

Peach Section

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Huge Teeth, Jawbones Show Human Giants In Ancient China, Java

By Science Service

NEW YORK—Giants who once lived in China would fit story-book descriptions of ogres, for their fossilized teeth are six times as big as modern man's and twice as big as a gorilla's. Far to the south, in Java, were other giants with jawbones much bigger than those of any known human being's, living or extinct.

All that is known of these huge but vanished men is told in the new issue of *Science* by Dr. Franz Weidenreich of the American Museum of Natural History.

His information had to be gleaned from a few fragments—a couple of jawbones found in Java and three gigantic teeth dug out of a drawer in a Chinese apothecary's shop in Hong Kong. Tantalizingly, further search for more complete skeletal remains of these giants must await the expulsion of the Jap dwarfs from the lands they inhabited, far back in Ice Age days.

Hints of the former existence of

outsized men first began to turn up in Java, from the same series of fossil-bearing beds that more than half a century ago produced the then almost incredible bones of the famous *Pithecanthropus erectus*. In 1937 and 1938, two skulls of *Pithecanthropus* type were found there by Dr. R. von Koenigswald, of the Geological Survey of Netherlands Indies.

Massive Fossils

In 1930, Dr. von Koenigswald's native collector brought in a fossilized upper jaw from the same site. It is larger and more massive than any known fossil or recent human jaw; although it has an ape-like gap between canine and incisor teeth, the teeth themselves, and associated structure, are distinctly

The brain-case, found some weeks later, is much bigger than the known Pithecanthropus skulls, principally because of the thickness of its bones, and the size of its great eyebrow ridges and a crest that runs over its top. A matching fragment of a lower jawbone also was found, a few months later in the same year.

Doctors Weidenreich and von Koenigswald continued to regard these fossils as belonging to Pithecanthropus, despite their greater size.

However, a lower jawbone found by Dr. von Koenigswald in 1941 made this conservative classification impossible. It was simply too big to fit in. So Dr. von Koenigswald gave it a new name: *Meganthropus paleojavanicus*, which means big man of ancient Java. It may be that the large skull found in 1939 will prove upon reexamination to belong to this new species also.

In Apothecary Shops

Discovery of evidence for the former existence of human giants in China was not made by digging in the field, but by digging in Chinese apothecaries' stocks-in-trade of fantastic materia medica. Dr. von Koenigswald knew that these Celestial medicine-vendors deal in fossil bones and teeth, which they pound up for their potions, so whenever he could be rummaged through their boxes and drawers.

Between 1934 and 1939 he found in such apothecaries' shops in Hong Kong, three molar teeth, evidently either simian or human, but six times as big as any human teeth ever seen. He took them at first for apes' teeth and accordingly named the vanished species to which they had once belonged *Gigantopithecus blacki*, or Black's giant ape. (The specific name was given in honor of the late Dr. Davidson Black, original discoverer of the Peking man.)

Dr. Weidenreich's reexamination of the teeth, however, has convinced him that they are human despite their great size, so he suggests a renaming: *Gigantanthropus*, which means giant man.

As Large as Gorillas

Dr. Weidenreich concludes his discussion with the suggestion that the original human beings may have been big, massive boned creatures: "The occurrence of large fossil human skulls with very thick individual bones in early or late stages, for instance in *Homo soloensis*, *Homo rhodesiensis* and in the Heidelberg jaw, seem to indicate that gigantism and massiveness may have been a general or at least a widespread character of early mankind."

The Javanese giants may have been, he estimates, of "the size, stoutness, and strength of a big male gorilla."

Dr. von Koenigswald was still on the island of Java when the Japanese invaded, and his present whereabouts is unknown. Since he could not communicate with him to obtain his consent to announcing details of his discoveries, Dr. Weidenreich obtained official permission from the Board for the Netherlands Indies, Surinam and Curacao.

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