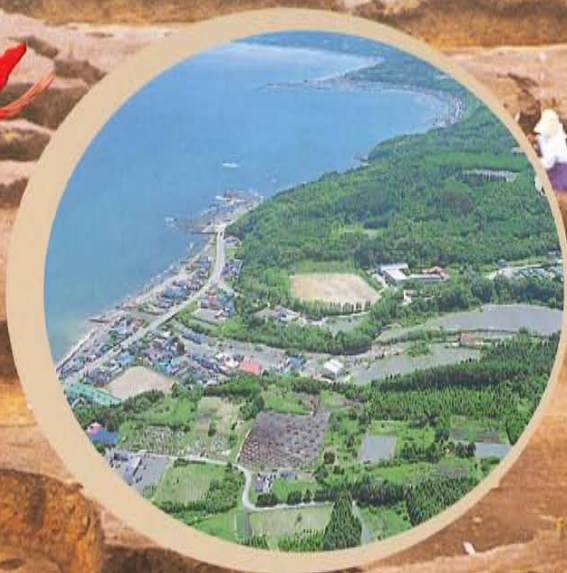


Jomon Archaeological Sites in Hokkaido, Northern Tohoku, and other regions  
Aiming to enter on the World Heritage list



# 縄文

*Jomon*



City of Hakodate



# Large-scale Settlement, the Ofune Site

## General Description of the Ofune Site, a National Historical Site

The Ofune Site is located on the coastal hill (42 to 47m of elevation) on the left bank of the Ofune River. It is a settlement dating from the middle Jomon period, about 4,500 years ago. As a result of the 1996 survey of the 3,500 m<sup>2</sup>, 92 pit dwellings and dumping mound remains were found. As the main area of the site spreads toward the west, the whole site is expected to be very large, and in August, 2001 the 71,832 m<sup>2</sup> area was designated as a National Historical Site.

The site is characterized by large-size dwellings and high density of the settlements. Whereas an average Jomon pit dwelling is 0.5m deep and 4 to 5m long, some of those discovered in the Ofune Site are 2.4m deep and 8 to 11m long. Considering the size of the houses, it can be inferred that a stable Jomon settlement existed here.

The Ofune Site (within the dot-line) and its Surrounding Area



### Close-packed large-scale settlement

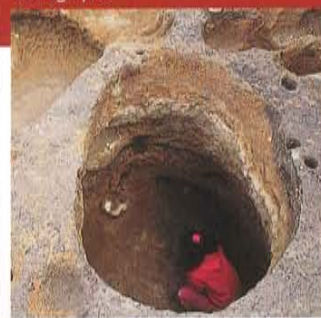


Large-scale dwelling with the depth of 2.4m

### Dwellings with stone fire pits



### Storage pits



Overlapping pit dwellings

### Various Unearthed Artifacts

About 200,000 artifacts have been excavated so far, many of which are the discarded things inside the dwellings. As a result of a test excavation, we found that there is an enormous amount of artifacts buried in the dumping remains. At present, however, this part remains unconfirmed as no further excavations have been done.

Among the excavated artifacts are elaborate miniature pieces of pottery, pieces of japan lacquer and pendants, as well as regular-sized pieces of pottery and stone tools. Food remains such as whale, tuna and deer bones were also found. From a burial site, a number of funerary artifacts were excavated, including pieces of pottery and a tooth that appears to have belonged to a ten-year-old boy.

These numerous findings indicate a certain level of spiritual and cultural life of the Jomon people.



Pottery



Miniature pottery



Burial site and exhumed tooth (of a boy about 10 years old)



Tab



Whale bones processed to look like swords



Whale's spine





In the Heart of  
Nature's Bounty

# Jomon Town-Minamikayabe

## Sites in Minamikayabe

Surrounded by the sea and the hills that abound with natural resources and numerous streams, Minamikayabe is a natural home to the Jomon people and their culture. Some 7,000 years that passed between the early and late Jomon saw the blooming of Jomon culture in an unbroken line. Among the artifacts excavated here is the "Hollow Clay Figure (Chuku Dogu)" regarded as one of the greatest national treasures. Charred remains of Japanese millet seeds were also found, which supports evidence that the Jomon people practiced some form of agriculture, and the discovered remains of an asphalt craft shop indicate the existence of a group of expert craftsmen. All these are of an extreme scientific importance. Among the discovered artifacts are large amounts of jade stones from Niigata region and asphalt from Akita region, which suggests the central role this area played.



### Food and Culture of Jomon as Indicated by the Unearthed Artifacts

The Jomon people have long been believed to be hunter-gatherers whose life was harsh. However, the finding of charred seeds of Japanese millet from the early Jomon period suggests that they practiced an incipient agriculture of cultivating minor cereal. An abundant and diverse provisions of the people is also indicated by the discovered food remains which include charred chestnuts, parts of whales, seals, tuna fish, seashells, and fossilized remains of diatoms.

Leading a stable life, the Jomon people acquired high skills of crafting Japan lacquer and jade handiwork, and they also used asphalt as an adhesive agent. In addition, clay tablets with impressions of feet and clay pots used as incense burners indicate an exuberant spirituality of those people.



Asphalt lumps from Jomon period (upper: Toyosaki N, lower: Makou B Sites)



Japan lacquer lipped jug (Kakinoshima A Site)



Lipped jug and perforated pottery (Yagi B Site)



Clay incense burner  
(Kakinoshima A Site)



Jade pendant



Japanese millet (Hamanasuno Site)



Chesnuts (Ofune Site)



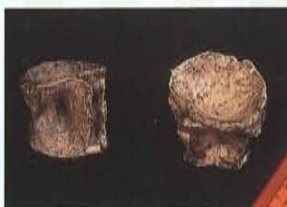
Clay tablets with impressions of feet (Kakinoshima A Site)



Ketsu-formed earring (Yagi A Site)



Seal ivories (Ofune Site)



Tuna bones (Ofune Site)



Remains of diatoms (Ofune Site)





## Chronological Table

9,000 yrs. ago	6,000 yrs. ago	5,000 yrs. ago	4,000 yrs. ago	3,000 yrs. ago	2,000 yrs. ago
Initial Jomon	Early Jomon	Middle Jomon	Late Jomon	Final Jomon	
Kakkumi A Site Kakkumi B Site Kakinoshima B Site	Yagi A Site Hamanasuno Site	Usujiri B Site Ofune Ruin Kakkumi A Site Kinaoshi C Site Kakinoshima A Site	Toyosaki N Site Makou B Site Chobonaino Site	Ofune A Site	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Embossed pottery and shell pottery were made.</li> <li>● Japan lacquer was used.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cylindrical pottery culture developed and a large-scale settlement was formed.</li> <li>● Mound remains were formed.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Jade and asphalt were brought.</li> <li>● Stone circles were formed.</li> <li>● Hollow clay figures were made.</li> </ul>		

About 9,000 years ago, the first Jomon people settled here. In Kakkumi A Site, embossed pottery and pit dwellings have been excavated as evidence. Later, through the period of Jomon Sea-Level Rising, a result of the global warming, the large-scale settlements of the early and middle Jomon periods such as the Hamanasuno Site, the Usujiri B Site and the Ofune Site were formed. In the late and final Jomon periods, the spiritual life of the Jomon people bloomed and, as a result, they started crafting clay figures and building stone circles. Exchanges became active, and jade stones and asphalt were introduced to this area from afar.

## Sites and Excavations

As of April of 2009, there are **91 sites** in Minamikayabe, a conserving area of Buried Cultural Properties, and the total area is approximately **1.6 million m<sup>2</sup>**.

The first scientific excavation was conducted in the Kurowashi Site by Hakodate Chubu High School in 1963. With the onset in 1973 of the full-scale excavation at the Hamanasuno Site as part of government-funded projects, the excavation has been conducted continuously. So far, more than 30 sites have been excavated, and the total excavated area is now 100,000 m<sup>2</sup>. During these excavations, more than 4 million artifacts were unearthed, among which is the "Hollow Clay Figure (Chuku Dogu)" found on the Chobonaino Site which has been designated as a national treasure from the late Jomon period, and other precious artifacts. In 2001, all the Jomon settlements were designated as Hokkaido Heritage.

## Location, Geography and Transport

Minamikayabe is located in the Oshima Peninsula that stretches out in South Hokkaido. Located at 41° 54' N 140° 58' E, the town stretches from north to south along the Pacific coast.

The climate of this area is similar to that of the Pacific coast of Japan, and is relatively mild for Hokkaido. Due to the vicinity of the mainland, it has a rainy season in the early summer. Generally, the summer here is rainy.

1 hour (34km) by bus from JR Hakodate Station, and 35 minutes (25km) by car from Hakodate Airport.

## Hakodate Board of Education

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