

### 3. Jomon Period along the middle reaches of the Tama River

#### 3.1 What was the Jomon Period

The origin of the term “Jomon” comes from the cord patterns on the various excavated earthenware. In this period people had not started regular farming nor stock-raising. Their life depended on hunting, fishing and gathering. However, different from the Paleolithic Period, the Jomon people acquired the bow and arrow, which promoted improved hunting efficiency, and the beginning of earthenware production promoted improved cooking skills.

The Jomon people lived in pit-dwellings (houses dug partly into the ground), and they formed villages. As time advanced, these ancient villages developed distinct activity areas, such as a living area, graveyard and so on, and they expanded in size. This evidence suggests that the ancient people formed a cooperative system having rules and order. It can be speculated that the people's life was dominated by charms, prayers and incantations in that period because the hunting, fishing and gathering life was easily influenced by changes in the natural environment, resulting in an unstable life. Human-like earthen figures (*dogu*) and rods swelled at one end (*sekibo*) have been excavated. Neither can be used as a tool in daily life. These artifacts are interpreted as being used for incantations for natural blessings and avoidance of disaster.

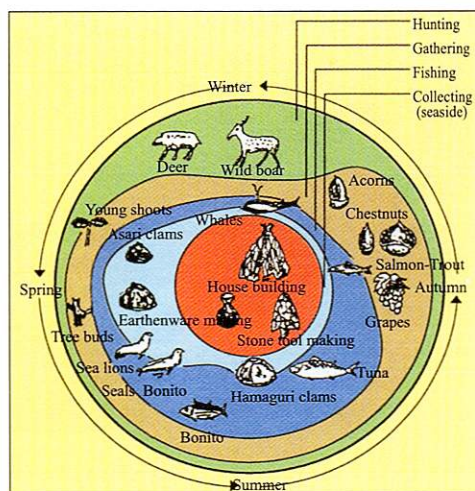


Fig.10 Living calendar of the Jomon people(Reference: KOBAYASHI Tatsuo.Jomon Reflections) .

### 3.2 Villages along the Tama River

The Jomon culture prospered in the Middle Jomon Period, about 5,500 to 4,500 years ago. Many sites of this period have been discovered on the left bank along the middle reaches of the Tama River. Village size was largest in this period, and the culture flourished. Ten Middle Jomon sites have been excavated from the Shojinbake Site in Hamura City downstream along the Tama River to the Nan'yoji Site in Kunitachi City, at intervals of 2 to 5 kilometers.

These villages were not all lived in at the same time, but their closeness shows that this region supplied rich natural resources and people could easily obtain food resources such as chestnuts, acorns and small animals.

### 3.3 Earthenware excavated from along the middle reaches of the Tama River

The representative earthenwares of the Middle Jomon Period in the Tama region were the Goryogadai, Katsusaka and Kasori E type earthenwares, from oldest to youngest, and also the Atamadai type earthenware, which is excavated mainly from the eastern Kanto region, and the Sori type earthenware, which is excavated mainly from the Chubu Central Mountain region. The parallel lines pattern on Goryogadai earthenware was created at the beginning of the Middle Jomon Period. However, among the sites on the left bank along the middle reaches of the Tama River, this earthenware was discovered only in a fireplace at the Nagasawa Site in Fussa City.



*Fig.11 Present Tama River (the confluence with the Hirai River). There is a 4 kilometer distance between the Nagasawa Site and the Ryushinji Higashi Site in Akishima City. This distance is a little larger than the average distance between the villages. Villages might not have formed between these sites because the confluence area was affected by floods.*



*Fig.12 Stone-lined baking pit No.13 Site. It is considered that this pit was used to bake foods with heated stones. A number of these pits were excavated from sites in the Tama River basin. In Fussa City, they were discovered in the Nagasawa and Fudosen sites.*



Full-blown villages in the Tama region were formed only from about 5,000 years ago at the time of the Katsusaka type earthenware, with its showy handles and three-dimensional decorations. After this period, many of these villages survived into the late Middle Jomon Period when Kasori E type earthenware, which typically had whirlpool patterns, was used. People lived continuously in these villages for long periods.

### 3.4 Active and widespread contacts

Tools used in daily life were basically acquired for self-sufficiency. However, some goods were bought by trade because they were not available locally. Obsidian is one of the famous trade goods. Obsidian arrowheads and their broken pieces have been excavated from the Nagasawa Site in Fussa City

When obsidian is hit by a hammer or the equivalent, a sharp blade splinter can easily be obtained. These were used for hunting weapons and tools. The obsidian source deposits have been confirmed at the Wada Pass at the foot of Mt. Yatsugatake in Nagano Prefecture, on Kozu Island, and in Hakone on the Izu Peninsula. Obsidian was brought to Nagasawa village via several other villages by trading with people from these places. Earthenware was also a major trade item. These might have been used as containers for storing trading goods or have been trade items themselves.

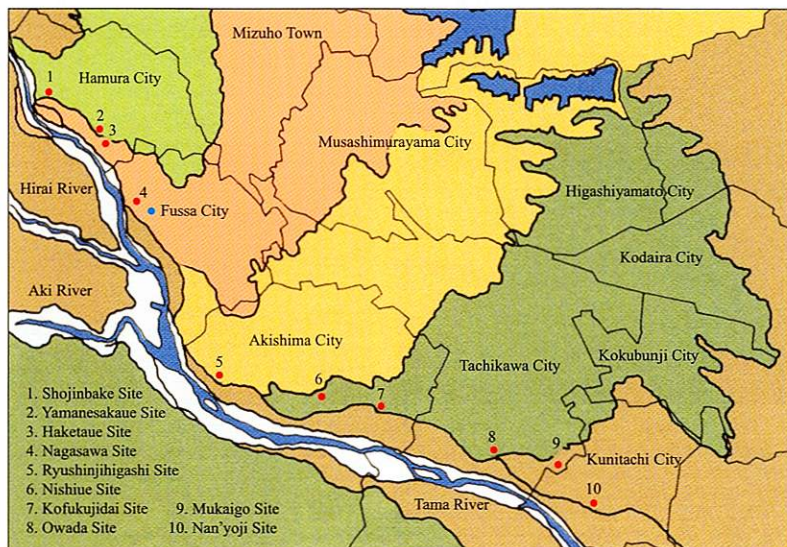


Fig. 13 Distribution of major sites along the middle Tama River in the Middle Jomon Period.

Because the Atamadai type earthenware (originating in the eastern Kanto region in the lower basin of the Tone River) and the Sori type earthenware (distributed on the southwestern foot of Mt. Yatsugatake) were excavated from the Nagasawa Site, it can be considered that Nagasawa village actively traded with these other regions. Probably other regional people also might have migrated into this region. Considering the distribution of obsidian, earthenware and other evidence, we can imagine that the Jomon people widely and actively exchanged their culture, technologies and information via a wide and diverse trading system.

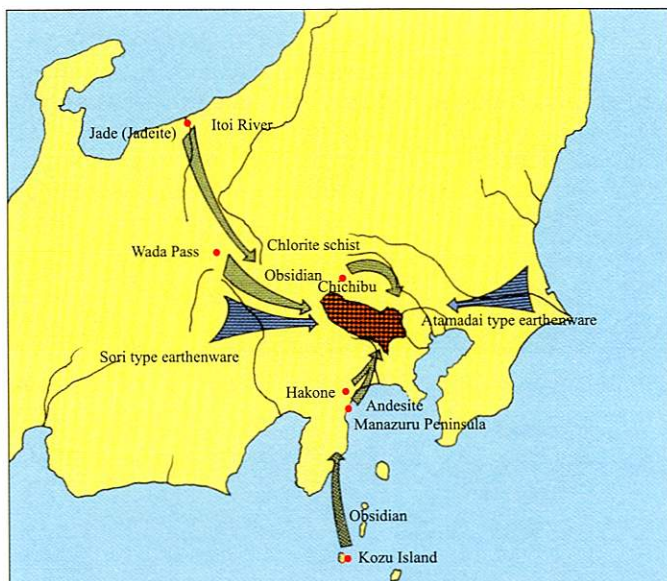


Fig.14 Earthenware and stone materials imported from other regions (Reference: Story of Excavations. Tokyo Education Committee).

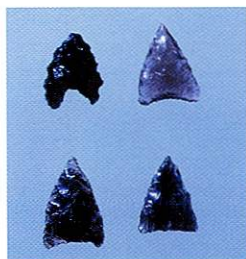


Fig.15 Stone arrowheads (Obsidian). The obsidian obtained by trade was a precious material. When broken, it produces a sharp blade. Much obsidian was processed and used for arrowheads.



Fig.16 Stone arrowheads (Chert). Chert is easily obtained in this region and is easily processed. It was popularly used for arrowheads.