Significance of Skull IX in Asian Paleoanthropology

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ABSTRACT

Skull IX (Tjg-1993.05) was found in Sangiran, Central Java, in 1993, and is now stored at the Institute of Technology, Bandung. It is a remarkably complete fossil cranium of *Homo erectus*. It is one of the six *H. erectus* crania from the early Pleistocene of Java that preserves a nearly complete vault and is the third Javanese *H. erectus* crania with a substantial part of the facial skeleton preserved. After preliminary studies by late Prof. Sartono and other researchers, our team, led by Prof. Yahdi Zaim, had an opportunity to re-reconstruct and fully describe the specimen during 2008-2010. In this paper, I introduce how we corrected the distorted original reconstruction and summarize the specimen's implications for the *Homo erectus* evolution in and outside Indonesia. Skull IX closely resembles Sangiran 17 and other Javanese *H. erectus* crania from the same stratigraphic level. The neurocranium of Skull IX is slightly smaller than the so-far-recorded smallest cranium from this zone, suggesting this individual was female. The face exhibits some "Asian" features, which highlights regional variation in Afro-Asian archaic members of *Homo*.

Keywords: *Homo erectus*, Skull IX, Sangiran, Java

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