

Jomon, Yayoi, and Ainu in Japan : Sacred Commonness : An Archaeobotanical Approach to Yayoi Social Stratification : The ‘Central Building Model’ and the Osaka Ikegami Sone Site

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CASE STUDY: ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH AT THE OSAKA IKEGAMI SONE SITE

The author took a part of the 1995 excavation of the Osaka Ikegami Sone central arena and collected carbonised plant remains by the flotation method. Based on the analyses, crop related activities at the central arena were reconstructed and the social meanings are discussed below.

1) The site profile

The Ikegami Sone site, a representative Yayoi large moated settlement, is located on the Osaka Bay coast in the Kinki region (Figure 14). The area was one of the hubs of Yayoi culture, presumably due to its accessibility to Continental Asia and other Yayoi core areas. The settlement appears to have been first constructed in Yayoi Phase I and lasted till Phase IV (Ishigami 1977). Particularly during Phase II – IV, it became one of largest Yayoi moated settlements and at its greatest extent in the Phase IV, the whole sphere occupied 600,000 m² with an enclosed residential area of 110,000 m² (Inui 1996a: 18–20). The population at the time has been estimated at 500 to 750, but some argue that it reached 1,000 or even more (Inui 1998: 138–139). In addition, it has been shown that the Ikegami Sone was a regional centre surrounded by satellite settlements (Figure 15), alongside other central settlements of the area, located approximately every 4 – 5 km (Inui 1998). Archaeological research has suggested that, as the regional centre, this settlement controlled the circulation of raw materials of limited availability for commodities such as stone knives, though it did not reach the level of specialised manufacturer (Hachiya 1983; Sakai 1986). Archaeological patterning also suggests that the Ikegami Sone economy was based on reciprocal exchanges with other settlements, besides farming, and *iidako* octopuses were exported as the local specialty of the Osaka Bay (Kuze 1989).

In the 1995 excavation, the central building of 133 m² (19.4 m × 7.2 m) and the accompanying large well (2 m in diameter) with a roof structure were discovered in the centre of the enclosed residential area (Kambayashi 1996) (Figure 16). The central building has four ridgepole-pillars: two free-standing and two inner-building. In terms of the style and proportion, the building is believed to have been in the raised-floor style with a gable roof 9 m high at the apex, and a raised-floor 4 m high (Inui 1999) (Figure 17).

The excavations revealed that the central building was rebuilt three or four times in the same position within a comparatively short term: from the late Phase III to Phase IV (Akiyama and Kobayashi 1998: 10) (Figure 18; Table 5). Construction of the large well that goes with the building is estimated to have taken place in early Phase IV, based on the typology of pottery shards found in the outer fill of the well frame. This is the same time as when the second central building was constructed, and at that point the well appears to have also been rebuilt in the same position as the central building was rebuilt. This indicates that the central building and the well

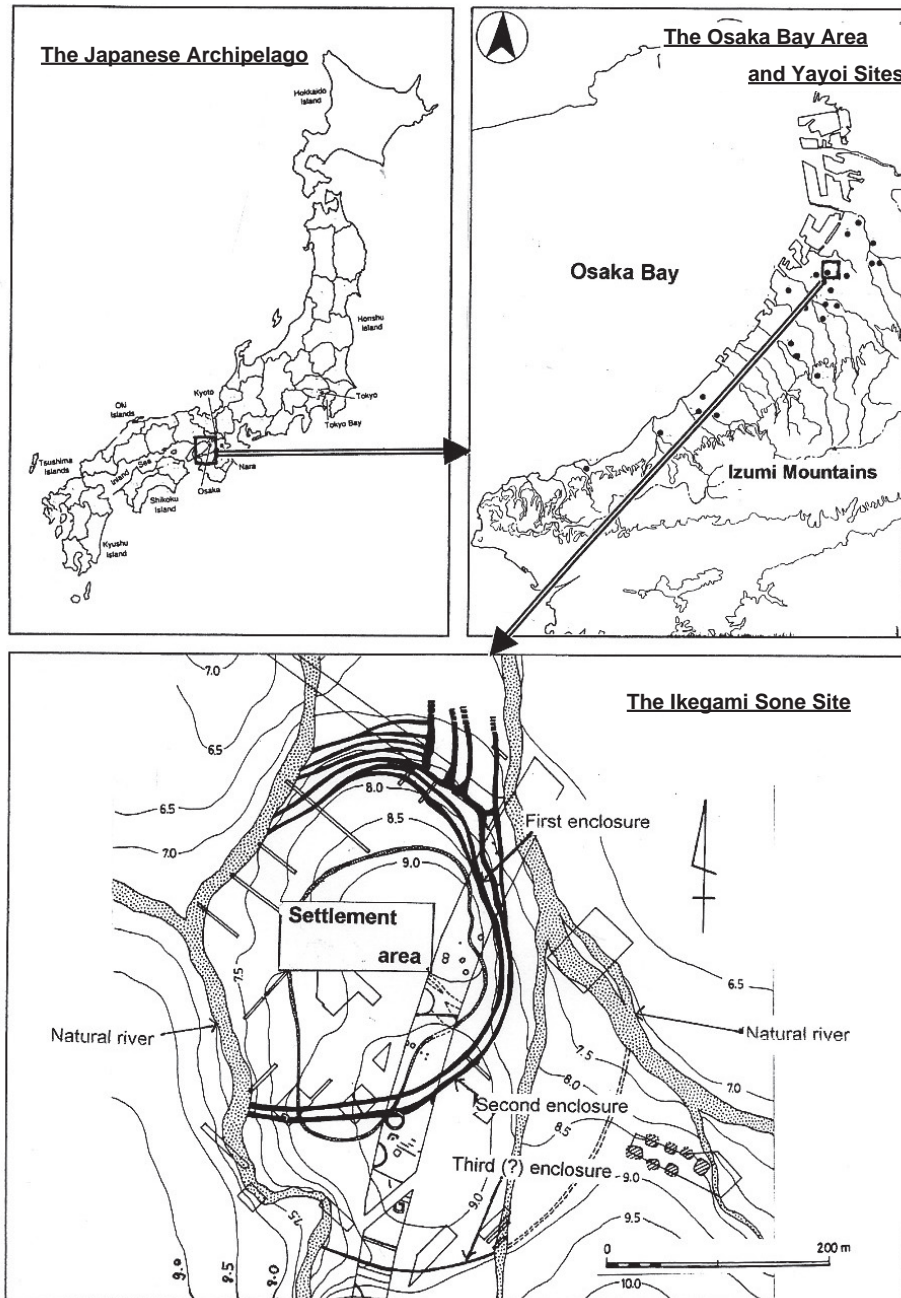


Figure 14 The Ikegami Sone Site (1).

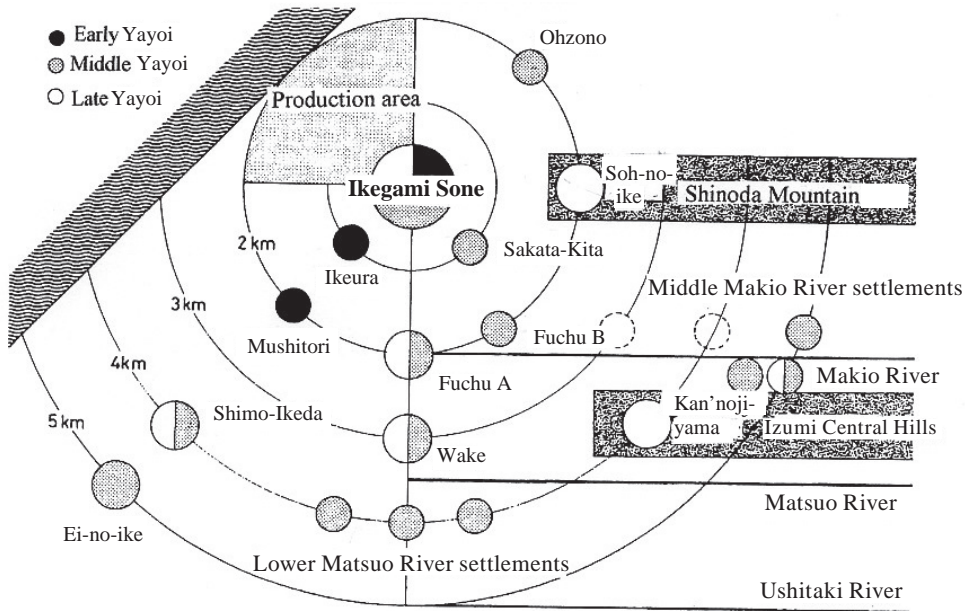


Figure 15 The Ikegami Sone Site and the Settlement Complex (From Inui 1996a).

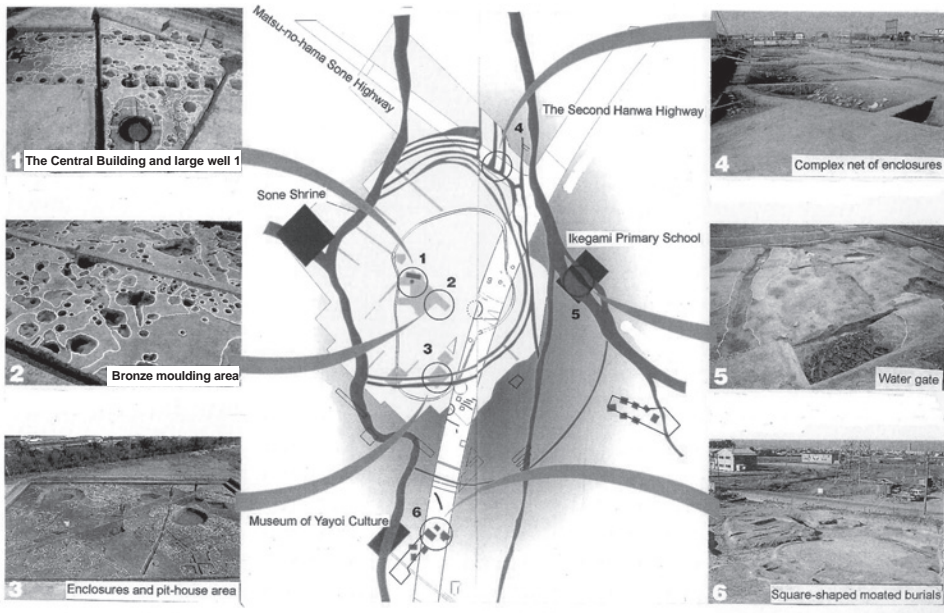
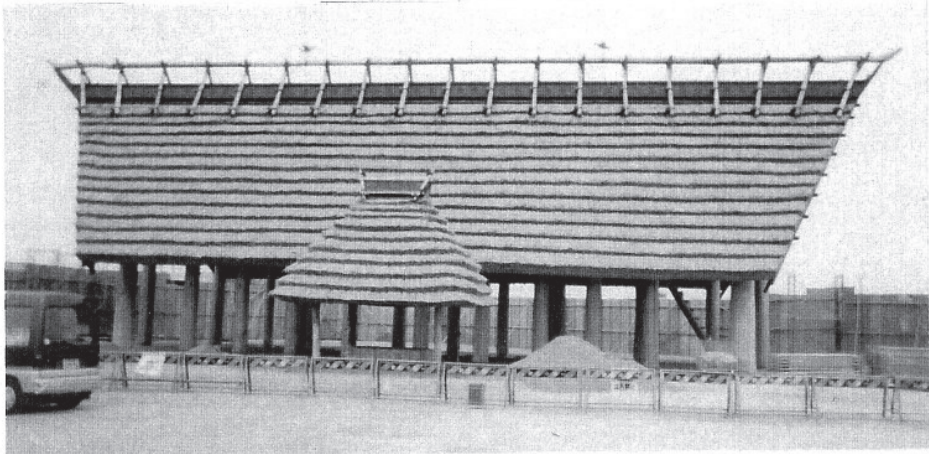


Figure 16 The Ikegami Sone Site (2) (From the Ikegami Sone Site Committee 1996).



Ridgepole-pillar

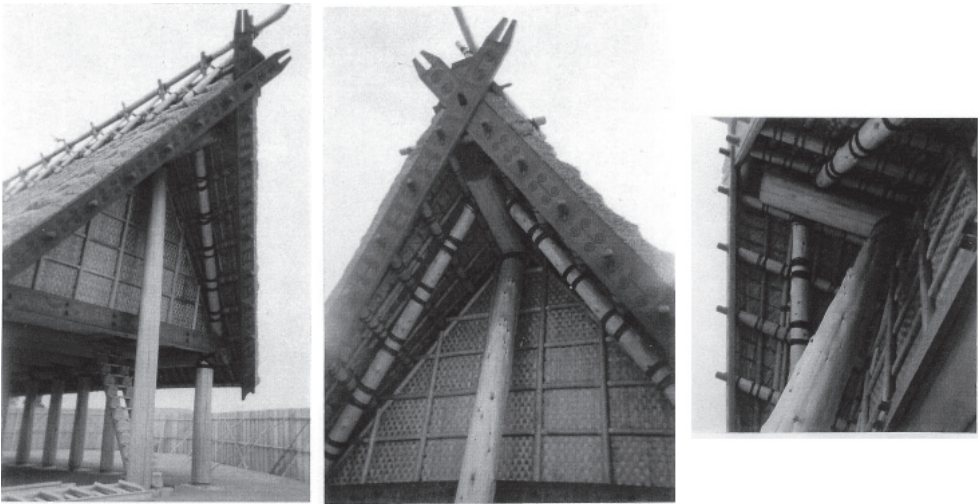


Figure 17 Reconstruction of Ikegami Sone Central Building.

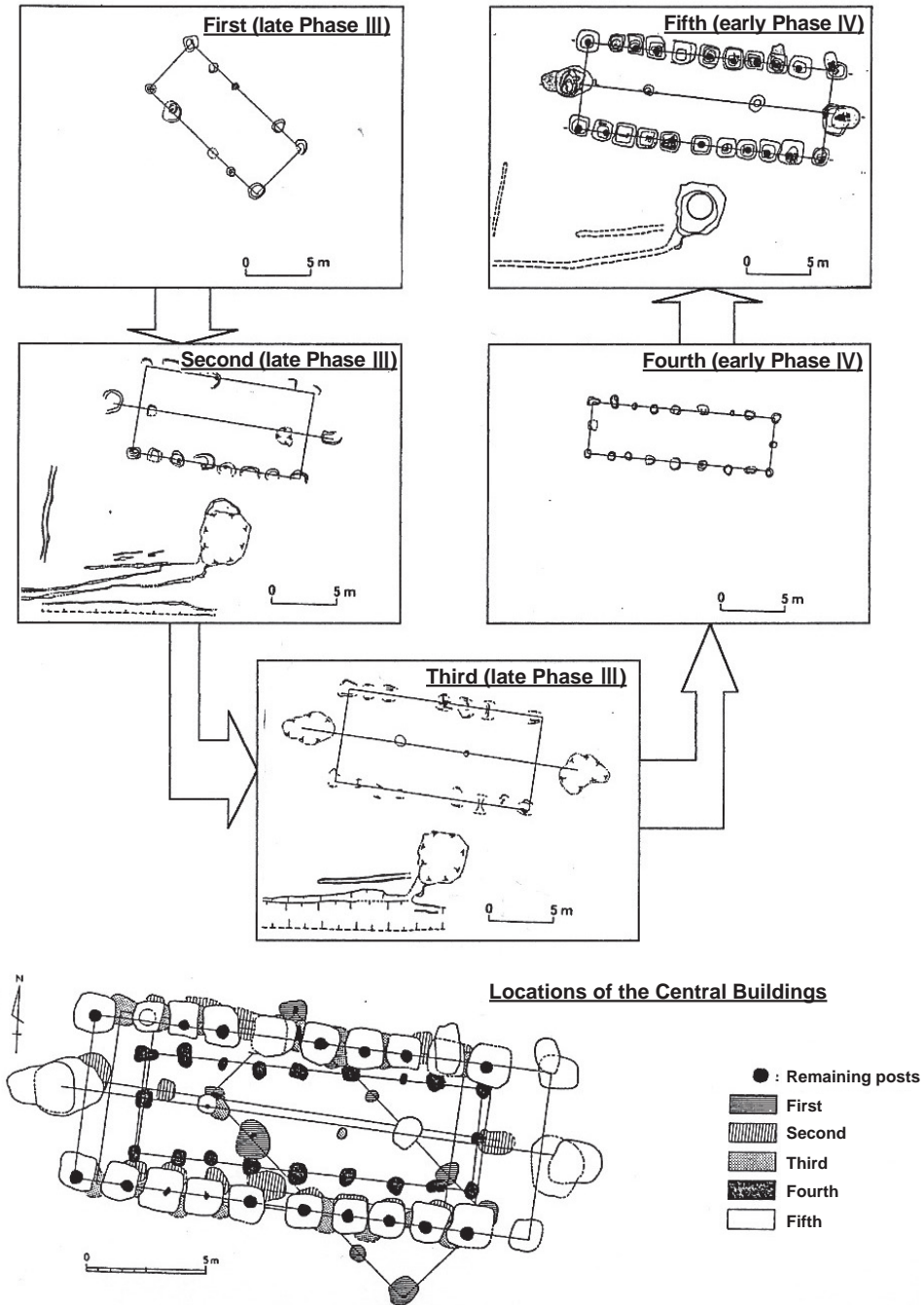


Figure 18 The Rebuilding of the Ikegami Sone Central Buildings.
 (From Osaka Heritage Centre 1999)

Table 5 Central Buildings.

	Date	Scale (m ²)	Posts (No.)	Ridgepole pillars
First	IV-2 (late Phase III)	55	12	-
Second	〃	87	16	4
Third	〃	109	18	4
Fourth	IV-3 (early Phase IV)	57	20	-
Fifth	〃	133	22	4
Abandonment	IV-4 (late Phase IV)			

were related facilities (Akiyama and Kobayashi 1998: 10). Eventually both facilities seem to have been abandoned at the same time, namely late Phase IV (Heritage Ikegami Sone Site Preservation Committee 1996: 24–25).

The space for the central building, *i.e.* the central arena, is demarcated from the pit-house area in south by a natural ‘valley’ (a linear dent) (Akiyama and Kobayashi 1998) (Figure 19). There is no common type of pit house within the central arena, but *hottate*-pillar buildings and several characteristic types of features have been found (Figure 20), such as pits of unfinished stone knives (Akiyama 1999a) and features related to bronze-moulding (Izumi City Education Committee 1998). In addition, two shards of pottery with pictures were found in the central arena, while two others were found in the residential area. The two found in the residential pit house area show deer (Phase IV) and a dragon (Phase V), whereas the two in the central arena both show buildings (Inui and Akiyama 1996) (Figure 21). Within the central arena, both shards were associated in particular with the central building spatially: one was found 20m south of the central building (Inui and Akiyama 1996) and the other in a pit of the central building (Akiyama *et al.* 1997: 31). The former picture (Figure 21: Building 1) shows a raised-floor building constructed of at least nine posts on one side and a gable roof. The latter (Figure 21: Building 2) shows a raised-floor building constructed with four-posts on one side and a gable roof, and special accessories: a balcony, roof decorations and a ladder with a handrail. These images are unique and are thought to depict the existing buildings of the Ikegami Sone central arena (Akiyama *et al.* 1997: 36; Inui 1999: 43). The shard with a picture of 4-post building (Building 2) is dated at early Phase IV based on the typology. The pit in which this shard was found is estimated to be older than the post holes of the existing central building. Thus, it is thought that the shard is from the time just prior to construction of this building (Akiyama *et al.* 1997: 40). On the other hand, the other shard (Building 1) is also dated Phase IV, and judging by the scale and style of the depicted building, it is assumed to be a representation of the existing central building (Inui 1999: 43). Their apparent association with the central building in Ikegami Sone provides substantial support for the argument that there is a relationship between the building depicted on the pottery and the actual central building.

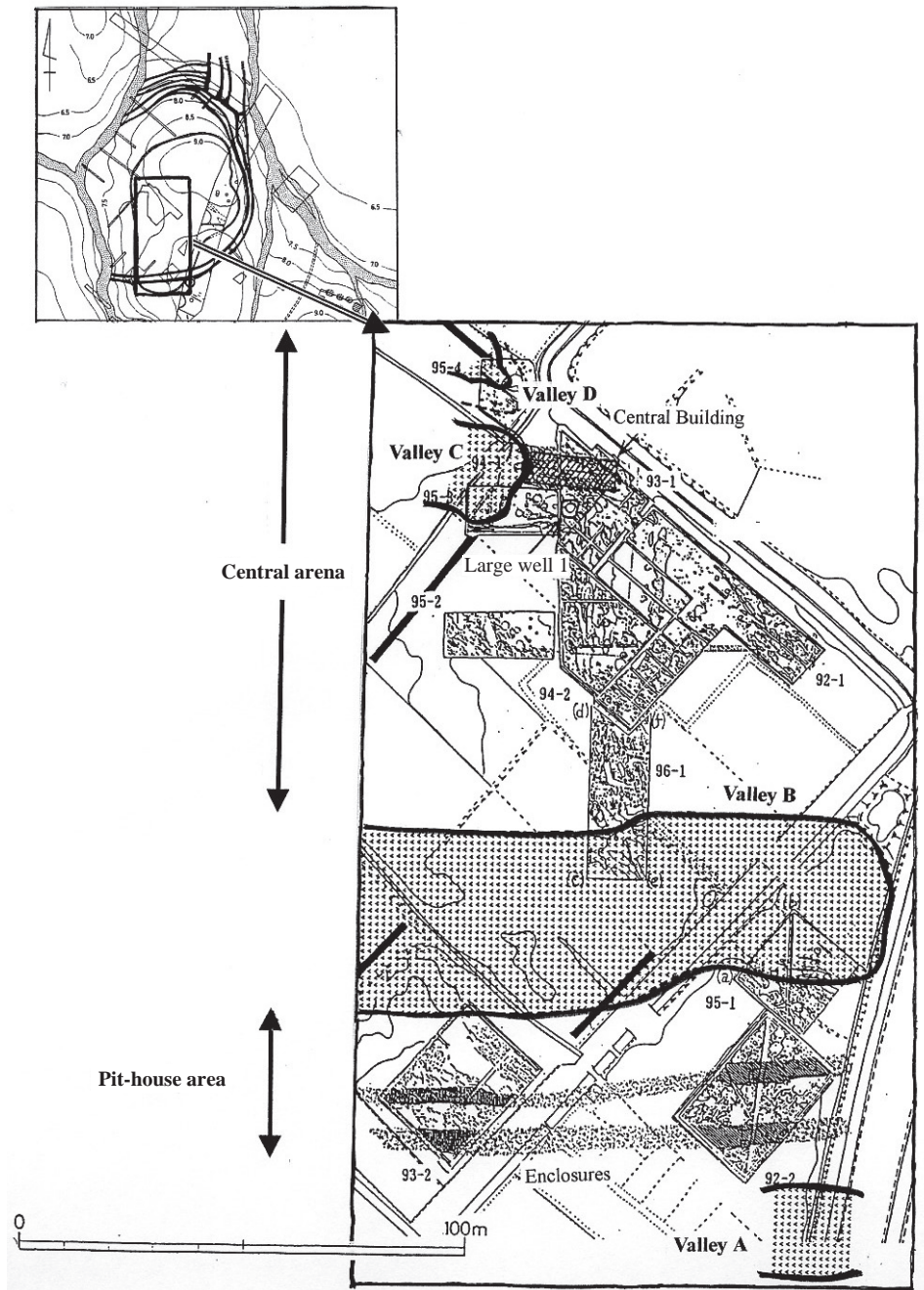


Figure 19 The Ikegami Sone 'Valleys'.
(From Akiyama and Kobayashi 1998)

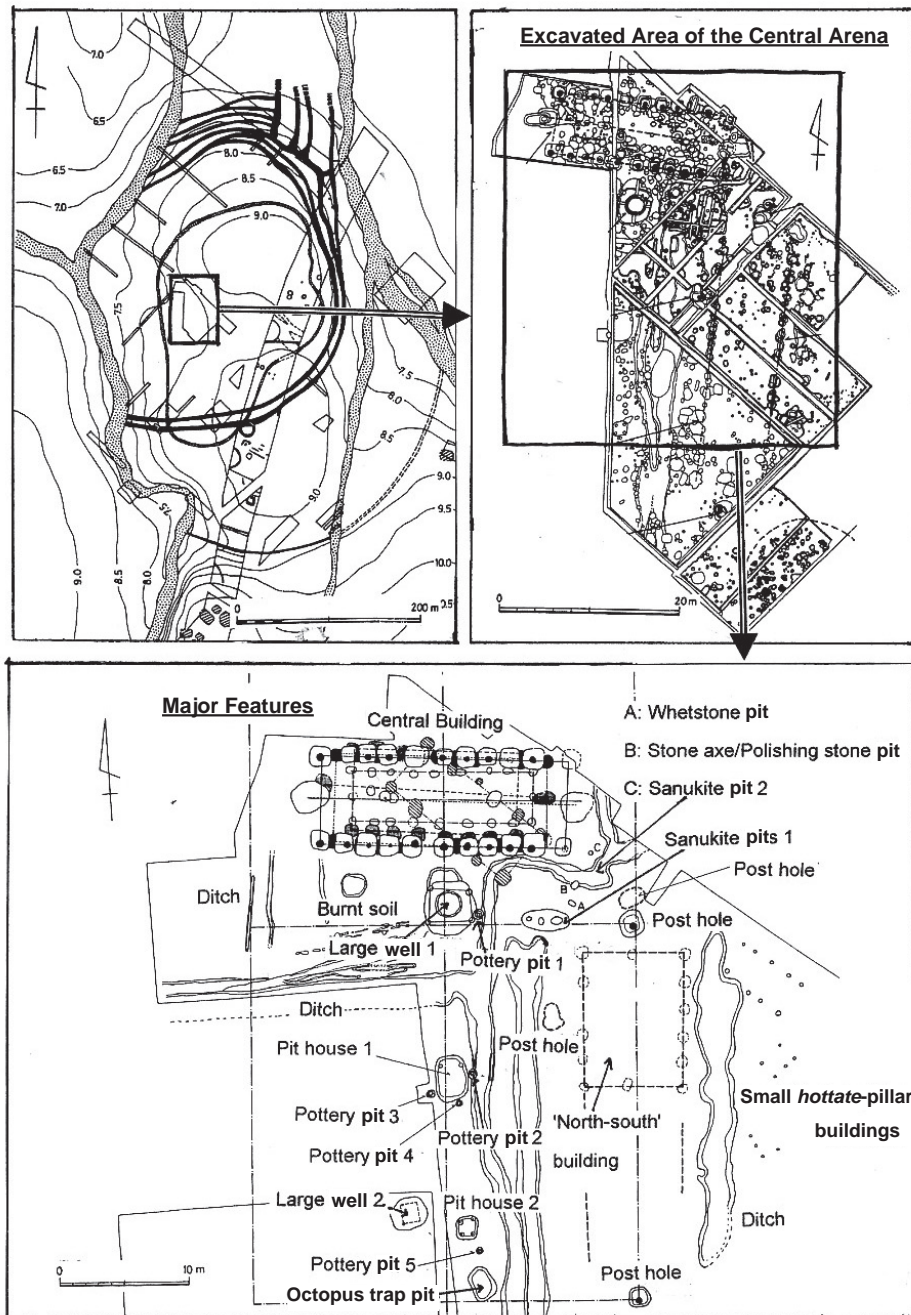


Figure 20 The Ikegami Sone Central Arena.

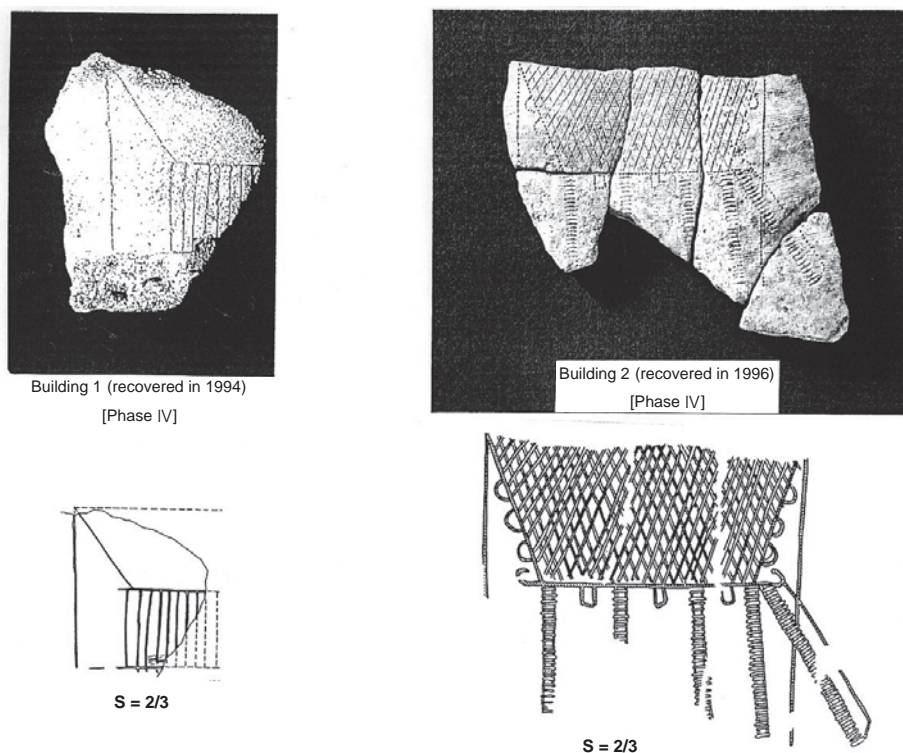


Figure 21 Ikegami Sone Pottery Iconography (From Heritage Ikegami Sone Preservation Committee 1997).

2) Sampling area and strategy

In the 1995 excavation, 750 m² of the central arena was excavated. The excavated area was divided in two sections: Area I and Area II (Figure 22). Area I included the central building and a large well, and also a characteristic pit containing a large pottery jar in an upright position with the edge and bottom removed. The function of this pit as ritualistic or as a small well has been a topic of discussion. (Akiyama 1999b; Inui 1999). In addition, previous excavations revealed an group of three pits east of the large well, that contained a large amount of Sanukite⁸⁾ flakes which had been prepared for making stone knives (Figure 23); a stone axe and a polishing stone; and a whetstone—all of which comprise the whole set of stone knife making components (Inui 1999) (Figure 20). As mentioned above, the archaeological evidence has suggested that the Ikegami Sone community did not reach the level of specialised manufacturer of tools. Instead, these features probably indicate a control centre for circulating rare materials over the region, in a state ready for the making of stone knives (cf. Hachiya 1983; Sakai 1986).

Area II includes three groups of features. Two of those groups are assemblies of a small pit house (3.6 m × 2.4 m) (not believed to have been for residential use due

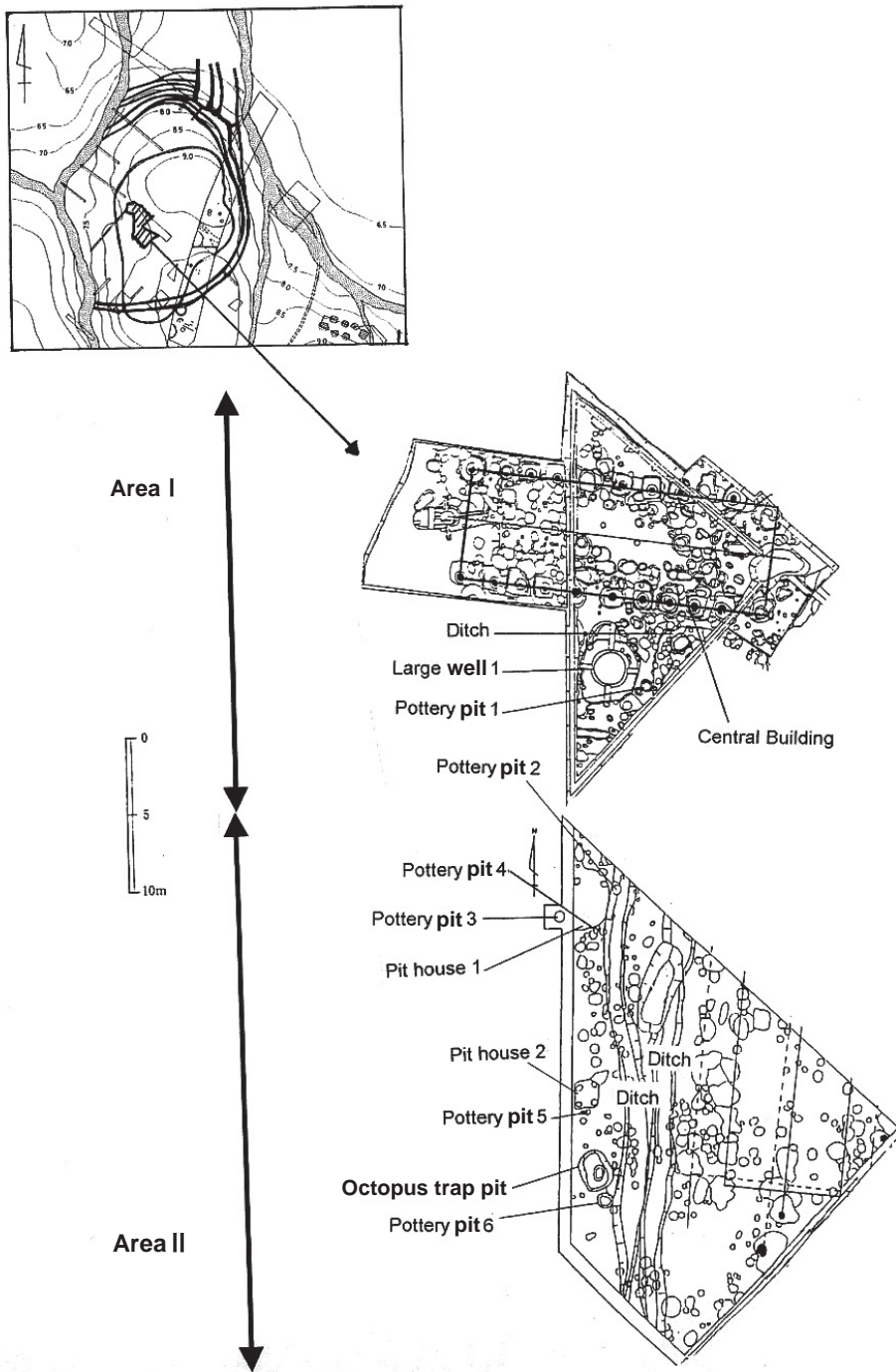


Figure 22 Sampling Areas in the Ikegami Sone Central Arena.