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The Large-Bodied hominoids of the Himalayas

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ABSTRACT

The review of available data concerning to large-bodied hominoids detected in the Himalayas is presented. They are mainly footprints (photographs by E.Shipton and M.Ward, P.Bordet, F.Smythe, and A.Woodridge) and also narration of one remote observation. It is shown that on the whole these data reveal basic features of the undefined creature, most probably humanlike primate, and allow describing it as a separate species. One of its features is unusual four-toed foot with two strong toes and two small toes. A taxonomic name for this hominoid is proposed — *Homo pardigitatus sp. nov.* ("That has paired toes").

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1. Introduction

The phenomenon, that received in middle of XX th Century the name "Snow man", draws attention of public and some scientists. Now after the course of the past half century science has not progressed in proved answering the old questions:

- What in reality the existing facts show?
- Is it possible that some creatures, strikingly similar to us, really live now on the Earth?
- Why we know about them much less, than about other inhabitants of the Earth?
- If they do live beside us, how and why they can disappear from our attention, and how such populations can biologically exist?

Those, who are familiar with history of ape discoveries and with quests for hominoids, not yet included in scientific taxonomy, can see the analogy between searches of zoologists of 150-200 years ago and the situation in

modern hominoid researches. For instance, one may compare monstrous images of gorillas in those not so old days and after modern observations. Then, during researches of gorillas and other apes, thousands of them were killed. Their skulls, skeletons, and skins were put to museums worldwide.

This approach for hominoids is unacceptable. They are so close to humans and so few in number that they should not be treated the same way. So, research of the creatures must use some soft methods, for example, without such basic element of zoological taxonomy, as a holotype in an accessible museum. And, perhaps, it will never be for some of hominoids. Hominoids will not be exposed in zoos. Then, the only possible approach, seen now, is categorization of available, so frequently sketchy, information about them.

In this article I demonstrate the fruitfulness of soft approach to evaluate available data on a large primate of Himalayas.

2. Footprints

2.1 The tracks met by Eric Shipton and Michael Ward

European public had shown some interest to mysterious hominoids soon after 1951 when English mountain climbers Eric Shipton and Michael Ward had photographed unusual footprints on snowfields in the Himalayas. The tracks were clear and sharp, and it was possible to measure their size. The prints obviously belonged to a large being — 13 inches (33 cm) long and 8 inches (20 cm) wide. It was obvious that the creature walked on two legs, like human. No animals known to the climbers could make such tracks.

Eric Shipton (1952) and Michael Ward (1997) tell the following about circumstances of the case:

"It was on one of the glaciers of the Menlung basin, at a height of about 19,000 feet, that, late one afternoon, we came across those curious footprints in the snow.... We did not follow them further than was convenient, a mile or so, for we were carrying heavy loads at the time, and besides we had reached a particularly interesting stage in the exploration of the basin. I have in the past found many sets of these curious footprints and have tried to follow them, but have always lost them on the moraine or rocks at the side of the glacier. These particular ones seemed to be very fresh, probably not more than 24 hours old. When Murray and Bourdillon followed us a few days later the tracks had been almost obliterated by melting. Sen Tensing had no doubt whatever that the creatures (for there had been at least two) that had made the tracks were "Yetis" or wild men".

These prints have not been unequivocally explained within more than fifty years. At first it was supposed, that the track had been made by a large creature, that moved at this point alone. The general contour of the footstep was unusual. Fig. 1 shows it was a concave on the side of reduced toes. It seems that small toes are on the inner part of the foot and strong toes are on external. But this assumption contradicts to all available data on feet of primates. Other hypotheses were discussed, among them that the track is superposition with print of a large predator (leopard). It is also not convincing.

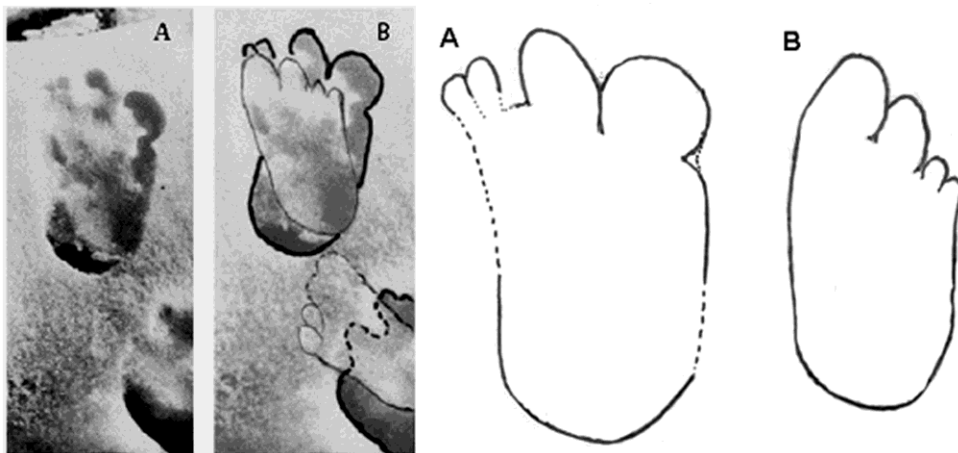


Fig. 1. Tracks in Shipton's photo: A — original image, B — the same with contours that show prints of each creature. Right fragment depicts sketches of the larger exemplar (A) and smaller one (B).

The author (Trachtengerts, 2003) had shown that those tracks are superposition of tracks by two individuals of same kind.

Structure of feet that appears from the photo shot is unusual for both — human and anthropoids. They are tetradactyl with two large strong toes on inner side and two smaller reduced ones on external side of foot. It is clear with contours of overlapping prints, that foot of each creature has own individual features. Fig. 1 left shows that the bigger creature walked first followed by the smaller one. Foot size of the first one (33 cm) helps to estimate his height as about 215-220 cm, according to humanlike proportions for relation of foot length to height that is near to 15-16%. The second one, that had foot 28 cm long, may be nearby 185 cm high. The hominoids walked with small distances between prints. Obviously, they moved there with care, probably, the place at glacier was dangerous for them.

For many years among researchers of Himalayan hominoids the opinion prevailed that the photos by E. Shipton were unique, that nobody else met tracks of same creatures. Because of that some critics expressed that the prints were faked by the mountaineers. However, the specified features of feet of similar kind were found among images in reports of other expeditions. This dismisses accusations of possible faking by Eric Shipton and Michael Ward.

2.2 The tracks met by pierre bordet

French geologist abbot Pierre Bordet in the early fifties participated in two travels to mountain Makalu. After return he published (Bordet, 1955) four photos (Fig. 1), which were not correctly interpreted by researches for careful analysis during the following years, so they had quality sufficient for analysis. Several lines of tracks were found near camp of the expedition on slopes at 3800 meters height.

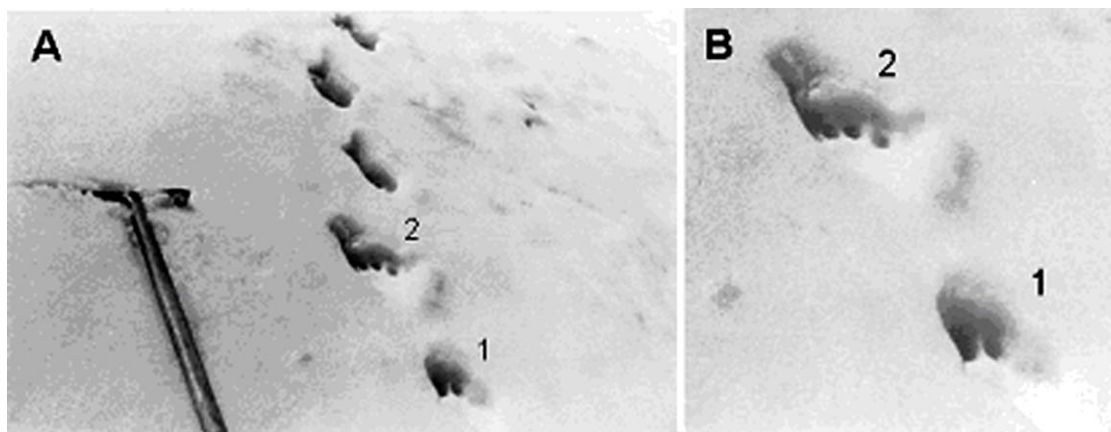


Fig. 2. The first shot of tracks by Pierre Bordet in May 1955 in valley of Barun: A — full shot, B — zoomed image of the two first prints.

They show in snow bare feet tracks of unusual form. In the report Bordet pointed out on some features that are common with those photographed by Shipton, namely — they are similarly big, number of toes in both cases is four, instead of five. P. Bordet put special attention to the last feature. Now we are convinced once again that he was right. Bordet came upon these tracks by chance. He had no intention to look for the Yeti at all.

The second track on Bordet's shots in Fig. 3 shows clearly enough two overlapping prints, and the upper one completely corresponds with that in shot by Shipton. It is made by right foot of a creature and has four toes. Two of them are large and two are small. The right part of the contour is hidden under lumps of snow, which have fallen off on track. It is interesting to note — pairs of the big and small toes are separated, and a small wall of snow appeared between them. Hominoids walked one after another, putting feet in same places in snow, as well as in Shipton's case.

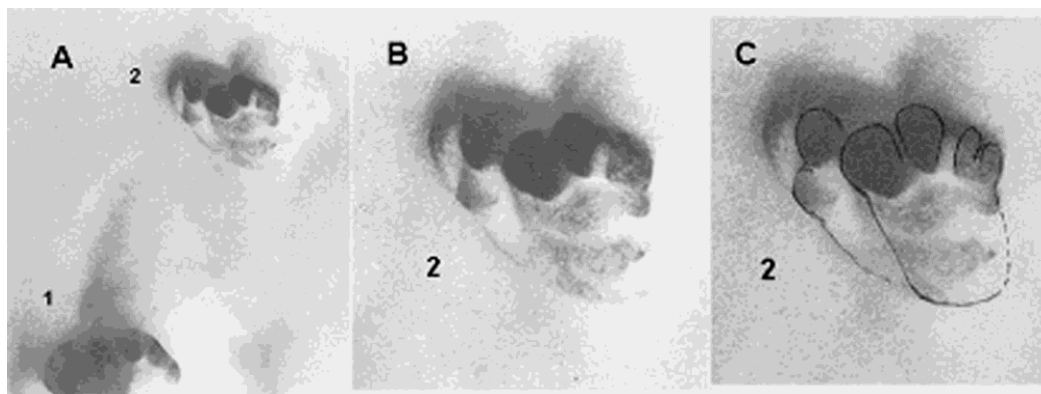


Fig. 3. Hominoid prints on P. Bordet's second track: A — initial view, B — zoomed track 2, C — contours of overlapped tracks (Trachtengerts, 2004).

2.3 The track shot by Frank Smythe

Frank Smythe was the elite of British mountaineering. He saw tracks of a biped creature in 1937 at mountains of Indian province Garwal. They were at heights of 20000 feet (about 6000 m). In his book Smythe (1949) described that the tracks were clear and appeared obviously the night before. All details of tracks were well visible. On horizontal surface they had size no more than 13 inches long (33 cm) and 6 inches wide (15 cm). Accurate prints of toes of less than 4 cm long and 2 cm wide were visible. On horizontal surface they were pointed outside like human ones. The length of steps was from 46 to 60 cm. In steep parts the length of footprints became lesser down to 12 cm, so the width of footsteps remained the same. The length of steps also became shorter in steep places.

Smythe followed the tracks and made many photo shots. They were surveyed by professor Julian Huxley, the secretary of the British Zoological society, and some other zoologists. They came to opinion — the tracks were made by a bear. They named it at first as subspecies *Ursus actors pruinosus*, but later their opinion was changed to *Ursus actors isabellinus* which is widespread in the Western and Central Himalayas.



Fig. 4. Footprint found by F. Smythe in Garwal.

This opinion contradicts the well known fact that bear tracks are always pointed inside to the line of animal movement. Moreover, this peculiarity precisely proves that the creature was biped. Mountaineers always drop heads of their boots in snow on steep slopes so they make shorter footprints in similar places. Besides, Sherpa porters in the troop were obviously confused with these tracks because they were well familiar with bear and yeti tracks and distinguished them for sure.

The photo Fig. 4 reproduced here with low quality from a newspaper is one of the few available now. At first sight it seems that the track has five toes. However, more careful analysis shows that the foot has really four toes only. The zoomed image of the track, despite a newspaper raster, allows to analyze the direction of sun rays and to understand shadowed and lighted surfaces on the photo. It is shown by arrows in the central picture. So, the dark shadow marks the left wall in footstep depression and the opposite is in sun light. It should be excluded from footprint contour. After doing so one receives the real figure in the right figure of the foot that is very similar to that on Shipton and Ward photograph. Let us note that Shipton photo shows pair of outer toes somewhat smaller than in Smythe's image. Perhaps, such creature can bend and extend all toes.

Fig. 5 also clearly shows that there are no marks in snow from paw claws, and the toes are separated in the way unusual for a bear.

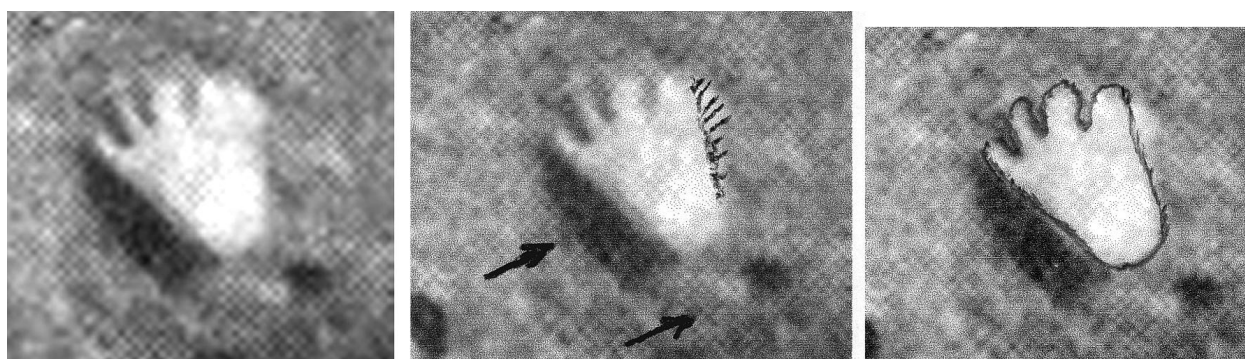


Fig. 5. Definition of footprint found by Frank Smythe.

On his return in Britain F.Smythe made numerous reports and communications with his own photos and narrations received from locals. Interest of scientists and public to this subject expired soon after short rise of curiosity. Observations by Frank Smythe were not adequately understood at the moment.

2.4 Observation by Anthony Woodridge

In 1986 journal *Cryptozoology* published the story by physicist and mountaineer A.Woodridge (1986) about his encountering with Yeti. The alleged meeting had occurred in March of the same year. At that time A.Woodridge was in Indian part of the Western Himalayas with a charitable mission. He wished to attract attention of possible sponsors to his mission and from time to time carried out actions of sport kind.

In March from 2 till 10 he made a run alone in upper parts of a valley. On March 6 Woodridge had reached snowfields at heights 2800 meters and followed farther. Snow was seen around untouched since last snowfall. To his surprise, at height of 3300 meters he had found out track of prints. The snow-covered slope was overgrown with rare bushes. Woodridge made only two pictures of tracks: a line and a single track. The track was still fresh and distinct, the length of it was 10 inches (appr. 25 cm). It is a bit smaller than the Shipton's tracks. The feature marked above on P.Bordet's tracks (short snow wall between pairs of toes) is well notable in Fig. 6.

A.Woodridge continued his run up in mountains and soon he saw what he thought was a standing motionless Yeti. He photographed it from far distance and the founding later was declared in the title of his article. Next years the place was examined by other researches. They found out that it was an edge of a rock, not a living being. But the photos of tracks in snow made by A.Woodridge are of scientific value. They point at area of these hominoids.

2.4 The summary on tracks

It may be concluded now that form of footprints of large Himalayan hominoids in essential details is certain enough. It is based mainly on photo by E.Shipton and M.Ward, because other photographs, so clear, were made

aside from vertical view and presented somewhat distorted shapes. But in general features they are consistent. The contours of footprints for both exemplars are shown in Fig.1.

Both prints have in general similar form and, most probably, due to circumstances of finding, belong to a same species. They have four toes, two of which are large and strong, and two are reduced small at external side of the foot. They differ in form of print of first toes. It may be supposed, that the thumb in the print of first exemplar was bent and pushed in snow dipper, as a hook. One can see in Fig. 1 that the shadow from sunlight in its depression was wider, than that in toe print beside. The second creature put its foot on pressed snow of previous track, and its toes were not bent. The feet of such hominoids may be up to 35 cm long or more.

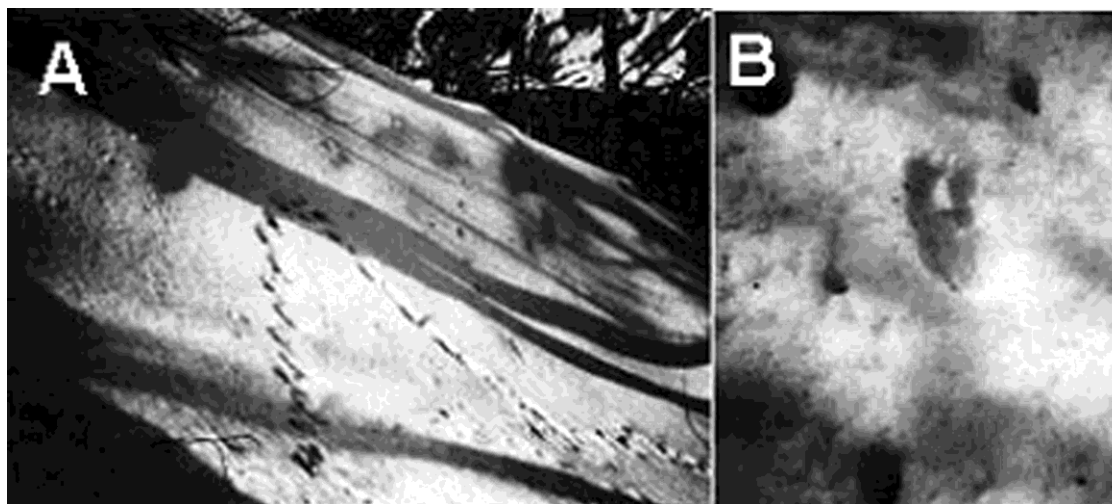


Fig. 6. Tracks met by Anthony Woodridge in the Western Himalayas

3. Visual observation

There is one well-described observation of the large Himalayan hominoids. It presented in documentary book by Slavomir Rawicz (1956). He tells in it about own experience in 1942 during runaway within a group of prisoners from a Siberian labor camp. They walked southward and overcome wide spaces of Mongolia, West China, Tibet, and the Himalayas in their way to India.

Crossing the snow-covered Himalayas, Rawicz and his companions have once encountered two big hominoids, standing ahead on their pass. Their bodies have been covered by hair. They were about 8 feet (240 cm) high. Short extract from the rare Rawicz's book is following:

"The contours of the mountains temporarily hid them from view as we approached nearer, but when we halted on the edge of a bluff we found they were still there, twelve feet or so below us and about 100 yards away. Two points struck me immediately. They were enormous and they walked on the hind legs. We stayed to watch...I set myself to estimate their height on the basis of my military training for artillery observations. They could not have been much less than eight feet tall. One was a few inches taller than the other in the relationship of the average man to the average woman. They were shuffling quietly around on a flattish shelf. At no time did they drop to the ground on all fours and display the knuckle-walking habit of chimpanzees and gorillas...

Their faces I could not see in detail, but the heads were squarish and the ears must lie close to the skull because there was no projection from the silhouette against the snow. The shoulders sloped sharply down to a powerful chest. The arms were long and the wrists reached the level of the knees. Seen in profile, the back of the head was straight line from the crown into the shoulders...The color was a rusty kind of brown. They appeared to be covered by two distinct kinds of hair — the reddish hair which gave them their characteristic color forming a tight close fur against the body, mingling with which were long loose straight hairs hanging downwards, which had a slight grayish tinge as the light caught them...They were doing nothing but moving around slowly together, occasionally stopping to look around them like people admiring a view."

Further, Rawicz wrote in his book:

"But I insist that recent estimations of growth of these beings in 5 foots (150 cm) are erroneous. The minimum growth of the adult of a being should be an eye-lo of 7 foots (210 cm)"

Rawicz then was not familiar with latter observations of smaller Himalayan hominoids to whom estimations in five foots are concerned.

In 1977 anthropologist W.Tschernezky and S.Rawicz fulfilled picture of the creatures that Rawicz saw in the Himalayas (Tschernetzky & Rawicz, 1977).

It is necessary to note, that in Rawicz's observation and, in particular, in the picture, there are some details that prove validity of his report.

In 1940-th when the encountering occurred no agitation yet was around existence of Yeti. S.Rawicz and its companions knew nothing about these beings of the Himalayas, neither they knew legends and real stories from locals. So they did not fear the creatures, as the natives do. Therefore they did not run from them in panic, but quietly and with attention examined them within two hours. Such duration, apparently, is the record in Yeti observations in history of the Himalayas.

The drawing made after Rawicz's encountering once again confirms the fact that images present much more information about living creatures than verbal descriptions which allow different interpretations.

In this drawing we see form of head narrowed up that is missed in Rawicz's text, but mentioned by other observers. It allows to suppose that the skull of these hominoids has sagittal crest. On front part one see massive prognathic jaws.

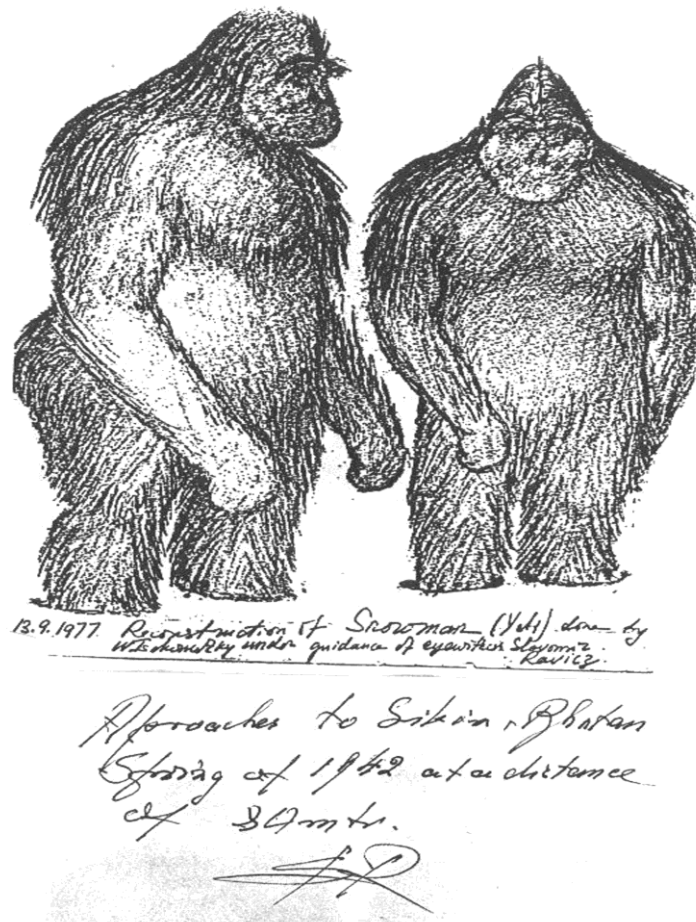


Fig.7. Picture of the large creatures of Himalayas based on S. Rawicz narration.

As a whole the form and position of body of these hominoids is much closer to human, than it is shown in various reconstructions made upon verbal data. The large stomach points out that the vegetal food is main part in their diet. The developed massive buttocks, that were not mentioned by Rawicz, show that the creatures are

completely biped (Short, 2000), and also, perhaps, their ability to overcome foodless periods. This feature to accumulate fat in buttocks for hungry periods is presented in some human races that live in hard environment.

Rawicz's comments on hominoid movement over dangerous snowy edge of a cliff show remarkable coincidence with a chain of tracks in Shipton's shot. In both cases the creatures walked with care by small steps, carefully checking way with feet. In both cases there were couples of larger and smaller beings. We may suppose that these Himalayan hominoids live as families consisting of couples.

W.Tschernezky talked to three other runaway mates that had confirmed this story. Bobbie Short had several meetings with Slavomir Rawicz and also felt confidence in his narration.

At the end of the survey, it may be concluded with high probability that tracks found out by Shipton and Ward, Bordet, and some other researchers, are made by creatures of the same kind as Slavomir Rawicz saw.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Results

The analysis of available data showed that on the whole these data reveal reality and some basic features of the undefined creatures, most probably humanlike primates. They have bodies covered by hair. The heights of the creatures are about 240 cm for males and about 200 cm for female's exemplars. They have feet with four toes about 30-35 cm long. Taking into account that not less than five exemplars of the same kind were involved into the consideration these conclusions invite further investigations.

4.2 On name of the large-bodied Himalayan hominoid

After such conclusions the problem arises to appoint them a taxonomic position.

In spite of the fact, that existence of large-bodied Himalayan primate was discussed by both — public and some professional anthropologists, no proposals for scientific name for it are known. Wladimir Tschernezky (1959) in his early hominoid reconstruction was inclined to connect these creatures with fossil hominids and, in particular, with *Paranthropus crassidens*, that had sagittal crest. I do not know, whether he offered other names for these hominoids after he got acquainted with S.Rawicz and his description.

With the data on body appearance, bipedality and form of feet, the described primate preliminary can be taken for a species of genus *Homo*. Tracks of no less than five individuals show that characteristics of feet, same number and structure of toes are not result of traumas or other external reasons. They are inherent features of these primates. Consequently, I suggest to insert the peculiar feature of the toes in its species name — *pardigitatus*, that means "that has paired toes". Exactly, that has two pairs of toes — one pair of large-sized toes and one pair of small-sized toes in each foot.

4.3. The description of species *Homo pardigitatus sp. nov.*

Holotype. The bigger one from the two primates, represented in drawing by S.Rawicz and W.Tschernezky. The drawing was made in September 13 1977 based on impression obtained during encountering with the creatures in February 1942 while tracking the Himalayas near Sikkim. Presumably, it is a male. The age is not known.

The characteristics

A large-bodied biped primate about 240 cm height. The position at movement — vertical, legs are straight. All body, except face, palms of hands and feet, is covered by hair. There are two types of hair on the body: red-brown rather short hair that covers body densely, and more long and rare grayish hair that passes through dense hair and hangs downwards.

The body is massive, wide and powerful. The head is large and narrowed to parietal part. The narrowed part is from forehead to back of the head. There are thick brow ridges. The forehead is rather high and not too sloping. Face bones are developed. The nose resembles a small human one. Jaws are very large and prognathic. The neck is powerful. Shoulders are wide and fall from neck to arms.

The stomach is big. Buttocks are considerable. The upper limbs are long, they can reach knees. Feet have in general proportions close to those of human but they are larger and considerably wider. Feet have four toes. The

first from inner side of foot and the second, close to it, are large-sized and well developed. The others two at outer sides of feet are rather small-sized and undeveloped.

Additional data

Behavior: There are not enough data about life history of these Himalayan primates. Their tracks met seldom, mainly in snowfields of high mountains. Probably, they inhabit lower parts on the mountains and move across snowfields from one valley to another. Tracks and some observations show that they often associate together in couples. On dangerous sites of mountains they move slowly with careful probing the way by feet. According to found tracks, the area of *Homo pardigitatus* is the Himalayas and Karakoram.

Paratype: The lower object in drawing by S.Rawicz and W.Tschernezky. Apparently, it is a female. She is about 210 cm height. Her age is unknown.

Acknowledgments

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