

ANTHROPOLOGY

# New-Found Fossils Prove Pithecanthropus Was Human

## Lower Jawbone Containing Wisdom Tooth and Many Fragments of Skull Cap Identify as Oldest Man

**E**ARLIEST human being that ever walked the earth.

This title is restored to the Ape-Man of Java, *Pithecanthropus erectus*, after years of doubt, by the discovery of a new skull, reported by Dr. John C. Merriam, president of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, to the Institution trustees. The discovery was made by Dr. G. H. R. von Koenigswald of Bandoeng, Java, a research associate of the Institution.

The new skull, hailed as one of the most sensational finds in the history of human evolution, was in more than forty pieces when it was picked out of its age-long resting-place in the ancient gravel beds and has not yet been fully patched together. However, Dr. von Koenigswald has determined that it is definitely human, a point hitherto considerably in doubt. Only last spring, the discoverer of the first skull, Dr. Eugene Dubois, declared his conversion to the opinion that the Ape-Man was an ape and not a man.

The new-found fossils consist of a lower jawbone and a much broken skull-cap. The jawbone still contains several teeth and the sockets from which others have fallen out. Of particular importance is the third lower molar, or wisdom tooth. This is very large, showing no trace of the reduction common in most human jaws, and is characterized by Dr. von Koenigswald as an ape-like feature. On the other hand, the socket of the eyetooth is small, therefore not ape-like. The wrinkling of the crowns of the molars is more complicated than in modern man but less than in Peking Man, and is more similar to that of Neanderthal Man.

### Human Skull

The skull cap is definitely human in the position of the ear, and in the way the lower jaw was jointed to the skull, but lacks a well-developed mastoid process, and in this respect it is ape-like.

Summing up, Dr. von Koenigswald says, "By these new finds it can be definitely proved that *Pithecanthropus* is human."

The age of the Java Ape-Man, Dr. Merriam commented, is not as great as was supposed when Dr. Dubois discovered the first skull cap, more than forty years ago. Then, the fossils were stated to belong to the period before the Ice Age, and to have an antiquity of more than a million years. Recently discovered fossils of extinct animals in the same gravel beds indicate that *Pithecanthropus* existed some time near the middle of the Ice Age, and is therefore not much more than half the formerly supposed age.

Back of discovery is a romantic little story dating back to a Munich beer garden. Something over a dozen years ago, two young German graduate students at the University of Munich, about to get their Ph.D's in geology, were sipping their seidels of *Münchener Helles* (or maybe it was *Dunkles*). Half-jocularly, they divided the world between them, for their scientific conquest.

One of them, Hellmut de Terra, now on the Yale faculty, told the other, "Your job is to go to Java and find another *Pithecanthropus* skull." To which his companion gravely agreed.

### Dream Came True

Unlike many such student daydreams, however, this one actually came true. For the second student was G. H. R. von Koenigswald, discoverer of the second skull and jawbone of this most ancient and primitive of human beings.

Dr. von Koenigswald didn't have an easy time of his search for the Ape-Man. He went to Java all right, but to make a living had to take a job as an economic geologist which allowed him no time for *Pithecanthropus*-hunting. Finally, however, the Carnegie Institution provided funds and gave him the status of Research Associate. That happened just last March.

By August, Dr. von Koenigswald turned in his Ape-Man skull fragments.

In the meantime, the original *Pithecanthropus*, discovered in the 1890's by Dr. Eugene Dubois, has lost some of his property. The teeth found in the same layer of river gravel with the first skull

cap, and presumed to belong to the Ape-Man, have been definitely proved to be those of an extinct species of orangutan. And the thighbone, with its peculiar diseased outgrowth, is now believed to be probably the remains of a different, more advanced, type of human being.

*Science News Letter, December 18, 1937*

ARCHAEOLOGY

## White Man's Funny, Too—As Natives See Him

**F**OR years, white men have been staring at natives and making frank remarks about how funny they are.

But the tables have been turned. If you can take it, you can see how funny white men look to the natives.

Prof. Julius E. Lips, one of Germany's exiled scholars, has come to this country, and published a book in which he shows and explains a rare collection of such pictures. (*THE SAVAGE HITS BACK*—Julius E. Lips—Yale Univ., 254 p., illus., \$5.)

He shows you, for example, Queen Victoria carved in wood by various African subjects, and you observe she is generally a puffy-cheeked, stout lady with trailing veil and a sawed-off body. Why? Because the Empire's African subjects



QUEEN VICTORIA

As her native African subjects depicted her.