

## Collapse: Twilight of Easter Island #1



RIPPLE ENGLISH

No other place \_\_\_\_\_ ever visited on earth gave me such a mysterious feeling as Easter Island. It \_\_\_\_\_ in the Pacific about 2,300 miles west of the South American coast and 2,000 miles away from the nearest \_\_\_\_\_ island. I was amazed to see hundreds of stone statues \_\_\_\_\_ the island. Many of them \_\_\_\_\_ unfinished or \_\_\_\_\_, as if the inhabitants had \_\_\_\_\_ disappeared \_\_\_\_\_ the island.

Even more surprisingly, the rise and \_\_\_\_\_ Easter society is never an exceptional \_\_\_\_\_. Many of the most \_\_\_\_\_ societies in the past \_\_\_\_\_ in ruin. Are we going to make the same \_\_\_\_\_ mistakes as these \_\_\_\_\_ people did? Well, they did, and we could. Many experts agree our \_\_\_\_\_ industrialized civilization \_\_\_\_\_, just like Easter Island, Maya civilization and Roman \_\_\_\_\_. Looking at these beautiful ruins, the question we have to ask ourselves is, “what can we \_\_\_\_\_ these \_\_\_\_\_ societies?”

No other place that I have ever visited on earth gave me such a mysterious feeling as Easter Island. It lies in the Pacific about 2,300 miles west of the South American coast and 2,000 miles away from the nearest inhabited island. I was amazed to see hundreds of stone statues across the island. Many of them have been left unfinished or abandoned, as if the inhabitants had suddenly disappeared from the island. Even more surprisingly, the rise and fall of Easter society is never an exceptional case. Many of the most advanced societies in the past ended up in ruin. Are we going to make the same sort of mistakes as these ancient people did? Well, they did, and we could. Many experts agree our modern industrialized civilization could fall apart, just like Easter Island, Maya civilization and Roman Empire. Looking at these beautiful ruins, the question we have to ask ourselves is, “what can we learn from these past failed societies?”

collapse	崩壊、倒壊	end up	最終的に～になる
abandon	放棄する、置き去る	ruin	廃墟、遺跡、荒廃
inhabitant	住民、生息動物	fall apart	崩壊する、行き詰まる
exceptional	例外的な、並外れた	empire	帝国



Many archeologists believe that the island was \_\_\_\_\_ by Polynesians in the 5th century. They made their livings \_\_\_\_\_ by raising chickens and growing root crops like sweet potatoes and taro. \_\_\_\_\_ the environment was \_\_\_\_\_, a \_\_\_\_\_ archeological evidence \_\_\_\_\_ successfully established \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ a population of about 15,000.

Researchers \_\_\_\_\_ carving the statues \_\_\_\_\_ the 12th century. Building and \_\_\_\_\_ statues \_\_\_\_\_ feeding lots of people who work on this project. This was made possible by the food \_\_\_\_\_ their agricultural success.

Most of the statues were carved \_\_\_\_\_ a quarry at Rano Raraku, \_\_\_\_\_ stone platforms \_\_\_\_\_. How did they carry these heavy statues \_\_\_\_\_ the island? It seems that they used log rollers to \_\_\_\_\_ the statues. They \_\_\_\_\_ trees along the ground \_\_\_\_\_ the statues across the logs. \_\_\_\_\_ be a massive consumption of \_\_\_\_\_ this project. By the time Europeans \_\_\_\_\_ arrived on Easter Island in the 18th century, there was no single tree \_\_\_\_\_ island.

Many archeologists\* believe that the island was settled\* by Polynesians in the 5th century. They made their livings mainly by raising chickens and growing root crops like sweet potatoes and taro. Though the environment was harsh\*, a series of archeological evidence shows that they had successfully established intensive\* agriculture to feed a population of about 15,000. Researchers estimated that they began carving the statues in around the 12th century. Building and erecting\* statues required\* feeding lots of people who work on this project. This was made possible by the food surpluses\* produced by their agricultural success.

Most of the statues were carved at a quarry at Rano Raraku, and then transported to stone platforms along the coastline. How did they carry these heavy statues across the island? It seems that they used log rollers to move the statues. They placed trees along the ground and then slid the statues across the logs. There had to be a massive consumption\* of wood for this project. By the time Europeans first arrived on Easter Island in the 18th century, there was no single tree left on the island.

Vocabulary List : No. 9~19

\_\_\_\_\_ the first Europeans arrived on the island in 1722, there was no tree \_\_\_\_\_ standing. Scientific studies have shown that this was the result of \_\_\_\_\_ most extreme examples of deforestation \_\_\_\_\_ history.

\_\_\_\_\_ humans migrated, Easter Island was \_\_\_\_\_ forests. But the \_\_\_\_\_ cut down trees for \_\_\_\_\_ purposes, such as cultivating farmlands and getting timber and \_\_\_\_\_. But the largest consumption of trees was for \_\_\_\_\_ statues across the island. Easter society \_\_\_\_\_ a dozen of clans, each of which \_\_\_\_\_ show their \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ by building \_\_\_\_\_ statues. The increase in statue size \_\_\_\_\_ time suggests competition between \_\_\_\_\_ chiefs became fierce year by year. The loss of trees \_\_\_\_\_ drastic changes \_\_\_\_\_ lifestyle. They lost \_\_\_\_\_ for fishing canoes and houses. \_\_\_\_\_ also decreased \_\_\_\_\_ soil erosion by \_\_\_\_\_. People on the island had nowhere \_\_\_\_\_ or ask for help. They started fighting over \_\_\_\_\_ resources and destroying each other's statues. What was \_\_\_\_\_ a remarkable civilization now began to \_\_\_\_\_.

When the first Europeans arrived on the island in 1722, there was no tree left standing. Scientific studies have shown that this was the result of one of the most extreme examples of deforestation\* in history. Before humans migrated\*, Easter Island was covered in forests. But the settlers cut down trees for multiple purposes, such as cultivating farmlands and getting timber\* and firewood. But the largest consumption\* of trees was for carrying statues across the island. Easter society consisted of a dozen of clans\*, each of which wanted to show their power and status by building bigger and more statues. The increase in statue size with time suggests competition between rival chiefs\* became fierce\* year by year. The loss of trees brought about drastic\* changes in their lifestyle. They lost raw materials\* for fishing canoes and houses. Crop yields\* also decreased due to soil erosion\* by rain and wind. People on the island had nowhere to go or ask for help. They started fighting over limited resources and destroying each other's statues. What was once a remarkable civilization now began to collapse.

Vocabulary List : No. 20~27

If their life is \_\_\_\_\_ a forest, why did the Easter Islanders \_\_\_\_\_ the trees down? They \_\_\_\_\_ changed their course of action and \_\_\_\_\_ sustainably, instead of completely destroying the environment.

When we look back at the past \_\_\_\_\_ perspective, we often \_\_\_\_\_ that these changes were \_\_\_\_\_, acute and drastic: one year, the island still \_\_\_\_\_ a forest; the next year, half of the forest gone. It wasn't like this. The process of deforestation took hundreds of years. The changes in forest cover from \_\_\_\_\_ were too gradual and \_\_\_\_\_ to recognize. Each individual could \_\_\_\_\_ only a few percent loss of their forest in their lifetime. And, more \_\_\_\_\_, we forget. We \_\_\_\_\_ remember \_\_\_\_\_ 20 years ago. How could they manage to tell the difference between the forest today and the forest a \_\_\_\_\_ decades ago?

Similarly, we had a lot of trouble detecting the climate change. We now realize that \_\_\_\_\_ around the world \_\_\_\_\_ slowly rising in the last several decades. However, the changes have been so \_\_\_\_\_, about 0.01 degree warmer \_\_\_\_\_ each year. That's why it was only \_\_\_\_\_ the last couple of decades or so that most climate researchers \_\_\_\_\_ on this issue.

Unlike us, Easter Islanders didn't have science to \_\_\_\_\_ what was happening and \_\_\_\_\_ language to \_\_\_\_\_ information for their \_\_\_\_\_. To begin with, they \_\_\_\_\_ recognize the problem, \_\_\_\_\_ the problem.

If their life is dependent on a forest, why did the Easter Islanders cut all the trees down? They could have changed their course of action and went sustainably, instead of completely destroying the environment.

When we look back at the past from our own perspective, we often assume that these changes were intense, acute and drastic: one year, the island still covered with a forest; the next year, half of the forest gone. It wasn't like this. The process of deforestation took hundreds of years. The changes in forest cover from year to year were too gradual and subtle to recognize. Each individual could experience only a few percent loss of their forest in their lifetime. And, more importantly, we forget. We hardly remember what it looked like 20 years ago. How could they manage to tell the difference between the forest today and the forest a couple of decades ago?

Similarly, we had a lot of trouble detecting the climate change. We now realize that temperatures around the world have been slowly rising in the last several decades. However, the changes have been so subtle, about 0.01 degree warmer on average each year. That's why it was only within the last couple of decades or so that most climate researchers reached a consensus on this issue.

Unlike us, Easter Islanders didn't have science to investigate what was happening and written language to leave information for their descendants. To begin with, they failed to recognize the problem, let alone solve the problem.

To summarize, Easter Island's downfall was most \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ action. \_\_\_\_\_ the lessons we can \_\_\_\_\_ from their \_\_\_\_\_? Their collapse can be seen as a metaphor, a worst case scenario, for what may \_\_\_\_\_ of us in our own future. The \_\_\_\_\_ between Easter Island and our \_\_\_\_\_ world are \_\_\_\_\_. Thanks to globalization, \_\_\_\_\_ trade, advanced \_\_\_\_\_ and information technology, all countries on Earth today share resources and affect each other, just as Easter's dozen clans. Polynesian Easter Island was \_\_\_\_\_ in the Pacific Ocean as the Earth is today in the universe. What's different today is a \_\_\_\_\_ of far more population, far higher consumption rates and far higher \_\_\_\_\_ power. \_\_\_\_\_ they had \_\_\_\_\_ to destroy their environment with just stone tools and their \_\_\_\_\_ power, we could \_\_\_\_\_ destroy our \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ science and technology. But it's possible to \_\_\_\_\_ a different \_\_\_\_\_. We now know that the global temperature is increasing, \_\_\_\_\_ the Easter Islanders did not realize deforestation. They could not \_\_\_\_\_ that Maya civilization \_\_\_\_\_ for similar reasons, \_\_\_\_\_ we can learn how these past collapsed societies \_\_\_\_\_. Today, 8 billion people are collaborating as a \_\_\_\_\_ problem-solving machine to \_\_\_\_\_ our \_\_\_\_\_. Our education, technology and globalization \_\_\_\_\_. If we \_\_\_\_\_ think more deeply about the \_\_\_\_\_ humanity, they can be powerful forces for \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ than an \_\_\_\_\_ to our collapse.

To summarize, Easter Island's downfall was most likely caused by their own action. What are the lessons we can draw from their failure? Their collapse can be seen as a metaphor, a worst case scenario, for what may lie ahead of us in our own future. The parallels between Easter Island and our modern world are obvious. Thanks to globalization, international trade, advanced transportation and information technology, all countries on Earth today share resources and affect each other, just as Easter's dozen clans. Polynesian Easter Island was as isolated in the Pacific Ocean as the Earth is today in the universe. What's different today is a combination of far more population, far higher consumption rates and far higher destructive power. If they had managed to destroy their environment with just stone tools and their muscle power, we could easily destroy our planet with advanced science and technology. But it's possible to imagine a different outcome. We now know that the global temperature is increasing, whereas the Easter Islanders did not realize deforestation. They could not learn that Maya civilization fell apart for similar reasons, while we can learn how these past collapsed societies failed. Today, 8 billion people are collaborating as a collective problem-solving machine to work on our existential issues. Our education, technology and globalization cut both ways. If we dare to think more deeply about the fate of humanity, they can be powerful forces for bringing a brighter future, rather than an accelerant to our collapse.

Vocabulary List: No. 38~42