

## Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan

Note: “Jomon” should not be italicized.

### [Description: 53 words]

The Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan serve as cultural heritage sites that attest to the livelihoods and spirituality of people who led a sedentary lifeway based on hunting, fishing and gathering over a period of more than 10,000 years. They consist of 17 archaeological sites in Hokkaido, Aomori, Iwate and Akita prefectures.

### [Description: 87 words]

The Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan serve as cultural heritage sites that attest to the livelihoods and spirituality of people who led a sedentary lifeway based on hunting, fishing and gathering over a period of more than 10,000 years while sustainably using the bounties of nature from forests, the sea, and rivers. They consist of 17 archaeological sites in Hokkaido, Aomori, Iwate and Akita prefectures dating from the Jomon period, including the remains of settlements, burial areas, and stone circles where rituals and ceremonies were performed.

### [Description: 150 words]

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People in Northern Japan, where these sites are located, initiated a sedentary way of life around 15,000 years ago that was enabled by abundant forest resources, such as beech and chestnut trees, and plentiful aquatic resources at the intersection of warm and cold currents off the coast. Over the course of subsequent years, they continued a lifestyle based on hunting, fishing and gathering for a long period of time, while adapting to environmental changes. During this period, people developed a complex spiritual culture as evident in clay figurines, stone circles and other archaeological finds at the sites.

### [Description: 193 words]

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In Northern Japan, where these sites are located, deciduous broadleaved forests consisting chiefly of beech spread widely, and the intersection of warm and cold currents creates ideal fishing conditions off the coast. Under such environmental conditions, people living in Northern Japan were able to secure food in a stable manner, and they started using pottery around 15,000 years ago and initiated a sedentary life. Over the subsequent 10,000 years, they continued sedentism based on hunting, fishing and gathering—without shifting to agriculture—while adapting to environmental changes such as climate warming and cooling. During this period, people developed a complex spiritual culture as evident in clay

## Examples of Descriptions of the Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan

figurines, stone circles, earthwork burial circles and other archaeological finds at the sites.

The Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan are valuable heritage sites that illustrate a pre-agricultural way of life and spiritual culture.

Tab.1 Component Parts

No.	Name	Prefecture	Municipality
1	Historic Site Odai Yamamoto Site	Aomori	Sotogahama Town
2	Historic Site Kakinoshima Site	Hokkaido	Hakodate City
3	Historic Site Kitakogane Site	Hokkaido	Date City
4	Historic Site Tagoyano Site	Aomori	Tsugaru City
5	Historic Site Futatsumori Site	Aomori	Shichinohe Town
6	Special Historic Site Sannai Maruyama Site	Aomori	Aomori City
7	Historic Site Ofune Site	Hokkaido	Hakodate City
8	Historic Site Goshono Site	Iwate	Ichinohe Town
9	Historic Site Irie Site	Hokkaido	Toyako Town
10	Historic Site Komakino Stone Circle	Aomori	Aomori City
11	Historic Site Isedotai Stone Circles	Akita	Kitaakita City
12	Special Historic Site Oyu Stone Circles	Akita	Kazuno City
13	Historic Site Kiusu Earthwork Burial Circles	Hokkaido	Chitose City
14	Historic Site Omori Katsuyama Stone Circle	Aomori	Hirosaki City
15	Historic Site Takasago Burial Site	Hokkaido	Toyako Town
16	Historic Site Kamegaoka Burial Site	Aomori	Tsugaru City
17	Historic Site Korekawa Site	Aomori	Hachinohe City
Associated Site 1	Historic Site Choshichiyachi Site	Aomori	Hachinohe City
Associated Site 2	Historic Site Washinoki Stone Circle	Hokkaido	Mori Town

## **Odai Yamamoto Site (Historic Site)**

### **[Location]**

Kanita, Sotogahama Town, Aomori Prefecture

### **[Years]**

ca. 13,000 BCE (Approx. 15,000 years ago)

### **[Catch phrase]**

An archaeological site attesting to the beginning of the Jomon period

### **[Description: 65 words]**

The Odai Yamamoto Site dates from soon after the beginning of the Jomon period and attests to a change from mobile to sedentary ways of life. Pots and stone arrowheads have been unearthed along with stone tools showing the same characteristics as artifacts of the preceding Paleolithic period. These pots date back more than 15,000 years, making them the earliest known pottery in Northeast Asia.

### **[Description: 102 words]**

The Odai Yamamoto Site dates from soon after the beginning of the Jomon period and has yielded pots and stone arrowheads along with stone tools showing the same characteristics as artifacts of the preceding Paleolithic period. Analysis and dating of the carbonized material on unearthed pot shards indicates that they date back more than 15,000 years. This archaeological site is important for gaining insights into a major change from mobility to sedentary ways of life, as the emergence of pottery, which is not suitable for a mobile lifestyle because of the weight and fragility, marks the inception of sedentism by human beings.

### **[Description: 145 words]**

The Odai Yamamoto Site, which dates from soon after the beginning of the Jomon period, is located on a terrace along the Kanita River, which flows into Mutsu Bay. Pots and stone arrowheads have been unearthed along with stone tools showing the same characteristics as artifacts of the preceding Paleolithic period. Analysis and dating of the carbonized material on unearthed pot shards indicates that they date back more than 15,000 years. The emergence of pottery, which is not suitable for a mobile lifestyle because of the weight and fragility, marks the inception of sedentism by human beings. Research has also found places where people produced stone tools and the locations of cooking pot shards. This archaeological site is important for gaining insights into a change from mobile lifeways in the Paleolithic period to sedentism in the Jomon period and into the emergent stage of sedentism.

## **Kakinoshima Site (Historic Site)**

### **[Location]**

Usujiri-cho, Hakodate City, Hokkaido

### **[Years]**

ca. 7,000 BCE – ca. 1,000 BCE (Approx. 9,000 to 3,000 years ago)

### **[Catch phrase]**

A settlement site attesting to the distinction between a residential area and burial area

### **[Description: 65 words]**

The Kakinoshima Site, which is a settlement site dating from ca. 5,000 BCE, is located on a terrace overlooking the Pacific Ocean. In the settlement, an area of pit dwellings is set apart from a burial area. Some graves have yielded clay tablets imprinted with children's footprints that were used as burial goods, attesting to the burial customs and spiritual culture unique to this area.

### **[Description: 78 words]**

The Kakinoshima Site, which is a settlement site dating from ca. 5,000 BCE, is located on a terrace overlooking the Pacific Ocean. In the settlement, a residential area is set apart from a burial area. Stone sinkers for fishing nets unearthed from pit dwellings indicate that fishing was actively practiced. Some graves have yielded clay tablets imprinted with children's footprints that were used as burial goods, attesting to the burial customs and spiritual culture unique to this area.

### **[Description: 153 words]**

The Kakinoshima Site, which is a settlement site dating from ca. 5,000 BCE, is located on a terrace overlooking the Pacific Ocean. In the settlement, an area of pit dwellings is set apart from a burial area consisting of large shared graves and individual graves, indicating a distinction between everyday space and special space. Stone sinkers for fishing nets unearthed from pit dwellings indicate that fishing was actively practiced. Some graves have yielded clay tablets imprinted with children's footprints that were used as burial goods, attesting to the burial customs and spiritual culture unique to this area.

The site also has the remains of artificial earthen mounds exceeding 190 meters in length which date from ca. 2,000 BCE. From the mounds, large numbers of pots and stone tools have been unearthed, along with earth and sand. These finds attest to the continual performance of rituals and ceremonies over a long period of time.

## **Kitakogane Site (Historic Site)**

### **[Location]**

Kitakogane-cho, Date City, Hokkaido

### **[Years]**

ca. 5,000 BCE – ca. 3,500 BCE (Approx. 7,000 to 5,500 years ago)

### **[Catch phrase]**

A settlement site accompanied by large shell mounds facing Uchiura Bay

### **[Description: 55 words]**

The Kitakogane Site is a settlement site accompanied by shell mounds on a hill overlooking Uchiura Bay. The shell mounds have yielded sea shells, fish bones, marine mammal bones, and bone and antler tools. These finds attest to the fishing-oriented livelihood that was pursued to adapt to environmental changes such as marine transgressions and regressions.

### **[Description: 93 words]**

The Kitakogane Site is a settlement site accompanied by shell mounds on a hill overlooking Uchiura Bay. The shell mounds have yielded large numbers of sea shells, fish bones, bone and antler tools, and other items. These finds attest to the fishing-oriented livelihood pursued by people at that time while they adapted to environmental changes such as marine transgressions and regressions. A watering place whose remains are in a lowland is thought to have been used as a ritual ground for the disposal of stone tools such as grinding stones and milling basins.

### **[Description: 151 words]**

The Kitakogane Site is a settlement site accompanied by shell mounds on a hill overlooking Uchiura Bay. On the plateau here are residential areas, a burial area and shell mounds. The remains of a watering place have been found near a spring in a lowland. The shell mounds have yielded shells, fish bones, bone and antler objects, and other items. These finds attest to the fishing-oriented livelihood pursued by people at that time while they adapted to environmental changes such as marine transgressions and regressions. The shell mounds had the characteristics of ritual places and have yielded graves and the remains of rituals involving animals. From the remains of the watering place, large numbers of stone tools, including grinding stones and milling basins, have been unearthed. Since many of these were deliberately broken, the place is thought to have been used as a ritual ground for the disposal of stone tools.

## **Tagoyano Site (Historic Site)**

### **[Location]**

Kizukuri, Tsugaru City, Aomori Prefecture

### **[Years]**

ca. 4,000 BCE – ca. 2,000 BCE (Approx. 6,000 to 4,000 years ago)

### **[Catch phrase]**

A settlement site accompanied by shell mounds facing Paleo-Lake Jusanko

### **[Description: 74 words]**

The Tagoyano Site is a settlement site accompanied by shell mounds facing what used to be Paleo-Lake Jusanko, which appeared during a marine transgression. The shell mounds have yielded large numbers of items including shells from Japanese basket clams and other shellfishes, and implements made from the bones of whales and dolphins, as well as unfinished bracelets made of dog-cockle shells. These finds attest to the livelihood around an inland bay at that time.

### **[Description: 96 words]**

The Tagoyano Site is a settlement site accompanied by shell mounds facing what used to be Paleo-Lake Jusanko, which appeared during a marine transgression. The settlement comprises pit dwellings, graves, shell mounds, storage pits, and various other features. The shell mounds have yielded large numbers of items including the shells of brackish shellfishes (chiefly Japanese basket clams), fish bones, marine mammal bones, and unfinished bracelets made of dog-cockle shells which were supposedly used for ornaments. The Tagoyano Site is an important archaeological site that attests to the livelihood around an inland bay and to settlements there.

### **[Description: 134 words]**

The Tagoyano Site is a settlement site accompanied by shell mounds facing what used to be Paleo-Lake Jusanko, which appeared during a marine transgression. The settlement comprises pit dwellings, graves, dumping grounds, shell mounds, storage pits, and various other features. The shell mounds have yielded items including the shells of brackish shellfishes (chiefly Japanese basket clams), fish bones (from carp, mackerel, etc.), marine mammal bones (from dolphins, whales, etc.), and bone and antler objects, in addition to pots and stone tools. Also unearthed have been large numbers of unfinished bracelets made of dog-cockle shells which were supposedly used for ornaments. These finds indicate that people living in this settlement manufactured shell products onsite. The Tagoyano Site is an important archaeological site that attests to the livelihood around an inland bay and to settlements there.

## **Futatsumori Site (Historic Site)**

### **[Location]**

Kaizukaienomae, Shichinohe Town, Aomori Prefecture

### **[Years]**

ca. 3,500 BCE – ca. 2,000 BCE (Approx. 5,500 to 4,000 years ago)

### **[Catch phrase]**

A settlement site attesting to environmental changes, as evident in the composition of saltwater shellfish and brackish shellfish in the shell mounds

### **[Description: 69 words]**

The Futatsumori Site is a settlement site accompanied by large shell mounds on a terrace located on the bank of Lake Ogawara along the Pacific Ocean. It was found that the lower layers of the shell mounds contain the shells of saltwater shellfishes and the upper layers contain those of brackish shellfishes. These finds illustrate how people lived in adaptation to environmental changes caused by marine transgressions and regressions.

### **[Description: 103 words]**

The Futatsumori Site is a settlement site accompanied by large shell mounds on a terrace located on the bank of Lake Ogawara along the Pacific Ocean. At the shell mounds, the lower layers contain the shells of saltwater shellfishes, including common Orient clams and Japanese oysters (*Crassostrea gigas*), and the upper layers contain those of brackish shellfishes, including Japanese basket clams. These finds attest to people's adaptation to environmental changes caused by marine transgressions and regressions. Also unearthed have been large numbers of bone and antler objects. Among them, an antler comb demonstrates a high degree of spirituality and artisanship for the period.

### **[Description: 153 words]**

The Futatsumori Site is a settlement site accompanied by large shell mounds on a terrace located on the bank of Lake Ogawara. A residential area comprising pit dwellings and storage pits is located on a flatland, with shell mounds and a burial area outside the residential area. The shell mounds are found on the northern and southern slopes of the terrace. The lower layers contain the shells of saltwater shellfishes, including Japanese oysters (*Crassostrea gigas*), common Orient clams and scallops, and the upper layers contain those of brackish shellfishes, including Japanese basket clams. These finds attest to people's adaptation to environmental changes caused by marine transgressions and regressions. Also unearthed have been large numbers of fish bones, animal bones, and bone and antler objects such as fishhooks and harpoons. Among them, an exquisitely crafted antler comb is important in gaining an insight into the high degree of spirituality and artisanship for the period.

## **Sannai Maruyama Site (Special Historic Site)**

### **[Location]**

Sannai, Aomori City, Aomori Prefecture

### **[Years]**

ca. 3,900 BCE – ca. 2,200 BCE (Approx. 5,900 to 4,200 years ago)

### **[Catch phrase]**

A large hub settlement site comprising various facilities

### **[Description: 73 words]**

The Sannai Maruyama Site is a large hub settlement site with features including pit dwellings, pillar-supported structures, graves, storage pits, ritual earthen mounds and dumping grounds. Massive amounts of pots and stone tools have been excavated, as have been animal and plant remains, more than 2,000 clay figurines (the largest number recorded at any site in Japan) and other artifacts. These finds illustrate a livelihood and rituals and ceremonies performed at that time.

### **[Description: 104 words]**

The Sannai Maruyama Site is a large hub settlement site on a terrace overlooking Mutsu Bay. It includes pit dwellings, graves, storage pits, pillar-supported structures, artificial earthen mounds, and various other features. Massive amounts of pots and stone tools have been excavated, as have been ritual implements, including more than 2,000 clay figurines (the largest number recorded at any site in Japan), the bones of various animals and fishes, nuts (chestnuts, walnuts, etc.) and other items. The Sannai Maruyama Site is an important archaeological site that attests to the livelihood around an inland bay, and the diversity of rituals and ceremonies at that time.

### **[Description: 156 words]**

The Sannai Maruyama Site is a large hub settlement site on a terrace overlooking Mutsu Bay. The settlement comprises features including areas of pit dwellings, including large ones, burial areas with pit graves that were aligned in rows, storage pits, pillar-supported structures, dumping grounds, and artificial earthen mounds. From the earthen mounds, large numbers of ritual tools, including clay figurines and miniature pots, have been unearthed. These finds attest to the continual performance of rituals and ceremonies over a long period of time. Archaeological finds also include hunting tools, such as stone arrowheads and stone spears, fishing gear, such as hooks and harpoons, grinding stones and milling basins that are thought to have been used to crush nuts, the bones of various fishes and animals, and nuts such as chestnuts and walnuts. The Sannai Maruyama Site is an important archaeological site that attests to how people at the time ingeniously used natural resources throughout the year.



## **Ofune Site (Historic Site)**

### **[Location]**

Ofune-cho, Hakodate City, Hokkaido

### **[Years]**

ca. 3,500 BCE – ca. 2,000 BCE (Approx. 5,500 to 4,000 years ago)

### **[Catch phrase]**

A hub settlement site with outstandingly developed ritual space

### **[Description: 63 words]**

The Ofune Site is a hub settlement site on a terrace overlooking the Pacific Ocean. It includes pit dwellings, storage pits, graves and artificial earthen mounds. From large ritual earthen mounds, accumulations of large numbers of pots, stone tools and other ritual implements have been unearthed. These finds demonstrate that rituals and ceremonies were held here continually, over a long period of time.

### **[Description: 96 words]**

The Ofune Site is a hub settlement site on a terrace overlooking the Pacific Ocean. It includes deep pit dwellings, including some deeper than two meters, storage pits, graves and artificial earthen mounds. From ritual earthen mounds, accumulations of pots, stone tools and other ritual implements have been unearthed. These finds demonstrate that rituals and ceremonies were held here continually, over a long period of time. Also unearthed have been marine mammal bones (from whales, tuna, etc.), fish bones, and nuts (chestnut, walnut, etc.) which attest to a livelihood and spiritual culture of a coastal area.

### **[Description: 138 words]**

The Ofune Site is a hub settlement site on a terrace overlooking the Pacific Ocean. In the settlement, various features including pit dwellings, storage pits, artificial earthen mounds, and graves were placed separately. Many pit dwellings at this site were found to be distinctively deeper than those found elsewhere—some of them large and deeper than two meters. Large ritual earthen mounds have yielded accumulations of huge numbers of pots, stone tools and scorched earth. These finds attest to the continual performance of rituals and ceremonies over a long period of time. The bones of marine mammals (whales, fur seals, etc.) and the bones of fishes (tuna, salmon, etc.) have been unearthed, as have nuts (chestnuts, walnuts, etc.). The Ofune Site is an important archaeological site that attests to a livelihood and spiritual culture of a coastal area.

## **Goshono Site (Historic Site)**

### **[Location]**

Iwadate, Ichinohe Town, Iwate Prefecture

### **[Years]**

ca. 2,500 BCE – ca. 2,000 BCE (Approx. 4,500 to 4,000 years ago)

### **[Catch phrase]**

A hub settlement site centering on the burial area and ritual space

### **[Description: 65 words]**

The Goshono Site is a hub settlement site on a terrace along the Mabechi River. At the center of the plateau here are graves and ritual earthen mounds that were surrounded by residential areas. From the site, pots, stone tools, clay figurines, animal bones, nuts and other items have been unearthed, illustrating a livelihood and spiritual culture of a river area.

### **[Description: 86 words]**

The Goshono Site is a hub settlement site on a terrace along the Mabechi River. At the center of the plateau here, which stretches east-west, are a burial area accompanied by stone arrangements and ritual earthen mounds. In the surrounding area are large, medium and small pit dwellings. From the ritual earthen mounds, the remains of burned animal bones and nuts have been unearthed along with large numbers of pots and stone tools, suggesting that rituals and ceremonies using fire were continually performed in this settlement.

### **[Description: 163 words]**

The Goshono Site is a hub settlement site on a terrace along the Mabechi River. At the center of the plateau here, which stretches east-west, are a burial area and ritual earthen mounds. In the eastern and western outer parts are residential areas comprising large, medium and small pit dwellings and storage pits. In the burial area, the remains of stone arrangements are placed in a ring, and outside the stone arrangements were pillar-supported structures. From the ritual earthen mounds, not only have large numbers of pots and stone tools been unearthed, but so have the burned bones of animals such as deer and wild boar, carbonized nuts such as Japanese horse chestnuts and other chestnuts, and ritual artifacts such as clay figurines, other clay objects and stone objects, suggesting that rituals and ceremonies involving fire were performed continually in this settlement. The Goshono Site is an important archaeological site that attests to a livelihood and spiritual culture of an inland river area.

## **Irie Site (Historic Site)**

### **[Location]**

Irie, Toyako Town, Hokkaido

### **[Years]**

ca. 1,800 BCE (Approx. 3,800 years ago)

### **[Catch phrase]**

A settlement site that supported a jointly managed ritual center and cemetery

### **[Description: 55 words]**

The Irie Site is a settlement site on a terrace overlooking Uchiura Bay. It comprises an area of pit dwellings, a burial area and shell mounds. A grave has yielded the bones of an adult affected by muscular atrophy, indicating that she managed to live long with paralyzed limbs, probably with the help of others.

### **[Description: 86 words]**

The Irie Site is a settlement site accompanied by shell mounds on a terrace overlooking Uchiura Bay. The shell mounds have yielded bone and antler objects, such as fishhooks and harpoons, along with shells, fish bones, marine mammal bones. These finds attest to the fishing-oriented livelihood that was pursued in the region. A grave has yielded the bones of an adult affected by muscular atrophy during childhood, indicating that she managed to live long with paralyzed limbs, probably with the help of others in the settlement.

### **[Description: 132 words]**

The Irie Site is a settlement site accompanied by shell mounds on a terrace overlooking Uchiura Bay. It comprises an area of pit dwellings, a burial area and shell mounds. The mounds have yielded shells (from short-necked clams, bay mussels, etc.), fish bones (from herring, founder, tuna, etc.), marine mammal bones (from dolphins, etc.), and bone and antler objects (fishhooks, harpoons, etc.). These finds indicate that fishing and hunting were actively practiced. A grave has yielded the bones of an adult affected by muscular atrophy caused by polio (infantile paralysis) and/or muscular dystrophy, indicating that she managed to live long with paralyzed limbs, probably with the help of others in the settlement. Ornaments made with wild boar tusks and other artifacts have also been unearthed, attesting to a high degree of spirituality.

## **Komakino Stone Circle (Historic Site)**

### **[Location]**

Nozawa, Aomori City, Aomori Prefecture

### **[Years]**

ca. 2,000 BCE (Approx. 4,000 years ago)

### **[Catch phrase]**

A large stone circle characterized by a complex arrangement of stones

### **[Description: 63 words]**

The Komakino Stone Circle is a ritual site that centers on a stone circle located on a plateau extending at the western foothills of the Hakkoda Mountains. The stone circle consists of three rings surrounded by stones that partly form a fourth ring. The whole area is 55 meters in diameter. Large numbers of ritual implements, including triangular stone plates, have been unearthed.

### **[Description: 90 words]**

The Komakino Stone Circle is a ritual site that centers on a stone circle located on a plateau extending at the western foothills of the Hakkoda Mountains. The stone circle consists of three rings surrounded by stones that partly form a fourth ring. The whole area is 55 meters in diameter. The outer two rings of the stone circle were made by placing oval stones oriented alternately in the vertical and horizontal directions. Large numbers of ritual implements, including clay figurines, miniature pots and triangular stone plates, have been unearthed.

### **[Description: 129 words]**

The Komakino Stone Circle is a ritual site that centers on a stone circle located on a plateau extending at the western foothills of the Hakkoda Mountains. The stone circle consists of three rings surrounded by stones that partly form a fourth ring. The whole area is 55 meters in diameter. After the ground was leveled, the stone circle was built by placing oval stones oriented alternately in the vertical and horizontal directions. From the stone circle and nearby dumping grounds, ritual implements have been unearthed, including clay figurines, miniature pots and more than 400 triangular stone plates. Because no other stone circles have been found in the surrounding area, the Komakino Stone Circle is thought to have been built, managed and maintained jointly by more than one settlement.

## **Isedotai Stone Circles (Historic Site)**

Note: Multiple circles

### **[Location]**

Wakigami, Kitaakita City, Akita Prefecture

### **[Years]**

ca. 2,000 BCE – ca. 1,700 BCE (Approx. 4,000 to 3,700 years ago)

### **[Catch phrase]**

A ritual site where four stone circles are concentrated

### **[Description: 57 words]**

The Isedotai Stone Circles are a ritual site that centers on stone circles on a terrace near the Yoneshiro River. Four stone circles are found close together at the terrace's northwestern edge, which commands panoramic views. From the surrounding area, large numbers of ritual implements have been unearthed, including clay figurines and animal- and bell-shaped clay objects.

### **[Description: 92 words]**

The Isedotai Stone Circles is a ritual site that centers on stone circles on a terrace near the Yoneshiro River. Four stone circles are found close together at the terrace's northwestern edge, which commands a sweeping view of distant mountains. Each of the stone circles measures more than 30 meters in diameter, the largest measuring about 45 meters in diameter. From the area adjacent to the stone circles, large numbers of ritual implements have been unearthed, including clay figurines, animal- and bell-shaped clay objects, stone plates, three-pronged stone tools and stone swords.

### **[Description: 153 words]**

The Isedotai Stone Circles is a ritual site that centers on stone circles on a terrace near the Yoneshiro River. Four stone circles are found close together at the terrace's northwestern edge, which commands a sweeping view of distant mountains. The largest stone circle measures about 45 meters in diameter. Below the stone circles are pit graves, suggesting that the stone circles were not only a cemetery, but also a ritual space. Each stone circle is surrounded by the remains of pillar-supported structures, storage pits and other features, all arranged concentrically. From the area adjacent to the stone circles, large numbers of ritual implements have been unearthed, including clay figurines, animal- and bell-shaped clay objects, stone plates, three-pronged stone tools and stone swords. Because no other stone circles have been found in the surrounding area, it is thought that several settlements over a wide region jointly built, managed and maintained this ritual place.

## **Oyu Stone Circles (Special Historic Site)**

Note: Multiple circles

### **[Location]**

Towada, Kazuno City, Akita Prefecture

### **[Years]**

ca. 2,000 BCE – ca. 1,500 BCE (Approx. 4,000 to 3,500 years ago)

### **[Catch phrase]**

Two regularly structured stone circles

### **[Description: 56 words]**

The Oyu Stone Circles is a ritual site that centers on stone circles on a terrace along the Oyu River. It comprises the Manza Stone Circle and the Nonakado Stone Circle, with each stone circle consisting of two rings made up of river-stone arrangements. Large numbers of ritual implements have been unearthed around the stone circles.

### **[Description: 82 words]**

The Oyu Stone Circles is a ritual site that centers on stone circles on a terrace along the Oyu River. It comprises the Manza Stone Circle and the Nonakado Stone Circle, with each stone circle consisting of two rings made up of river-stone arrangements. Each stone circle includes sundial-like stonework and is surrounded by the remains of pillar-supported structures arranged concentrically. Large numbers of ritual implements have been unearthed around the stone circle, including clay figurines, bell-shaped clay objects and stone swords.

### **[Description: 144 words]**

The Oyu Stone Circles is a ritual site that centers on stone circles on a terrace along the Oyu River. It comprises the Manza Stone Circle (52 meters in diameter) and the Nonakado Stone Circle (44 meters in diameter), with each stone circle consisting of rings made up of arrangements of river stones of various sizes. Each stone circle is surrounded by the remains of pillar-supported structures, storage pits, pit graves and other features, all arranged concentrically. Large numbers of ritual implements have been unearthed around the stone circles, including clay figurines, clay tablets, bell-shaped clay objects, stone rods and stone swords. A straight line that connects the central stones in these stone circles to sundial-like stonework points toward the sunset on the summer solstice, so some researchers maintain that people at that time built the stone circles in consideration of the sun's movement.

## **Kiusu Earthwork Burial Circles (Historic Site)**

Note: Multiple circles

### **[Location]**

Chuo, Chitose City, Hokkaido

### **[Years]**

ca. 1,200 BCE (Approx. 3,200 years ago)

### **[Catch phrase]**

A cemetery site surrounded by tall circular embankments

### **[Description: 60 words]**

The Kiusu Earthwork Burial Circles is a large cemetery site surrounded by tall earthworks on a gentle slope overlooking the Ishikari Depression. Earthwork burial circles were created by digging a circular pit and piling the excavated earth around the pit in a ring, with several pit graves inside. They attest to unique burial customs and a high degree of spirituality.

### **[Description: 87 words]**

The Kiusu Earthwork Burial Circles is a large cemetery site on a gentle slope overlooking the Ishikari Depression. Earthwork burial circles were created by digging a circular pit and piling the excavated earth around the pit in a ring, with several pit graves inside. The site has nine earthwork burial circles, the largest measuring 83 meters in outer diameter and 4.7 meters in height. These circles are an important archaeological site that attests to unique burial customs, a high degree of spirituality and an increasingly complex society.

### **[Description: 137 words]**

The Kiusu Earthwork Burial Circles is a large cemetery site surrounded by tall earthworks on a gentle slope overlooking the Ishikari Depression. Earthwork burial circles were created by digging a circular pit and piling the excavated earth around the pit in a ring, with several pit graves inside. The site has nine earthwork burial circles, which are still visually recognizable. The largest measures 83 meters in outer diameter and 4.7 meters in depth from the crest of the earthwork to the bottom of the pit. Some of the graves within the burial circles have traces of a powdered red pigment or buried standing stones that are thought to have served as tombstones. These burial circles make up an important archaeological site that attests to unique burial customs, a high degree of spirituality and an increasingly complex society.

## **Omori Katsuyama Stone Circle (Historic Site)**

### **[Location]**

Omori, Hirosaki City, Aomori Prefecture

### **[Years]**

ca. 1,000 BCE (Approx. 3,000 years ago)

### **[Catch phrase]**

A large stone circle created at the foot of Mt. Iwaki

### **[Description: 61 words]**

The Omori Katsuyama Stone Circle is a ritual site accompanied by a large stone circle on a hill at the foot of Mt. Iwaki. The stone circle was made by building a round mound on artificially leveled ground and surrounding it with 77 stone assemblages. In and around the stone circle, a large number of disc-shaped stone objects have been unearthed.

### **[Description: 87 words]**

The Omori Katsuyama Stone Circle is a ritual site accompanied by a large stone circle on a hill at the foot of Mt. Iwaki. The stone circle was made by building a round mound on artificially leveled ground and surrounding it with 77 stone assemblages that form a slight oval of 48.5 meters by 39.1 meters. In and around the stone circle, some 250 disc-shaped stone objects have been unearthed. They are thought to have been used for rituals and ceremonies in association with the stone circle.

### **[Description: 156 words]**

The Omori Katsuyama Stone Circle is a ritual site accompanied by a stone circle on a hill at the foot of Mt. Iwaki. The stone circle was made by building a round mound on artificially leveled ground and surrounding it with 77 stone assemblages that form an oval of 48.5 meters by 39.1 meters. In and around the stone circle, some 250 disc-shaped stone objects have been unearthed. They are thought to have been used for rituals and ceremonies in association with the stone circle. Because no other stone circles have been found in the surrounding area, it is thought that several settlements over a wide region jointly built, managed and maintained this ritual place. In this regard, the site is exceptional evidence of the development of spiritual culture at that time. The stone circle commands a view of Mt. Iwaki towering in the hinterland, with the sun setting behind its summit on the winter solstice.



## **Takasago Burial Site (Historic Site)**

### **[Location]**

Takasago-cho, Toyako Town, Hokkaido

### **[Years]**

ca. 1,000 BCE (Approx. 3,000 years ago)

### **[Catch phrase]**

A cemetery site facing Uchiura Bay

### **[Description: 58 words]**

The Takasago Burial Site is a cemetery site accompanied by shell mounds on lowlands facing Uchiura Bay. Graves have yielded burial goods such as clay figurines and other clay objects, in addition to human bones showing traces of tooth extraction and those of a woman with an unborn baby. These finds attest to funeral practices and spiritual culture.

### **[Description: 90 words]**

The Takasago Burial Site is a cemetery site on lowlands facing Uchiura Bay. The site includes shell mounds and a burial area that consists of pit graves and stone arrangements. The pit graves have yielded burial goods such as pots, stone tools, and other stone objects, and a powdered red pigment (an iron oxide known as Bengala) was sprinkled in the pit graves. Human bones have also been unearthed, including those showing traces of tooth extraction and those of a woman with an unborn baby. These finds demonstrate funeral practices.

### **[Description: 139 words]**

The Takasago Burial Site is a cemetery site accompanied by shell mounds on lowlands facing Uchiura Bay. The site has a burial area that consists of pit graves and stone arrangements. The pit graves have yielded human bones showing traces of tooth extraction and those of a woman with an unborn baby. From the remains of stone arrangements, artifacts such as clay figurines and other clay objects have been unearthed, attesting to funeral practices and ancestor worship at that time. From the shell mounds, lots of fishing gear, including antler harpoon heads, has been unearthed along with shells (from *Littorina brevicula*, scallops, short-necked clams, etc.) and fish bones (from herring, right-eye flounder, tuna, etc.). The Takasago Burial Site is an important archaeological site that attests to a fishing-oriented livelihood in a coastal area and a high degree of spirituality.

## **Kamegaoka Burial Site (Historic Site)**

### **[Location]**

Kizukuri, Tsugaru City, Aomori Prefecture

### **[Years]**

ca. 1,000 BCE – ca. 400 BCE (Approx. 3,000 to 2,400 years ago)

### **[Catch phrase]**

A cemetery site where artistic clay figurines and varied burial goods have been unearthed

### **[Description: 73 words]**

The Kamegaoka Burial Site is a large cemetery site on what used to be Paleo-Lake Jusanko, which appeared during a marine transgression. On the plateau here are many graves, and the boggy lowlands of the area that surrounds the plateau have yielded large numbers of artifacts, including lacquered pots and other lacquerware items, as well as a large, artistic, goggle-eyed clay figurine. These finds attest to a complex spiritual culture at that time.

### **[Description: 97 words]**

The Kamegaoka Burial Site is a large cemetery site on what used to be an inland bay called Paleo-Lake Jusanko, which appeared during a marine transgression. On the plateau here are many graves. On the boggy lowlands of the area that surrounds the plateau, dumping grounds were established, from which large numbers of artifacts have been unearthed, including lacquered pots, lacquered bamboo baskets and gems. Among them, a large clay figurine (designated by the national government as an Important Cultural Property) is well known for its distinctive eyes, earning it the description of “the goggle-eyed clay figurine.”

### **[Description: 144 words]**

The Kamegaoka Burial Site is a large cemetery site on what used to be an inland bay called Paleo-Lake Jusanko, which appeared during a marine transgression. Spreading on the plateau here is a burial area. On the boggy lowlands of the area that surrounds the plateau, dumping grounds were established for ritual purposes, from which large numbers of artifacts have been unearthed, including lacquered pots, lacquered bamboo baskets, plant-based objects and gems, in addition to pots and stone tools. Among them, a large clay figurine (designated by the national government as an Important Cultural Property) is well known for its distinctive eyes, earning it the description of “the goggle-eyed clay figurine.” The fact that the site had far fewer pit dwellings than graves and had many burial pits spaced densely suggests that it was a cemetery built, managed and maintained jointly by neighboring settlements.

## **Korekawa Site (Historic Site)**

### **[Location]**

Korekawa, Hachinohe City, Aomori Prefecture

### **[Years]**

ca. 1,000 BCE – ca. 400 BCE (Approx. 3,000 to 2,400 years ago)

### **[Catch phrase]**

A settlement site accompanied by diverse facilities such as pit dwellings, pit graves, a watering place and dumping grounds

### **[Description: 57 words]**

The Korekawa Site consists of the Nakai, Ichioji and Hotta sites. The Nakai Site is a settlement site with various facilities, where pots, clay figurines, wooden artifacts (bows, fish spears, etc.) and lacquerware items (lacquered combs, etc.) have been unearthed. These finds illustrate a livelihood in a river area, as well as a high degree of spirituality.

### **[Description: 85 words]**

The Korekawa Site consists of the Nakai, Ichioji and Hotta sites. The Nakai Site is a settlement site with various facilities, where large numbers of pots, clay figurines and lacquerware items (lacquered bows and combs, etc.) have been unearthed. Also excavated have been hunting tools, fishing gear, nuts (chestnuts, Japanese horse chestnuts, etc.), fish bones (from salmon, trout, etc.), and the remains of a watering place where people are thought to have stored wood and processed nuts. These finds illustrate a livelihood at that time.

### **[Description: 157 words]**

The Korekawa Site consists of the Nakai, Ichioji and Hotta sites. The Nakai Site is a settlement site with various facilities, including pit dwellings, graves, dumping grounds and a watering place. From the dumping grounds in a boggy lowland, large numbers of lacquerware items, including lacquered bows and combs, bracelets, and containers, have been unearthed along with pots of sophisticated design and clay figurines. These finds illustrate a high degree of spirituality and artisanship at that time. Also unearthed have been wooden artifacts such as bows and fish spears, nuts such as walnuts and Japanese horse chestnuts, the bones of deer, wild boar and other animals, and those of Japanese sea bass, tuna and other fishes. Also, the remains of a watering place where people are thought to have stored wood and soaked Japanese horse chestnuts to remove their bitterness have been found. These finds provide an insight into a livelihood based on hunting, fishing and gathering.

## **Washinoki Stone Circle (Historic Site) [Associated site]**

### **[Location]**

Washinoki-cho, Mori Town, Hokkaido

### **[Years]**

ca. 2,000 BCE (Approx. 4,000 years ago)

### **[Catch phrase]**

One of the largest stone circles in Hokkaido

### **[Description: 57 words]**

The Washinoki Stone Circle is a ritual site accompanied by one of the largest stone circles in Hokkaido. The stone circle consists of double outer rings with an oval stone arrangement at the center. It is approximately 37 meters in diameter. Near the stone circle is a pit burial area, which illustrates spiritual culture at that time.

### **[Description: 73 words]**

The Washinoki Stone Circle is a ritual site accompanied by one of the largest stone circles in Hokkaido. The stone circle, approximately 37 meters in diameter, consists of double outer rings with an oval stone arrangement at the center. In the surrounding area is a pit burial area with seven pit graves. The plateau where the stone circle is located overlooks Mt. Komagatake, providing an insight into people's views and beliefs about nature.

### **[Description: 138 words]**

The Washinoki Stone Circle is a ritual site with one of the largest stone circles in Hokkaido on a river terrace one kilometer inland from Uchiura Bay. The entire archaeological site is well-preserved because it was covered by volcanic ash from Mt. Komagatake, which erupted in the Edo period (running from the 17th to the 19th centuries). The stone circle consists of double outer rings with an oval stone arrangement at the center. The outermost ring is roughly circular, with a major axis of approximately 37 meters and a minor axis of about 34 meters. Near the stone circle are a pit burial area with seven graves and the remains of arrangements of stones of varying sizes. The plateau where the stone circle was created overlooks Mt. Komagatake, providing an insight into people's views and beliefs about nature.

## **Choshichiyachi Site (Historic Site) [Associated Site]**

### **[Location]**

Kikyono, Hachinohe City, Aomori Prefecture

### **[Years]**

ca. 6,000 BCE (Approx. 8,000 years ago)

### **[Catch phrase]**

A settlement site accompanied by a shell mound dating from the Jomon transgression

### **[Description: 55 words]**

The Choshichiyachi Site is a settlement site centering on a shell mound that dates from a marine transgression period. From the shell mound, large numbers of shells (from common Orient clams and other warm-water shellfishes), fish bones, and bone and antler objects (fishhooks, harpoon heads, etc.) have been unearthed, illustrating that fishing was actively practiced.

### **[Description: 93 words]**

The Choshichiyachi Site is a settlement site centering on a shell mound that dates from a marine transgression period. Unearthed from the shell mound have been large numbers of shells from common Orient clams and other warm-water shellfishes, the bones of fishes including Japanese sea bass and Japanese black porgy, fishhooks combined with shafts, and open-socketed harpoon heads. These finds illustrate that fishing was actively practiced. The shell mound dates from a time when climate warming caused the sea level to rise during the Jomon period, attesting to people's adaptation to environmental changes.

### **[Description: 155 words]**

The Choshichiyachi Site is a settlement site accompanied by a shell mound on what used to be the ancient Oirase Bay, which appeared during a marine transgression. From the shell mound, shells from warm-water shellfishes have been unearthed, including common Orient clams and clams of the order Myida. The fish bones that have been discovered are those of fish that are caught in inland bay areas, including Japanese sea bass and Japanese black porgy, and those of fish that are found in the open sea, including bonito and tuna. In addition, bone and antler objects, including fishhooks combined with shafts, and open-socketed harpoon heads, have been unearthed. These finds indicate that fishing was actively practiced. The shell mound dates from a time when climate warming caused the sea level to rise and the coastline to shift landward, during the Jomon period. This is an important archaeological site that attests to people's adaptation to environmental changes.