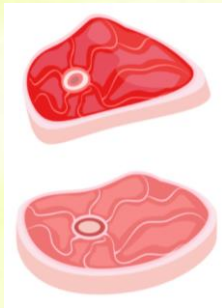


The Use of Fire

In the early ages, humans ate raw food. However, raw food did not digest easily and was not absorbed by the body. As a result, this eating habit affected the development of the human brain and body.



During the dry season, wildfires were a common occurrence. Hominids discovered the use of fire during these wildfires. In winter, hominids would burn wood and tree trunks to keep their bodies warm. When hominids went looking for food in the forest, they discovered burnt animals. The meat smelt and tasted better, compared to raw meat. Besides this, cooked meat digested more easily and was absorbed better by the human body. After the hominids discovered the benefits of fire, they gathered more wood from the forest for cooking purposes.



The Use of Fire

This transformed the lives of our ancient ancestors completely. This marked the beginning of humans consuming cooked food rather than raw meat. This helped in the development of the human brain and body.

When did humans begin to master using fire? According to archaeologists, several layers of ash were found in caves in Beijing from around 500,000 years ago. The top layer of the ash was divided into two sections. The study showed that hominids at the time had not only learnt how to use fire but were also able to manage it effectively.

The two sections of the ash showed strong evidence for the use and storage of fire. The hominids maintained the burning fire by continuously adding wood to it. When fire was not needed, humans scattered the ash to cover the fire or let it burn at a slower rate. If fire was needed, the ash would be removed and dry grass was added to start the fire again.



The Use of Fire

In the past, fire made human life much easier; however, depending on natural fire was not enough. Even today, archaeologists are debating when humans started to master the use of fire. It is believed that hominids started using fire during the production of tools and weapons. Due to friction, sparks were generated during the processing of wood or stone. Later, humans discovered smoke; and that fire was generated due to the heat resulting from the sawing or drilling of wood. After years of experience, humans discovered that wood drilling could start a fire.



Food for Thought:

- ❖ The fundamental of a great invention is the ability to accommodate human needs in every situation and the ability to repeat itself easily. This is evident in the discovery of fire and the method of making fire.
- ❖ Invention is based on experience, improvement and innovation. This is shown by the discovery of the fire-making process.



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