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From the Editor

In November 2000, the discipline of Paleolithic archaeology in Japan was rocked by the Fujimura scandal, in which famed archaeologist Fujimura Shin'ichi was photographed planting artifacts into an "Early Paleolithic" site in northern Japan. Six years later, we are happy to report that Japanese Paleolithic archaeology is alive and well. As the 16 Special Focus papers presented in this volume of *Current Research in the Pleistocene* attest, archaeologists in Japan are conducting their research in a rigorous scientific setting, and any lingering questions of integrity have been put to rest. The papers presented here report on a variety of topics, from the precise dating of Japan's first Upper Paleolithic cultures, to the emergence of pottery technologies during the late glacial. Much attention understandably focuses on the evolution of stone technology during the Upper Paleolithic. We hope that this collection of papers will not only serve as an update on Japanese Paleolithic archaeology for our English-reading audience, but will also facilitate future international collaborations between the archaeologists of northeast Asia and the Americas. I thank Akira Ono and Masami Izuho for assembling this group of papers, and Charles T. Keally for correcting the English in 11 of them.

For Volume 24 (2007), the Special Focus section will be "Paleoclimates and Paleoenvironments of the Late Glacial." We are soliciting manuscripts that address the following kinds of questions: How are millennial-scale global climatic oscillations during the late Glacial expressed in various regional proxy records? How did such oscillations impact human populations? Authors wishing to present new evidence of late-Glacial climates and environments, or regional syntheses of climate, environmental, and human adaptive change are welcome to submit manuscripts. Please contact the *CRP* editor (goebel@tamu.edu) for more information.

For Volume 25 (2008), we plan on soliciting manuscripts with a special focus on paleodietary reconstruction. Our hope is to assemble a group of papers (1) reporting new information about the diets and subsistence pursuits of northeast Asia and America's first human inhabitants, and (2) presenting new methods of dietary analysis. Again, please contact the *CRP* editor if you would like to participate in this project.

Ted Goebel

Refitted Points: Biface Reduction Strategy in the Terminal Pleistocene of Honshu Island

Masaki Naganuma

This paper presents an example of a refitted biface from Honshu Island (central Japan). In the terminal Pleistocene, "biface reduction" was a main strategy of hunter-gatherer lithic technology (e.g., making leaf-shaped points, preforms of wedge-shaped microcores, axes, and disc-like cores) in the northern part of Japanese Islands (Naganuma 2002, 2003). Such industries spread widely across the Russian Far East, the arctic region of Beringia, and northern North America. However, it is not so easy to understand the reduction sequence of bifacial tools. Intensive flaking deleted features of blanks while the reduction sequence was carried out across a plurality of sites under high residential mobility. These interpretations were developed in studies of Paleoamericans (Bamforth 2003; Kelly 1988), but they have a wide range of applicability in other regions and times in the world. Studies about the multifunctionality of bifacial tools continue to rely on micro-wear analysis; however, refitted materials also provide significant information.

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At Mattobara site locality C (37° 13′ 42″ N, 138° 46′ 22″ E), a 148-m^2 excavation revealed 4,171 stone artifacts (Ono 1997). The majority of tools include 82 partially retouched small points and 7 massive bifacial points. Two scrapers, a graver, and a few other retouched tools occur. Though there were no suitable samples for dating, typological comparison suggests the assemblage dates to the late Upper Paleolithic. There are three types of raw materials. Fine gray-colored hard shale (n = 3,124) seems to have originated from valleys more than 150 km northeast of the Mattobara site. Obsidian outcrops are present in mountains about 150 km south of the site, but there are only 36 flakes and 5 obsidian points in the site. Local igneous or sedimentary rocks (andesite, tuff, crude local shale, etc.) occur as pebbles along rivers near the site. Most of the points are made of gray hard shale or obsidian.

Figure 1 shows the bifacial reduction sequence of refitted materials of a single nodule. The raw material is dark-colored hard shale, but the color and the roundness of its surface suggest that it was acquired near the Mattobara site. First, Figure 1-1 shows all 82 flakes, 2 points, and a bifacial core refitted. A flat pebble with a diameter of about 13 cm and thickness of 5 cm is restored. Next, Figure 1-2 shows the appearance of a pebble with reduced thickness. Some flakes produced from this stage have remains of surface cortex. One of them was retouched and shaped into a small point (middle row, right). Furthermore, another small blade-like flake was also retouched and processed into a small point (middle row, left). It is interesting that these blanks of small points are not so long or thick. Third, Figure 1-3 shows a final bifacial core left in the site. Although this biface is unshaped, there are similarly sized (length and width) bifacial leaf-shaped points from the site (also made of local raw materials such as andesite and tuff), and we can estimate that this biface would have become a preform of a leaf-shaped point with still more careful continued reduction. This case illustrates the multiple usage of one biface, as a core for supplying flake blanks for small points and as a preform of a larger, massive leaf-shaped point. It was fortunate for us to succeed in refitting these materials because one stone may have been reduced in a relatively short period of time at a single place (one site). There is the possibility that this is related to the usage of local raw materials. Indeed, the refitting of exotic fine gray hard shale and obsidian is difficult, and reduction sequences are represented only partially at Mattobara. This case will form the basis of an effective model for understanding the biface reduction strategy.

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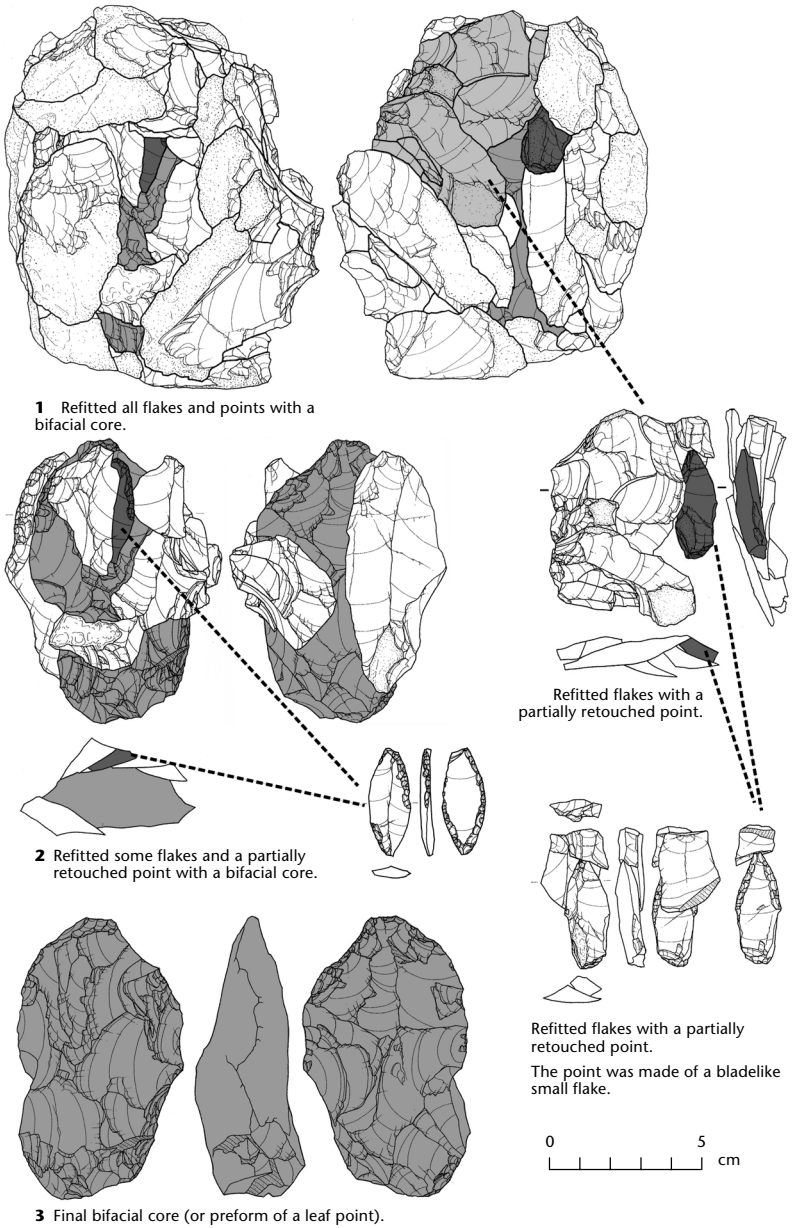

Figure 1. Refitted points from Mattobara site Locality C (manufactured on hard shale).

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