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TSUSHIMA AS 'BOUNDARY'

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ABSTRACT

Examining the internal and external history of the channel that separates Japan and Korea, Tsushima 対馬 Island (Japan) holds a characteristic position. After almost 140 years have passed since the formation of nation states in modern East Asia, Tsushima still seems to be recognized as 'boundary'. However, recent publications stress that in spite of the changed appearance of Tsushima in modern ages, and despite the paradigms of Japanese archaeology, from a social and economic history perspective there has been a close relationship between peninsular and archipelago cultures. Based upon specific archaeological data therefore the 'boundary' nature of Tsushima has to be reconsidered.

INTRODUCTION

Tsushima is a 'boundary' island of Japan, constituting the Japanese territory lying nearest to the Korean Peninsula (Fig. 1). It is a well known fact that the island had played a very important role in the history of East Asia. The distance to Fukuoka 福岡 City (Kyūshū 九州, Japan) is ca. 120-160 km, but to Busan 釜山 City (Korea) it is only about 49.5 km. Tsushima Island (Tsushima City 対馬[市], Nagasaki Prefecture 長崎[県]) is about 82 km long; 90% is covered by deep forests and steep mountains. Only a few small areas are suitable for farming and paddy fields, but the island is rich in mineral resources, such as silver and precious stones. The extensive coastlines and countless bays allow exploiting marine resources and moreover provide a means of contact within the island and beyond.

This paper aims to contribute to an alternative history of the cultural interaction between Korea and Japan based on new archaeological data from Tsushima Island. The first part of this paper offers a brief history of Tsushima archaeology from the 19th to 20th centuries; the second summarizes two excavations in Mine Town 峰[町],

Mine Ward 三根[区]; the Mine 三根 and Ide 井手 sites are located in the northwestern part of Tsushima Island. They are recently discovered settlement sites connected



Fig. 1: Map showing the location of Tsushima Island.

not only to the Yayoi 弥生 culture of Japan, but also to Bronze Age and early Iron Age cultures of the Korean Peninsula (late 1st millennium BCE to mid-3rd century CE). The third part of this paper attempts to show how Tsushima had played an autonomous role in the cultural interaction between Korea and Japan during the period under discussion, based on an analysis of archaeological data. Topics to be addressed are the research history, settlements and site clusters of Mine Ward, ceramic production and exchange system, the beginning of iron forging and associated exchange between the peninsula and the archipelago, and a consideration of the nature of social complexity in Tsushima as a ‘boundary’ area.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TSUSHIMA ARCHAEOLOGY

Prior to World War II: from 1867 to 1945

After the end of the Edo 江戸 period (1603-1868) and the beginning of the modern state of Japan (Meiji 明治 period, 1868-1912), the formerly prosperous Tsushima Island was reshaped into a major fortress aiming at controlling the Korea Strait (Fig. 2). In 1872, military forces



Fig. 2: Tsushima fortress (courtesy of Dr. M. TSURU).

of the Japanese Empire took over the command of the island in order to strengthen the border defenses against the European states (such as Russia). Such domination prevented Tsushima from any development towards modernization for more than seventy years.

Meanwhile, archaeology in a European fashion entered Japan in the late 19th century. From the beginning of the 20th century, the new generation of Japanese archaeologists expanded their research interest beyond the Japanese Archipelago towards Korea, China, and South-east Asia, paralleling the political and economical expansion of imperialistic Japan until the end of World War II.

Following WWII: from 1945 to the 1950s

In 1948, members of the Far-Eastern Archaeological Society (Jap. *Tō-A kōkogakkai* 東亜考古学会) surveyed many archaeological sites and cultural relics in the island. Japanese archaeologists had lost access to their

continental fields of survey in China and Korea after the end of World War II. Despite the growing interest in the island, Tsushima was considered a culturally backward area, due to the limited materials. In 1950 to 1951, the 9th Academic Society Union (Jap. *Kyū-gakkai rengō* 九学会連合) carried out several interdisciplinary campaigns (area studies) in Tsushima Island. These campaigns were also related to the activities of the Committee of Social Science and Humanities (Jap. *Jinbun kagaku-kai* 人文科学会), which was installed by the Japanese Government under the General Headquarters (GHQ) of the US. Members of the Society for Japanese Archaeology (Jap. *Nihon kōkogakkai* 日本考古学会) as well as of the Far-Eastern Archaeological Society moreover participated in this project and excavated several archaeological sites. These activities contributed to establish the perception of Tsushima as a national boundary between Korea and Japan after World War II, not only with regard to the cultural-historical paradigms of Japanese archaeology; academic considerations were generally omitted within the pressing political and territorial agendas of Japan in 1945 to 1950 (see TAWARA 2008).

The era of economic growth: from the 1960s to the 1980s

From the 1960s, archaeological investigations in the island were carried out mainly by academic archaeologists from mainland Japan. University staff used to cooperate with the prefectural board of education in the respective region. Japan was in the middle of a high economic growth phase, and archaeological research was restructured and designed into a management system of cultural heritage, incorporating many local governmental archaeologists. These circumstances influenced the study of the materials from Tsushima Island. There were still large gaps between mainland Japan and the island concerning economy and political power, and this reflects in archaeological interpretation. National politics and local ethnocentrism resulted in discussing the relationship between the two nations ‘Japan’ and ‘Korea’. Even though Japanese scholars cooperated with Korean scholars in this period, there was no space for considering that Tsushima Island played an independent role and followed its own path through a unique history.

Since the 1990s (after the Cold War)

Archaeological activities suffer from cultural-political agendas in a post-colonial situation of globalization vs. localism and colonialism vs. nationalism. We need to reconsider our interpretation and use our archaeological knowledge appropriately within the specific social-historical contexts. Aiming at contributing to such agendas and achieve an alternative history of the Tsushima-Korea straits area, I will now analyze new findings and use scientific methods to prepare the path for a future ‘Tsushima archaeology’.

RECENT DISCOVERY OF SETTLEMENT SITES IN TSUSHIMA ISLAND

Mine site

The Mine site (also: Yanbe 山辺 site) is located in Mine Ward in the northwestern part of Tsushima Island (Mine Town, Tsushima City, Nagasaki Prefecture, Fig. 3). Situated on a low plateau beside the upper Mine River and enclosed to the other side by a horseshoe-shaped mountain-foot, the site covers most of the the area of a former small agricultural hamlet (Fig. 4). The length of the hill is about 160 m, the width is about 60 m, and the

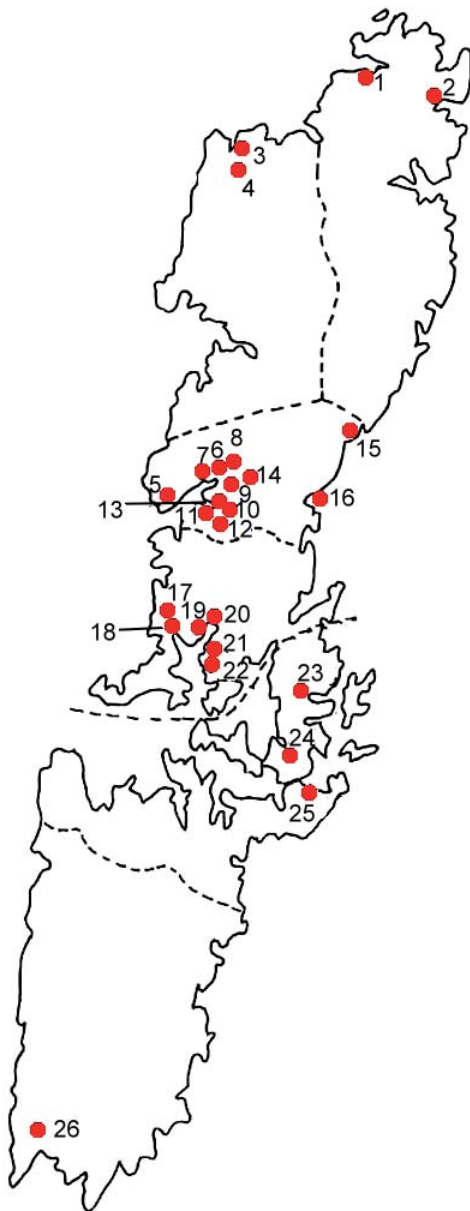


Fig. 3: Map locating Yayoi period sites in Tsushima (after ABIRU 2001:9).

1 Kyonokuma, 2 Tōnokubi, 3 Kubiru, 4 Shiratake, 5 Kisaka, 6 Kami-gayanoki, 7 Shimo-gayanoki, 8 Sakadō, 9 Takamatsunodan, 10 Mōkozuka, 11 Ōtawara, 12 Ōtawara-yamoto, 13 Ebisuyama, 14 Mine/Yanbe, 15 Shiinoura, 16 Koshōjima, 17 Shigenodan, 18 Karasaki, 19 Kurokibana, 20 Saboura-akasaki, 21 Nukanohama, 22 Higashinohama, 23 Yoshigaura Cave, 24 Tamatsuke-hanatenbo, 25 Kagaribana, 26 Otekata.

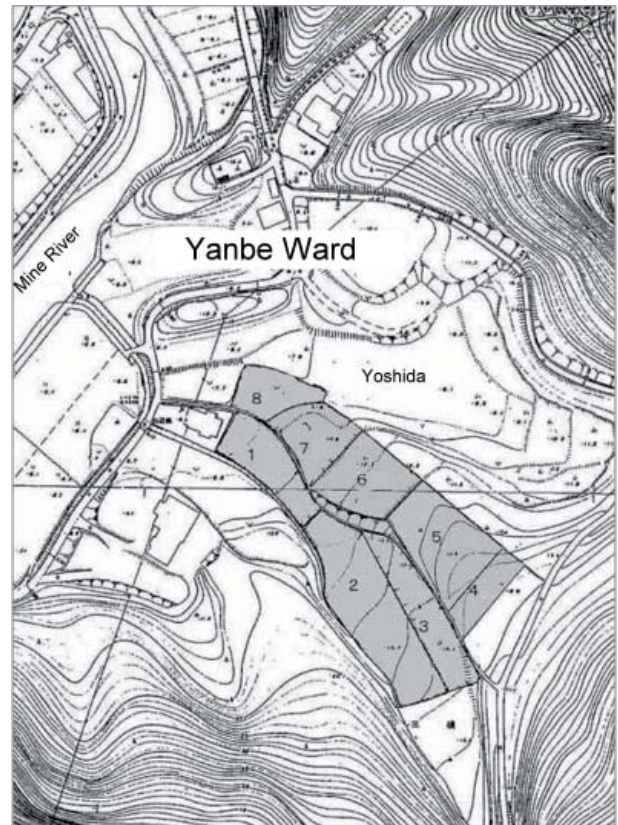


Fig. 4: Map showing the location of the Yanbe part of Mine site with sections 1–8 (after TAWARA 2008:28).

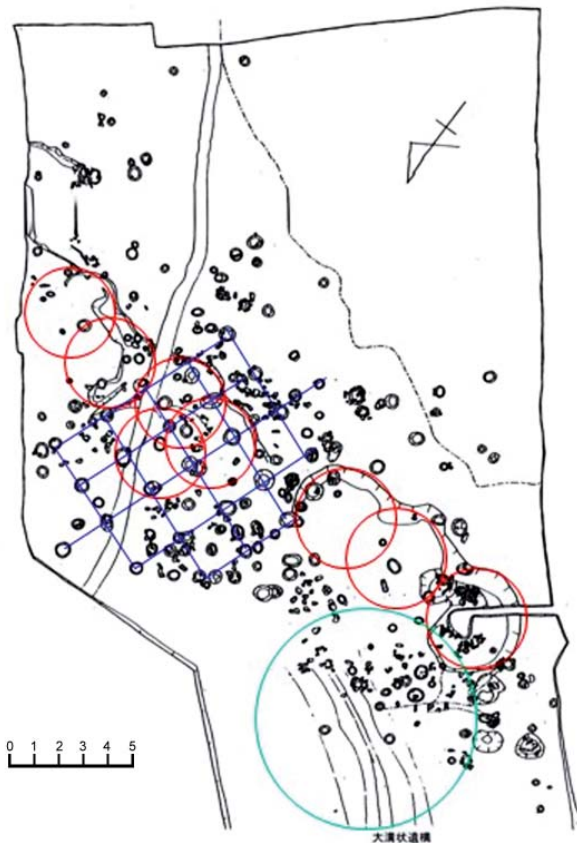


Fig. 5: Features of location no. 6 (after TAWARA 2008:27).

height is 8 to 25 m above sea level. The northern part of this area covers the former paddy fields of the hamlet; a small shrine is situated nearby, the Hachiryū-den 八竜殿 (eight dragon shrine), dedicated to the spirits of the water. This place is called Yanbe by the local people, and it is part of the Mine site settlement group in Mine Ward.

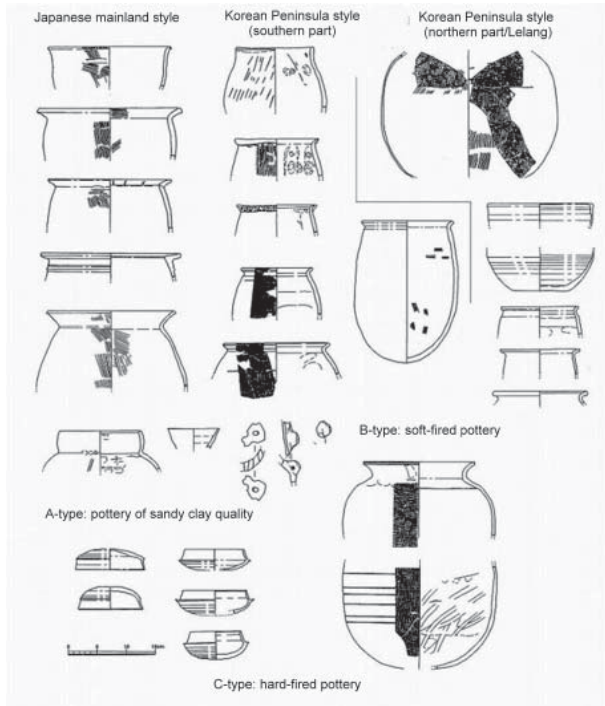


Fig. 6: Pottery and ceramics from the Mine site (after TAWARA 2008:29).

Since the discovery of this site in 1995, several archaeological excavations were carried out around this area by the Mine Town Board of Education (Jap. Mine-chō kyōiku iinkai 峰町教育委員会). As a result of the November 1999 to March 2001 campaign, many important archaeological features and relics were revealed, such as dwellings and pits (Fig. 5) with huge amounts of pottery – Japanese and Korean types (Fig. 6) –, iron artefacts, stone tools, and glass beads. These materials mainly belong to the pre- and proto-historical ages, paralleling Yayoi to Kofun 古墳 period in Japan, and giving evidence of what was thought to be a central place of the ‘country of Tsushima’ described in the Chinese historical text *Weizhi* 魏志 in the mid-3rd century CE.

Ide site

Not far away from the Mine site, the Ide site is located on a low platform between paddy fields and a hill (Fig. 7). In the mid-1950s, many pieces of Yayoi pottery were found by local people, and later ABIRU Yoshihiro 阿比留嘉博 and NAGATOME Hisae 永留久恵 carried out the first archaeological excavation in 1959 (MANO 1974). In 1990, the Mine Town Board of Education and the Ehime 愛媛 University (Prof. SHIMOJŌ Nobuyuki 下条信行) carried out the 2nd archaeological excavation

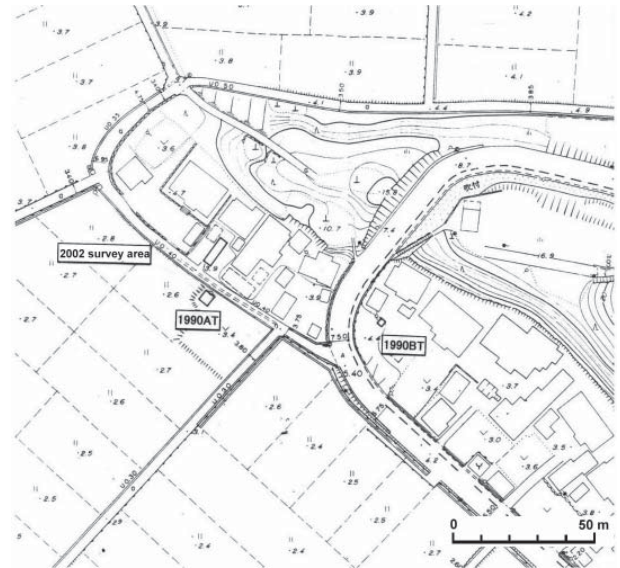


Fig. 7: Map showing the location of the Ide site (after Mine-chō kyōiku iinkai 2003:3).

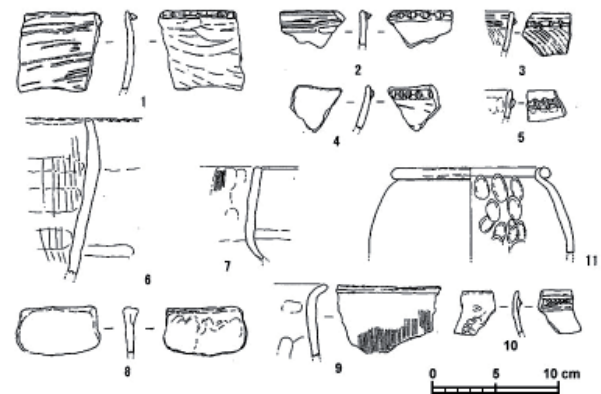


Fig. 8: Pottery from the Ide site (after Mine-chō kyōiku iinkai 2003:4).

1-8: from layer 8; 9-10: from structural remains; 11: from layer 7.

in order to shed light on the pottery in its archaeological context and to examine the early farming culture (Mine-chō kyōiku iinkai 1990). In the area 1990AT, many pieces of Yayoi pottery were recovered from the layers 4 to 11. It is of special importance that Early Yayoi pottery from Japan (Itazuke 板付 type I and II) and early Mumun 無文 pottery from Korea were revealed together in layers 7 and 8 (Fig. 8).

In 2002, the Mine Town Board of Education carried out the 3rd archaeological excavation here in international project cooperation with the Dong-A 東亜 University, Busan, Korea (Mine-chō kyōiku iinkai 2002, 2003). The variety of pottery excavated from layers 1 to 8 can be summarized as follows (cf. *ibid.*):

Cluster I (layers 6-8):

Final Jōmon 縄文/Earliest Yayoi (Japan) (Fig. 8:1-5, 9, 10), and early Mid-Mumun (Korea) (pre-Songuk-ri 松菊里 type: Fig. 8:6(?), 7).

Cluster II (layers 6-7):

Early Yayoi (Japan), and early half of Late Mumun (Korea) (Fig. 8:11).

Cluster III (layers 5-6):

Middle Yayoi (Japan) and late half of Late Mumun, *wajil* 瓦質 (soft-fired) pottery of the Proto-Three Kingdom period (Korea).

Cluster IV (layers 5-7):

Early Kofun (Japan) and Three Kingdoms (Korea).

Cluster V (layers 1-4):

Middle Age and early modern period (ceramics made in Korea, China, and Japan).

POTTERY CHRONOLOGY OF TSUSHIMA ISLAND

Summarizing the results of excavations at settlement sites such as Ide and Mine, where both Japanese and Korean specimens have been found, pottery chronology of Tsushima Island during the pre- and proto-historical age (the 'Yayoi' period in Japanese system) can be classified into five phases (Fig. 9):

Phase I:

Final Jōmon/Earliest Yayoi to the Early Yayoi period: 1st millennium BCE.

Phase II:

Early to late Middle Yayoi period: 3rd to the early half of the 1st century BCE.

Phase III:

Final Middle Yayoi to beginning of Late Yayoi period: early half of 1st century BCE to mid-1st century CE.

Phase IV:

Early to late Late Yayoi period: late 1st century CE to early 2nd century CE.

Phase V:

Final Yayoi to beginning of Kofun period: late 2nd century CE to the mid-3rd century CE.

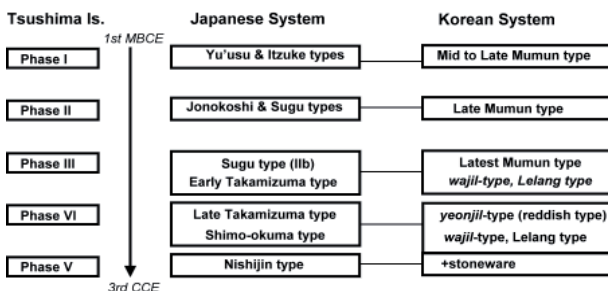


Fig. 9: Pottery chronology of Tsushima Island.

This chronology is based on cross-dating of pottery in Tsushima Island, the material coming mainly from burial sites; material corresponding to phases I and II, however, is mainly from settlement sites. Especially the Korean middle Mumun pottery (Songuk-ri type) from Mine site (see Fig. 6) fits well into a gap between the Ide site's clusters I and II, so these types should be included into phase I. It is possible to further divide this early phase into two sub-phases, Ia (Yamanotera 山の寺/Yu'usu 夜臼 type and Itzuke-I type) and Ib (Itzuke-II type). Even more early sub-phases are suggested by the archaeological complex of Ide site, relating to the early Mumun pottery finds from the 1990 campaign and with regard to the Late Jōmon or final Neolithic pottery from Korea as seen in layer 8 (e.g. Fig. 8:8).

MODELING THE SETTLEMENT PATTERNS OF TSUSHIMA ISLAND

In order to clarify the settlement patterns of Tsushima Island we can make use of the archaeological sites in the Mine Bay area at the western coast of the island, which include two districts, Mine Ward (in the north) and Yoshida Ward 吉田[区] (in the south). This area was densely populated in pre- and proto-historic ages. The site distribution by phases can be summarized as follows (Figs. 10, 11):

Phase I-II:

Settlement sites are usually located along the upper courses of rivers. In Mine Ward, the Mine (A) and Ide settlements (B) sprang up along the Mine River. In Yoshida Ward, along the Yoshida River, the Yoshida settlement (14) continued through from the Jōmon period, and the Otobaru 大田原 (32) and the Senosae 瀬のさえ settlements (C) came into being. On the other hand, there are only a few burial sites, such as the Otobaru-oka 大田原丘 site close to the Otobaru settlement site.

Phase III-V:

Settlement sites can be found in the same locations as in phase I-II. Numerous burial sites are spread in the vicinity of the settlement sites near Mine Bay. A strong burial site cluster is extant in Mine Ward, including the Kami-gayanoki 上ガヤノキ site (5) with a stratified cemetery, Shimo-gayanoki 下ガヤノキ (4), Takamatsunodan タカマツノダン (29), and Sakadō サカドウ sites (6). Mine (A) and Ide sites (B) are thought to be the respective settlements. For this period, Yoshida Ward also has rich burials such as the Tōtogoyama トウトゴ山 (13), the Ebisuyama 恵比須山 (30), and the Chigonohana チゴノハナ sites (13). The Yamoto ヤモト (32) and Senosae sites (C) are thought to be the respective settlements of these latter sites.

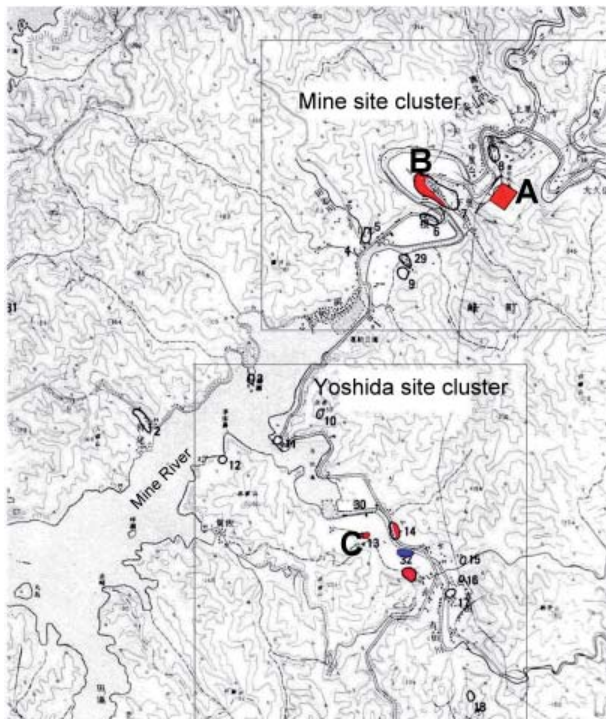


Fig. 10: Map showing the site distribution of phase I-II (after TAWARA 2008:28).

1 Kisaka, 2 Kario, 3 Nagase, 4 Shimo-gayanoki, 5 Kami-gayanoki, 6 Sakadō, 7 Ide, 8 Mine Public Hall, 9 Shiotsubo, 10 Shiratake, 11 Chigonohana, 12 Shiraboshi, 13 Tōtogoyama, 14 Yoshida, 15 Amano-moroha Shrine ruins, 16 Yoshida-hōkyō'intō, 17 Yoshida-yakata ruins, 18 Tominosae, 29 Takamatsunodan, 30 Ebisuyama, 31 Kisaka Kaijin Shrine, 32 Ōtabaru-yamoto;
A: Mine site (Yanbe Ward, 1999-2003 campaign), B: Ide site (2002 campaign), C: Senosae (2003 campaign).

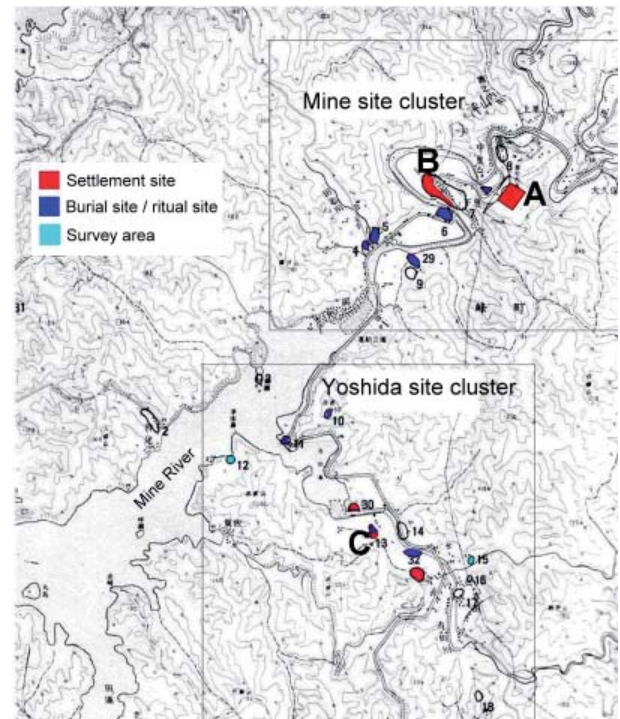


Fig. 11: Map showing the site distribution of phase III-IV (after TAWARA 2008:28).

The topographical situation of Tsushima Island is very restricted. The settlement cluster of the Mine Bay area therefore is considered a main factor for the interpretation of the pre- and proto-historic society of Tsushima Island. Does the settlement cluster indicate a small scale community in Tsushima Island, due to limited space for agriculture and subsistence? How does this add up with the fact that huge amounts of artefacts had been discovered, imported to the Mine Bay area and the other parts of the island during these periods, such as bronze artefacts from Korea – used as burial goods – and ceremonial bronze weapons from mainland Japan? The archaeological situation indicates that the various settlements along

the river and in the bay area were not separated from each other, but shared the same cultural perception with regard to ceremony or mortuary ritual (Fig. 12).

SIGNIFICANCE OF ARTEFACTS FROM SETTLEMENT SITES IN TSUSHIMA ISLAND

We can grasp the significance of the artefacts from settlement sites in Tsushima Island by using a statistical approach. The following analysis of items from Mine site includes Kofun period material (Figs. 13, 14, 15); the Kofun period is chronologically divided into phase KI (Early Kofun, late 3rd to 4th century CE), phase KII (Middle Kofun, 5th century), phase KIII (Late Kofun, 6th century), and phase KIV (Final Kofun, 7th century).

Considering the proportional share of different materials (Fig. 13) it becomes clear that the most frequent item is the reddish to yellowish open-fire pottery (type A: 74.3%), which belongs in phases I–V and the Kofun period (KI–IV). It comprises Japanese and Korean style pottery, and a mixed style. The grey kiln-fired pottery is relatively rare (5.9%), consisting of *wajil* and Lelang-style pottery (type B: 4.8%) and stoneware (type C: 1.1%), all of which belong in phases III–V and the Kofun period. Iron artefacts are to be mentioned, including unfinished tools (1.7%) and iron slag (0.2%), as well as stone tools (4.3%), including tools for iron working. No bronzes have been reported from this dwelling site.

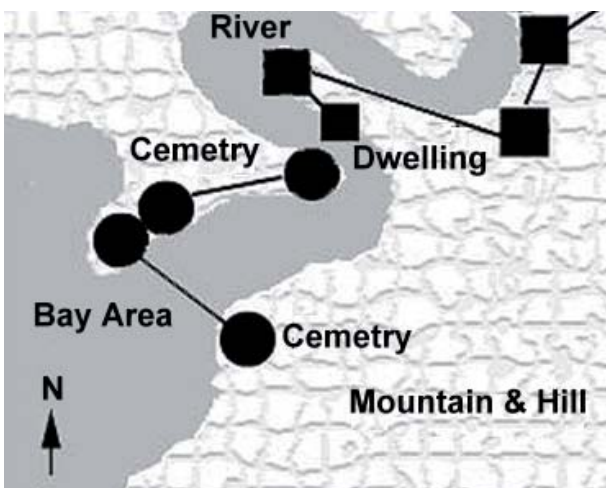


Fig. 12: Settlement pattern of Tsushima Island.

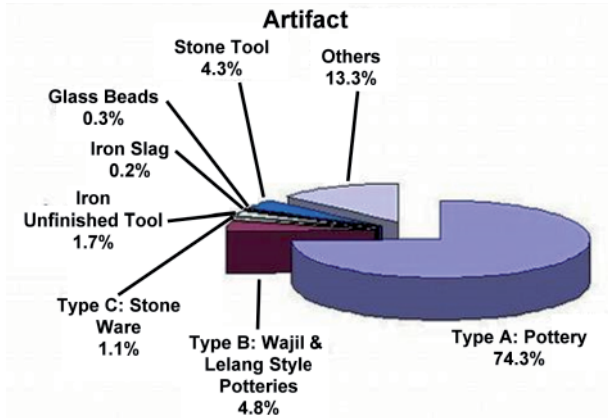


Fig. 13: Diagram illustrating the distribution of different artefacts from Mine site.

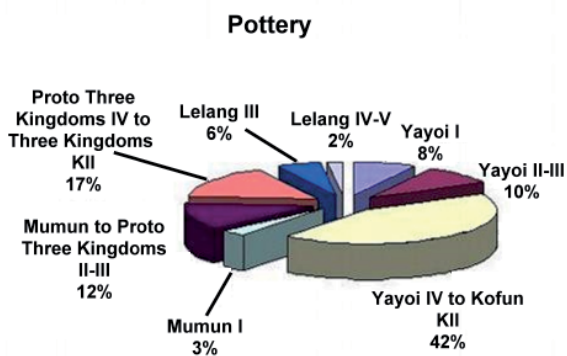


Fig. 14: Diagram illustrating the distribution of pottery types.

Focussing on the pottery types extant in Mine site (Fig. 14), the statistic shows that the majority of items belongs to Japanese style pottery of phase I (8%), phase II to III (10%) and phase IV to KII (42%), all in all 60% of the whole assemblage. The remaining 40% consist of Korean style pottery. Arranged according to phases (Fig. 15), the following tendencies in pottery usage emerge:

Phase I:

Japanese Yayoi style pottery (type A) makes out about 68%; the rest is Korean Mumun style pottery (type A).

Phases II-III:

Korean Mumun style, Proto-Three-Kingdoms style pottery (types A and B: 42%) and Lelang style pottery (type B: 21%) together make out the majority; Japanese Yayoi style pottery (type A) makes out 37%.

Phases IV-KII:

Japanese Yayoi style and Kofun style pottery makes out a strong majority of about 70% (mostly type A), the rest is Korean Proto-Three-Kingdoms, Three-Kingdoms (types A and C) and Lelang style pottery (type B).

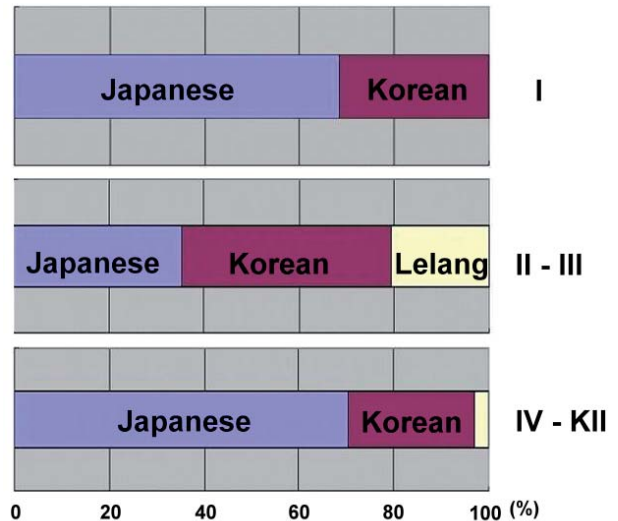


Fig. 15: Table illustrating the distribution of pottery styles according to phases (loc. nos. 6 and 7, Mine site).

CONCLUSION:

THE EARLY IRON AGE SOCIETY OF TSUSHIMA ISLAND

Before the discovery of the settlement sites in Mine Ward the interpretation of the pre- and proto-history of Tsushima Island was difficult for some reasons. The Yayoi culture model of wet-paddy-field agricultural societies does not fit the environment of Tsushima, and therefore there was a tendency to underestimate the degree of social and cultural developments in the island, compared to mainland Japan. The possibility of local iron working is still hardly ever discussed among Japanese and Korean archaeologists.¹

For the Japanese Archipelago, archaeological materials indicate that in a first stage (trad. Early Yayoi, ca. 4–3BCE) few iron implements were imported, paralleling the overall development of Japanese Yayoi societies, originally inspired by the introduction of wet-paddy-field agriculture from the continent. During the second stage (trad. Middle to beginning of Late Yayoi, ca. 2BCE–1CE), the demand for iron gradually increased. The productiveness of agriculture steadily grew, and the cultural interaction between Korea and Japan intensified.² As a result, Yayoi society moved towards social complexity and cultural integration. The third stage of development (middle of Late Yayoi to the end of Yayoi period, ca. 2–3CE) witnessed a rapidly increasing degree of iron-working in the whole of Japan, and original (Japanese) style iron items came to exist. Especially the development of an exchange system for iron (ingots and tools) and the competitive interaction between the various polities in East Asia inspired the re-organization and integration of Yayoi culture and led to a stage of early state formation in Japan.

¹ Cf. MIYAMOTO Kazuo (this volume) on iron working in Iki 壱岐 Island.

² On the cultural interaction between Korea and Japan see also Barbara SEYOCK (this volume).



Fig. 16: Iron tools and unfinished tools (ingots) (after TAWARA 2008:43).

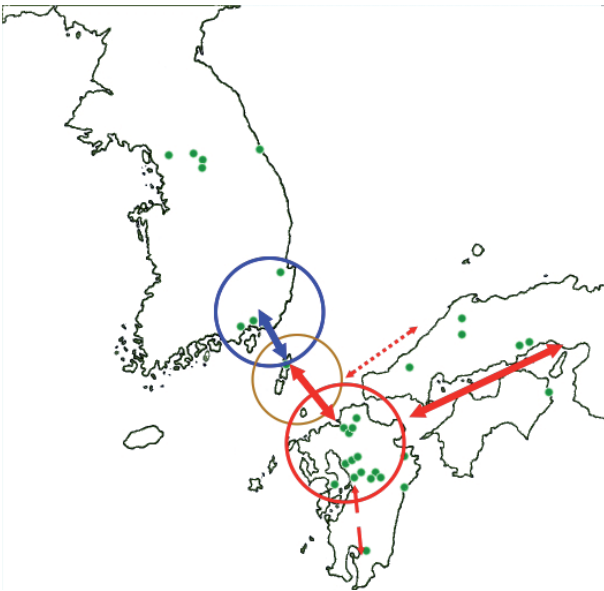


Fig. 17: Map illustrating the exchange of iron through Tsushima Island.

In conclusion, some general ideas about the society of pre- and proto-historic Tsushima Island and their impact on the perception of Yayoi Japan shall be postulated. Although agricultural tools and fishing implements make out the bulk of iron artefacts in Yayoi period Tsushima sites, the finds of tools connected to iron working (Fig. 16) indicate some stratified level of social life. There are no bronze artefacts from settlement sites, but the numerous bronze artefacts from burial sites around Mine Town carry some special meaning, connected to funeral rituals for selected persons. Iron-working in Tsushima Island might have started by the 1st century BCE, at the same time as in mainland Japan. Tsushima people probably imported iron ingots and metallurgy directly from the south of Gyeongsang 慶尙 region in Korea and transmitted their commodities and knowledge further to Japan (Fig. 17).

We may thus develop a model of social complexity for Tsushima Island. The settlement sites of Mine Ward prove a production system for iron tools and an autonomous exchange system, compensating a situation where agricultural activity was not sufficient for the subsistence of pre- and proto-historic people. The paradigm of an inevitable parallelism of wet-paddy-field agriculture and the advent of Yayoi society may thus be re-examined in the light of Tsushima Island archaeology.

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