

GUIDE-BOOK EXCURSION C-7

會協學地京東

(Nov. 6th, 1926)

No.

THE KASORI SHELL-HEAPS



PAN-PACIFIC SCIENCE CONGRESS, 1926

JAPAN

THE KASORI SHELL-HEAPS

BY YOSHIKIYO KOGANEI, AKIRA MATSUMURA AND
NENOZO UTSUSHIKAWA

THE KASORI SHELL-HEAPS

Location and Topography. The Kasori shell-heaps are situated at the Kasori homestead, in the village of Miyako, Chiba County, in the Province of Shimōsa, i.e., at the northeast corner of Tokyo Bay. They can be reached in about two hours from Tokyo, by one hour in the train from Ryogokubashi Station to Chiba City and thence by an hour's walk.

To the northeast of Chiba City, and across the plain formed by alluvial deposits of the Miyako River which runs through the city, stand the ranges of low hills, upon which the shell-heaps are found. At a point about six kilometres upstream from the city, a small tributary joins it from the north through a valley of rice-fields between the low hills. Upon the hills to the west of this stream are the shell-heaps. To-day, however, most of them are covered with forest growth and a dark loam of vegetable formation about 1.5 m. thick. The shell-heaps seem to be quite extensive, and there is some reason to believe that although now there are only a couple of farmhouses in the neighbourhood, the place must have sustained far more people in neolithic times when the distant sea came in as far as this.

History. The shell-heaps here were first reported in 1887 by Mr. E. Uyeda in the *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Tokyo*. Later in 1907 and in 1915 members of the Society made excursions and on excavating a part of them, discovered human remains. Many other persons have visited the place hoping to find something of interest. Although such finds were occasionally reported, no complete list of them has ever been published. In the early part of 1924, Y. Koganei, A. Matsumura and other members of the Anthropological Institute of the Imperial University of Tokyo made quite an extensive excavation, in the course of which the remains of three human beings and a great quantity of relics were obtained. The discovery of even these few human remains is noteworthy as they have rarely been found, or at least reported, in this part of the country.

Shell-heaps. As has already been stated, the shell-heaps are mostly covered by forests and it is difficult to say exactly how extensive they are, but shells are exposed here and there in so wide an area that some regard them as the largest and foremost of all the shell-heaps in Japan. This is partly the reason why the Kasori shell-heaps came to be chosen for this particular excursion. The shell-heaps, however, are not continuous, nor evenly distributed, also thickness of the shell-layer varies from two metres to only a few centimetres. Yet as a rule, they are quite thick in the centre and become thinner toward the edges. That each heap is of considerable proportions can be seen from the fact that in 1924 about 80 square metres were excavated and yet some part was left untouched. These great shell-heaps suggest either a numerous population or else a long period of habitation. The fact that even within the same shell-heaps, some slight differences can be detected in the pottery and other things found may be taken as an indication of long occupation.

a) **Shells** found here are similar to those of most shell-heaps round Tokyo Bay. Some shells are often more abundant than others but here those of similar kind seem to be found more or less at one spot. The following shells are typical :

Ostrea gigas Thunb., *Arca inflata* Rve., *Meretrix meretrix* L., *Macra veneriformis* Desh., *Cyclina chinensis* Chem., *Dosinia tro-scheli* Lke., *Tapes philippinicum* Ad. et Rve., *Solen gouldi* Conr., *Mya arenaria* L., *Globulus costata* Val., *Polynices ampla* Phil., *Eburna japonica* Rve., *Rapana thomasiana* Cross., *Purpura luteostoma* Chem., etc.

b) **Artifacts:** Pottery. Finds are made on the surface, in the shell-bed, and in the earth below the shells. Most numerous are potsherds which though generally only fragments can, however, often be pieced together to give a general idea of the form. Various forms such as dishes, bowls, jars, tea-pots, etc., are found. They are all plain-baked and unglazed wares with mat-impressions over the surface and often with skeuomorphic designs raised or incised. Sometimes, but very rarely, specimens painted with red ochre or with the surface smoothed over, are met with. Besides pottery, clay human figures are also found.

Stone objects. Arrow heads, axes both polished and unpolished, and single or double headed, dishes and beads are found.

Bone and horn objects. Harpoon heads, awls, mouth-pieces and

other objects, the uses of which are not clear. They were chiefly made of the bones of deer and boar. Some unfinished objects and a great amount of animal as well as fish bones, horns, tusks, teeth, etc., are found.

Shell objects. Armlets, what seem to be girdle-ornaments, spoons, etc. Quite a number of armlets were found.

c) **Human remains.** One skeleton was found in 1924 in the soil below the shell-bed in an extended position while two others were in contracted position in the bed of shells. Burial in both positions seems to have been practised in neolithic times in Japan, and apparently the shell-heaps often became places of burial.

Concluding Remarks. When were these innumerable shell-heaps, of which the Kasori is only one example, formed in Japan? Who were the shell-heap people? These questions are difficult to answer. But this much is clear that the shell-heaps were left in prehistoric times by peoples of neolithic culture who were then widely spread over various parts of Japan; hence, their age may well be reckoned in thousands of years. The theory put forward by many anthropologists in Japan that they were left by the ancestors of the Ainus of today is steadily gaining ground.



Fig. 1. Kasori Shell-heaps.



Fig. 2. Near view of Spot B, showing various layers.

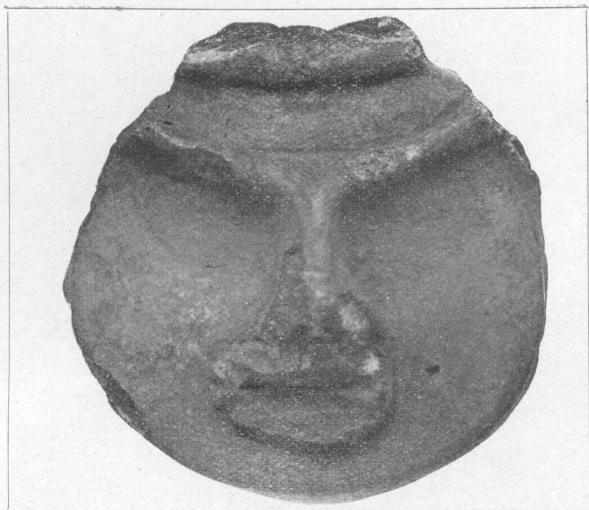


Fig. 3. Head of clay human figure.



Fig. 4. Pottery.

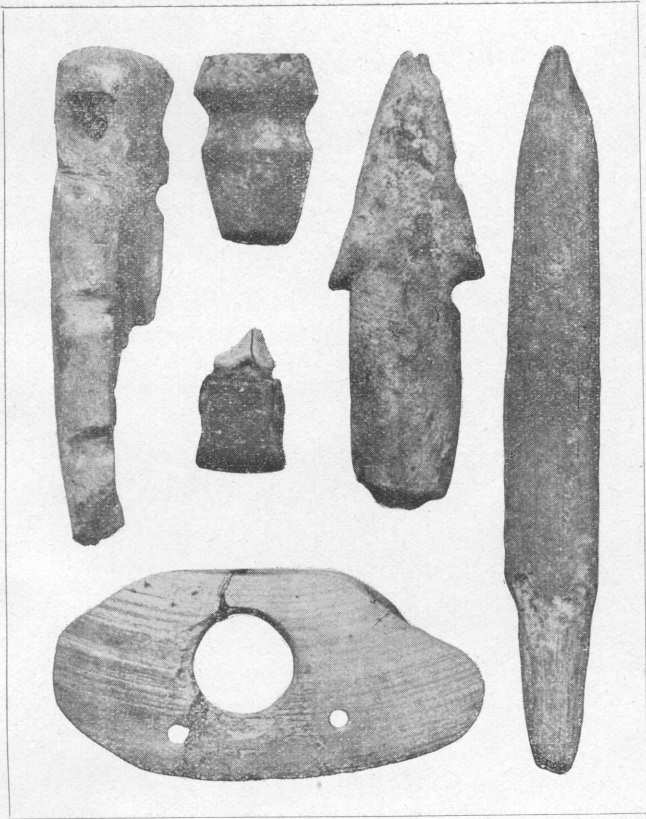


Fig. 5. Artifacts.

大正十五年十二月二十日印行
大正十五年十二月二十五日發行

第三回汎太平洋學術會議

印刷者 木 下 憲
東京市日本橋區兜町二番地
印刷所 東京印刷株式會社
東京市日本橋區兜町二番地
發賣所 東京地學協會
東京市京橋區木挽町九丁目二十九番地

Executive Office: Rooms of the National Research Council,
Department of Education, Tokyo

CABLE ADDRESS:—KENKYU, TOKYO.