Is it Possible that We Humans Could Have Evolved from Chimpanzees? by Randy Collins

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Of all the primates, Chimpanzees and Gorillas are said to be closest relatives of humans. All Hominidae (members of the biological family that includes, gorillas, chimpanzees, orangutans and humans) are believed to have evolved from a common ancestor millions of years ago. Among the chimpanzees, there exists a species called bonobo that are found in the Congo Basin in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Central Africa.

The bonobo have distinctive features like longer legs than other primates, and dark faces with pink lips. The hair on the head has a parting and the tail is tufted in adults. They are omnivorous and live in groups. They live in a matriarchal society with the mothers and females in general always having the upper hand. There is one peculiar trait that raises a speculation that humans could have evolved from chimpanzees. The females of the species are believed to be adept in taking advantage of males to the extent of controlling them by using sexual appeasement as a tool. Another important practice is that a male's rank in the social hierarchy is more often than not, determined by the mother's rank. The name bonobo actually means "ancestor" in an extinct Bantu Language. Bantu consists of over 250 languages and dialects, the notable among them is Swahili, and with over 80 million speaking this language it is the largest spoken Bantu language. The other languages are Zulu and Shona.

Genetic studies of the DNA of chimpanzees have been characterized as being 99% identical to that of Homo sapiens. Later studies proved that chimpanzees are more closely related to humans than Gorillas. When compared to common chimpanzees, the bonobo are more slender in build and the female bonobo are smaller- made than the male. They have a slim upper body with narrow shoulders, thin neck and long legs which the common chimpanzees do not have. The females also have more prominent breasts when compared to the flat chest that the other female apes possess. However, they are not as prominent as those of humans.

Bonobo spend their time on the ground and on trees as well. One characteristic that is quite unlike humans is that they are quadrupeds and on rare occasions they do walk on two legs. However, while in captivity and with plenty of food available, they have been observed to walk more on two legs. The posture they assume when they walk on two legs strikingly resembles that of humans when compared to other chimpanzees. Unlike the common chimpanzee and other primates that have common facial features, the bonobo has another trait that could make us really wonder if we did evolve from them, after all.This feature is the unique individuated facial features that every bonobo possesses and that this characteristic is adapted for social interaction. A typical group could consist of 100 members living in a commune. During the day, they break up into smaller groups and go about the business of gathering food and at nightfall all are back at the commune and each family has its own nest on tree tops. Another striking fact is that bonobo, unlike other primates and animals always face each other when they mate and mounting from the rear is absent. Polygamous relationships are present, though a mother bonobo and her grown up son never mate. Whenever a new food source or feeding ground is found the entire group congregates and celebrates by having orgy which actually reduces tension and promotes peaceful feeding and all are satiated.

The gestation period is 240 days and there is normally only one offspring. The mother nurses the young one for about 4 years. The male bonobo are protective of their clan and never allow common chimpanzee to intrude. Whenever a common chimpanzee is found in the vicinity (it would normally be a male) the male bonobo challenge it to a duel and end up killing it. The common chimpanzees normally keep to themselves and never stray into enemy territory. More such related programs are

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Randy Collins is a freelance author and takes keen interest in the origin of species and likes to watch related programs that are aired by popular service providers like a Verizon FiOS TV.

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