

Elections Issue

The Candidates Answer Your Questions

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1979 Burma Find

Professor's Book Confirms Asian Origin



Evolutionary Biology of the New World and Continental Drift, a 528-page book co-edited by UNCC Anthropology Professor Russell Ciochon may answer some fundamental questions about the dispersal and evolution of all higher primates.

In May 1979 Ciochon was involved in a team which discovered 40-million-year-old primate fossils in Burma. The team consisted of Donald Savage, a paleontologist at the University of California at Berkeley, several Burmese scientists, and Ciochon. Their finds were named *Ampithecus* and *Podaungia*.

This finding confirmed evidence of actual ancestral higher primate stock and suggested their origin was Asian instead of African, as had been previously proposed.

According to Ciochon the book argues the ancestors of these Burmese anthropoids probably dispersed across Asia into Africa by

crossing the narrow swap-like Tethys Sea about 40 million years ago.

"Once in Africa this ancestral stock began to differentiate with some populations ultimately becoming ancestors of the 30-million-year-old Fayum primate made famous by paleontologist Elwyn Simond of Duke University," Ciochon said. "Other populations probably dispersed across the equatorial Atlantic Ocean to reach South America."

Ten years ago such a crossing would have been scoffed at by much of the scientific community. However, in the book's first chapter, written by D.H. Tarling, an English geophysicist, evidence is provided that the marine gap between South America and Africa 40 million years ago was only half that of the present distance between the two continents.

As further evidence, Tarling says geophysical and paleontological evidence supports the existence of volcanic islands (stepping-stones) in

the ancient equatorial Atlantic and that postulated ocean currents would favor such a migration.

Ciochon says the new book will not only do much to clarify the line of evolution leading to New World monkeys, but it will also provide a proper perspective in which to examine the evolutionary relationships of the Old World monkey, apes and humans.

"I fully believe our understanding of the earlier phases of our primate ancestry will be significantly advanced by this publication, perhaps even to the extent similar to recent publications regarding the origin of the human line itself," Ciochon said.

According to Ciochon the book presents the arguments and consensus portions of an international symposium held in Turin, Italy and Bangalore, India. At this symposium, scientists discussed and debated the issues of higher primate evolution and the effects of continental drift on the directions and modes of dispersal of the anthropoids.

The symposium and the volume's preparation were provided by grants from the Smithsonian Foreign Currency Program and the L.S.B. Leakey Foundation.

The book is published by Plenum Press of New York and sells for \$49.50.

BBB Warns Of Easy Money Offer

By David E. Griffith

"We'll pay you 50 cents per envelope stuffed and submitted to us." So says the advertising for Essex House, a work-at-home company whose advertising circulars have appeared on several UNCC bulletin boards.

The ad gives its reader the impression that his company located in Van Nuys, Calif. will send an applicant material to be stuffed into envelopes and submitted back to Essex House at a payment of 50 cents per envelope stuffed by the home employee.

But as Better Business Bureau (BBB) officials say, "Work-at-home offers are often more involved than they seem."

Down in the body type of the Essex circular, it says, "We'll pay you 50 cents for each envelope you secure, stuff with our circulars and submit to us according to our instructions."

However, the ad stipulates that in order to start work for the company you must pay them \$15 for the starter kit. This starter kit includes an eight-page instruction booklet and 50

advertising flyers for Goodlife Communications (a work-at-home offer quite similar to Essex House whose address in Oregon is constantly changing). Goodlife Communications is not listed in any Oregon telephone directory or with the Portland BBB.

Once the individual receives the starter kit, he is instructed to place a newspaper ad. The ad reads something like "Earn extra money at home. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to (the address of the person who placed the ad). If the homeworker receives any response to the ad, they are instructed to send the unsealed SASEs ("secured" by the newspaper ad) to Goodlife Communications (P.O. Box 22000, Milwaukee, Ore.).

This is how Essex House can assure its home employees, "By following our instructions you will receive pre-addressed envelopes with postage stamps already affixed." The ad coaches workers in another paragraph, "How you go about receiving the envelopes is a secret and can only be revealed to members who

agree not to unfold such secrets to anyone who is not a member."

BBB brochures call work-at-home offers similar to Essex House "work-at-home schemes," because they all have one thing in common: you have to buy something before you can start work.

Postal Inspector Chris Marko, who is stationed in Los Angeles area, says Essex House is under investigation for possible violation of the mail fraud act. She added, "I've never seen a work-at-home offer of this nature that is legitimate." Marko said envelope stuffing schemes are a type of pyramid racket and pyramids are illegal because there is always a built-in loser. "Whenever we hear of a person placing one of the newspaper ads it is our policy to visit them and ask them to stop. We're not after these people though; they're just victims. We just don't want them to cause other people to fall victim to the schemes.

The BBB advises extreme consumer caution toward any work-at-home offers.

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