



First photograph of famous Sinanthropos skull, sent to U. S. National Museum anthropologist by Dr. Davidson Black, first investigator of this ancient Chinese race.

## Peking Skull Declared Neanderthaloid

Anthropology

The skull of *Sinanthropos pekinensis*, or ancient Man of Peking, turns out to be no million-year-old ultra-primitive human type but apparently a comparatively recent and certainly a high-type Neanderthaloid cranium. This is the gist of the opinion of Dr. Ales Hrdlicka, noted anthropologist of the U. S. National Museum, given to Science Service after he had examined a profile photograph of the much-controverted fossil sent him by Dr. Davidson Black of Peking Union Medical College, whose field work has resulted in the discovery of this new find of prehistoric man in China.

"The skull is decidedly a high-type Neanderthaloid," said Dr. Hrdlicka, "and the jaw of Peking Man is almost a duplicate of the fossil jaw designated as 'number g' from Krapina."

Krapina is a town in Yugoslavia, where some years ago a number of Neanderthal skeletons were discovered.

Dr. Hrdlicka received a cast of a molar tooth of Peking Man from Dr. Black some time ago, and has examined it critically. "In every imaginable point it is exactly similar to teeth that can be found in the jaws of modern men," he said. "Moreover, in the newly found jaw of *Sinanthropos* the third molar is reduced, and this is emphatically not a primitive condition; it is modern in character."

As for a relationship with *Pithecanthropus*, the so-called ape-man of Java, he scouted the idea. "There is nothing in the specimen that would relate it to Java Man," he declared. "Furthermore, it is very doubtful whether the coining of a new generic, or even of a new specific name is justified at the present time."

A newly discovered organism,

whether living or fossil, is set aside as a new genus when it is unlike any group known at the time, or as a new species if it plainly belongs to a known genus but fails to match up to any of the species within that genus. Should Peking Man finally prove to be identical with Neanderthal Man, he would have to share with the latter the name *Homo neanderthalensis*. In any case, Dr. Hrdlicka believes, the new specimen is enough like both Neanderthal and modern man to be included in the genus *Homo*, and his present scientific designation as *Sinanthropos pekinensis* (the Chinese man of Peking) should go into the discard.

In spite of the absence of the million-year-old background at first claimed for Peking Man, Dr. Hrdlicka is not in the least inclined to discount the importance of the discovery or to derogate the work of Dr. Black. On the contrary, he regards it as highly gratifying that a goodly fund of skeletal material, including one braincase in good condition, should have been discovered in China, far removed from the localities where the bones of Neanderthal Men, presumptive relatives of Peking Man, have been unearthed. He is hopeful that future researches will turn up still more material, and especially that more skulls may be found.

Peking Man has had his predecessors in Chinese archæology, and hints leading up to the recent discovery of a number of skeletons and one skull have been cropping up at intervals for several years.

The first signs of human habitation of China going back of even the hoariest of Chinese traditions appeared many years ago. Traders brought out a thin but steady stream of crude stone tools and weapons. They were obviously very ancient, but equally

obviously they were of the New Stone Age—say 10,000 to 5,000 B. C. Anthropologists declined to become excited.

Then, a little less than twenty years ago, some scholarly Jesuit missionaries turned up a number of flint tools of the type known in Europe as Mousterian, from Le Moustiere in France, where workshops of the Neanderthals were first discovered. This really was interesting, for it is a long jump from Peking to Le Moustiere. But still there were no actual human remains, and especially there were no skulls.

Four or five years ago the first bone of apparent human origin was discovered—a single tooth, somewhat worn. Assuming that the find represented a creature new to science, it was given the name *Sinanthropos pekinensis*. Prof. Black was responsible for the introduction to the world at large of this first dweller within the Celestial Kingdom, and he has been his leading examiner and protagonist ever since.

The discovery of the tooth was followed soon by the finding of two fragmentary skeletons, without skulls. This was important, because it established the right of the tooth to be called human without cavil. Some teeth do not fare so well. But the bones were so broken and incomplete that beyond firmly establishing the early presence of man in China they did little else.

The most recent find of course establishes the position of man in China at a very early time more firmly than ever. Whether Peking Man was the same man who made the Mousterian type tools found by the Jesuits remains unsettled. News on this point is something which cultural anthropologists in this country are awaiting with great eagerness.

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