

## **Korekawa Site**

The Korekawa Site is the collective name for three adjoining archaeological sites in Hachinohe, southern Aomori. The sites—the Nakai Site (1000–300 BCE), the Hotta Site (3000–2000 BCE), and the Ichioji Site (4000–2000 BCE)—are located on a terrace beside the Niida River. Surveys of the sites have revealed burial pits, storage pits, deposits of earthenware, evidence of pit dwellings, and vast quantities of lacquerware. Artifacts are exhibited at the Korekawa Archaeological Institution in themed exhibitions that explore life and craftsmanship in the prehistoric communities of northern Japan.

### *The Nakai Site*

The Nakai Site was settled for 700 years at the end of the Jomon period (13,000–400 BCE). At the center of the site there is a plateau where a sun-dial-like stone arrangement has been discovered. This is thought to have served as a ritual area. To the east and west of the plateau, many burial pits have been identified, and to the north and south, there are low wetland areas. Deposits of stone tools, wooden tools, earthenware, lacquerware, and the shells of walnuts and chestnuts have been found from the wetland area. Evidence of pit dwellings has been discovered on the northern edges of the plateau.

### *The Nakai Site—plants and life at the site*

From the study of seeds found preserved at the site, pollen analysis of the soil, and investigations of wooden and lacquered artifacts, archaeologists have been able to identify plants that grew at the settlement and understand how they were used. Walnut trees and horse chestnut trees provided sustenance and timber for pit dwellings and woodworking. Lacquer trees were tapped for sap that was refined to produce lacquer. Spindle trees, the wood of which is flexible, provided the material for making bows. Evidence suggests that inhabitants of the settlement maintained the land surrounding the site in such a way as to keep these plants available.

### *The Nakai Site—pottery and lacquerware*

Excavations of the Nakai Site have yielded many elaborately decorated earthenware vessels and intricately lacquered items. These artifacts demonstrate mastery of advanced pottery and lacquer techniques and convey a highly developed sense of design. They are defined as “Kamegaoka style,” an aesthetic characteristic of the final-Jomon period in northern Japan. The term originates from earthenware discovered at the Kamegaoka Burial Site in northern Aomori. Many of the world’s leading museums, including the

Tokyo National Museum, the British Museum, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, have “Kamegaoka style” pieces in their collections.

The Korekawa Archaeological Institution primarily exhibits artifacts from the Nakai Site and the nearby Kazahari Site 1 (2000–1000 BCE), located on the opposite bank of the Niida River. Among the collection is a designated National Treasure—a solid clay figurine, seated, with clasped hands—and several hundred Important Cultural Properties of Japan.

#### *The Hotta Site*

The Hotta Site predates the Nakai Site by 2,000 years. Archaeologists have uncovered earthenware, a series of pits believed to be for storing nuts, and evidence of pit dwellings at this site. The earthenware vessels discovered here typically have wide mouths and are tapered at the bottom. They are decorative, usually with bold patterns, but lack the intricacy and level of finish exhibited by much later pieces from the Nakai Site. Several earthenware artifacts from this site are displayed at the Hachinohe City Museum.

#### *The Ichioji Site*

The Ichioji Site is the largest and earliest of the three sites. It predates the Nakai Site by 3,000 years. Archaeologists have found evidence here of pit dwellings and large deposits of pottery. Deep layers of potsherds—1.5 meters at their thickest—were found buried in the earth. These layers also contained the bones of fish and animals, as well as tools such as fish hooks and combs made from bone and antler. The earthenware vessels from this site are tall and cylindrical in form. They are patterned with cord-markings but are less decorative than most pieces from the Hotta and Nakai sites. The Hachinohe City Museum exhibits numerous artifacts from the Ichioji Site.

#### *The Korekawa Archaeological Institution*

Many fine examples of “Kamegaoka style” artifacts are displayed at the Korekawa Archaeological Institution. Artifacts include earthenware vessels, clay figurines, beads, adornments, and tools such as lacquered bows and baskets. In the theater, a video is screened introducing life in prehistoric Japan. There is also a craft workshop and a shop for souvenirs. Information is provided in English, and additional multilingual information is available via the Pocket Curator app, which can be downloaded on site.

### *Related archaeological sites*

Several of the Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan are located in Aomori Prefecture, including the Kamegaoka Burial Site [\[link\]](#), the Komakino Stone Circle [\[link\]](#), the Sannai Maruyama Site [\[link\]](#), and the Futatsumori Site [\[link\]](#). Nearby in Iwate Prefecture, the Goshono Site [\[link\]](#) can be combined easily with a visit to the Korekawa Site.