



# Human Fossils of the Siwaliks: Myths and Realities

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## ► To cite this version:

Anne Dambricourt Malassé. Human Fossils of the Siwaliks: Myths and Realities. 2019. halshs-02359628

**HAL Id: halshs-02359628**

**<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-02359628>**

Preprint submitted on 12 Nov 2019

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UMR 7194 CNRS web page « Siwaliks : les hominins du haut bassin de l'Indus depuis le Pliocène ».

### **Human Fossils of the Siwaliks: Myths and Realities**

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Two American biologists, Herrera and Garcia-Bertrand (2018), were quick to publish a long synthesis on Masol (Dambricourt Malassé, 2016) taking up the problem of the geographical and phylogenetic origins of the hominins who left the oldest intentional cut marks collected in Pliocene deposits in association with choppers, in Asia and not in Africa. The merit of this historical discovery goes to the "Siwaliks" program fully funded by two great European research organizations, the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) and the National Museum of Natural History, Paris which entrusted the direction to Dr. Anne Dambricourt Malassé, paleoanthropologist. The first Indo-French fieldworks in the Siwaliks were initiated in 2002 by Dr. Mukesh Singh, President of the “Society for Archaeological and Anthropological Research” at Chandigarh (Union Territory of India).

Nevertheless, it is imperative to denounce a serious untruth in this eagerness to seize the emerging paleoanthropological problematic. This precipitation transmits a very serious sham put in place by a former student of the Panjab University of Chandigarh since 1988, Mohinder Pal Singh, while no paleoanthropologist cites him. Since the official recognition of Masol in 2016 by the Prime Minister of India and the President of the French Republic in Chandigarh, he claims the international recognition for the discovery of fossils of 3.4 Ma allegedly humans.

In 2018 the Archaeological Survey of India asked to confirm what Mohinder Pal Singh said, because he presented himself as the former teacher of the author of this paper “Human Fossils of the Siwaliks: Myths and Realities”, graduate of the Academy of the University of Paris. Yet, Mohinder Pal Singh does not hold a doctorate but a master's degree in Anthropology from the Panjab University. So, he could never have become of Lecturer. He

was laboratory assistant at the Blood Bank of PGI in Chandigarh. If M.P. Singh had collected the slightest bit of *Homo* at to 3.4 Ma in the Himalayan foothills, he would have been invited to the international symposium of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences organized by Yves Coppens in April 2019 and heard among the distinguished guests.

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In 1988 Mohinder Pal Singh published an incisor in the Proceedings of the Academy of Sciences of India claiming that it is human. Then, he visited paleontologists from the European Centre for Prehistoric Research in Tautavel (CERP, France) and the current director of the French mission in India, Anne Dambricourt Malassé, at the Institute of Human Paleontology in Paris. All the experts replied that this tooth was not human but that of a cervid. M.P. Singh repeated his misdeeds in 2003 in the peer review *Human Evolution* which agreed to publish four photos without scale and with totally unrealistic interpretations. The article is downloadable to verify (see references). There is absolutely no relation between the photos and the descriptions, for example figure 4 is a small rectangular fragment of mandible with fractured roots. There is no dental crown. But M.P. Singh describes 1) a parabolic mandible – i.e. with the arched shape characteristic of *Homo* and 2) a molar whose the crown surface shows the *Dryopithecus* pattern, i.e. five cuspids. It is not necessary to be a great expert to see that figure 5 is not a femur. In the acknowledgments M.P. Singh mentions he had submitted this article to *Nature* which rejected it. Till now no one understands how the reviewer accepted such a manuscript.

The consequences of this paper are disastrous as unqualified biologists like these two Americans present M.P. Singh as the historical discoverer of Pliocene hominin in Asia reducing the researchers of the “Siwaliks” to epigones without even mentioning their names nor the French Institutions. To give the measure of this humiliation in relation to Dr. Mukesh Singh, it is as if the discoverers of the *Australopithecus* Lucy had been presented as anonymous epigones of a mythomegalomane.

There are no known hominin fossils in the Siwaliks and the first discovery of human activity during Pliocene will always historically accredited to the Indo-French cooperation.

### **Acknowledgements**

The author thanks Dr. Mukesh Singh, President of the “Society for Archaeological and Anthroppological Research” and the Archaeological Survey of India for the efforts to restitute the historical truth.

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