

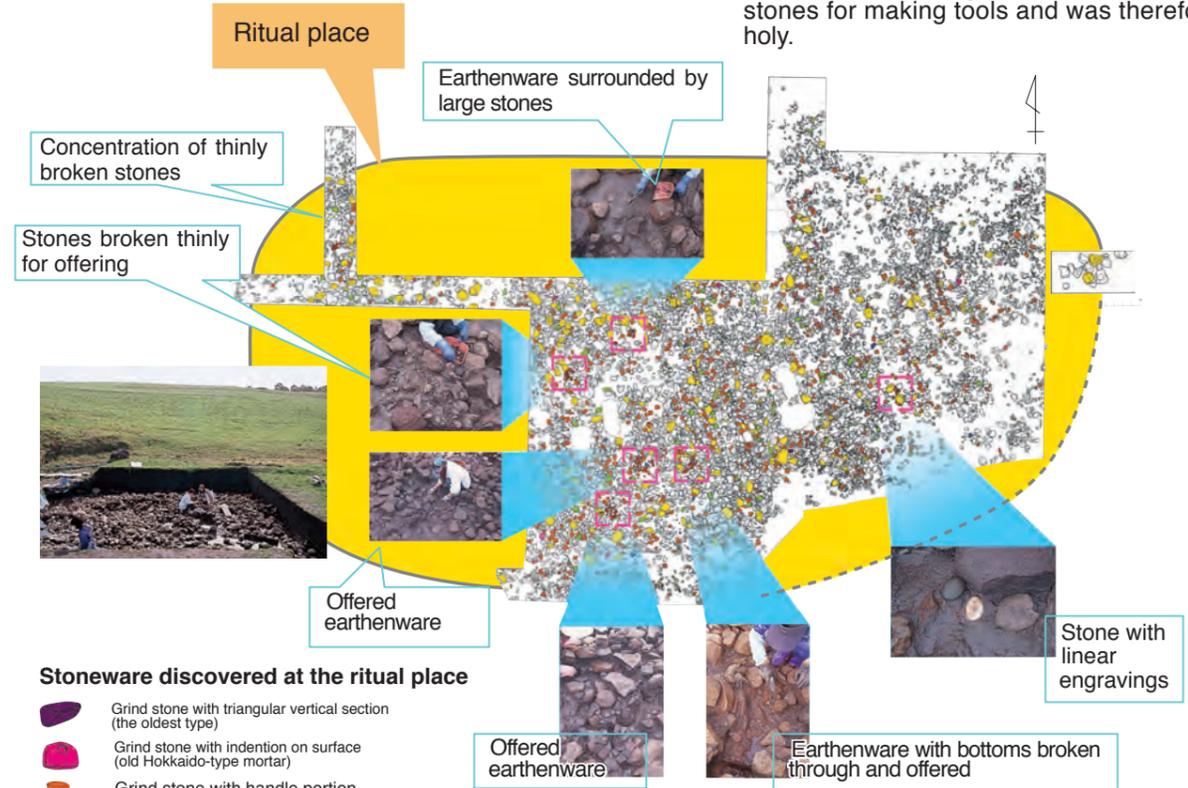
4 All things are animate

Near the spring in the lowland, ceremonial watering-sites from the Early Jomon Period, where a total of 1,209 pieces of stoneware were ceremoniously buried, have been uncovered. The excavation area is about 200 square meters. A watering-foothold from the Middle Jomon Period (about 5,000 to 6,000 years ago) also has been found. From these facts we can tell that the watering-site had been constantly utilized for 2,000 years even though the dwelling sites had been relocated.



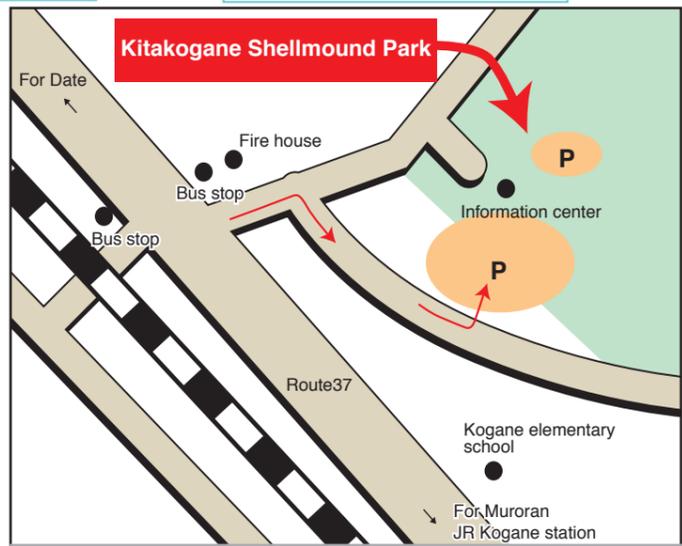
Stone Tools ceremoniously buried at watering site

Stoneware was intentionally broken after use at the watering site so that it could be perfectly buried. They would hold a ceremony by offering broken earthenware and polished stones with linear engravings, and then would express their appreciation for the used-up tools and wish the rebirth of the tools. The people used the watering-site for rituals. It is believed that the reason why is because it gave them water and stones for making tools and was therefore holy.



Stoneware discovered at the ritual place

- Grind stone with triangular vertical section (the oldest type)
- Grind stone with indentation on surface (old Hokkaido-type mortar)
- Grind stone with handle portion (Hokkaido-type mortar)
- Other grind stones
- Stone plate
- Grind stone in the making
- Tool for grind stone
- Tool for striking and shaping stone
- Half-round stone, purpose not yet understood
- Net sinker
- Stone with indentation on surface
- Worked stone



Open April thru November (7 days a week)
9:00a.m. to 5:00p.m. (admission free)

Traffic access
Take Donan bus from JR Kogane station or Datemomnbusu station (20 minutes)
Get off at "Kitakogane kaizuka kouennmae" bus stop
Walk 5 minutes to the "Kitakogane Shellmound"

Kitakogane Shellmound Information Center
Tel&Fax : 0142-24-2111
75 Kitakoganechou, Date City, Hokkaido, Zip059-0272, Japan

Date City Institute of Funkawan Culture
Tel: 0142-21-5050, Fax: 0142-22-5445
21-5 Tateyamachou, Date-City, Hokkaido, Zip052-0031, Japan



A Historic Site KITAKOGANE SHELLMOUND

1 Jomon Hill, Kitakogane Shellmound

The Kitakogane Shellmound (a national historic site) is located on the east coast of Hunkawan bay, a prominent area where a number of shellmounds are distributed. This was a dwelling cluster site that consisted mainly of shellmounds on highland and watering-sites on lowland during the Early Jomon Period (about 6,000 to 5,000 years ago). This shellmound, a reserved area of 87,539.88 square meters, also includes houses, graves, deer traps, remains of earthen mounds and a ritual place at the watering-site, etc.

Kitakogane Shellmound, or "Jomon Hill," is covered with what was left by the Jomon people.



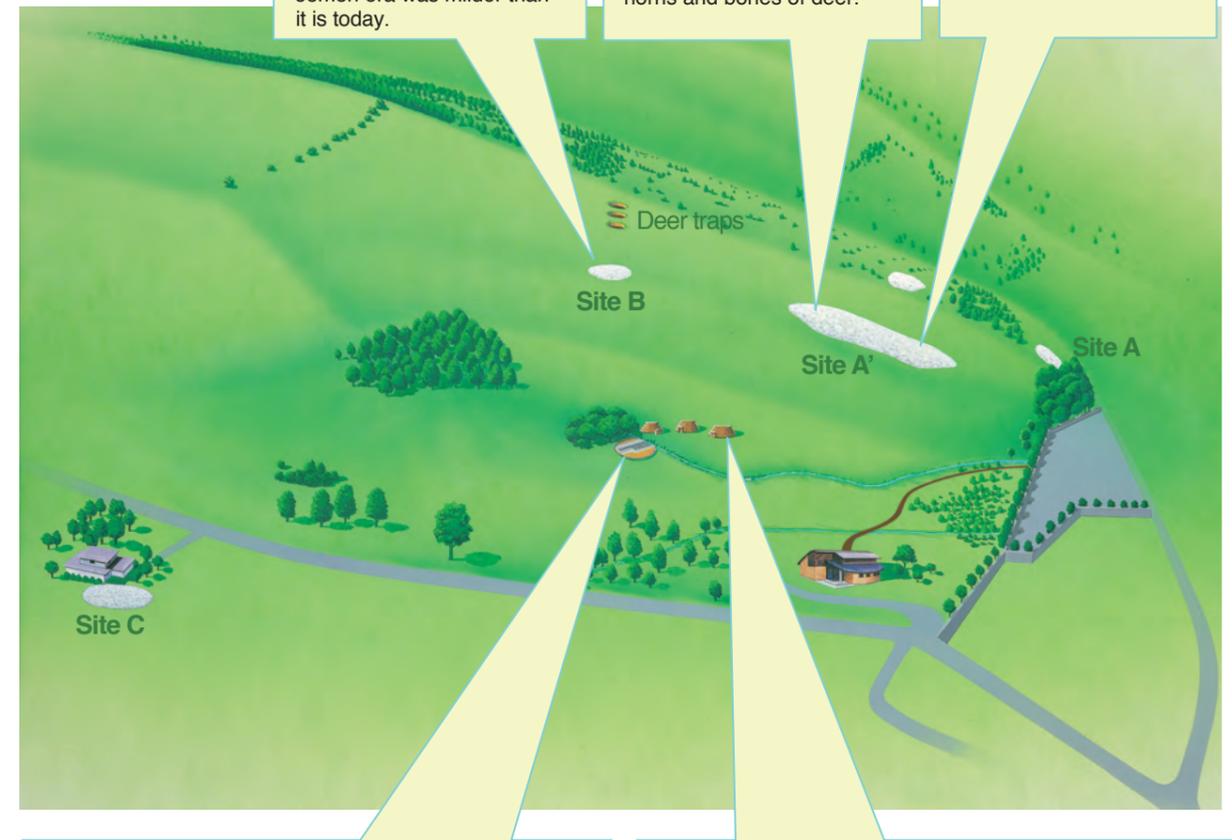
Site B shellmound
The site of the oldest shellmound in this area. Shells discovered here indicate that the climate of the Jomon era was milder than it is today.



Shellmound artifacts
Calcium contained within the shells preserved a variety of tools and crafts made from the horns and bones of deer.



Site A' shellmound
Jomon graves with 14 human skeletons discovered thus far.



Ritual place at the watering-site

This site might have been a holy place producing essential spring water. Also found were the remains of tools ceremoniously buried after use.



Dwellings of the Middle Jomon Period

During this era the dwellings were relocated from the hilltop to a site near the spring.



2

Imaging the way of life of the Jomon people at the shellmound

There are five shellmounds, apparently created in succession as the beach line drifted in the Jomon Era. The largest shellmound at site A' is 80x30 meters and 0.8 meters deep. Within the layers of oyster shells and sea urchins, bones of various sea animals, including fur seals, are mixed in. A look inside the shellmound conjures up images of their daily life such as what kind of food they ate, what animals they hunted, etc....

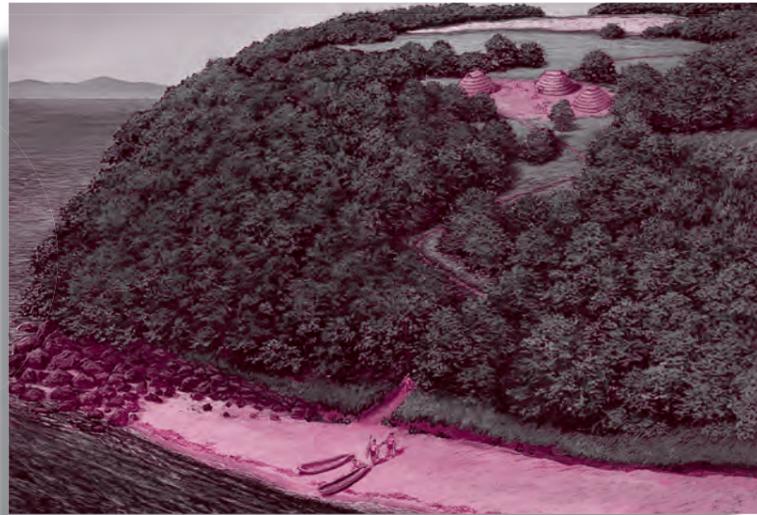


Harnessing nature and living with nature

By observing the foods and the tools used for procuring those foods, we know the Jomon people lived with nature by making full use of it. They always respected nature and felt grateful towards it, because it gave them a means by which to survive. This is why the Jomon culture lasted as long as 10,000 years.

The ocean was much closer

The climate 6,000 years ago was milder than that of today and the coastline was closer to the foot of the Kitakogane hill. Bit by bit it receded further away from the hill as the climate became colder. The Jomon people relocated their houses nearer to the sea and constructed the shellmound. We know they always acted wisely and chose convenient sites to gather sustenance from the mountain and the sea.



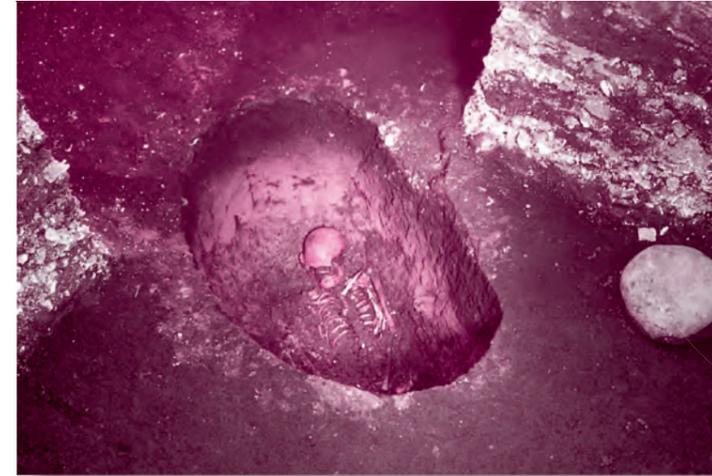
Handiwork by the Jomon people

Various kinds of tools and crafts, hand-made by the Jomon people, were found at the shellmounds. When we find needles we can form an image of women sewing garments and embroidering, and when we see unfinished tools we can guess how they were made. The people, to our surprise, developed tools to make tools, as if we were seeing an ancient toolbox.

3

A Shellmound NOT a garbage dump

Graves have been identified both in and underneath the shellmounds. Fourteen human skeletons from the early Jomon period have been discovered. The Jomon people regarded "the shellmound as burial ground for everything living around". This presumption comes from evidence that the Ainu people have a similar practice which was handed down by the Jomon people.

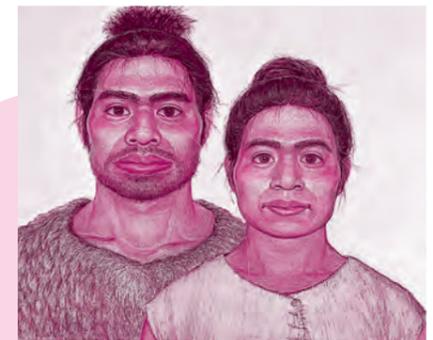
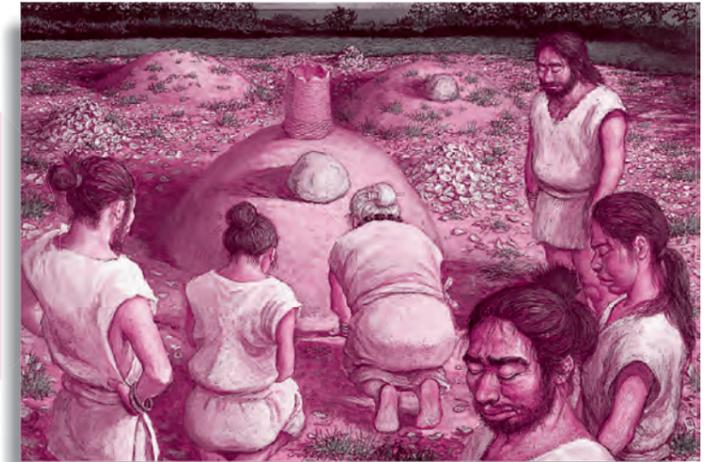


The grave of everything living around

The human bones, respectfully and ceremoniously buried together with animal bones, have been excavated from the shellmound. Evidence from this discovery indicates that shells, fish, deer, and fur seal were not thrown away as garbage but respectfully buried as living things. Furthermore, nutshells and ash from plant and tree burnings at Irori fireplaces were also buried in the same manner. The shellmounds were graves for everything living and places for prayer and thanksgiving.

Graves of the Jomon people

Human bones with their arms and legs folded back have also been found in the graves. This is the so called "crouched burial", which, in many cases, the bodies were customarily lain flat on their back or side. On top of the grave, stone plate and earthenware were offered. This practice of folding back the arms and legs indicates to us that they wished to prevent the baleful spirit from coming back from the dead.



Native People's roots in Hokkaido

The fourteen human skeletons found at the Kitakogane shellmound site are older than any other bones ever found in Hokkaido. The bones are invaluable in the study of ancient people. Bones of the ancient Jomon people not only from the Kitakogane shellmound but all of Hokkaido and the bones of the modern day Ainu indicate that the genetic characteristics of the bone structures of the Jomon people have been inherited throughout the ages.

