destroy the fleas and built another one. The only problem was that the fleas were still infecting their few domesticated dogs and unfortunately their meager clothing as well. Nevertheless, the early explorers reported that the natives while for the most part friendly and unassuming were usually dirty by Spanish standards. It is not generally reported what the natives thought of general Spanish ways. However, some did feel that the Spanish may have been exiles from their own tribes or lands, and that they had come to claim native women.

After all, these new people were all men and when it came to the native women in some cases the natives were not too far off the mark.

Warfare

As these groups developed into small tribes, tribelets and mostly small loosely associated bands within a specific area, trade with other local groups developed and contacts were for the most part peaceful in nature. (The term 'tribe' should be used sparingly as this advanced level of organization was not often in evidence in California.) That is not to infer that these peoples were anything along the lines of being child-like or fully submissive. Simple would perhaps be a better term. Some small local wars and fighting did occur, usually over the oak trees protected by the local tribe. The weapons of choice would of course have included the spear, bow & arrow, rock & sling, and the war club among the natives of the Colorado River area. Mostly in the southern area, a very sharp obsidian blade at times held by a hard wood handle was used. Their war clubs were made of very hard wood, which could be thrown considerable distances with a good deal of accuracy. Needless to say, when not used in warfare they were formidable hunting weapons when the target was a deer or a rabbit.

The reasons for war beyond a trespassing group into another tribes' oak grove could arise from the death or slight to a village chief or perhaps the belief that a spell had been cast by a shaman upon one group or another. The Spanish would report that in some areas the natives were frequently at war, but their reports in this area may not be the full story. There are also reports of native raids on neighboring tribes conducted to capture women, which would have naturally caused a local war. Overall it can be stated that the natives never developed any type of warrior society.

It has also been reported that the Maidu and Gabrielino tribes engaged in torture of their captured enemies, before killing them. Some of the less fortunate missionaries would learn that painful lesson first hand! This should not be confused with ritual sacrifice. It was a personal act and not designed to please any gods. In battle the defeated enemy would be scalped and if there was time the entire head would be taken back to be displayed in the village. The scalp, including the ears, would have been worn during the celebration all night accompanied by much dancing. It has also been reported that at times a small piece of the enemy would be consumed, but not in a true cannibalistic sense. It would have been consumed only to acquire the strength and courage of the enemy. Evidence of true cannibalism has yet to be found among the natives of California. There seems to be no known record of men being taken prisoner and held, however at times, and only if there was enough food, women and children would have been taken prisoner to be used as slaves. The natives of California did not need any instruction by later Europeans in how to torture, kill and scalp their enemies. Some tribes however, notably the Yuma and Mohave, did not take scalps as they seemed to fear the practice. The Yokuts in the Central Valley took some scalps, but it was not an every day event.

It should also be noted that the Modoc people of northeastern California did engage in raids to acquire slaves and a trade route was established from their homeland to the Colorado River. This was not however, the general practice of most natives. There was simply little need for such slaves to do any work. They would of course need to be fed.

It was also rare for any of these groups to use shields in battle, as they were very cumbersome. These protective devices were however used by the Yuma, Diegueno and Mohave groups and were made of elk-hide or layered deerskin. Some of these shields were worn like vests, which would have resembled the ones worn by the Spanish explorers.

The equation of life however, was decidedly to the side of peaceful coexistence. These people were able to live within the confines of the environment without causing a great deal of environmental damage,

other than the burning they did to flush out game. They had mostly what they needed in the way of foodstuffs, so war was for the most part unnecessary. It was not a long term or every day event. There were no wars lasting months or years because the natives understood that there was nothing to gain from such efforts.

California's Splendid Isolation

For many thousands of years the native peoples of California lived in cultural and geographic isolation. The Pacific Ocean and desert southwest, complimented by the Cascade and Sierra Nevada mountain ranges combined to form natural sea and land barriers against outside influences. The fact that these Mesolithic Stone Age cultures were able to last as long as they did can be understood in the context of their isolation from the outside world, which generally included contacts with other nearby native groups.

California is home to the lowest point in the contiguous 48 states, Death Valley, and the highest point represented by Mt. Whitney. California is also home to a rich and diverse group of environments showing an often fog shrouded coastline, a large agriculturally fertile central valley, large hot deserts and several mountain ranges. It is within these geographically diverse areas that we are able to understand much of the reason why California natives enjoyed their 'splendid isolation' for so long. It is also perhaps why many of these native peoples did not travel very far from their homes once they had adapted to one area or another. A people well adapted to a foggy coastal hunting and gathering lifestyle would be less likely or able to adapt and thrive in a hot desert or cold alpine environment and vis-à-vis. If the area they lived in was more than sufficient to supply their needs there would be little reason to move to an area which was unknown, geographically different and perhaps less able to support their needs.

Also, it was not simply distance from other populated areas of the earth, which supported the isolation of these people, even though distance was a major factor. Distance was enhanced by the natural environmental challenges such as the south flowing California Current which required early mariners to tact back and forth as they struggled against the prevailing winds and currents to sail north. The Pacific Ocean in and of itself was a major obstacle to be overcome, and landing a ship on an unknown coastline always risked disaster.

Overland distance from population centers was also a great challenge equal to the difficulties of ocean travel. Adding to this difficult and hazardous distance overland were the natural barriers formed by the Colorado and Mohave Deserts, as well as the challenges presented by the Cascade, Coast, Transverse, Peninsular, Modoc, Sierra Nevada and Klamath Mountains and Ranges. These mountains vary greatly in geology, but all of them present geographically difficult boundaries to cross in order to enter and move around the California area. In short, if one were to select an area on earth at the time which seemed to have been ready-made to support small groups of people in isolation with abundant natural resources over an extended period of time, California would be that place.

Living in an area which was able, relatively easily, to fulfill their needs also seems to have stunted any advancement which would have perhaps been developed over time, such as a much higher agricultural base, had there been any need to develop them. Limited pressure to survive meant no need to develop any advanced technology. Being cut off from other outside cultures therefore became a double-edged sword. The California natives were very much isolationists rarely venturing beyond their own territory. There was a great preference to live their entire lives near their homes. This is not to say that they did not know there was a larger world beyond their own. The natives seem to have simply preferred to know a great deal about their local homelands and cared little of what the rest of the world held. It may have been a simple way of thinking, but considering how long and how well these people lived in California, it was very successful.

Nevertheless, eventually someone or some other group was going to come along with a higher technological base and develop the area far beyond what these people could ever have dreamed of. In any area when a group of newcomers are able to establish themselves because they possess technological advances and have the will to use them and have the organization to implant power and control they will soon overpower the earlier group. Close contact with any technically superior civilization over a substantial period of time would have been fatal to them and their way of life. A Stone Age way of life certainly has a limited lifespan and eventually became a dead end culture, which simply could not compete or adapt. Simply said, the natives did not have the tools to compete with these newcomers. They would have needed to adapt with great speed upon European contact, which they could not do or fade, into California history, which is exactly what happened to most of the pre-intervention peoples of California.

Political Organization

For the most part there was very little political organization among the California natives. Hunter-gatherer societies on the whole tend not to have a hierarchical social structure. Therefore the term 'chief' should not be generally used, as leadership would flow from individual to individual depending on the situation. The only notable exceptions were the Yuma and Mohave groups, which had a level of organization comparable to other native groups in the southwestern United States at the time, and could therefore be correctly referred to as tribes (Neolithic). Groups as large as 2000 natives could at times combine to defend against other local native groups who were at times hostile, but these were not permanent alliances, and could not be described as a political organization. A group of 2000 warriors however, would have been a most formidable army to be sure. If these types of numbers could have been sustained perhaps the Spanish would have taken a second look at bringing military and religious forces into California. The natives however, simply did not think that way. Isolation within their homeland was their way of life.

In northern California the Hupa, Yurok and Karok peoples had no political organization at all. Any groupings would have been short-lived for the purposes of hunting and gathering or perhaps defense, but nothing, which could be called an alliance. In central California the Yokuts were somewhat better organized and could call up members for defense from 100 to 500 members and had villages with similar numbers. The village and village chief would have been the most common political organization. One report by the Spanish who explored the area mentioned as many as 600 warriors able to be fielded in that region at any one time. Generally there seems to have been no real need for any complicated political organization among the peoples of California other than to hunt and gather foods and for times of war. Conquering territory does not seem to have been a part of their way of life. They also seem to have had no idea of personal property, which would at times frustrate the Spanish. This miscommunication made for some tense contacts since the natives thought nothing of taking anything they wanted from these strangers.

As for the young natives they were taught to behave and listen to their elders. They were also to give food freely to those who were older than them and therefore of greater knowledge than themselves. They were told that if they were disobedient that a spider or a rattlesnake would make a painful visit!

From Professor Alfred L. Kroeber we have a summary from his studies of the natives of California.

Ethnologically California may be said to be characterized by the absence of agriculture and of pottery, by the total absence of totemism or gentite organization, by an unusually simple and loose social organization in which wealth plays, for a somewhat primitive and an American group, a rather important part; by the very rude development of all arts except basketry; by the lack in art realism; by a slight development of fetishism and by the conspicuous lack of the symbolism and ritualism so highly developed by most of the American Indians; by the marked prevalence of religious restrictions connected

with birth, death, sexual matters, and similar phases of life; by the predominance among ceremonials of mourning and initiation rites; and by a considerable development of true conceptions of creation in mythology. These characteristics hold true in some degree almost throughout the entire state...

Religion and a World of Spirits

Primary to religion and healing among the California natives was the shaman. The natives believed that illness was caused by the presence of a foreign and hostile force or object, which had entered the body. (This of course is not too far from the truth at times.) In order to ascertain what the foreign object or force was the shaman would dance around the sick or injured individual while singing and at times smoking. After the diagnosis was made, a cure was developed by removing the object (perhaps an enemy's arrow). The shaman may also have sucked out the wound, which could in fact remove some of the infection. In addition the shaman would brush the body or massage it, along with blowing smoke on the patient. Expectorating (spitting up) could also be part of the cure.

Beyond healing, shamans were also called upon to interpret dreams, which were thought to be very important windows into the spirit world and other realities. In times of drought they would be called to use their believed powers and special contacts with the spirit world to bring forth the rains or perhaps to stop powerful storms which occasionally moved through the area. In fact, in California's Central Valley the natives believed that local shamans could actually create the weather, effect good harvests and bring good fortune in local wars. Needless to say, the suspected power of the shamans was to be respected and feared.

There were also specialized shamans who would concentrate wholly on bringing forth rain during dry periods. Other shamans would be linked to rattlesnakes referred to as rattlesnake holy men. This type of shaman was common in the area held by the Valley Yokuts where not unexpectedly one finds quite a few snakes. Interestingly, the local people seemed to have linked snakes to the sun, which brought them out of their holes by its warming rays. Perhaps this was the same thinking developed by Meso-American peoples some of whom also made a powerful connection between the sun god and the snake.

The bear shaman was also thought to be a powerful source of spiritual knowledge and was wide spread from the foothills of Shasta in the far north to as far south as San Diego. The bear shaman was thought to be able to turn himself into a grizzly bear and with this power, destroy any adversary. This is one of the primary reasons why the bear was not generally hunted for food. It was thought by some natives that with supernatural powers the bear shaman could easily return and seek revenge on the hapless native hunter who had dared to hunt him.

Along with these powerful shamans, all native groups in California seem to have formed religious cults. The most widespread and powerful were the Kuksu and Toloache cults. These cults could only be entered by the males of the tribe as women were strictly forbidden. As part of the Toloache cult members would chew or smoke a locally grown jimson weed, which produced visions, which were then interpreted, often by a shaman. Dreams produced by jimson weed were also prized and interpreted. As part of the Kuksu cult, members would partake in ceremonial dancing in underground 'dance rooms', which was said to be able to bring their members to a higher level of consciousness. In 'public' the members would dance in disguises. The purpose was to guarantee good weather, harvests and hunting as well as the general good health of its members. Isolation in special Kuksu cult huts would also be part of the mix where a native could, it was said, be one with the spirits.

Kachina figures (dolls) of about 12 inches or more were also produced which were brightly decorated with plumage and colors. These figurines were placed in important areas and were given food offerings in the hopes that they would bring good hunting or gathering for the tribe or group. It was also hoped that they would keep away any evil spirits, and bring good favor to tribal members during war. Many of the natives viewed the animal world as near to them and indeed felt that their world was populated by the

spirits of their ancestors as well as animal spirits. For an example of this belief in spirits one may look to the Miwok and the Coyote, which was their creator god. The Kuksu cult seems to have been strongest among the Maidu, Patwin and Pomo in the north as well as being observed but not as strongly in the south among the Miwok, Esselen, Ohlone, Costanoan and Yokuts.

The Stars Above

The general view of California natives is that they were well aware of the stars above, but they did not, for the most part, hold any great significance for them. This is not necessarily a correct understanding of this area of native life. The constellations we know as Orion and the Big Dipper do seem to have been grouped in the same general ways known to the 'Old World.' Venus was also thought to have been recognized as being perhaps more important a point of light in the night sky than the others. There are also references to an area of the sky known as the 'Ghost's Road.' We would recognize that stellar road as the Milky Way. Only in the southern areas however, did the natives recognize any other constellations. The movement of the moon was of course recognized as 13 or so moons seemed to have passed as season to season went full circle, but there does not seem to have been any native word for the passage of a year even though the seasons were named by many of the native groups. Certainly navigation by the stars was not understood. There has never been found any native Stonehenge in California or any places designated as being aligned with the stars or the planets. Once again it is clear that the natives looked within to their local area and not outside to the stars. This however, may not be the full story.

Anthropologist Travis Hudson, working at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History has taken a close look at native artifacts and reports that shaman-astronomers could very well have been active sky watchers who had "...compiled a corpus of astronomical information and devised explanations for what they observed in the sky to an extent far beyond what has been previously credited to hunter-gatherers." Alexander Marshack (1918-2004) of Harvard University's Peabody Museum has found that the native Californians "...performed a variety of stellar, lunar, and solar observations, using that data to regulate economic, political, and ritual behavior." Professor Marshack is well known for his work on the controversial theory that notch marks and carved lines on upper Paleolithic pieces of bone represent crude lunar calendars as described in his book *The Roots of Civilization* in 1972. Clearly, there is much work to be done before we fully understand how involved with the study of the stars above the natives of California truly were. Sadly however, the full story may now be lost forever.

A Fatal Contact with the Outside World

Those who have studied such things point to estimates which indicate that one-sixth to one-eighth of all natives living in the United States before contact with Europeans lived in California despite the fact that California represents only five percent of the land. That would soon change.

When explorers found their way to California, mostly from Spain, they found the natives to be friendly for the most part and generous with gifts and food for these strangers even though they had minimal material possessions. History would show that despite this welcome the natives were not well treated and were thought of as being just a bit less than fully human. More to the point, no matter what else the Spanish explorers and later occupiers brought to the area, they also brought malaria, smallpox, chicken pox, measles, typhoid, dysentery, tuberculosis and venereal disease. These diseases, more than anything else, would eventually decimate the native population. But there would be much more. And even though there is no evidence to show that the Spanish explorers and later Spanish invaders/occupiers intended to infect the

California natives with “European” diseases, the fact remains that these people with no immunity to these new diseases were in fact nearly wiped-out by these unintended medical terrors.

Later, when armed Spanish invaders entered the area with priests at their side a whole new terror would continue to destroy the native population. And even though Catholic ‘fathers’ such as Junipero (Joe) Serra (1713-1784) claimed to care for the souls (which means one needed to die) of the natives and would explain that they were bringing a “benevolent despotism,” to the locals, the historic fact remains that the soldiers under their command had no problem killing or raping any native who caused any problems, or for that matter, no reason at all. Indeed, the priests who came to California needed the soldiers to protect them and in this need turned a very blind eye to the treatment of the natives whom they claimed were under their protection. They believed that they were under a mandate from God to destroy their ancient beliefs and replace it with a new one based on Catholic beliefs.

History would show that their ‘benevolent despotism’ was just a bit more brutal than we are led to believe in standard histories written about the Spanish incursions and eventual occupation of California. In point of historical fact, the natives of coastal California who came into contact with the Catholic Spanish would eventually become little more than slaves in their own homeland, and this institutionalized slavery would cost many of them their lives.

Today in order to visit a contemporary hunter-gatherer society one would need to visit Western Australia. The Pila Nguru people who live there seem to have been able to continue their lifestyle only because their habitat in the Great Victoria Desert will not lend itself to even modified agricultural efforts. For now they seem to be safe from external influences, but the future is anyone’s guess.

Fu-Sang, California?

Was California once known as the mystical Land of Fu-Sang? Maybe! No one doubts that the people we refer to as native Americans arrived in California long before any Europeans even dreamed of a whole new world across the ocean, or for that matter, before any modern nations even existed in the Old World. But did the history books get it wrong when they speak of first exploration and contact with the ancient peoples of California with outside civilizations? Could it be that 1000 years before any Spanish or British ships came to California, that the natives of the north and Central American coasts played host to explorers from mainland China? The surprising answer may very well be yes! Western historians now realize that the Chinese had detailed schedules for passenger carrying ships along their coast in the 5th century and they carried a device as then unknown to western men – a compass! They were true navigators. They also knew that there was a great land across the ‘Eastern Ocean’.

There once was a priest named Hwui Shan and he traveled to many strange new lands for many years including a land called Fu-Sang, far to the east of China and across the great Eastern Seas.

From a third century Chinese poet we learn about the Land of Fu-Sang.

*East of the Eastern Ocean lie,
The shores of the Land of Fu-Sang.
If after landing there, you travel
East for 10,000 li,
You will come to another ocean, blue,
Vast, huge, boundless.*

We learn of Hwui Shan from a report he made to the future Emperor of China, Liang Wu-ti (464-549) (reigned 502-549 A.D.) in 499 A.D. His story was told to Prince Yu Kie, a courtier of the Emperor through an interpreter, who dutifully entered it into the official imperial archives of that year, noting that it was “one of the noteworthy happenings” of 499 A.D. In 600 A.D. this report of his great voyage was published by Chinese historian Li Yan Chu noted for his *Records of the Liang Dynasty*. This would become part of *The Twenty-two Historians*. More of the original report was published by Chinese scholar Ma Twan-Lin in the thirteenth century A.D. Finally; one may find Hwui Shan’s travels recorded in volume 231 in the *Tu-Shu-Tsi-Chin Encyclopedia* published in the eighteenth

century. Needless to say, Hwui Shan was no myth and he did travel far. However, his tale is unique as it comprises the only actual known written record of an explorer from China crossing the Pacific Ocean and exploring what would become the Americas 1000 years before Columbus and 500 years before the Vikings found the 'New World.' He would also become the first priest to travel and possibly teach in California. It should be noted at this point that some California coastal natives do have quite a few stories about strange ships carrying men from across the Pacific.

Even though many modern American historical scholars seem to have completely forgotten Hwui Shan, there have been a few books and articles written about this well traveled man. In 1875, writing in London, American Charles Godfrey Lehend (1824-1903) wrote a paper called *Fu-Sang* based on Hwui Shan's report. Ten years later Edward Payson Vining (1847-1920) wrote a massive 800-page work about this man he called *An Inglorious Columbus*. Closer to home, Dr. Charles E. Chapman published a work in 1921 *History of California: The Spanish Period* in which he devoted a full chapter on Fu-Sang called *The Chinese Along the Pacific Coast in Ancient Times*. Finally, one may find a delightful report on Hwui Shan in the *American Heritage Magazine*, April 1966, volume 17, issue 3, which is highly recommended. But just who was this 'Chinese' Columbus named Hwui Shan and what can he tell us of his voyage?

Chinese reports tell us that Hwui Shan, a name which seems to translate as 'very intelligent,' was a mendicant Buddhist priest from Afghanistan (Cabul) arriving in China as a very young missionary on or about 450 A.D. Unfortunately we may never know what his true name was since we only have the one record so Hwui Shan it must be. We are told that the young priest did not remain in China for long preferring to travel even farther from his homeland of Afghanistan. He was soon heading across the ocean with four other priests on his missionary journey of discovery.

From China the group sailed northeast of Japan to the Kamchatka Peninsula in Siberia, called the Land of Ta-Han by the Chinese. From Siberia, he traveled across the Pacific most likely by island hopping across the northern Russian areas past the Aleutian Islands and then south along the west coast of North America. This was his Fu-Sang, which seems to have encompassed all of the Pacific coast of America from Alaska south to the tip of Baja California. He was now ready to spend the next forty years among the natives observing their traditions, customs and ways of life all while teaching the ways of Buddhism. He does not seem to have had any problems with the locals as he traveled. The fact that he was alive was proof of his success. The problem is that we don't know exactly where he and his fellow priests landed so it is somewhat a matter of speculation. However, with more than 40 years to wander, a man can cover a good deal of territory before the adventure is over. We do know one thing about this wonderer; he never claimed any lands for Afghanistan or for his adopted home of China. He was an observer and teacher, not a conqueror. If he had been a man of conquest and the Chinese had taken a great interest in the new area, perhaps the history of California would have taken a most interesting twist.

When an elderly Hwui Shan appeared before the Chinese Emperor after his long travels, he gave the Emperor gifts from the Land of Fu-Sang, including a "kind of semi-transparent stone, about a foot in circumference, cut in the form of a mirror." The stone as he described could easily be a highly polished piece of obsidian or black volcanic glass used by the natives for arrow and spear points and as mirrors by the natives of Central America at the time of his travels. Whatever happened to the mirror or other gifts given to the Emperor we may never know, but if they ever surfaced they could constitute solid proof of his voyage to America. Modern chemical tests may be able to shed some light on this. We do however; have some very interesting descriptions of some of the things the priest saw on his voyage of discovery, so all is not simply guesswork and storytelling. There is to be sure much meat on those old bones.

A good example of one such description, which would be simply impossible to make up, is a report of some of the people he met on his voyage. At one point he described "The Land of Marked Bodies situated [2,300] miles northeast of Japan. Its people have marks (strips) on their bodies like wild animals. In front they have three marks. If the marks are large and straight they belong to the upper class, but if the marks are small and crooked they belong to the lower class." In fact, what he was describing were the tattoos worn by the nature women at Point Barrow, Alaska. From historian and publisher Hubert Howe Bancroft (1832-1918) we learn about these Alaskan natives matching Shan's description, "At Point Barrow the women have on the chin a vertical line about half an inch broad in the center, extending from the lip, with a parallel but narrower one on either side of it, a little apart. Some have two vertical lines protruding from either angle of the mouth... a mark of their high position in the tribe." So it seems clear that the priest made it at least to Alaska, so why not even further down the coast, which would have been a natural course to take following the current? (Japan Current)

It would seem that we must leave the story of Fu-Sang at this point if not for one very interesting discovery made in 1882 at Cassiar in British Columbia. In that year reports come to us of a group of miners working the area who found a cache of buried Chinese brass coins. Some of the coins were reported to be as old as 1200 B.C., along with a bronze fan reported to have Chinese characters written on it. Is this a cache deposited by Hwui Shan or one of his fellow priests, or some other long forgotten Chinese travelers who came to America even before our Chinese Columbus, but left no written record of their adventures? Of course we also ask: Why would they bury these coins? Perhaps in the future some of these questions will find some very interesting answers. These of course are not the only Chinese implements or coins found along the Pacific coast.

Nevertheless, we do know for a fact that some ships from China and Japan did make it all the way across the Pacific intentionally or not. The California natives have traditions which speak of “many houses,” seen along the Pacific coastal waters. Dr. Charles E. Chapman reports, “There is said to be an authentic record of some sixty oriental craft which were driven across the Pacific in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.” It is also recorded that two traders from Japan reached the west coast of New Spain early in the seventeenth century. In 1774 Spanish explorer Captain Juan Bautista de Anza (1735-1788) crossed Arizona and California ending up on the coast near the Mission at Carmel. To his great surprise he saw the wreck of a ship (foreign) on the rocks which was not of any European design he had ever seen. He described it as being “exotic.” In 1815 a well-reported event occurred off of Santa Barbara. This report comes to us from Scottish Captain Alexander Adams (1780-1870) commander of the *Forrester* who came across the drifting ship. A Japanese junk which had been on a coastal voyage from Osaka to Tokyo had been blown off course by a great storm which also destroyed the mast, sail and rudder. For a more than a year the battered derelict had been pushed by the Japan Current all the way across the Pacific until it arrived in California with 14 dead sailors. Incredibly there were three survivors still on board, proving that a voyage was certainly very possible if it was planned well enough. Certainly Hwui Shan would have planned very well indeed. The question we must ask now is: How did Hwui Shan return to China? He must have sailed back across the Pacific, but who picked him up and were any other individuals dropped off to continue his adventure in the Americas? Certainly there seems to have been enough Chinese ships moving along the Pacific coast of America for Hwui Shan to have confidence of being picked up and returned to China. History for the moment at least, seems to be silent on this point.

There is one other very interesting aspect to the story of Hwui Shan as he possibly made it all the way to Middle America. In the legend of Quetzalcoatl, the locals speak of him as being a pious man who came to their area “from across the seas” and gave the people many new religious practices. Was this pious bearded white man from across the seas Hwui Shan or perhaps one of the other Buddhist priests? Or is this simply a legend distorted by the Spanish to help explain their invasion? We will probably never know, but it is interesting to note the many similarities between some of the religious traditions of ancient peoples of Middle America and the early Buddhists. It was also reported by the natives that Quetzalcoatl left them after he had taught for many years sailing back to his own nation which was said to have been once again across the sea. He is also reported to have stated that someday he would return. Perhaps we really do have another name by which Hwui Shan was known to those of ancient American history. One thing is quite clear. Many of the natives of Central America including the Aztec, Toltecs and Maya have legends of white strangers coming to their lands to teach the locals about arts, crafts and religion. These legends have persisted all the way to the ends of South America and are therefore very hard to discount as only legends.

Reaching even farther back into the mists of time we find a Chinese expedition reported in the *Shan Hai King* from around 2250 B.C. It is reported that they crossed the “Great East Ocean” where they made land fall and went inland to “a great luminous rock wall valley.” Was this the Grand Canyon? Perhaps so, but there is not much to go on for this possible adventure to be proven. One thing we do know, Hwui Shin had to learn about the land of Fu-Sang from someone!

Certainly powerful Chinese fleets of the Ming Dynasty were in evidence by the early 15th century as witnessed by the expeditions commanded by Cheng Ho (Zheng He c.1371-1433). In 1405 the first of seven such expeditions launched from 1405 to 1433 was ordered to sail across the Indian Ocean to the east coast of Africa by Emperor Yung-lo (1359-1424). This first fleet is reported to have consisted of 63 ships and 27,870 men! It is not beyond reason to believe that a nation with such a powerful navy would have looked to the east as surely as they looked to the west. These fleets had some ships known to be some 500 ft in length on voyages to India, Arabia, Sri Lanka and Egypt. The sixth voyage from 1421/23 is of interest and great controversy as it is suggested that perhaps Cheng Ho made it all the way to the ‘New World’ some 70 years before Columbus!

Finally, for those who feel that any pre-Spanish voyages to explore the Americas are only pleasant fiction, one need only look at the many known and suspected voyages to the east coast of North America before Christopher Columbus (Cristoforo Colombo) (1451-1506). Along with many less documented or suspected pre-Columbian voyages to the “New World” we find Saint Brendan (545), Viking Leif Ericsson (1003), Viking Thorvald Ericsson (1007), Icelander Thorfinn Karlseffni (1010), Icelandic Bishop Eric Gnupson (1121), Prince Madoc of Wales (1171), Norseman Paul Knutson (1355), The Zeno brothers Nicolo and Antonio from Venice (1395), Prince Henry Sinclair of Scotland (1395), and Gaspar Cortereal from Portugal (1477). Even if some of these voyages turn out to be tall tales we must never forget that even when Columbus landed the natives of the East Coast of America already had stories and legends about strangers who had visited their countries many years before. Nevertheless, Mr. Columbus still gets the credit for making the first ‘effective’ discovery of America as others soon followed based upon his reports of this ‘New World.’

“As the Indians in the more thickly settled parts of California became extinct before anthropologists had opportunity to gather data from them, it is necessary to rely upon skeletal material to determine the physical type of the aborigines in these parts.”
Professor Edward W. Gifford (1887-1959)