

5. Life in the Jomon Period

5.1 Dwellings

The standard structure of the Jomon Period was the pit-dwelling, a dwelling with the floor sunk into the ground and a thatched roof built over that. In the Nagasawa Site, a total of 41 pit-dwelling remains have been excavated. These dwellings had pits for posts, and fireplaces enclosed by stones on 3 or 4 sides. Some fireplaces had earthenware vessels buried in them (*maiyo*, Jomon *hibachi*). Many earthenware vessels and stone implements have been excavated from inside and outside these dwellings. The fireplace seems to have been considered a sacred space, and family seating and working positions seem to have been designated in relation to the fireplace.

One of the characteristic structures of this period is the pit lined with stones and about 1 meter in diameter. Because burnt and heat cracked stones remain at the bottom of the pits, it is thought that these pits were food cooking facilities utilizing fire-heated stones. Many such pits have been excavated in the Nagasawa Site.

5.2 Earthenware from the Nagasawa Site

The artifacts excavated from the Nagasawa Site are mainly deep type earthenware vessels which were supposedly used in cooking. Because earthenware has the two functions of cooking and storage, the range of available food was expanded and habitual eating activities became established. The quality of life improved markedly. As time passed and society developed, various types of earthenware were created for application to a diverse lifestyle. The usage and purpose of earthenware can be distinguished, for example, daily use or special purpose items.



Fig.26 Restored Jomon pit-dwelling (Tama New Town Site). Five to ten people lived in each such thatched roofed pit-dwelling during the Jomon Period.

Significantly, the number of excavated shallow type earthenware vessels is less than that of the deep vessels. And the diameter of the shallow vessels exceeds that of the deep ones. Because some shallow vessels are vermilion-lacquered, these are thought to have been used for rituals and not as daily utensils.



Fig. 27 Shallow type earthenware (Katsusaka type, 1st excavation).



Fig. 28 Earthenware from a fireplace (Kasori E type, 1st excavation).



Fig. 29 Deep type earthenware (Katsusaka type, 8th excavation).



Fig. 30 Deep type earthenware (Katsusaka type, 8th excavation).



Fig. 31 Deep type earthenware (Katsusaka type, 8th excavation).



Fig. 32 Deep type earthenware (Katsusaka type, 8th excavation).

5.3 Various types of stone implements

Various types of stone implements have been excavated from the Nagasawa Site. Chipped stone tools for digging, polished stone tools for cutting or shaving wood, quern-stones and grinding stones for milling seeds, handled stone knives, and arrowheads of hard stone such as obsidian or chert, and many others have been excavated. Clearly the Jomon people created various tools from natural materials for acquiring and processing a variety of foods.



*Fig.33 Deep type earthenware
(Kasori E type, 1st excavation).*



*Fig.34 Deep type earthenware
(Katsusaka type, 2nd excavation).*



*Fig.35 Deep type earthenware
(Kasori E type, 9th excavation).*



*Fig.36 Deep type earthenware
(Kasori E type, 9th excavation).*



*Fig.37 Deep type earthenware
(Kasori E type, 9th excavation).*



*Fig.38 Deep type earthenware
(Kasori E type, 9th excavation).*

5.4 Human life in harmony with nature

The artifacts excavated from the Nagasawa Site are mainly deep type earthenware vessels and chipped stone implements. The people in the Nagasawa village lived by hunting and gathering the products of nature. However, considering the large number of chipped stone implements and milling stones that have been excavated, compared with the small number of arrowheads for hunting, their daily diet surely consisted of a significant plant component, such as seeds and roots. Burnt bones of deer and wild boar have been excavated from the Shojinbake Site in Hamura City. Without doubt animals were hunted, although it is thought to have been difficult to fulfill all their nutritional needs by hunting animals with a bow and arrow or by digging pitfalls.

The tendency for people to have hunted prey and gathered the seeds of the rich Musashino Plateau in harmony with nature, and to have spent their lives following the rhythm of the seasons, is supported by common observations in the sites of the middle Tama River basin.



Fig.39 Milling stones (quern stone and grinding stone).



Fig.40 Chipped stone implements excavated from the Nagasawa Site.



Fig.41 Polished stone implements excavated from the Nagasawa Site.



Fig.42 Stone knives with handles excavated from the Nagasawa Site.