

Takasago Burial Site

The Takasago Burial Site (c. 900 BCE) is a large burial site thought to have functioned as a cemetery serving nearby settlements. Archaeological surveys and partial excavations have revealed shell mounds and a burial area with many pit graves. The site is open to the public and the locations of the shell mounds and burial pits are marked. Information about the site is available at the Irie Takasago Museum [\[link\]](#).

Evidence of elaborate funeral rites

The site provides evidence that ritualistic burial practices became increasingly complex during the later stages of the Jomon period (13,000–400 BCE). The grave pits are similar in shape, and the deceased were interred in almost the exact same position, with their arms and legs bent at an angle and their heads mostly turned to the northwest. Pottery and stone implements and other burial items were found in most of the graves. A circular arrangement of stones was also discovered within the burial area. Inside it were several clay figurines (*dogu*) and a pot filled with red ochre. Traces of red ochre have been found in burial sites at several locations, suggesting it was used in funeral rites. Red ochre powder may have been scattered over bodies before burial.

Well-preserved remains

Human remains are rarely found in prehistoric burial pits because of the acidic nature of the soil in Japan. Despite this, many intact skeletons have been discovered at the Takasago Site. Here, the deceased were interred in pits within the shell mounds, and the calcium carbonate from the large quantities of bone and shell present in the mounds is thought to have helped preserve the remains.

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Other artifacts uncovered at the Takasago Site include harpoon heads and other fishing implements carved from deer antler. They are exhibited at the Irie Takasago Museum [\[link\]](#) alongside artifacts found at the nearby Irie Site [\[link\]](#). An entrance fee is required. Some basic information is in English.