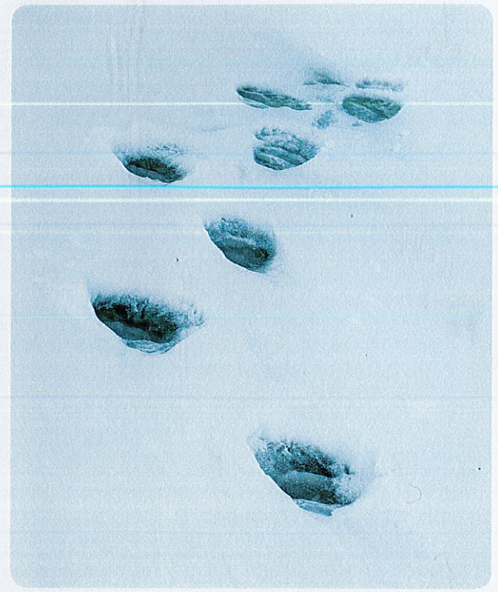
The Abominable Snowman



Location	The Himalayas
First Known Mention:	326 B.C.

"Stories of other mythical, human-like creatures such as Yeti are founded on grains of truth."

- Henry Gee, editor of Nature magazine

The Abominable Snowmen, or Yeti, are mysterious ape-like creatures of legend, said to dwell in the Himalayas. Whilst dozens of expeditions into the mountains of Asia have yet to prove if these animals exist, their legend has endured for hundreds of years. Real or not, the tale of the Yeti brings a moral to all who hear it: stay away from wild and dangerous animals.



The Himalayan mountains

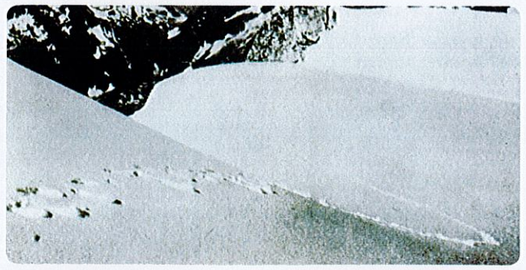
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The legend of the Yeti

Yeti are said to be around six feet tall and covered in dark greyish or reddish-brown hair. They have appeared in the folklore and legends of the Himalayan people for centuries. When Alexander the Great conquered the Indus Valley in 326 BC he demanded to be brought a Yeti. The locals told him this was impossible as the creatures were used to living in the mountains and would not survive at such a low altitude.



A new name



A wider interest in the Yeti grew during the early part of the 20th century. It was then that they gained their popular name: 'The Abominable Snowman'.

Westerners had started travelling to the Himalayas and attempting to scale the mountains. When one group of explorers were interviewed by the journalist Henry Newman, they told him that they had seen strange footprints on the mountain. Their guide had explained that these were the footprints of the 'metoh-kangmi'.

The name 'metoh-kangmi' means 'man-bear snow-man'. Newman mistranslated 'metoh' as filthy and then decided to use 'abominable' instead. In his newspaper report he named the Yeti 'Abominable Snowman' – a name they have worn ever since.

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Further sightings were to follow. In 1925 N.A. Tombazi recorded that he saw an unknown creature near Zemu Glacier, "...unquestionably, the figure in outline was exactly like that of a human being, walking upright and stopping occasionally to pull at some rhododendron bushes. It showed up dark against the snow and, as far as I could make out, wore no clothes."

Two hours later, when Tombazi and his companions had descended the mountain, they saw the creature's footprints in the snow. The prints were only six to seven inches wide but were undoubtedly made by a creature walking on two feet.

In 1942, two hikers on the Himalayas saw two dark shapes moving through the snow a quarter of a mile away. Despite the distance, the hikers were able to describe the animals as being close to eight feet in height with squarish heads, powerful chests and reddish-brown fur.

Important reported sightings	
326 B.C.	Alexander the Great demands to be shown a Yeti.
1921	Journalist Henry Newman gives the Yeti the name, 'The Abominable Snowman'.
1942	Hikers spot two Yeti moving through the snow.
1953	Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay scale Mount Everest, spotting large footprints.
1954	'Yeti hair' is analysed and comes from no known animal.
1986	Anthony Wooldridge takes photographs of the Yeti.
2010	Two Chinese hunters claim to have caught a Yeti.
2019	An Indian army mountaineering team spot mysterious 'Yeti' footprints near their base camp.

Shipton's photographs

Nobody could tell if the Yeti sightings were hoaxes, genuine or misidentification; a common explanation for a Yeti sighting is that it is really a different animal, such as a large bear, which has been seen.



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Interest in the Yeti was only to increase in the 1950s. Eric Shipton had been attempting to scale Mount Everest when he chanced across footprints belonging to an unknown animal. His photographs were heavily debated and analysed. Whilst many believed that these were the best evidence for the existence of the Yeti, others believed they could have been made by some other animals.



The Himalayan mountains

In 1953, Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay became the first recorded mountaineers to reach the peak of Mount Everest. Hillary reported seeing large footprints on the mountain and, though never seeing the creature, said that his father had seen one twice. In later years, Hillary was much more sceptical about the existence of the Yeti.

The hair of the Abominable Snowman

The Pangboche monastery in the Himalayas held a collection of hairs believed to come from a Yeti. An expedition team were able to obtain some of these hairs and take them for analysis.

The hairs were looked at by Professor Frederic Wood Jones. After comparing the hairs to those of other animals, the Professor was convinced that they did not come from a bear or ape but from a hoofed animal. He was, however, unable to identify the animal they came from.

Wooldridge's photographs

In March 1986, experienced mountaineer and explorer Anthony Wooldridge was in the Himalayas when he saw what he believed to be a Yeti. The creature stood silently

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and perfectly still near a ridge 500 feet away. Odd tracks in the snow seemed to lead towards it.

Wooldridge took two photographs of the creature. These were analysed and claimed by some to prove that the Abominable Snowman was a real creature.

A group of experts returned the following year to discover that Wooldridge had taken a photograph not of a 'metoh-kangmi', but a dark outcrop of rock which looked like an upright figure.

Did you know?

The Yeti is not the only ape-like creature of legend. Similar monsters are said to live in different parts of the world. The Bigfoot or Sasquatch have been reported in wilderness areas of North America; the Skunk Ape is a foul-smelling humanoid believed to inhabit Florida, North Carolina and Arkansas; and the Yeren is a creature living in the mountain forests of China. Other creatures include the Yowie, the Mande Barung, Orang Pendek, Almas and the Barmanou.

Modern day sightings

Whilst belief in the Yeti has waned in the 21st century, sightings continue to this day.

In 2010, two Chinese hunters claimed to have caught a Yeti. What they had captured was revealed to be a civet, a cat-like animal with a face like kangaroo, which had lost all of its fur due to disease.

In April 2019, an Indian mountaineering expedition claimed to have spotted mysterious 'Yeti' footprints near Makalu base camp.

It seems unlikely that we will ever learn if the Abominable Snowman is a real animal of flesh and blood or simply a creature of myth and legend. The Yeti has been a mystery for thousands of years. It may well remain a mystery for thousands more.

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The Abominable Snowman

Name: Date:

1) Which leader demanded that a Yeti was brought to him?

Feedback

2) Who gave the Yeti the name, 'The Abominable Snowman'?

3) Where did N.A. Tombazi see an unknown creature?

4) Who saw strange footprints in the snow when they climbed Mount Everest?

5) Where were hairs believed to come from the Yeti kept?

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Questions

6) "Stories of mythical, human-like creatures such as the Yeti are founded on grains of truth." Explain what this phrase means.

Feedback

7) Look at the section titled, "A new name". Find one word which has a similar meaning to definitely.

8) Look at the section titled, "Shipton's photographs". Find one word which indicates we cannot prove that Hillary and Norgay were definately the first people to climb Mount Everest.

9) Look at the section titled, "Shipton's photographs". Find one word which has a similar meaning to doubtful.

10) Why do you think Newman used the word 'abominable' instead of 'filthy'?

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Questions

Feedback

11) Can you find two pieces of evidence in the text which might help people to believe that the Abominable Snowman is real?

12) Alexander the Great was told the Yeti could not survive at low altitudes. Can you think of two reasons why he might have been told this?

13) Why do you think that Anthony Wooldridge did not discover the Yeti he had seen was really an outcrop of rock?

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