

Nangō site group

This is a composite of remains from the Jōmon to Muromachi periods, located in the city of Gose in the southwest portion of the Nara basin. The sites spread out over a sloping alluvial fan ranging from 140–250 m in elevation at the eastern base of Mt. Kongō, and the higher portions provide a sweeping view over the Nara basin. Narrow valleys formed by tributaries of the Katsuragi river split the level area, and it is hardly an environment where the living is easy.

But in such surroundings there was a huge settlement that is particularly well-known for the Middle and Late Kofun periods. While features already existed from prior ages, these were greatly exceeded in scale by the various facilities which spread across a 1-km range at the start of the Middle Kofun period, giving the sense of sudden emergence. The contents of this Kofun period settlement divide broadly into an early phase from the first half to the middle portion of the fifth century, and a late phase from the latter portion of the fifth to the sixth centuries.

It is one of the strongholds of the forces of the Katsuragi region, and located nearby are the Muro Miyayama tomb, the largest keyhole-shaped mound in the Katsuragi region, along with a vital location on transport routes at the intersection of the north–south road crossing the Kazenomori pass and the east–west route traversing the Mizukoshi pass.

In the early phase, taking as its economic base a craft industry having as core the production of iron implements, carried forth by immigrants from the Korean peninsula, facilities divide into the following groups.

- 1 Ritual-related facilities. From high to low locations at the southern edge of the site group are the Gokurakuji Hibiki site (on a cobble-faced square projection, a large-scaled embedded-pillar building identical to house-shaped *haniwa*, fronted with a plaza), the Nangō Ōhigashi site (water conducting facilities with a large-scale wooden pipe reaching 4 m in length, as represented in *haniwa*), and the Nangō Yashida site (with the largest building in the archipelago at the time, but with no plaza), lining up east–west, where a series of rituals were carried out to integrate the region, as represented in *haniwa*.
- 2 Craft-related facilities. At a high point on the western edge of the site group, a compound artisan workshop (making luxury products using silver, copper, iron, deer antler decorated with designs of intersecting straight and curved lines, and so forth) of the Nangō Kadota site was set up, and at various places within the site group production unfolded of iron implements, stone and glass beads, etc.
- 3 Residential sector for classes of moderate status. Located in the central portion of the site group with mid-scale buildings as the core, such as the large-walled buildings of the Nangō Yanagihara site and the embedded-pillar buildings of the Ido Igara site, it is thought that groups engaged in craft production were brought together for residence here.
- 4 Residential sector for the general populace. Centered on its northern area, clusters with pit structures as their main components were located at various places across the site group, and are thought to

have been primarily for persons engaged in the craft production.

In the later phase, large-walled buildings were erected at all locations, as the settlement underwent a major transformation to one led by immigrants with intellectual rather than technical skills. Starting this off, a large group of storehouses (the Ido Otada site) was erected at a high location, and features of elite residences (the Oida Hinokimoto site) were built at a lower spot, and residential sectors for classes of moderate status of immigrants with intellectual skills and sectors for the general populace were built at various places.

The results of the above investigations regarding settlements of the Kofun period have made significant academic contributions to clarifying the conditions of settlements under the command of elites, which had been largely enigmatic, and for considering the nature of elite residences and early cities.

In addition to the above, other finds draw attention such as the Shimochaya Jizōdani site where a splendid assemblage of pottery for the end of the Middle to the start of the Late Jōmon periods has been recovered along with wooden tablets and other Ancient period materials, and the Hakanabe tomb with a square mound built on a half-scale plan of that of the Ishibutai tomb.