

●Shinagawa Historical Museum Explanatory Sheet

The Oi-kashima Archaeological Site

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The Oi-kashima Archaeological Site was discovered in 1983 during the construction of Shinagawa Historical Museum (Oi 6-11-1, Shinagawa City, Tokyo). The ruins of 26 residences were initially found on the site, which covers an area of approximately 1,500 square meters, as artifacts of daily life such as earthenware, spinning wheels and grindstones.

Based on factors such as the characteristics of the earthenware, it is believed the Oi-kashima archaeological site is a portion of a village that was continuously built up through the fifth to seventh centuries. This is the first site from this time period found in Shinagawa City.

Nine excavations were carried out up through 2009, and in total 45 residences were discovered on the site.

Earthenware of the Time

Haji Earthenware: The Yayoi Period began in 300 BC, and represented a time when people shifted from hunting and gathering to agriculture. The representative earthenware of this time period was discovered in Yayoi, Bunkyo City, Tokyo, which led to it being called the



▲ The 1983 excavation

Yayoi Period. *Haji* earthenware builds on the legacy of Yayoi pottery, and is reddish brown.

Haji earthenware was made by rolling clay into a long cord, and winding it over itself from the base. The wet clay was then fired in a field. The earthenware was unglazed and highly heat resistant, and many pots, jars and vases were used for cooking. After the spread of *Sue* stoneware, which developed later, similar techniques were incorporated into *Haji* earthenware, such as coating the surface with charcoal to further improve its heat resistance. *Haji* earthenware has been found through the third to eighth centuries.

Sue Stoneware: *Sue* stoneware was ash-gray pottery that appeared in the fifth century, influenced by the techniques of the Korean peninsula. *Sue* stoneware was made by dedicated craftsmen, who carefully selected their clays, and worked with a potter's wheel. The pieces were then fired in an underground kiln at a high temperature of 1,000°C, much higher than the approximately 800°C used for *Haji* earthenware.

Sue stoneware, including jars, storage containers and eating utensils such as shallow bowl, was harder and more durable than *Haji* earthenware. *Sue* stoneware was made throughout the 12th century, and its techniques were carried on in the porcelain making traditions that



▲ Artifacts from the Oi-kashima archaeological site

appeared later.

Discovered Ruins of Residences

The ruins of the residences excavated at the Oi-kashima archaeological site are reproduced in a corner of Shinagawa Historical Museum's garden. The square pit dug into the ground is the floor of the house, and the four holes are for the pillars of the house. As few remains above the ground portion have been found and details are unknown, it is believed that beams were laid across the pillars and the house was covered with a thatched roof that continued all the way to the base of the house, made from plants such as the Japanese nutmeg tree. The narrow, square groove that runs along the perimeter of the floor pit is believed to be used for drainage or to sustain the walls of the house.

This home design was highly resistant to the cold, and was in use for a long time, from the Jomon Period up through the eighth century.

A cooking stove can be found built into the wall on the north side of the house. The design of these cooking stoves was brought over from the Korean Peninsula in the fifth century, and quickly spread throughout Japan. The cooking stove was made from earth such as clay or sand, and strengthened with a ceramic core. The groove extending past the wall of the house behind the mouth of the cooking stove served as a chimney, channeling smoke from the cooking stove to outside the house. Earthenware legs made to support pots on the fire have

also been discovered around the cooking stove.

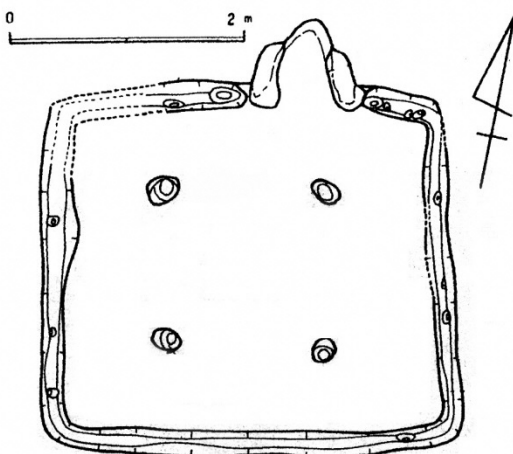
Village Life of the Time

The people who lived in the Oi-kashima archaeological site used pit houses. The entrances to these homes were made on the south side of the house, and it is believed people used ladders to enter their homes.

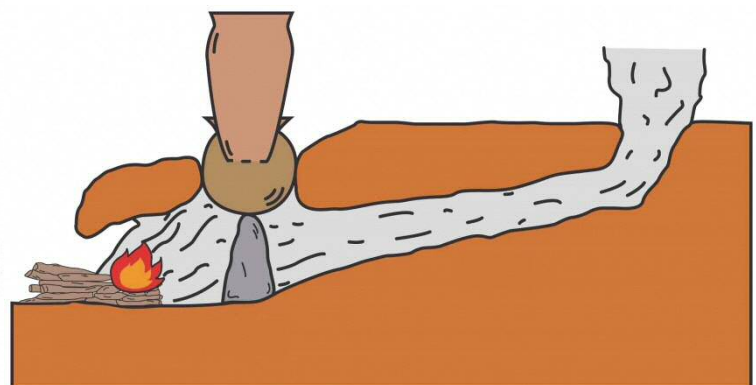
The cooking stove was built on the wall opposite to the entrance, on the north side of the house. The floor of the central portion was hard and well pounded down, to do daily work. It is believed rugs and mats were placed along the other walls to create areas for sleeping and relaxation area.

Water jars and ceramic tools were placed around the stove. The people of the time used different earthenware tools for cooking, eating, and drinking.

As stated previously, grindstones and spinning wheels were also found at the Oi-kashima archaeological site. Based on the discovery of grindstones, we can presume the use of metal tools had spread by this time, and the presence of spinning wheels suggests that cloth was also made.



▲ Diagram of the residence



▲ Profile diagram of the cooking stove