what the missing link should look like. Subsequent scientists had let prejudice interfere with their scientific judgment. The unfortunate result was that two generations of students were taught that science had fossil evidence proving that man had descended from apes.

Although jaws and teeth continue to be important factors in the search for man's family tree, it is now thought that the major evolutionary advance that led to humans may have been walking upright.

OUT OF THE FOREST AND ONTO THE PLAIN

The lush tropical forests that covered Asia and Africa began to shrink about 14 million years ago. As the climate gradually gave way to grassland, savannas, and plains, the habitat of tree-dwelling animals was greatly reduced. Thus, faced with a shrinking supply of food, the tree-dwelling apes felt great pressure to seek a new food source and way of life on the plains.

Ramapithecus. The first potential primate fossils that hint at adaptation to life on the plains come from Pakistan, East Africa, Turkey, and China. The place they were first discovered was in the Punjab in northern India. The species is called *Ramapithecus* ("Rama" for a deified hero worshipped by Hindus and "pithecus" for ape).

Ramapithecus ("Rama ape") is thought to have made the transition from a tree-swinging ape to a partial life on the ground. Its teeth are similar to those of eaters of grass seeds, which indicates that it may have sought food sources on the plains rather than in the trees.

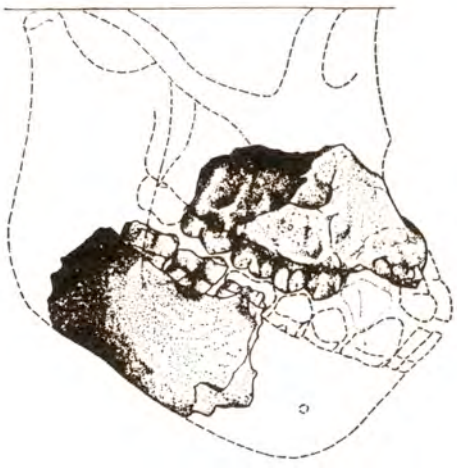

FIGURE 10.4.
Hypothetical appearance of the face of Ramapithecus based on existing fragments of *kenyapithecus wickeri* (Leakey, 1962). Dashed lines are conjectural.