

K. AKERMAN  
Box 312  
Derby  
W.A.  
6728

Dear Don,

Many thanks for your letter and I sincerely hope you are well on the way to recovery now. We have been seeing quite a bit of stone knife surgery here over the past 3 months - over 200 youths have been subincised or circumcised about  $\frac{1}{2}$  with jivari hafted flakes. These are of chert in preference to steel for a number of reasons - steel is too sharp and in high tension moments at rituals too many slips have been made - the old stone knife with a percussion trimmed edge (also sometimes a stone or glass spearhead) crushes blood vessels allowing blood loss to be minimal.

Some tribes go in for white chert - if its got any marking it means the cut wont be clean others prefer banded stone so the cut will be clean like the hand running through the flake.

I have drafted out reduction sequences for the production of Kimberley Pts as you can see there is more than 1 way to do it depending on the size of your initial core and the flakes that come off it. Each of these sequences is used in the Kimberley and I have seen aboriginals use all at one time or another. The production of both serrate and non serrate points leads me to some confusion in nomenclature. Preform 2 for a serrate point is the implement in the non-serrate series - is what I call Preform 1. then the blank as can the term blank be still used for the hammerstone dressed flake or plain flake. Again depending on its dimensions.

Within two - 3 weeks I should be ready to work up the heat treatment of stone for this area. I think the practice was developed in the south east Kimberley Gudgea - Djaru country. At least they understand the principles better than any other aborigines I have spoken to. They say the process takes 3-4 days 1 day to heat a pit dug in <sup>dry</sup> sand continually firing it for 8-10 hours. The coals are shoveled out and a 4 inch layer of cool sand is placed on the bottom. Blankets and covers were placed on this covered with more cool sand (ie non heated) then the whole was covered with the ~~remains~~ <sup>coals</sup> of <sup>and not sand</sup> ~~removed~~ removed earlier and finally this was all covered with solid mound of earth to contain the heat - to quote 'can't let any air get in there'. After 3 more days the pit is cool and the stones dug up - "just like glass don't need stick or stone you can put the wire (flakes) straight on 'em". Leads me to believe that the practice was a recent development and our classic points only about 100-150 years old - the large ones that is - no similar points appear to occur archaeologically. A bit paradoxical when you think that the U.S. craftsmen had the technique when they entered the Americas and it's been lost until a little group of 200-300 re develop it in Australia as their sun sets with the coming of the white.

I would really be interested in your comments on a rejoinder I have written (but not yet submitted) to your paper on flaking with wooden tools - I enclose a photocopy.

Keep well

Fond regards

Kim