The Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan consist of 17 archaeological sites located in the southern part of Hokkaido Island and the northern part of the Honshu Island of the Japanese archipelago. This property is a valuable cultural heritage demonstrating the pre-agricultural way of life and complex spiritual culture of prehistoric people who lived based on gathering, fishing, and hunting for a very long period of time, more than 10,000 years.

The Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan

The Japanese word Jomon means cord pattern, which characterize earthen pottery unearthed from the archaeological sites, after which the culture that produced the distinctive pottery is called Jomon culture.
Value of Jomon prehistoric sites

Jomon prehistoric sites unique to the Japanese archipelago

The beginning of Jomon period dates back some 15,000 years before present, when the climate of the Japanese archipelago became warmer rapidly. Forests of deciduous broad-leaved trees expanded and produced a lot of acorns, chestnuts and walnuts. Landforms and environmental conditions became more suitable for fish and shellfish to grow. As a result, the Japanese archipelago saw rich biological diversity of an exceptional degree even in the global context.

Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan is a unique prehistoric culture that existed in the Japanese archipelago and lasted for over 10,000 years. People were able to lead a sustainable life in harmony with the bountiful nature and managed to adapt deeply to changes in climate and the natural environment. It is characterized by the earliest pottery-making in the world and the establishment of villages where people were able to live a stable life.

Jomon prehistoric sites is distinctive as compared with contemporaneous Neolithic sites in other parts of the world in that it achieved sedentism based on gathering, fishing, and hunting as the basis of livelihood without opting for full-fledged agriculture or stockbreeding and that it enjoyed harmonious society. It is an extremely important culture in the history of humankind.

Sedentism

Adapting to the natural environment at that time, Jomon people invented tools, such as pots, bows, arrows, and fishhooks. They gradually changed to sedentism, while continuing to make livelihood based on gathering, fishing, and hunting. They built pit dwellings and eventually villages. Within a village, dwellings and tombs were made. Some villages became large to function as regional centers. Monuments such as large pillared structures, ceremonial earth mounds, and stone circles were also constructed.

These villages did not have defensive moats or walls around them, indicating that Jomon people had peaceful, harmonious society. In addition, they conducted active long-distance exchanges and trades across the sea and beyond mountains, as is evidenced in the existence of jade, asphalt, and obsidian in places where they do not occur naturally. Lacquerware, accessories, and ceremonial clay figurines have been unearthed, showing the sophisticated spirituality of Jomon people.

Trade and exchange across the strait

Jomon people conducted active trade and exchange, even across the Tsugaru Strait between Hokkaido and Aomori Prefecture, for goods such as obsidian and shellfish accessories.

Ecological Jomon

Jomon people made livelihood based on gathering, fishing, and hunting, making various tools for these purposes. These artifacts show how they tried to improve their hunting and fishing methods and cooking methods.
Harmony with nature

During the Jomon period, Northern Japan was covered by beech forests and other deciduous broad-leaved trees. The ecosystems of rich biodiversity provided Jomon people with access to diverse natural resources, both forest products and marine resources, on a sustainable basis. As a result, their lives lasted for over 10,000 years. In the surrounding areas of the villages, many useful trees such as chestnut trees, walnut trees, and lacquer trees were planted, forming “Jomon Satoyama”, or productive ecosystems modified with human intervention. In particular, it is likely that chestnut trees were more or less cultivated for food and timber. Although there were global climate change, environmental change, and natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunamis, Jomon people managed to adapt and overcome these difficulties.

From Jomon to the present

Jomon period lasted over 10,000 years up to around 400 years BCE, when full-fledged rice cultivation started in the Japanese archipelago. It does not mean that it was a stagnant culture or a primitive culture. Instead it was a mature society of its own complete with excellent craftsmanship and sophisticated spirituality.

There are many things that people living today can learn from Jomon prehistoric sites, such as wisdom and practice of incorporating the bountiful blessings of nature into daily lives, life with nature, and care for family and friends. It is important that we pass Jomon prehistoric sites on to future generations.

Craftsmanship of Jomon people

Lacquered bamboo basket
[Kitakogane Site, Date City, Hokkaido Pref.]

Objects probably used for rituals such as clay figurines, stone bars, and rock plates have been unearthed. They are made of various materials, and in various shapes. It is thought that they were used to wish for good catch and safety, to pray for funereal purposes, or to show power. The clay tablets imprinted with hands or feet of a child might be associated with parents caring for their children.

Rich spirituality of Jomon people

A sword made of whale bone
[Kitakogane Site, Date City, Hokkaido Pref.]

Triangles of various materials, and in various shapes. It is thought that they were used to wish for good catch and safety, to pray for funereal purposes, or to show power. The clay tablets imprinted with hands or feet of a child might be associated with parents caring for their children.
Northern Japan has excellent natural environment still today, as is exemplified by World Natural Heritage properties, Shirakami-Sanchi (in Aomori and Akita Prefectures) and Shiretoko (in Hokkaido). This is also an area where Jomon prehistoric sites are concentrated as compared with other areas of the Japanese archipelago and that in a good state of conservation. There are many invaluable archaeological sites that bear testimony to the wisdom and ingenuity of our ancestors.

The national government of Japan designates archaeological sites of high academic and historical value as historic sites, out of which those of particularly high academic value that can be considered to be a symbol of Japanese culture are designated as special historic sites. Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan consist of 17 component parts that are designated either as historic sites or as special historic sites such as Sannai Maruyama Site and Oyu Stone Circles.

**Time capsules of Jomon period**

Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan consist of archaeological sites (settlement sites, shell middens where bones are well preserved, and low wetland sites where organic materials are well preserved) and monuments (stone circles and earthwork burial circles). The former is associated with the beginning of sedentism, the maturation of society, and Jomon people’s life and livelihood. The latter is associated with the development and sophistication of spirituality.

These prehistoric sites are located in various places ranging from coastal areas to hills, lake sides, and river basins, indicating sustainable land uses of Jomon people adapting to different environments without inflicting too much load on the natural environment.

The southern part of Hokkaido and the northern part of Tohoku, centering around the Tsugaru Strait, were culturally integral throughout the Jomon period.

This so-called Tsugaru Strait Cultural Area is characterized by the world’s earliest pottery and lacquerware and large-scale stone circles. Also, clay figurines showing rich spirituality and artistic character have been found in high density. The influence of this area extended to other areas through active long-distance trade and exchange.

**Jomon collection**

- **A large jade ring**
  [Sannai Maruyama Site, Aomori City, Aomori Pref.]
  Jade had been brought from Niigata Prefecture, approx. 700 km away from Aomori Prefecture.

- **A clay figure in the shape of a squid**
  [Washinoki Site (No. 4), Mori Town, Hokkaido Pref.]
  A rice-stuffed squid is coincidentally a local specialty of Mori Town.

- **Lacquered earthenware**
  [Kamegakia Burial Site, Tsugaru City, Aomori City]
  This earthen dish is beautifully colored with red and black lacquer.

- **A comb made of antler**
  [Futatsumori Site, Shichinohage Town, Aomori Pref.]
  An 11cm-long comb made of antler, exhibits sophisticated craftsmanship.
The Jomon period is divided into six periods, depending on the characteristics of pottery and other factors. Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan contain 17 archaeological sites dating from each of these periods, covering the distinctive characteristics of all these periods, so that the series can collectively tell a complete story of prehistoric sedentary life, which lasted for more than 10,000 years, while experiencing the Jomon transgression, climate change, and changes in natural environment.

**Chronological table of the Jomon period vis-a-vis world history**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Major events in Japan</th>
<th>Events in the world</th>
<th>Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan</th>
<th>The characteristics of Jomon pottery in Northern Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13,000 BCE</td>
<td>Palaeolithic Period</td>
<td>• Microlithic culture spreads in the Japanese archipelago.</td>
<td>• Peking Man. Murial paintings of the Lascaux Cave are drawn.</td>
<td>- Odai Yamamoto Site</td>
<td>The earliest, undecorated pottery (ca. 15,000 years before present) is found at (Odai Yamamoto Site)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9,000 BCE</td>
<td>Initial Jomon Period</td>
<td>• The use of pots and bows and arrows starts; sedentism advances; and villages appear.</td>
<td>• The earliest temple (Goheki-tepe) is built in Turkey.</td>
<td>Kakinoshima Site</td>
<td>Patterns appear on the pottery, ranging from rouletted impressions, to seashell-incised patterns and then code patterns. The number of pots with the pointed bottom increases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000 BCE</td>
<td>Early Jomon Period</td>
<td>• Climate warming progresses and the sea level rises (Jomon transgression). • Shell middens appear.</td>
<td>• Rice cultivation starts in the downstream area of the Yangzi River. • Agriculture (rye) starts in the Mesopotamia region.</td>
<td>- Kitakogen Site - Tagoyano Site - Futatsumori Site</td>
<td>Akamido style (Choshichiyachi Site)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,000 BCE</td>
<td>Middle Jomon Period</td>
<td>• The number of settlements increases and some settlements become regional centers. • Technique of using lacquer develops.</td>
<td>• Chinese civilization starts. • Mesopotamian civilization starts.</td>
<td>- Ofune Site - Sannai Maruyama Site - Goshono Site</td>
<td>Flat-bottomed pots decorated with various code patterns (new Ento style) is made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000 BCE</td>
<td>Late Jomon Period</td>
<td>• Large settlements develop into regional centers. • Trade of jade, obsidian, etc. flourishes.</td>
<td>• Indus civilization starts. • Pyramid of Khufu is built.</td>
<td>- Irie Site - Ouy Stone Circles - Tsedota Stone Circles - Komakino Stone Circle</td>
<td>New Ento style (Goshono Site)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 BCE</td>
<td>Final Jomon Period</td>
<td>• Many tools for rituals such as goggle-eyed clay figurines and clay masks are made, and accessories also become diverse. • Rice farming is introduced to northern Kyushu.</td>
<td>• The “Spring and Autumn” period and the Warring States period of China</td>
<td>- Takasago Burial Site - Kamegaoka Burial Site - Korekawa Site - Klus Earthwork Burial Circles - Oomi Katsuyama Stone Circle</td>
<td>Elaborately decorated Kamegaoka-style pottery is made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 BCE</td>
<td>Yayoi Period</td>
<td>Yoshinogari Site flourishes.</td>
<td>• China is unified by Qin Dynasty. • Colosseum is built.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conservation and promotion**

Many of the Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan are open to the public as archaeological parks for the purposes of conservation and promotion. Many NGOs provide guided tours introducing the charm and value of the archaeological sites to visitors, organize events for visitors to experience Jomon prehistoric sites, and disseminate information widely through various means. Local people, NGOs, and local governments are working together to interpret the value of Jomon prehistoric sites and pass it on to future generations.
The interpretation facilities located at the individual Jomon prehistoric sites are introduced below. Check the official website of the Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan for further details:

1. **Ofune Site**
   - **Location:** Hakodate City Jomon Culture Center, Hakodate City, Hokkaido
   - **Contact:** +81 138 25 2030
   - **Opening Hours:** 9:00~17:00 from April to October
   - **Closed on Mondays and the year-end holidays and New Year holidays**
   - **Admission:** Adults JPY 300, Students JPY 150
   - **Website:** http://www.city.hakodate.hokkaido.jp/ (only in Japanese)
   - **Note:** Free when it falls on a Saturday or Sunday

2. **Kakinoshima Site**
   - **Location:** Hakodate City Jomon Culture Center, Hakodate City, Hokkaido
   - **Contact:** +81 138 25 2030
   - **Opening Hours:** 9:00~17:00 from April to October
   - **Closed on Mondays and the year-end holidays and New Year holidays**
   - **Admission:** Adults JPY 300, Students JPY 150
   - **Website:** http://www.city.hakodate.hokkaido.jp/ (only in Japanese)
   - **Note:** Free when it falls on a Saturday or Sunday

3. **Kiusu Earthwork Burial Circles**
   - **Location:** Chitose City Buried Cultural Properties Center, Chitose City, Hokkaido
   - **Contact:** +81 123 24 4210
   - **Opening Hours:** 9:00~17:00
   - **Closed on Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, and the year-end holidays and New Year holidays, except for the second Sunday of the month**
   - **Admission:** Free
   - **Website:** https://www.city.chitose.lg.jp/bunya/stone/(only in Japanese)

4. **Kitakogane Site**
   - **Location:** Kitakogane Site Information Center, Kitakogane-cho, Date City, Hokkaido
   - **Contact:** +81 142 24 2122
   - **Opening Hours:** 9:00~17:00
   - **Closed from December to March**
   - **Admission:** Free
   - **Website:** https://www.city.date.hokkaido.jp/funakawa/detail/00000312.html (only in Japanese)

5. **Irie Site**
   - **Location:** Irie Site, Toyako Town, Abuta-gun, Hokkaido
   - **Contact:** +81 142 76 5802
   - **Opening Hours:** 9:00~17:00
   - **Closed on Mondays and from December to March**
   - **Admission:** Adults JPY 150
   - **Website:** http://www.city.toyako.hokkaido.jp/ (only in Japanese)

6. **Takasago Burial Site**
   - **Location:** Takasago Museum, Toyako Town, Abuta-gun, Hokkaido
   - **Contact:** +81 142 76 5802
   - **Opening Hours:** 9:00~17:00
   - **Closed on Mondays and from December to March**
   - **Admission:** Adults JPY 100
   - **Website:** http://www.city.toyako.hokkaido.jp/ (only in Japanese)

7. **Sannai Maruyama Site**
   - **Location:** Sannai Maruyama Jomon Culture Center, Sannai, Aomori Pref.
   - **Contact:** +81 17 766 8282
   - **Opening Hours:** 9:00~18:00 from June to September and the “Golden week” holidays from the end of April to the early May
   - **Closed on the year-end holidays and New Year holidays**
   - **Admission:** Adults JPY 410, High school and university students JPY 200
   - **Website:** http://www.sannaimaruyama.pref.aomori.jp/english (only in Japanese)

8. **Komakino Stone Circle**
   - **Location:** Komakino Stone Circle, Chitose City, Hokkaido
   - **Contact:** +81 138 25 3163
   - **Opening Hours:** 9:00~17:00
   - **Closed on Mondays and holidays**
   - **Admission:** Adults JPY 300
   - **Website:** http://komakinosite.jp (only in Japanese)

9. **Omori Katsuyama Stone Circle**
   - **Location:** Omori Katsuyama Stone Circle, Akita City, Akita Pref.
   - **Contact:** +81 173 49 1194
   - **Opening Hours:** 9:00~16:00
   - **Closed on Mondays and the year-end holidays and New Year holidays**
   - **Admission:** Adults JPY 250
   - **Website:** http://korekawa-jomon.jp/ (only in Japanese)

10. **Goshono Site**
    - **Location:** Goshono Site, Ichinohe City, Aomori Pref.
    - **Contact:** +81 173 42 6490
    - **Opening Hours:** 9:00~17:00
    - **Closed on Mondays (except for the first Monday of the month and holidays)**
    - **Admission:** Adults JPY 250
    - **Website:** http://www.city.kitaakita.akita.jp/isedotai/index.html (only in Japanese)

11. **Isedotai Stone Circles**
    - **Location:** Isedotai Stone Circles, Ichinohe City, Aomori Pref.
    - **Contact:** +81 173 42 6490
    - **Opening Hours:** 9:00~17:00
    - **Closed on Mondays (except for the first Monday of the month and holidays)**
    - **Admission:** Adults JPY 250
    - **Website:** http://www.city.kitaakita.akita.jp/isedotai/index.html (only in Japanese)

12. **Hachinohe City Museum**
    - **Location:** Hachinohe City, Aomori Pref.
    - **Contact:** +81 17 766 8282
    - **Opening Hours:** 9:00~18:00 from June to September and the “Golden week” holidays from the end of April to the early May
    - **Closed on the year-end holidays and New Year holidays**
    - **Admission:** Adults JPY 200
    - **Website:** http://www.city.hachinohe.aomori.jp/ (only in Japanese)

13. **Susano District Physical Culture Exchange Center**
    - **Location:** Susano District Physical Culture Exchange Center, Ichinohe City, Aomori Pref.
    - **Contact:** +81 173 49 1194
    - **Opening Hours:** 9:00~16:00
    - **Closed on Mondays and the year-end holidays and New Year holidays**
    - **Admission:** Adults JPY 150
    - **Website:** http://www.city.hachinohe.aomori.jp/ (only in Japanese)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Admission Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Korekawa Site</strong></td>
<td>1 Aza-Yokoyama, Korekawa, Hachinohe City, Aomori Pref.</td>
<td>+81 178 38 9511</td>
<td>9:00~17:00</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goshono Site</strong></td>
<td>2 Aza-Goshono, Iwadate, Ichinose Town, Ninnohe-gun, Iwate Pref.</td>
<td>+81 195 32 2652</td>
<td>9:00~17:00</td>
<td>Closed on Mondays (except for the first Monday of the month and holidays), closed on the day following a holiday (except when it falls on a Saturday or Sunday), closed on the year-end holidays and New Year holidays, Adults JPY 300, University students JPY 200, Children (incl. elementary and high school students): Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tagoyano Site</strong></td>
<td>59-1 Kizukuri Wakamidori, Tsugaru City, Aomori Pref.</td>
<td>+81 173 42 6460</td>
<td>9:00~16:00</td>
<td>Closed on Mondays, following day of national holidays, and the year-end holidays and New Year holidays, Adults JPY 200, High school and university students JPY 100, Elementary and junior high school students JPY 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oyu Stone Circles</strong></td>
<td>45 Aza-Manza, Oyu, Towada, Kazuno City, Aomori Pref.</td>
<td>+81 186 84 8710</td>
<td>9:00~17:00</td>
<td>Closed on Mondays from November to March, and the year-end holidays and New Year holidays, Adults JPY 320, Students up to high school: JPY 110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kamegaoka Burial Site</strong></td>
<td>105 Biyodan, Kizukuri Tateoka, Tsugaru City, Aomori Pref.</td>
<td>+81 173 45 2450</td>
<td>9:00~16:00</td>
<td>Closed on Mondays, following day of national holidays, and the year-end holidays and New Year holidays, Adults JPY 200, High school and university students JPY 100, Elementary and junior high school students JPY 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Isedotai Stone Circles</strong></td>
<td>100-1 Ogatanakata, Wakigami, Kitakita City, Aomori Pref.</td>
<td>+81 186 84 8710</td>
<td>9:00~17:00</td>
<td>Closed on Mondays and the year-end holidays and New Year holidays, Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Odai Yamamoto Site</strong></td>
<td>34-3 Kanita-odawsabane, Sotogahama Town, Higashi Tsugaru-gun, Aomori Pref.</td>
<td>+81 174 22 2577</td>
<td>9:00~16:00</td>
<td>Closed on Mondays and the year-end holidays and New Year holidays, Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Washinoki Stone Circle</strong></td>
<td>35-1 Aza-Higashi-gamae, Shichinoh Te, Kamikita-gun, Aomori Pref.</td>
<td>+81 178 44 8111</td>
<td>9:00~16:00</td>
<td>Closed on Mondays (except for the first Monday of the month and holidays), closed on the day following a holiday (except when it falls on a Saturday or Sunday), closed on the year-end holidays and New Year holidays, Adults JPY 250, High school and university students JPY 150, Elementary and junior high school students JPY 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Futatsumori Site</strong></td>
<td>15 Kazukaishioke, Shichinoh Te, Kamikita-gun, Aomori Pref.</td>
<td>+81 178 58 5530</td>
<td>Closed in winter</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Choshichiyachi Site</strong></td>
<td>16 Hirosaki, Hachinohe City, Aomori Pref.</td>
<td>+81 186 37 3962</td>
<td>9:00~17:00</td>
<td>Closed on Mondays from November to March, and the year-end holidays and New Year holidays, Adults JPY 320, Students up to high school: JPY 110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan consist of 17 archaeological sites located in the southern part of Hokkaido Island and the northern part of the Honshu Island of the Japanese archipelago. This property is a valuable cultural heritage demonstrating the pre-agricultural way of life and complex spiritual culture of prehistoric people who lived based on gathering, fishing, and hunting for a very long period of time, more than 10,000 years.

The central figure in the logo represents Jomon pottery as well as the map of Northern Japan (Hokkaido and northern Tohoku): the vortex representing the Tsugaru Strait symbolizes the powerfulness of Jomon culture. Darker areas mark the locations of the 17 Jomon sites. The two Chinese characters signify Jomon (literally, “cord pattern”): “JOMON JAPAN”, short for the Jomon culture of Japan, is also a reminder that natural lacquer known today as japan in English dates back to this period.

Site tour rules:

- No unauthorized vehicles, motorbikes, or bicycles are permitted to enter the archaeological site.
- Visitors are not permitted to enter restricted areas.
- Eating and drinking are not permitted within the archaeological site.
- No pets are allowed within the archaeological site (except for guide dogs, service dogs, and hearing dogs).
- Take back your trash.
- Smoking is prohibited at all places except for designated smoking areas.
- Pay attention to and follow the specific rules and instructions at individual archaeological sites and facilities.

Thank you for your kind cooperation to pass on our common invaluable treasure to future generations.