

Ancient great ape fossil found in Africa

24 August 2007

Scientists in Africa say they've have a found the fossil teeth of an ancient great ape that extends the human family tree millions of years.

The new species of great ape was uncovered in the desert scrubland of Ethiopia, Britain's Daily Telegraph said Thursday.

The scientists said the fossil, which dates from around 10 million years ago, helps pin down the date when gorillas split from chimp-human stock -- at least 2 million years earlier than previously thought -- the newspaper said.

Gen Suwa of Tokyo University Museum said the molars "share key similarities" with those of a modern gorilla.

The report, published in the journal Science, said the teeth are those of a new species of fossil ape, dubbed *Chororapithecus abyssinicus*. It would be the earliest recognized primate directly related to gorillas, chimpanzees and bonobos, the newspaper said.

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APA citation: Ancient great ape fossil found in Africa (2007, August 24) retrieved 20 September 2021 from <https://phys.org/news/2007-08-ancient-great-ape-fossil-africa.html>

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