

## The Oldest Monkeys in Asia

Eric Delson

Anthropology, Lehman College and the Graduate School, City University of New York /  
Department of Vertebrate Paleontology, American Museum of Natural History  
New York, NY 10024/NYCEP

New evidence clarifies somewhat the early history of Cercopithecidae in Asia, the last continent to have received Old World monkeys. *Mesopithecus pentelicus* is, of course, best known from the Balkans, but single mandibles have been recovered from Maragheh (Iran) and Moloan (Afghanistan) at ca. 8.5 Ma. Just to the west (but across a biogeographic barrier?), in the Potwar Plateau of the Pakistan Siwaliks, a dozen fragmentary specimens of a small colobine now termed *Semnopithecus sivalensis* have been recovered at Hasnot and Kaulial Kas, perhaps 7-5+ Ma. These were previously called *Presbytis*, but reinterpretations of Asian colobine systematics suggest that *Semnopithecus* (including *Trachypithecus*) is the less derived genus. The first Siwalik cercopithecine, *Macaca palaeindica*, is from an indeterminate level of the Upper Siwaliks (later Pliocene, ca. 3.2-1.8 Ma), and this was long thought to be the first cercopithecine west of Romania. Recent work by a joint IVPP/AMNH team in the Yushe Basin of Hubei Province, China, has yielded a large fauna including three cercopithecoid teeth from a latest Miocene level: one is a colobine M<sub>3</sub> larger than the Siwalik form, the other two upper molars of a mid-sized cercopithecine, presumably *Macaca* sp. These teeth are dated about 5.5 Ma, making the cercopithecines nearly as old as the first European specimens, isolated teeth of *M. sylvanus prisca* from the eastern Spanish fissure filling of Casablanca-M.

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