

## Book Reviews

**ANTECEDANTS OF EARLY MAN IN NORTHWESTERN INDIA: PALEONTOLOGICAL AND PALEOECOLOGICAL EVIDENCES.** R. N. Vasishat, Inter-India Publication, D-17, Raja Garden Extension, New Delhi. (Price: Rs. 295/-; US \$ 59/-).

This topical book presents a broad synthesis of the work done by the author on the famous fossil localities of the Himachal Himalaya at Haritalyangar. The Siwalik outcrops around this village have acted as a lodestone, attracting the attention of scientists of various disciplines and from different parts of the world connected with the many aspects of human evolution. Dr. Vasishat's comprehensive treatment and painstaking efforts to document and summarize the studies that have been conducted for well over a century, places the present findings in clear historical perspective.

The essence of the book lies in the detailed description of the vertebrate fauna found in association with primates. The larger mammals including proboscideans, rhinocerotids and tragulids have been described, but of special importance in the section dealing with the micromammals, namely, the small-sized primates and rodents. The chapter on fossil primates from Haritalyangar redescribes the fossil material collected by Dr. Vasishat during his long field association with the Siwaliks. This includes the skull of *Palaeotupaia siwalicus* and other excellent material of adapid primates, *Pliopithecus*, *Sivapithecus*, *Ramapithecus* and *Gigantopithecus*. Although most of these taxa have been described elsewhere, Dr. Vasishat has updated and revised previous taxonomic assignments and for the first time given an unified view of these important primate fossils from Haritalyangar.

The section dealing with the associated fossil rodents again provides a detailed description of these diverse but hitherto little known micromammals. Extensive review and reference to the Siwalik rodents of Pakistan and other adjacent areas has helped in the better understanding of the palaeoecology and dispersals of Tertiary rodents.

The concluding chapter deals with the hominoid ecology of northwestern India. The brief section deals with the development of concepts dealing with palaeoecological analysis of fossil vertebrate faunas and cites previous work undertaken on this aspect in the Siwaliks of the subcontinent. Considering the title of the book and the emphasis on palaeoenvironmental reconstructions, one would have hoped for a more comprehensive and extensive treatment of the subject. As it stands, the palaeoecological analysis is of too generalized a nature and does not consider the sedimentological data which is essential for such reconstructions. A further improvement in the format of the book would have been the inclusion of line drawings for all taxa in lieu of, or in addition to, the photographic plates which are not of uniform clarity.

The book (though priced above the means of the individual reader) provides an excellent and multifaceted approach to the problems of Siwalik vertebrates and palaeoecology. This volume would be a very useful addition in Reference, University and College libraries.