

●Shinagawa Historical Museum Explanatory Sheet

The *Yokoana-bo* Caves of Shinagawa

Yokoana-bo Caves

Yokoana-bo caves were made through the end of the fifth century to the seventh century by grouping multiple burial sites dug into the slopes and cliffs of hilly areas.

A *yokoana-bo* cave is composed of three spaces: the entrance where religious rites were carried out, the passageway into the burial chamber, and the burial chamber which held the remains of the deceased.

The form of the burial chamber differed between regions. The floor of the burial chamber is often strewn with pebbles, ash, and shells, suggesting that burial coffins or tables were made in the space.

The People Buried in the *Yokoana-bo* Caves

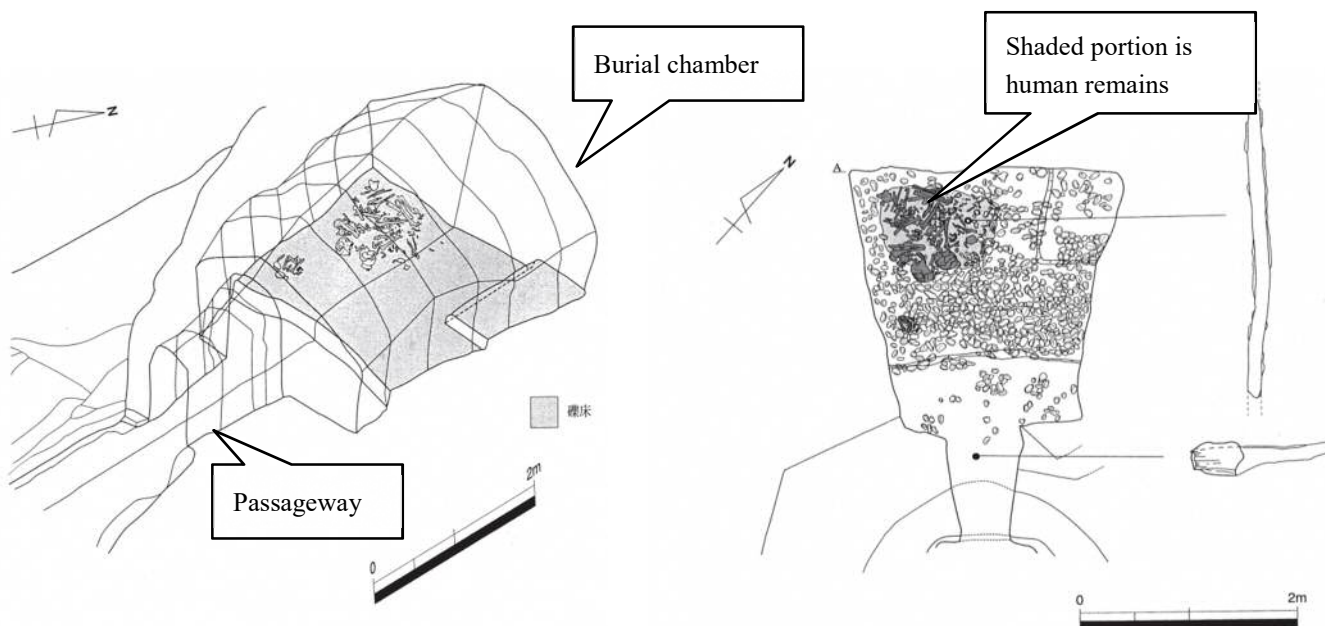
Many *yokoana-bo* caves are discovered with burial chambers containing the remains of dozens of individuals. This is because the caves served as a shared facility for many people. An analysis of the bones shows that in addition to adult men, adult women, and even juveniles and children were buried in the caves, and it is believed they served as a grave for entire families.

The *Yokoana-bo* Caves of Shinagawa

Two burial grounds have been discovered in Shinagawa, the Minami-Shinagawa *Yokoana-bo* Burial Grounds (surveyed 1960), and the Oi-kanekoyama *Yokoana-bo* Burial Grounds (surveyed 2000).

The Minami-shinagawa *Yokoana-bo* Burial Grounds: The Grounds were excavated at the top of Zemusu (James) saka-slope, where human bones and fragments of iron armbands were found. This ground is close to the Oi-kashima archaeological site, which was active during the same period, and it is believed the two sites were related.

The Oi-kanekoyama *Yokoana-bo* Burial Grounds: Three caves were discovered in the Burial Grounds located in Nishi-Oi 4-chome, Shinagawa City, Tokyo. Approximately 2.5 kilometers to the northeast of the Grounds, around 40 additional caves were found. It is believed the site was actively used in the early seventh century, and the remains found at the No. 1 to 3 caves provide clues to the manner of burial used during this time period.



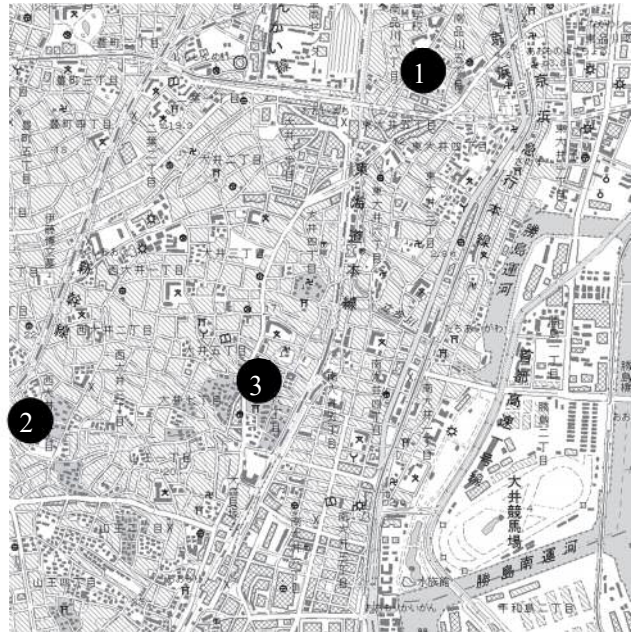
▲ Diagram of a yokoana-bo cave

▲ The No. 1 Grave of the Oi-kanekoyama *Yokoana-bo* Burial Grounds

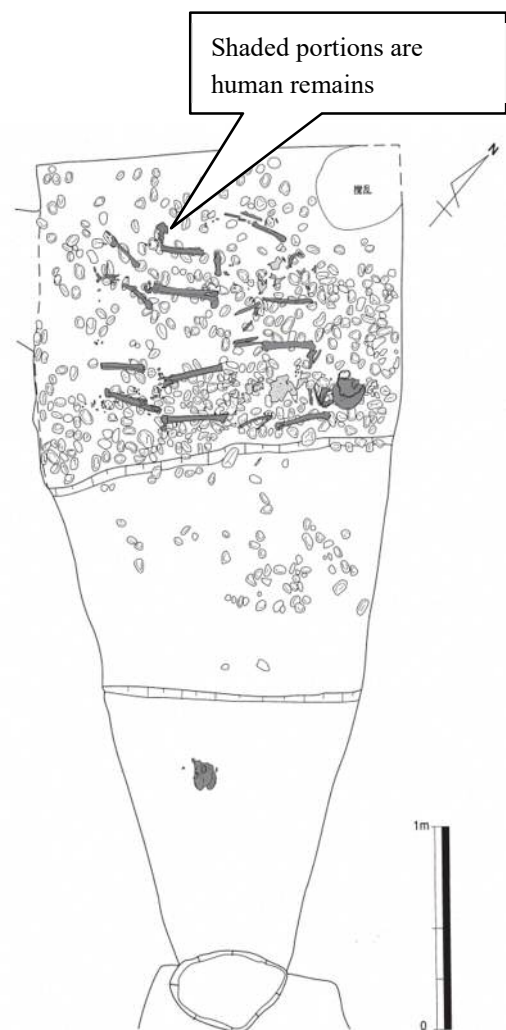
The No. 1 cave contains the bones of a total of eight individuals. The bones were intentionally moved and gathered into a single location. This is because the bones of previously buried individuals were moved when a new person was to be buried in the cave.

In contrast, the bones of the No. 3 cave were not moved when new individuals were buried in the cave.

Furthermore, traces of plaster can be found with the pebbles on the floor of the No. 2 cave, suggesting that the entire burial chamber was plastered at the time of its use.



- 1 Minami-shinagawa *Yokoana-bo* Burial Grounds
- 2 Oi-kanekoyama *Yokoana-bo* Burial Grounds
- 3 The Oi-kashima archaeological site (today: Shinagawa Historical Museum)



▲ The No. 3 Grave of the Oi-kanekoyama *Yokoana-bo* Burial Grounds