

A Preliminary Report on the Plant Remains from the Nakano B Site, Hokkaido.

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Soil samples from the Initial Jōmon Nakano B. Site, House 1, Grid 3 were submitted to me for the purpose of recovery and analysis of plant remains and other small archaeological items. The samples were collected in 1975 and stored in small plastic bags. The soil, representing a portion of each level within House 1 was floated on the Hokkaido University campus using a modification of the "garbage-can" technique (Watson 1976). A plastic garbage-can served as the outer flotation container, while a metal bucket fitted with a 1.2mm. window screen in the bottom served as the interior container. The metal bucket was fitted with four brackets around the rim, 90 degrees apart. The brackets supported the bucket within the garbage can, thus allowing one person to carry out the flotation process. Two people, however, made the job very simple. Individual samples from each level were combined in order to increase the efficiency of the flotation process. A standard sample size of 14 bags (about 30 litres) was arbitrarily chosen. The remaining soil from each level was retained to facilitate potential cross-checking of data. Soil was slowly poured into the hands of an assistant which were held just above the water surface. This broke the fall of the soil, allowing it to become more slowly immersed in the water and therefore not pass immediately through the screened bucket bottom. The suspended light fraction was scooped out of the water using a 0.6mm. mesh hand screen.

Analysis of both heavy and light fractions followed the method described by Yarnell (1974).

The flotation sample data are summarized in Table 1. Both heavy and light fraction data are included. A total of about 672 grams of quantifiable remains have so far been analyzed. Approximately 12% (81 gm.) of this total is carbonized plant remains. The remainder consists of pottery sherds, stone flakes, and small bone. No significant trends are noted in the sample component quantities from lower to upper levels; the quantities are quite variable.

The carbonized plant remains are comprised of wood charcoal, kurumi nutshell (Juglans ailanthifolia Carr.), kihada (Phellodendron amurense Rupr.) fruits and seeds, and a seed of niwatoko (Sambucus sp.). A total of 36 seeds were recovered, 7 of which are either unknown or unidentifiable. Almost 80%, by weight, of the plant remains is wood charcoal. The remainder is nut remains, kihada and small seeds. The five levels contained relatively similar proportions of plant remains components, although the density of plant remains per level is variable.

The quantities of kurumi nutshell and kihada fruits and seeds are in marked contrast to those reported from the Early Jōmon Hamanasuno Site, located about 30km. to the northeast of Nakano B (Crawford and Hurley in press). While such plant foods as nuts and kihada berries were probably not especially important to the Hamanasuno occupants, the opposite appears to be true for the Nakano B peoples. Flotation of soils from Hamanasuno in 1976, utilizing the same methods as that applied to the Nakano B soils seems to confirm this contrast. The lack of other small seeds at Nakano B such as those reported from Hamanasuno (Ibid.) may be either a function of recovery methods, the Initial Jōmon subsistence ecology, or both. Further testing will be necessary to ascertain the variables involved.

Table 1

Flotation Samples from the Nakano B Site: Sample Components as a Percentage
of Total Sample Weight and Carbonized Plant Remains as a Percentage
of Total Weight of Carbonized Plant Remains (seeds are recorded as raw counts)

Level	Volume of Soil Sample (Bags)	Total Sample Weight (gm)	Sample Components				Carbonized Plant Remains								Total No. Seeds
			Pottery	Stone Flakes	Small Bone	Carbonized Plant Remains	Total Weight (gm)	Wood Charcoal	Unknown	<u>Kurumi</u> Nutshell	Small Seeds				
											<u>Kihada</u> Fruit Seeds (No.)	<u>Niwa-</u> <u>toko</u>	Uniden- tified Seeds		
I	14	40.48	21.49	55.39	-	23.12	9.36	85.26	-	14.74	1			1	
II	14	341.69	65.50	29.98	-	4.43	15.13	79.84	-	19.49	0.66	8	3	11	
lower II	14	36.15	1.41	0.55		98.04	35.44	75.79	-	24.21	-(?)	1	1	2	
III	14	236.98	47.05	44.83		8.12	19.24	82.48	-	16.68	0.83	18	1	22	
IIIb	2.5	16.39	83.77	6.59	-	9.64	1.58	100.00		-					
Total	66.5	671.69	53.38	34.60	-	12.02	80.75	79.72	-	19.96	0.32	28	7	36	

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