

## 教科書原典文字データ

No other place that I have visited made such an impression on me as did Rano Raraku, the volcanic crater that served as the quarry where Easter Island's famous enormous stone statues were carved.

Easter Island is the world's most remote habitable land, lying far out in the Pacific Ocean, 2,300 miles west of the coast of Chile.

Scattered over the crater's walls are 397 stone statues, each representing a long-eared legless human male torso, the largest of them 70 feet tall (taller than the average modern five-story building), weighing from 10 to 270 tons.

There are 97 more statues scattered along the roads as if abandoned, and 113 stone platforms that formerly supported 393 more statues, all of which were no longer standing but had been thrown down, many of them deliberately. Yet Easter Island's people had possessed no cranes, wheels, or means other than human muscle power to move the statues. Who carved the statues, how did the carvers move such huge masses, and why did they finally throw them all down?

European explorers in the 18th century were puzzled by how the islanders had transported and built their statues. They found no timber and strong ropes made from big trees, and the island was almost treeless. What had happened to all the trees that were there?

原典のある英文については、テキストデータを収録しています。

Around 900 AD, Polynesians from the western islands colonized Easter Island and built up a population that peaked at around 15,000 people. At the time of the European arrival they were living mainly as farmers. While Easter Island was divided into about eleven territories, each under its own chief and competing with other groups, the island was also loosely\*4 put together under the leadership of one powerful chief. As a result of the Island's isolation, competition between chiefs took the form of building volcanic stone statues representing their powerful ancestors. If that strikes you as strange, imagine the increasingly costly cars, houses, and jewelry by which modern "chiefs" compete.

Transporting these statues required lots of thick long ropes to drag the sleds\*5 used to move them, and also many big strong trees to get all the timber needed for the sleds and canoe ladders\*6. But when the explorers saw the island, it had very few

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