

FATHER TEILHARD, SCIENTIST, WAS 73

Co-Discoverer of Peking Man Is Dead—Research Aide of Wenner-Gren Foundation

The Rev. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, noted paleoanthropologist and co-discoverer of "the Peking Man," died here Sunday while dining with friends. He was 73 years old. He resided at the Fourteen Hotel, 14 East Sixtieth Street.

For the last four years Father Teilhard had been research associate of the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, 14 East Seventy-first Street.

Born in France, Father Teilhard was educated at a Jesuit school near Lyon, entered the Jesuit Order in 1899, and was ordained a priest in 1912. In World War I he served at the front as a stretcher bearer with the African troops, from January, 1915, until the end of the war, winning both the Military Medal and the Legion of Honor for gallantry in action.

After the Armistice he resumed his studies in geology and paleontology, and received a Ph. D. at the Sorbonne. In 1923 he left his teaching post at the Catholic University in Paris and went on his first expedition to China, where he was to work on a variety of problems until 1945.

Shortly after his arrival there he was named adviser to the National Geological Survey, and in this capacity, the Wenner-Gren Foundation said, "he collaborated for ten years in research supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, which resulted in the discovery of the Peking Man."

In a talk delivered during an international symposium on early man at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia in March, 1937, Father Teilhard described the Peking Man as "perhaps the next to the last step traceable between the anthropoids and man." A lower stratum from the one in which the Peking Man was found he believed to be the most likely to yield the last "missing link."

In an interview on this occasion, Father Teilhard said he believed in the evolution of man from lower orders of the animal kingdom and that he did not consider such belief irreconcilable with religion.

"I find absolutely no barriers and no hurdles between my beliefs as a scientist and as a priest. The two are parallel," he said.

"As a scientist," he continued, "I must admit the evidence that man was born from the animal kingdom. But he was not an animal. The great, the tremendous, the significant fact about man is the coming of thought with and through him."

The New York Times

Published: April 12, 1955

Copyright © The New York Times