

## **Karakami Site**

The hilltop village of Karakami in northwestern Iki, near Katanae Bay, was one of the largest settlements on the island around the beginning of the common era. Its people are thought to have subsisted on fishing, hunting, and ironworking.

Archaeological finds such as pieces of scrap iron and the remains of a furnace suggest that the Karakami villagers may have played an intermediary role in the ancient iron trade between the Korean Peninsula and mainland Japan. They are thought to have acquired iron goods from Korea, where the technology required to produce the metal was developed earlier than in Japan, and modified or reinforced them for sale in Kyushu and elsewhere in Japan. Karakami's connection with Korea is evidenced by the large quantity of earthenware from the peninsula discovered at the village site.

In addition to introducing advanced ironmaking techniques to Japan, the village may have played a role in bringing a now familiar pet animal to the archipelago: the oldest known bones of a domesticated cat found in Japan were unearthed in Karakami.