

The Aborigines

history, culture, life



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Before 1788

general
information

- 'Aborigine' word for the biggest group of natives in Australia and Tasmania
- from Latin: ab origine, means: from the beginning
- coined by the European settlers in the 19th century
- native tribes give themselves other names like cardinal points:

north = Yolngu

south = Nanga

east = Murri

west = Wonghi

Before 1788

their way to
the current
settlement
areas

- first humans who left Africa
- 70.000 years ago
- the sea level was about 90 metres lower than today, islands were easier to reach
- probably they reached Australia via Indonesia
- fixed home for at least 50.000 years
 - long relationship is reflected in their culture and belief

Before 1788
life and
culture

- isolated life in a very uneconomical country
- a few thousand years later the whole continent was populated
- highest population about one million Aborigines (estimation)
- until the white Europeans' arrival remaining in Stone Age
- no writing, agriculture, tools/weapons made from metal
- life as hunters and gatherers
- altogether a few hundred tribes all over Australia without fixed borders
 - spiritual relationship to nature: the land doesn't belong to humen, but humen belong to the land

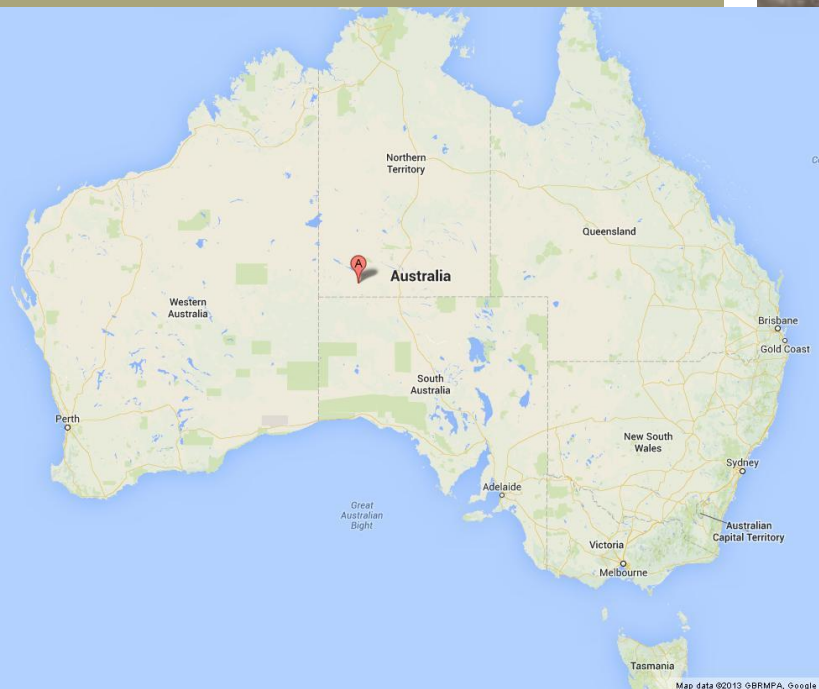
Before 1788

the "Dreamtime"



- it's the Aborigines' idea of creation
- a holy continual history of creation that will last forever
- beings from Dreamtime go on long journeys and create the landscape
- while doing this, they leave their spirit with the humen where it lives on
 - everything is connected (past to presence, humen to nature and ancestors)
- Uluru (Ayers Rock) cultural heart for Aboriginal People
- home of the rainbow serpent, their most important creation being
 - shaped mountains and valleys, keeper of the water
- playing Didgeridoo and dancing for days to pay homage to her

the rainbow serpent,
painted with sands and clay



Since 1788

fateful year

- on January 28, 1788, the English captain Arthur Phillip landed in Australia with many criminals on board
- initially it stayed peaceful but more settlers mean more problems
- Aborigines become as little worth as animals
- settlers began to kill, rape or kidnap them
- suffered from illnesses the settlers took along
→ everything would change for them



- for defusing, they were put into special reserves
- christian reeducation for their children
 - violent riots or retreat to the outback
 - at the beginning of the 20th century, Aborigines are threatened with extinction

Since 1788

current

situation

- in 1901, the oppression was legalized by the so called "white australia policy"
- just in 1949 official citizenship for the Aborigines
- civil rights some years later
- Alltogether, there are about 500.000 Aborigines
- many of them are living in bigger towns, but with worse conditions:

unemployment, drugs, crime, suicide rate ↑

life expentancy ↓



- An Example: Redfern, Sydney:
- In 1973, the government bought an area and gave it to an aboriginal housing association, now it's a social focal point
- problems to integrate in the whites' society as a consequence of colonization, loss of (cultural) identity, lack of perspective
- daily racism and confrontation between police and inhabitants

"SORRY"

- Just in 2008, the Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd apologized officially for all the suffering the white people did to them
- It seems their situation and self-image is improving after all
- It will still be a long way until Australians and Natives can live equally next to each other

Sources

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