

## The Omori Shell Mounds

### What are the Omori Shell Mounds?

The Omori Shell Mounds are an archaeological site extending from Oi 6-chome, Shinagawa City, Tokyo, to Ota City, covering a time period from the late to the final Jomon Period (approximately 4,400 – 2,300 years ago). The first academic survey was carried out by the American biologist Edward S. Morse, whose archaeological survey report is said to represent the beginning of Japanese archaeology.

### Artifacts from the Omori Shell Mounds

Shell mounds were formed by the shells discarded by people from the shellfish they gathered for food, and also include animal bones, fish bones, and plant scraps. The Omori Shell Mounds contains shells, and the bones of various animals including deer and boars, as well as a variety of patterned earthen ware, earthen slabs, stone tools, and tools made of bone. Many types of earthen ware have been found in the Omori Shells Mounds, from deep vessels to shallow bowls, some with handles and others with spouts for pouring. The stone tools include a large stone ax, and stone tools (stone rod and sword) that are believed to have been used during festivals. Bone fishhooks and harpoon tips have also been found.

### Life of People During the Jomon Period

The people ate seafood, seaweed, roots (such as lily roots), dried shellfish, nuts, and acorns by boiling, stewing, drying, grinding or grilling.

### Two Stone Monuments

There are two stone monuments that commemorate the Omori Shell Mounds excavation. When Motoyama Hikoichi and his team excavated the Omori Shell Mounds in 1929, they erected a broad stone monument inscribed with the words “Omori Shell Mounds” at the Omori Shell Mounds Garden (Oi 6-chome, Shinagawa City, Tokyo); and when the team led by Sasaki Chujiro carried out an excavation five years later, he erected a vertical stone monument inscribed with “Omori Kaikyo” (Sanno, Ota City, Tokyo). Based on official reports and archaeological reports, we know that Morse excavated the area around the “Omori Shell Mounds Monument” in Oi, Shinagawa City in 1877.

### Japan's First Excavation Compensation

The University of Tokyo made a request to the Tokyo government to carry out an excavation of the Omori Shell Mounds. The excavation was planned to be carried out on the land of Sakurai Jinemon. Sakurai made a request of 80 yen to the government to cover the costs of post excavation repairs, but in the end only received 50 yen. This was the first excavation compensation paid in Japan.

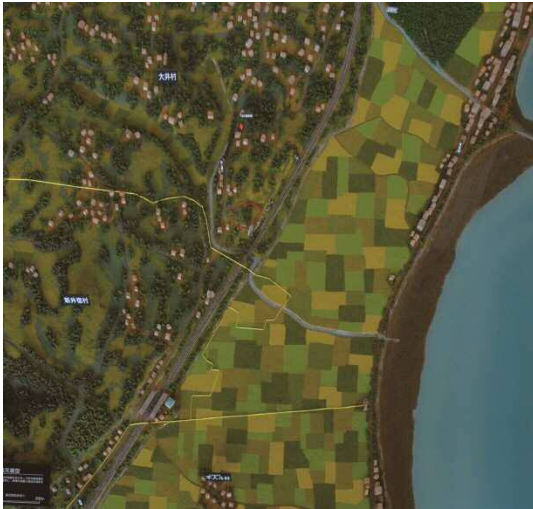
### Further Archaeological Surveys by Shinagawa City

Through a survey carried out by Shinagawa City in 1984, a shell mound from the final Jomon Period (approximately 3,200 – 2,300 years ago) was discovered, excavating a large number of shells, animal bones, stone tools, bone tools, pottery fragments, and clay earrings. A portion of the excavation carried out by Morse was also confirmed. In 1993, the remains of the first dwelling were also discovered.

### Portland and Shinagawa City

On October 13, 1984, Shinagawa City established a sister city relationship with Portland, Maine, the United States, the hometown of Morse. The two cities have deepened their friendship.

2\_01\_01



Model of the Omori Shell Mound Area

A model produced based on a survey done in 1881.

2\_01\_02



Earthen Ware Bowl (Reproduction)

Excavated 1877

Original: The University Museum, the University of Tokyo Collection

Nationally Designated Important Cultural Property

Late Jomon Period (Approximately 4,400 – 3,200 years ago)

A reproduction of the bowl excavated by Edward S. Morse at the Omori Shell Mounds. It is believed to have been used to store food.

2\_01\_03



Earthen Ware with Handles  
(Reproduction)

Excavated 1877

Original: The University Museum, the  
University of Tokyo Collection

Nationally Designated Important  
Cultural Property

Late Jomon Period (Approximately  
4,400 – 3,200 years ago)

A reproduction of the bowl excavated  
by Edward S. Morse at the Omori Shell  
Mounds. The handles were used to  
suspend the bowl from a string. The  
bowl was used to provide light or burn  
incense.

2\_01\_04



Stone Tool (Reproduction)

Excavated 1877

Original: The University Museum, the  
University of Tokyo Collection

Nationally Designated Important  
Cultural Property

Late to final Jomon Period  
(Approximately 4,400 – 2,300 years  
ago)

A reproduction of the tool excavated by  
Edward S. Morse at the Omori Shell  
Mounds. A polished stone tool, believed  
to have been used in rituals as a stone  
sword or rod.

2\_01\_05



Chipped Stone *Adze* (Reproduction)

Excavated 1877

Original: The University Museum, the University of Tokyo Collection

Nationally Designated Important Cultural Property

Late Jomon Period (Approximately 4,400 – 3,200 years ago)

A reproduction of the adze excavated by Edward S. Morse at the Omori Shell Mounds. Both sides of the adze are pressure-chipped to form blades. It is believed this adze was mounted on a wooden handle and used to unearth vegetables, with the edges serving as a blade.

2\_01\_06



Japanese Deer Antler(Reproduction)

Excavated 1877

Original: The University Museum, the University of Tokyo Collection

Nationally Designated Important Cultural Property

Late Jomon Period (Approximately 4,400 – 3,200 years ago)

A reproduction of the antler excavated by Edward S. Morse at the Omori Shell Mounds.

2\_01\_07



Earthen Ware Deep Bowl (Reproduction)

Excavated 1877

Original: The University Museum, the University of Tokyo Collection

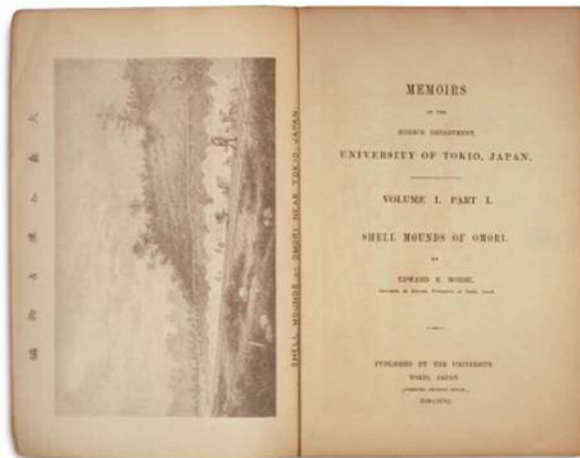
Nationally Designated Important Cultural Property

Late Jomon Period (Approximately 4,400 – 3,200 years ago)

A reproduction of the bowl excavated by Edward S. Morse at the Omori Shell Mounds. It is believed to have been used to store food and cook over a fire.



2\_01\_08



“Shell Mounds of Omori”

E.S. Morse, 1879

Japan’s first archaeological survey report. A Japanese translation by Yatabe Ryokichi was published in the same year.

2\_01\_09



Translation of the “Shell Mounds of Omori”

Written by E.S. Morse, translated and edited by Kondo Yoshiro, Sahara Makoto, 1983

2\_01\_10



#### Lingula Anatina Specimen

Lingula anatine are a type of brachiopod shellfish that Morse researched.

2\_01\_11



From side



From reverse side

#### Earthen Ware Shallow Bowl (Reproduction)

Excavated 1877

Original: The University Museum, the University of Tokyo Collection

Nationally Designated Important Cultural Property

Late Jomon Period (Approximately 4,400 – 3,200 years ago)

A reproduction of the bowl excavated by Edward S. Morse at the Omori Shell Mounds. It is believed to have been used to serve food. Morse declared this the most delicately made item among all his findings. Similar fragments of bowls from the Late Jomon Period were also discovered in the excavation carried out by the Shinagawa City Board of Education in 1993.



2\_01\_12



### Jaw and Foot Bones of Wild Boar

Excavated 1984

Final Jomon Period (Approximately 3,200 – 2,300 years ago)

Bones discovered during the excavation carried out by the Shinagawa City Board of Education.

2\_01\_13



### Arrowhead made of Boar Tusk

Excavated 1984

Late Jomon Period (Approximately 4,400 – 3,200 years ago)

An arrowhead made of polished boar tusk. Similar artifacts were also discovered during the excavations carried out by Morse.

2\_01\_14



Arrowhead made of Obsidian

Excavated 1984

Final Jomon Period (Approximately 3,200 – 2,300 years ago)

A stone arrowhead made of obsidian discovered during the excavation carried out by the Shinagawa City Board of Education. Obsidian could only be obtained on Kozushima Island in Tokyo and Wada Pass in Nagano Prefecture, proving that the people who lived in the area of the Omori Shell Mounds carried out trade with communities from other regions.

2\_01\_15



Earthen Ware Vessel with Spout (Reproduction)

Excavated 1877

Original: The University Museum, the University of Tokyo Collection

Nationally Designated Important Cultural Property

Late Jomon Period (Approximately 4,400 – 3,200 years ago)

A reproduction of the vessel excavated by Edward S. Morse at the Omori Shell Mounds. Traces of a spout are visible on the side of the jar, suggesting that it was used to pour water into other drinking cups or bowls.

2\_01\_16



Horn, Neck and Jaw Bones of Japanese Deer

Excavated 1984

Late Jomon Period (Approximately 4,400 – 3,200 years ago)

Horn and Bones discovered during the excavation carried out by the Shinagawa City Board of Education.

2\_01\_17



Leg Bones of Japanese Deer

Excavated 1984

Late to final Jomon Period (Approximately 4,400 – 2,300 years ago)

Bones discovered during the excavation carried out by the Shinagawa City Board of Education.

2\_01\_18



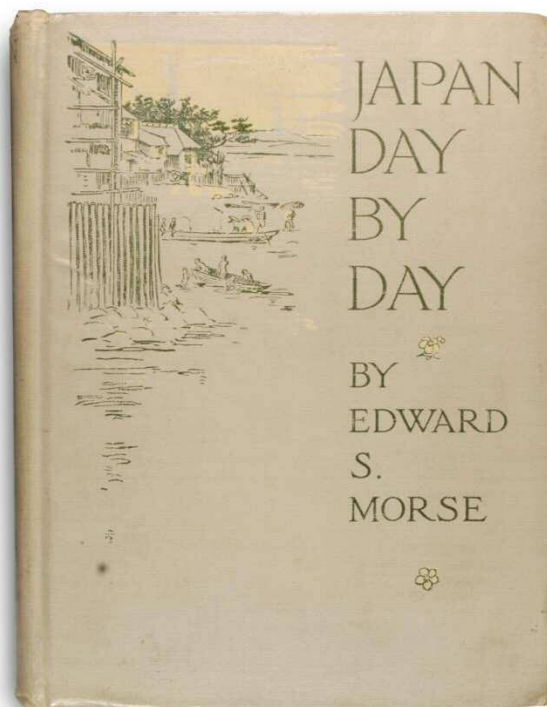
### Earthen Ware Deep Urn

Excavated 1984

Final Jomon Period (Approximately 3,200 – 2,300 years ago)

An urn discovered during the excavation carried out by the Shinagawa City Board of Education. It is believed to have been used to store food or cook over a fire.

2\_01\_19



### “Japan Day by Day”

E.S. Morse, 1917

A book that collects diary entries and sketches Morse made during his stay in Japan. The book includes passages about Morse’s excavations of the Omori Shell Mounds, and sketches of the pottery he uncovered.

2\_01\_20



### Small *Dogu* Clay Figurines

Excavated 1993

Late Jomon Period (Approximately 4,400 – 3,200 years ago)

*Dogu* discovered during the excavation carried out by the Shinagawa City Board of Education.

2\_01\_21



### Clay Earrings

Excavated in 1984, 1986

Final Jomon Period (Approximately 3,200 – 2,300 years ago)

An item discovered during the excavation carried out by the Shinagawa City Board of Education. A pierced hole in the earlobe was expanded with wood or branches for earrings.



2\_01\_22



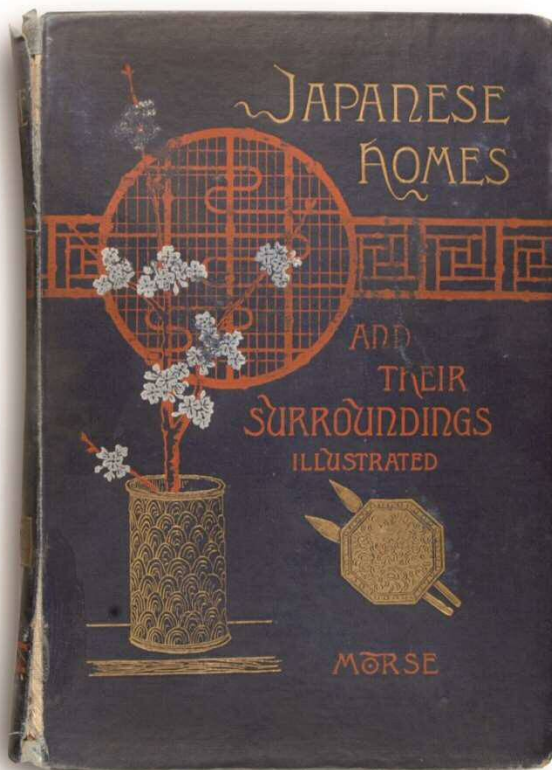
### Earthen Ware Shallow Bowl

Excavated 1984

Final Jomon Period (Approximately 3,200 – 2,300 years ago)

A bowl discovered during the excavation by the Shinagawa City Board of Education. It is believed to have been used to serve food.

2\_01\_23



### “Japanese Homes and Their Surroundings”

By E.S. Morse, published in 1886

Introduces the rapidly disappearing traditional Japanese homes which Morse observed during his time in Japan.

2\_01\_24



### Shell Bracelet

Excavated 1993

Late Jomon Period (Approximately 4,400 – 3,200 years ago)

An item discovered during the excavation by the Shinagawa City Board of Education.

Made from *Ootsutanohagai*, *Patella Optima*.

Believed to be discarded before it was completed.

2\_01\_25



Spatula-shaped Bone tool

Excavated 1984

Final Jomon Period (Approximately  
3,200 – 2,300 years ago)

An item discovered during the  
excavation by the Shinagawa City  
Board of Education.

Made from bone of deer. It is believed  
to be used to smooth leather.