

An Archaeological Settlement Analysis of Goshono Site

TAKADA Kazunori
YAMADA Masahisa

1. The Planar Distribution of Remains

Goshono is a late-Middle Jomon settlement site in Iwate Prefecture, Ninohe County, Ichinohe Town, Iwadate Goshono (Figure 1). Goshono is a medium-sized terrace plane located on the east bank of Mabechigawa River and consists of a long flat surface with remains located throughout the site. Archaeological excavations began in the fiscal year 1989 and, as of fiscal year 1996, the distribution of features has been ascertained over 60 percent of the total area, and of that 10 percent has been excavated in detail. Similar late Middle Jomon period remains were already found at Babatai site, located below the northwest cliff of Goshono site, which was excavated in 1977-1978.

Figure 2 is a distribution map of remains discovered up to 1993 from research at Goshono and Babatai sites. The independent features include pit house ruins (hereafter called dwelling remains) and pit burials, and also include discoveries of stone circle features, pillar buildings, graves, and an embankment feature, each of which display a particular arrangement. That is, the dwelling remains and pit burials are located throughout the site but are concentrated in four areas, three in the east, center, and west areas of Goshono site and one at Babatai site. The remaining features are largely limited to the central area, with the stone circles, graves, and pillar buildings in an area to the north of 80 meters east-west and 50 meters north-south, and in an area to the south is where the embankment feature and buried pottery was discovered. From the planar distribution of these features, the range of distribution of Middle Jomon period remains includes an area encompassing Goshono and Babatai sites 700 meters east-west and 200 meters north-south.



Figure 1 Middle Jomon Period Sites Surrounding Goshono



Figure 2 Distribution Map of Features at Goshono



Figure 3 Map of Different Areas of Goshono Site

Pottery excavated at Goshono and Babatai sites comes from the middle to end of the Middle Jomon period. This period of time is considered the overall duration of settlement and has been classified into five general phases I-V. Each of these phases and their relationship to pottery typology is as follows. Phase I is Upper-Entō-c style, Phase II includes Upper-Entō-d and -e as well as Daigi-8-a styles, Phase III is Daigi-8-b-style, Phase IV is Daigi-9 style, and Phase V is Daigi-10 style. While it is possible to further subdivide each of these phases, making as many as 10-12 phases, as the sorting of pottery remains incomplete the descriptions of each village (settlement) area is based on these five divisions Phase I-V.

The East Village

Dwelling remains and grave pits are particularly concentrated in the southeast part of the site. The remains of 187 dwellings has already been confirmed, but as there are still areas that have yet to be examined, the total is certain to be more than 250 dwellings. Of the dwelling remains, there are large size dwellings over 10 meters in length, medium sized dwellings between 5-7 meters, and small dwellings 3-4 meters, and the majority of these remains are overlapping. Pottery has been excavated from Phases II – V.

The Central Village

The northern part of the central area is a flattened terrace encompassing an area 80 meters east-west and 50 meters north-south, within which have been discovered two stone circle features and surrounding grave pits. Outside the area of stone circles and graves are the remains of one-bay (ikken) by two-bay (niken) pillar buildings (hottate bashira tatemono) that may possibly encircle this area. The southern part is raised 1-2 meters (an embankment feature) and encompasses an area 80-90 meters east-west and 30 meters north-south. Within this area a large amount of pottery and stone tools have been discovered alongside many burnt bones and charred plant remains, clay and stone artifacts, and cracked gravel as well as a fire pit and burnt earth. Dwelling remains and graves have been discovered outside the stone circles at the north side and below the embankment feature, with recent research having increased the total number of dwelling remains to 200-250. There are large, medium, and small dwelling remains, with the large dwellings distributed mainly to the east and west of the stone circles. Of these features, the pillar buildings and embankment feature are from after Phase III, whereas the dwelling remains and graves have been ascertained to come from after Phase II.

The West Village and Babatai Site

To the west of the central area there is a concentration of dwelling remains and graves. Remains of 50 dwellings have been discovered just in this west area, but as there are still areas yet to be examined it is likely the number of dwelling remains will range from 70 to 100. Similar large, medium, and small size dwelling remains that, based on excavated pottery, are found to come from Phase II to Phase V At Bababai site the 37 pit house ruins were detected. Pottery from Phase I through Phase III was unearthened, and as there are unexamined areas it is certain that the number of dwelling remains would be over 50 in total.

2. Examination of Dwelling Construction

The following reviews the construction of dwelling at each area of the site, beginning with the dwellings at Babatai site where research is the most complete. As mentioned above, research at Babatai has found 37 dwelling remains from Phase I through Phase III and, moreover, as dwelling remains in three occasions show the building was reconstructed at the same location and one of the dwelling remains was reconstructed twice, the total number is 41 buildings. These dwelling remains are distributed to the east and west of the research area, which is divided by a north-south running road, with 36 buildings to the east and 5 to the west. While the area beneath the road remains unexamined, the dwellings to the east consisting of 36 relatively densely grouping in an area of 70 meters north-south and 25 meters east-west. Lets begin by considering this group of dwellings.

In the eastern side of Babatai all of the recovered pottery corresponds to Phases II and III of the late-Middle Jomon period, with the exception of several shards that do not directly correspond with the dwelling remains from the Daigi-10 style and the mid Late Jomon period. From this evidence it is possible to limit the dwelling remains to this period. From the pottery remains it was possible to date 19 buildings, 12 from Phase II and 7 from Phase III. These 19 buildings consist of large size dwellings (over 70 square meters, middle size dwellings (10-25 square meters), and small size dwellings (under 10 square meters). Of the large-size dwellings there are 5 sets of remains, of which four are overlapping and one that was rebuilt and the middle and small size dwellings were detected surrounding these large size dwellings. Thus, one can presume that the composition of these remains consisted small and medium size dwellings surrounding one large size dwelling at a single time. Viewed from the perspective as a dwelling group, one can examine the details of each of the remains.

The remains of Phase III provide excellent conditions for examination. 7 dwelling remains from Phase III have been identified as B15, B16, C1, C3, C5, C10, and C13 (Figure 4). Of these, C1 was rebuilt 2 times and C3 was rebuilt once, increasing the total number of dwellings to 10. Without going into detail, while there was no excavated pottery remains, similarities in the form of the pit floor, distribution of postholes, and method of hearth construction make it likely that C12 and C15 were also from Phase III, increasing the total to 12 buildings. Of these 12 buildings, there are some that could not simultaneously coexist—such as C1 and C3 that were rebuilt or C1 and C5 that are contiguous to each other—and thus require a subdivision. Of these, the three dwelling remains C3 (new), B15, and C1 (new) each have kuroboku soil from after the Late Jomon period in Layer 1 of the sedimentary soil, below or within which final-Middle Jomon period Daigi-10 style pottery and mid-Late Jomon period pottery shards were recovered. From this, one can extract that these were the final three dwellings to be discarded in the eastern side of Babatai.

Next, I will examine the dwelling remains B16, C5, C13, and C10 that contain pottery remains from the same period as these three buildings. Of these four dwellings, C5 may be excluded because a bundle of pottery shards were recovered from a depression in the first soil layer and, moreover, slightly older pottery remains were recovered from the pit floor. Of the remaining three

buildings, B1 and C13 are both shallow, with only 10-15 centimeters of the pit wall remaining, making them impossible to compare from the sediment soil. Also, with building C10, while the pottery remains on the pit floor correspond with the former three dwellings, older pottery remains were excavated from the sedimentary soil, meaning that the layers were reversed. Rather, it could be that older pit sedimentary soil for some reason penetrated this area. Therefore, it is conceivable from the pottery remains that the three buildings B16, C13, and C10 were from a very close period to the three dwellings including C3 (new), although there is no clear evidence to determine if this group of dwellings created a set or not. Similarly, dwelling C15 has a similar pit floor form to B16, meaning that, while impossible to confirm, it may correspond with C3 (new).

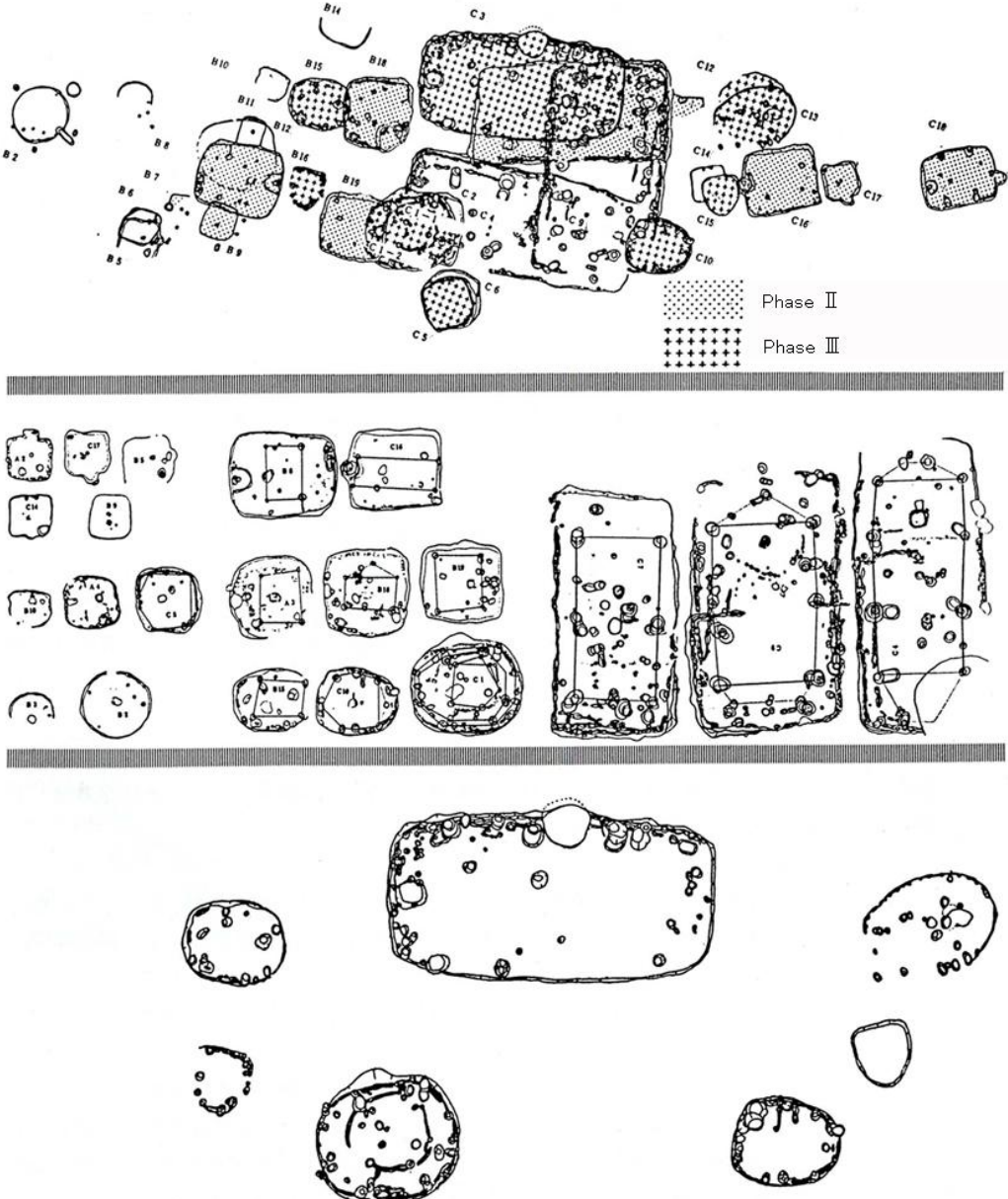


Figure 4 : Features at Babatai (Upper : Distribution of Features and Phases ; Middle : Division of Large, Middle, and Small Buildings ; Lower : Location of Phase III Buildings)

Chart 2 : Phase III Dwelling Remains Floor Areas

No.	Name	Area (m ²)	Classification				
				4	C 10	15.84	Middle
1	C 3	77.24	Large	5	C 1	23.55	Middle
2	C 13	17.20	Middle	6	B 16	5.0?	Small
3	C 15	4.94	Small	7	B 15	10.48	Middle

From the results of this analysis, an examination of the grouping of dwellings of this new Phase III found that the dwellings corresponding with the large size dwelling C3 (new) may either include two middle size dwellings B16 and C5 or be formed with two additional middle size dwellings C13 and C10 and two small size dwellings B16 and C15. That is, this dwelling group was comprised of, at the smallest, one large dwelling and two medium dwellings, or at the largest, one large, four medium, and two small dwellings. However, there are 2 large size dwellings from Phase III rebuilt in the same place, with as few as 10 medium and small size dwellings from Phase III associated with these 2 buildings, thus meaning it is very likely that for each large dwelling there were at least 4 or 5 associated medium and small dwellings. From this evidence, one can view the basic unit of dwellings during Phase III to consist of 1 large, 3-4 medium, and 1-2 small size dwellings. Incidentally, comparing the area of the buildings in this dwelling group, the large size dwelling C1 (new) is nearly equal to the corresponding 6 medium and small dwellings (Table 1). Thus it is likely that the large size dwelling served a function that required it to be similar in size to the other dwellings, or rather, built as a large dwelling that would allow all members of the settlement to gather together. This composition of large, medium, and small dwellings at Babadaira is not limited to Phase III but is almost the same in Phase II, and thus allows one to consider this the basic dwelling unit in the eastern settlement of Babatai.

3. Settlement Structure of Goshono Site

The investigation of the eastern side of Babatai. shows that the settlement is formed from dwelling groups of one large size dwelling surrounded by several medium and small size dwellings. The next question to consider is what the dwelling composition is like in Goshono. At Goshono site there are dense dwelling remains from Phase II in the East, West, Central area, and western side, each of which have a similar distribution and ratio of large size dwellings to that in Babatai.. Moreover, research of the large size dwellings from Phase II through Phase V has been conducted and found that shape of these dwellings has shifted over time from rectangular, rounded corner rectangular, oblong, egg-shaped, to circular shaped. While there are still remains that have yet to be fully investigated, it is likely that large size dwellings from each phase are located in each of these areas. In this respect, the dwelling composition of Babatai can be applied directly to the different areas of Goshono.

However, the central area of Goshono, which has the stone circle features and grave pits as well as the ritual spaces surrounding the embankment feature, allow one to view Goshono as constructed around this central ritual and burial area, whereas Babatai as well as the east, central, and west areas are dwelling zones. Of course, this spatial configuration developed after Phase III, and while the previous location of a similar burial area is still unknown, it is almost certain that the settlement was comprised of 2-3 coexisting dwelling groups located to the east and west of a common burial and ritual space. That is, the actual conditions of the settlement at Goshono consisted of several coexisting dwelling groups made up of 4-6 buildings with a large size dwelling as well as a communal burial area and ritual grounds.

Naturally, one can assume that the scale and composition of dwelling groups changed over time, and in the future if the structure and distribution of dwellings in each period becomes clearer, one may be able to predict the location of other facilities, such as roads, that did not leave any traces of remains. In this regard, the composition of dwelling groups, as well as the spatial range and distribution are critical factors. For example, the eastern side of Babatai has remains distributed over a range of 2,000 square meters, yet when limited to Phase III the range narrows to about 800 square meters. In the same place, the dwelling group from Phase II consists of 1,500 square meters, and Phase II and III have dwelling groups over a range of 800-1,500 square meters. Also, the east, central, west, and Babatai. are each separated by a distance of 60 to 120 meters, but entering Goshono Phase V remains are distributed throughout neighboring sites including Tanaka, Odaira, Komori, and Chigiri. However, in this period the central grave and ritual areas continue to function at Goshono, with dwelling groups constructed at far distances to these common grounds, and following this period all remains disappear.