

NEW ANTHROPOLOGICAL DISCOVERY

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IN MAY, an exhibition of relics of human culture unearthed during the building of new factories, mines and communications in the last four years was opened at the Historical Museum in Peking. Among more than 3,700 exhibits, selected from the total of about 150,000 finds, was a fossilized human skull which has attracted much attention both among lay visitors and scientists.



The skull was discovered in 1951 by workers digging the foundations for a bridge across the Huangshanchi river in Tzeyang county, Szechuan province, along the route of the Chengtu-Chungking Railways. Realizing that it must be important, the builders stopped work and made a report to the government. The Geological Directing Committee, predecessor of the present Ministry of Geology, sent the palaeontologist Professor Pei Wen-chung to Tzeyang to survey the site and supervise further excavation. The results of his study were published in the Bulletin of the Academia Sinica during 1952. He reported that the skull was found 23 feet underground in a gravel stratum of the late quaternary period. It dates back to the palaeolithic age, and is contemporary with the mammoth. Its owner lived from several tens of thousands to over 100,000 years ago.

According to the preliminary conclusion drawn by Professor Pei, the skull was that of a girl, of the species *homo sapiens*, to which modern man also belongs. It has its own distinguishing characteristics as compared with the fossils of early *homo sapiens* found elsewhere, such as the Crom-magnon Man of Europe and the Upper Cave Man of northern China. A further study of it is now being made by the Chinese anthropologist Professor Wu Ju-kang, who has not yet published his findings.

These are the first fossilized human remains of the late quaternary period to be brought to light in Southwest China. They prove that people were living in various parts of our vast country tens of thousands of years ago.