

# ●Shinagawa Historical Museum Explanatory Sheet

## The Irukibashi Archaeological Site

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The Irukibashi Archaeological Site is located in Osaki 2-chome, Shinagawa City, Tokyo, and is centered around a shell mound that dates back 5,000 years ago. The site is located on a gentle slope that rises from an elevation of 15 meters to 20 meters.

### Discoveries from the Shell Mound

The shell mound is composed of countless layers of discarded shells caught by the people living in the area at the time. The shell mound also contains bones of animals, birds, reptiles such as sea turtles, bones and teeth of fish, and discarded tools. The following artifacts were discovered at the Irukibashi Site.

Shells: Veined rapa whelk, whelk, ark clam, cockle, Pacific oyster, common orient clam, Atlantic jackknife clam, venus clam, common land snail

Animal bones: Japanese deer, wild boar

Earthenware: Jomon pottery

Stone tools: Stone axes, stone arrowheads, fishing floats made of light stone, stone accessories

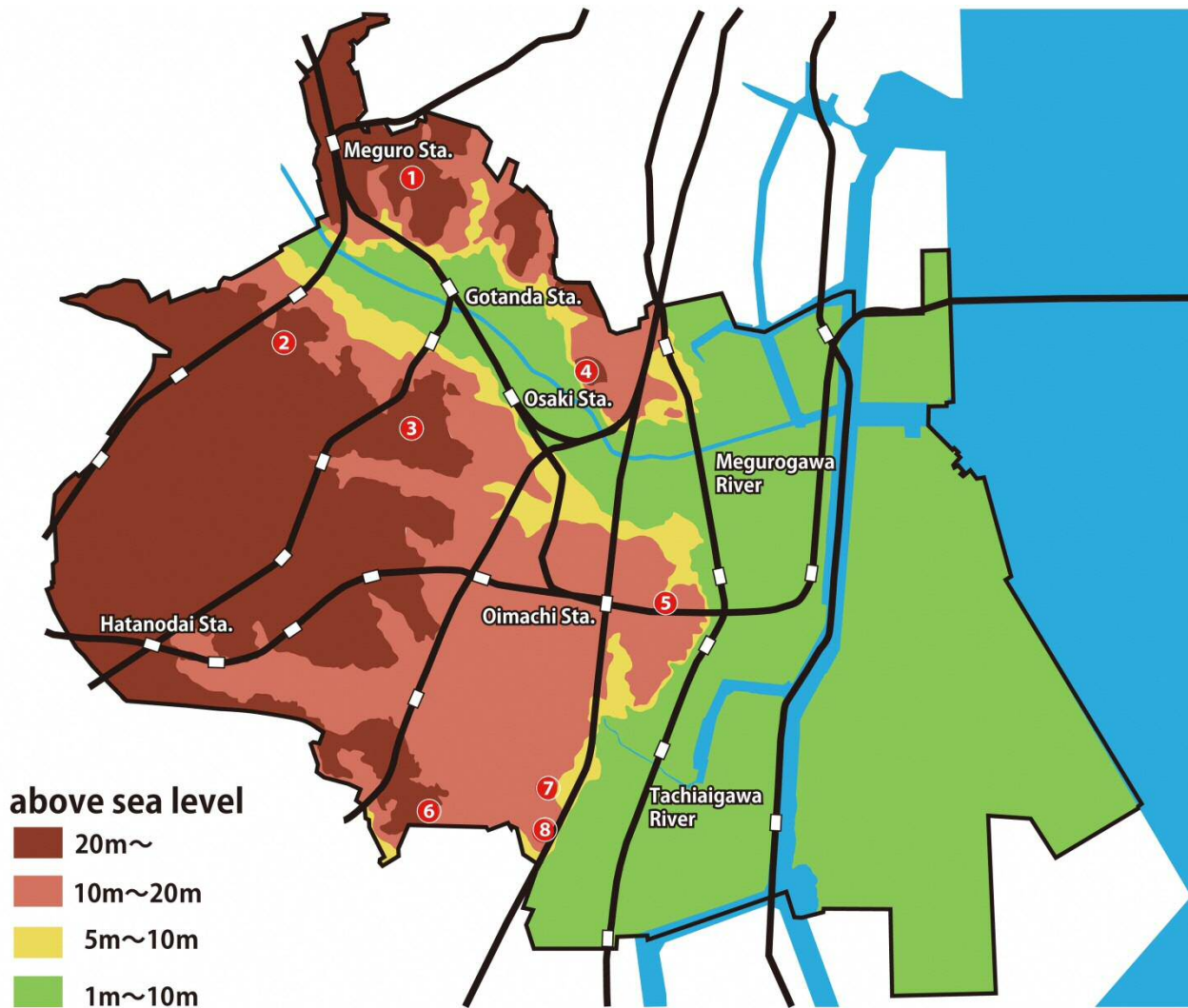
A particularly large number of cockles and common orient clams were found among the shells. Because cockles can only be found in the warm waters south of Kyushu today, it is thought the climate was warmer than present when the Irukibashi shell mound was in use. In this way, the shells and bones excavated indicate how the climate and landscape has changed through the ages.



▲Jomon Pottery found at the Irukibashi Archaeological Site



▲Excavation Jomon pottery



Major archaeological sites in Shinagawa City

1.) Ikedayamakita 2.) Kirigaya 3.) Irukibashi 4.) Gotenyama 5.) Sendai-zaka 6.) Oi-kanekoyama *Yokoana-bo* Horizontal Cave Tombs Site 7.) Oi-kashima 8.) Omori Shell Mounds

## The Jomon Period

The Jomon Period began around approximately 13,000 BC, and was a time when people were primarily hunter-gatherers. The period derives its name from the “cord marked” (Jomon) pattern found on the earthenware found from the period

Based on his excavation of the Omori Shell Mound conducted in 1877, Edwards Sylvester Morse coined the term “cord marked pottery” in his archaeological survey report, “The Shell Mounds of Omori” published in 1879. Shirai Mitsutaro first translated the term “cord marked pottery” into “Jomon Pottery” in Japanese in 1886.

The Jomon Period is divided into six sub-periods based on the shape of the earthenware found at the time.

Incipient Jomon Period: 13,000 BC–7,500 BC

Initial Jomon Period: 7,500 BC–4,000 BC

Early Jomon Period: 4,000 BC–3,000 BC

Middle Jomon Period: 3,000 BC–2,000 BC

Late Jomon Period: 2,000 BC–1,000 BC

Final Jomon Period: 1,000 BC–100 BC

Jomon pottery was made by rolling clay into a long cord, and then winding it over itself from the base. Early Jomon pottery had a narrow, pointed base and wide mouth. The shape of Jomon pottery, however, changed throughout the various regions and ages. Jomon patterns made with bamboo and shells have also been found.