

A NEW GIANT DROMAEOSAURID FROM JAPAN

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The most productive dinosaur sites in Japan are found in the Kitadani Formation (Albian) of the Tetori Group in Fukui Prefecture. Jaw fragments from the Katsuyama quarry were identified in 1991 as dromaeosaurid on the basis of fusion of the interdental plates. Two years later, the discovery of a right first manual ungual, a right astragalus, and a left metatarsal III confirmed that one of the theropods is a dromaeosaurid. These bones were found in a small area of the quarry, and may represent part of an associated skeleton. That region of the excavation will be extended in 1995.

The manual ungual, which is probably from the first digit, is laterally compressed, strongly recurved, and tapers to a very sharp point. The distance from the dorsal edge of the proximal articulation to the tip is 10.5 cm measured in a straight line, and 15 cm measured along the outside curvature. The third metatarsal is 29.5 cm long. Both of these measurements suggest that the animal is approximately double the size of *Deinonychus*. Although there are no overlapping elements with *Utahraptor*, the Japanese dromaeosaur would have been about 25% smaller in linear dimensions.

The presence of giant dromaeosaurids in Lower Cretaceous strata of Japan, Mongolia and the United States shows that faunal interchange between the northern continents was well underway by Albian times.