

# Japanese medieval trading towns: Sakai and Tosaminato

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## ABSTRACT

*Trade was essential to the development of urban forms in medieval Japan. In this paper, Richard Pearson introduces discoveries at two important medieval trading centres: Sakai, in the Kinai region, comprising the modern prefectures of Osaka, Nara and Kyoto, the longest established urban areas in Japan; and Tosaminato, headquarters of the Ando clan at the northern tip of the main Japanese island of Honshu, centre for the northern trade with Hokkaido.*

**KEYWORDS:** Medieval archaeology, trade, urban archaeology, Sakai, Tosa Minato

## Editor's note (by Simon Kaner)

This paper is based on a presentation originally delivered at a conference in 2004 in Norwich, UK organized by the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures on the 'Archaeology of Medieval Towns in Japan and Europe.' A volume arising from this and subsequent research will be published later in 2016 under the title of *The Archaeology of Medieval Towns: Case Studies from Japan and Europe*, edited by Brian Ayers, Simon Kaner and Richard Pearson, and published by Archaeopress of Oxford. Pearson's paper refers to research undertaken up to the later 2000s.

The paper is divided into two main sections. The first part is a review of the historical and social background to the rise of medieval urban centres in Japan in general. Pearson identifies a series of major social and economic trends which underlay the development of towns: village nucleation; trade, with a particular focus on ceramics and coinage; changes in land tenure and local government; the development of new economic institutions including the appearance of shipping agents who acted as middle men between the rural estates which produced commodities and the markets, and co-operative guilds; changes in the composition of social classes, most notably the rise of the provincial warrior class and an urban merchant class; and changes in religion important for understanding the development of urban areas around temples of shrines.

The second section of the paper presents detailed summaries of the archaeological discoveries at Sakai and Tosaminato, which are related to the social and economic trends

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Category: Original Article (Solicited) Accepted: 10 March 2016

discussed in the first section. Combined with the results of the broad area excavations at Kusado Sengen on the Inland Sea coast, these summaries introduce the reader to the diversity in medieval Japanese trading towns and to the factors which led to their development and demise.

The medieval history of Sakai and the Osaka region where it is located have been previously discussed in English by Wakita Haruko (Wakita 1999) and V. Dixon Morris (1977). Pearson's paper demonstrates how much the archaeological record of these port cities adds to the historical sources. This is the first time the results of the investigations at Tosaminato have been presented in detail in English. Pearson will shortly be publishing a new, fuller account of the archaeology of Osaka and Sakai, under the title of *Osaka Archaeology* (Oxford: Archaeopress, forthcoming).

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## **Introduction**

In this paper I discuss some of the major historical and archaeological trends in the rise of towns in the Japanese islands, relating them to the moated trading centre of Sakai, near Kyoto and Osaka, and Tosaminato, the trading town of the Ando Clan and centre for northern trade on the Tsugaru Peninsula, Aomori Prefecture.

Although there had been a long standing interest in medieval artifacts such as coins and ceramics, major excavations of medieval sites in Japan began with Kusado Sengen-cho, Fukushima City in 1961 (Matsushita 2000) (Figure 1). By the 1980s wide area excavation of many different kinds of sites all over Japan resulted in a proliferation of important publications such as the series, *Yomigaeru Chusei* (The Rise of the Middle Ages) (Amino *et al.* 1994). In 1991 Maekawa challenged earlier criticisms that the field had not yet reached a stage where summarisation and generalisation could be achieved (Maekawa 1991) and in the following decade Japanese medieval archaeology matured into a well developed area of study with a substantial literature and recent reviews (Sakazume 2000 and Ono 2001). In many prefectures medieval sites now constitute the largest category of sites excavated in government-funded salvage projects. From the 1990s there was been a trend to produce an archaeologically derived view of social history, with the co operation of historians. This can be seen in the annual publication, *Chusei Toshi Kenkyu* (The Study of Urban Centers).

The medieval period can be seen as an interlude between two periods of unification

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Figure 1. Map of Japan showing major sites mentioned in the text

of the 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> centuries and the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the present. During this time there was a decline in the central authority of the Japanese (Yamato) state and the rise of local powers. The period is also marked by the development of separate realms of military and sacral power and the rise of warrior and merchant classes. From 1470 to 1570 Japan was wracked by internal strife and shifting power among local rulers loyal to the central power and those seeking local autonomy. This is the time period of the building of fortified castles in Japan, termed the Warring States period (*sengoku jidai*). The medieval period came to an end with unification under military rulers, whose power was consolidated in the Tokugawa period (1600–1867). Despite the political upheavals which occurred throughout the medieval period, there were three centuries of economic growth between 1250 and 1550 (Totman 2000, pp. 160–175). State control was very loose in

the northern parts of Honshu; Hokkaido and Okinawa were economically linked to the centre but were politically independent. Regional diversity and varying rates of change are very important aspects of the study of medieval Japan. The cultural and political conditions under which towns arose were extremely diverse, a wide variety of what are termed urban forms (*toshi*) being produced by multiple processes (Ishii 2000).

## **Major social and economic trends in medieval Japan**

### **Village nucleation and the rise of towns and cities**

Maekawa (1998) has identified a process by which villages coalesced and increased their administrative, service, handicraft, and religious roles, becoming multifunctional regional centers. He has termed this process *sonshuka*, which he has translated as nucleation. It is a process of coalescence or agglomeration which creates regional nuclei. A trend toward nucleated rural villages began in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and progressed rapidly during the 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was driven by the expansion of arable land and irrigation systems by farmers who had previously lived in isolated farmsteads (Maekawa 1998, Yamakawa 1998). Maekawa identified three trajectories of nucleation of late medieval villages (1998, pp. 45). One of these led to the creation of residential forts (*jokan*), a second to the development of villages which persist into the present and a third led to the development of urban centres. The development of the residential fort can be seen in the structure of the 16<sup>th</sup> century site of Ichijodani, Fukui Prefecture. In this site the internal land divisions (*tansaku*) are relatively small. They are the units given to local samurai groups, and vary according to the social status of the samurai. Maekawa (1998) considered the appearance of the long narrow *tansaku* pattern of land tenure as a key indicator of urban life and the presence of artisans and merchants who were dependent on farmers for their food. The third type, the urban commercial centre can be seen in the Kusado Sengen-cho site in the 13<sup>th</sup> to early 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the ancient period it was already a local capital and in the medieval period it formed from a number of villages who shared a market. These nucleated settlements took different forms in different parts of Japan (Maekawa 1997).

By at least the 13<sup>th</sup> century, town-like or urban features can be found archaeologically in relatively remote areas such as Yanagigoshō, the administrative capital of the Northern Fujiwara polity in Hiraizumi, Iwate Prefecture (Maekawa 2000, pp. 93). The site lies in northeastern Japan, the 'Eastern Country' known in Japanese as *Togoku*. It was relatively remote from the administrative centre of Kyoto. In the *Togoku* area at the end of the ancient and in the early medieval periods there were rectangular garrisons which secured the power of the central authority. They housed administrators, craftsmen, and religious practitioners. These sites were surrounded by moats and earth ramparts and contained

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dwellings, a flat assembly area, and in some cases a Buddhist temple.

In the late 13<sup>th</sup> century there was a proliferation of port towns along the Inland Sea, such as Kusado Sengen, and Sakai. In northern Kyushu Hakata was the main port for the China trade. In the Kinai region, comprising the modern prefectures of Osaka, Kyoto and Nara, early centres of the 14<sup>th</sup> century show evidence of iron working. It appears that artisans lived around elite residences (*yashiki*) in a dependent relationship since workshops have been found around the edges of elite residences. Communities were also built around temples (*monzenmachi*).

The development of a commercial sector can be seen in the site of Kusado Sengen beginning in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, It has characteristics of both a port town and a temple town since it was the site of a substantial temple, the Teifukuji, built around 1321. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century it consisted of a rectangular group of residences and a cemetery of cairn burials. The chronology of the site can be divided into four periods. From the mid 13<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century there was a main road running north to south. From the 14<sup>th</sup> century an area of long narrow lots was found as well as evidence of brewing, iron working, circulation of coins, and lacquer production. The number of houses declines in the early to mid 15<sup>th</sup> century and there was rapid decline in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Ono 2001, pp. 48).

One of the most significant new urban developments of the Muromachi period was the building of castle towns (*jokamachi*) by local leaders involved in territorial struggles (*sengoku daimyo*). By the late Muromachi period, castles were no longer built on defensible peaks but were situated on plains where daimyo could combine defence with control. These communities included warriors, merchants, and craftsmen. Earlier fortified castles were demolished. By the late 16<sup>th</sup> century large numbers of villages in the Kinai were surrounded by ditches and moats. The latter were used not only for defence but also as important parts of irrigation systems.

Up to this point we have been discussing regional centres. During the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries the population of the primal city of Kyoto was over 200,000, making it one of the world's largest cities of its time. The population of London at this time is said to have been 50,000 (Yamamura 1990, pp. 377).

### Trade

Medieval Japanese towns and cities served as redistribution centres. In this section I outline several of the major turning points of trade between China and Japan and summarize two of the commodities, ceramics and coinage. The first stage of the development of the medieval economy and society of Japan is linked to the rise of the Song economy in China. From the 10<sup>th</sup> century the pace of commercial development quickened in China and in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries private traders from China came

to the Japanese port of Hakata. By the late Heian Period, trade, mostly private, was conducted by elites through ports in northern Kyushu and Japan became part of the East Asian trading sphere. Song ships came to Dazaifu and traded with representatives of various temples and shrines and their attached estates. Little trade was carried out by the central government. From the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century the most important centre for trade was the Dazaifu Korokan, set up especially for interaction with foreign traders. There was an increasing inflow and use of coins before the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, although many rural people still exchanged goods without the use of coins. The volume of Chinese ceramics flowing to Japan increased dramatically in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, reaching a peak in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. It declined in the 15<sup>th</sup> century but was resumed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Trade in Chinese goods included works of art and antiques as well as coins and ceramics. The renewal of continental contacts, which had begun in the late Heian period, was fuelled by a demand for Chinese objects by political and religious elites, particularly under the rule of the Ashikaga family of military rulers (Totman 2000, pp. 175).

### **Coinage**

Throughout the medieval period Japan used Chinese copper coins as the medium of exchange; therefore it was a crucial import (Totman 2000, pp. 153). Huge amounts of Song coins were imported, despite Chinese official prohibition in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century (Yamamura 1990, pp. 358). In the 15<sup>th</sup> century the Ming court sent Japanese leaders diplomatic gifts of millions of coins (Atwell 2002, pp. 86; Collcutt 1983, pp. 174). From 1404 Ashikaga Yoshimitsu opened up trade with Ming dynasty China, accepting from the Chinese the title of 'King of Japan.' There were only nineteen missions between 1404 and 1549, when the Ming terminated these missions because of internal confusion in China and piracy along the coast. In the transition from the Medieval period to the Modern period in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Tokugawa government prohibited the use of Chinese coinage and minted its own currency in gold, silver, copper and later, iron denominations.

The Sin'an shipwreck of the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, found near Mokpo, Korea, contained 8.1 tons of Chinese coinage, some eight million coins (Information Section 1984, Kokuritsu 1998a, pp. 60). It is said to have belonged to the Tofukuji Temple, Kyoto. Dramatic hoards of Chinese coins have been found in Hokkaido and the main Japanese Islands, but are virtually absent in the Ryukyu Islands. In addition to chance finds such as the discovery in 1968 of around 450,000 Chinese coins dating from Han times to 1368 at Shinori near Hakodate, Hokkaido (Nagai 1994, pp. 16) there are now several cases of large quantities of coins from controlled excavations (Kurihara 2000). A few examples will convey the scale of these finds. Some 77 percent of the coins in the caches are from

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the Northern Song (960–1127) (Suzuki 1999, pp. 59). In Kusado Sengen Cho two finds were made. One, weighing nineteen kilogrammes, was comprised of five thousand coins while the other consisted of 12,595 coins. All of the coins were dated before 1368, the beginning of the Ming Dynasty. From Niigata, at Ishiusu, near Kamitate Castle and the Senpukuji Temple, 271,784 coins were found in association with architectural features and ceramics. There were 82 types of coins on strings of between 92 and 99 coins each, the latest being the Korean Chosen Tsuho type, dated to 1423. From Namioka Castle in Aomori, privately minted Chinese coins were also recovered (Suzuki 2002).

Suzuki (1999) gathered data from 275 cases of hoards totaling 3,530,000 coins. Four prefectures, Akita, Shimane, Kochi, and Okinawa are not included in his survey since their data were not yet compiled. He concluded that the coins were used in commerce and for paying soldiers. They were buried primarily for security, while a few instances were ritual or votive deposits. He concluded that most of the coins were transported to Japan in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and that the hoarding peaked in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, declining in the latter half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. He cites historical records of transactions in feudal manors (*shoen*) which show that the use of currency increased in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, in comparison to rice or textiles. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century coins of Yongle Tongbao type were specially favoured for commercial transactions.

Both Chinese coins and trade ceramics provide important methods of dating medieval sites, as well as important information on changes in patterns of consumption. As Suzuki points out (1999, pp. 60) dating from coins is not simple, since the coins remained in circulation for a long time. The relationship between the time of import (which can only be postulated) and the time of burial in the cache is not always well known. The Japanese also produced counterfeit Chinese coins at sites such as Sakai.

### Ceramics

Chinese ceramics constituted the bulk of the imports in medieval Japanese foreign trade but there were also relatively small quantities of ceramics from Korea, Vietnam, and Thailand. The history of the ceramics is relatively well known through the intensive work of pioneer scholars. Excavation of the Korokan yielded ceramics from the 7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, including Korean wares from the Korean states of Silla and Koryo, Yuan ceramics from Zhejiang, Changsha Tongguan ceramics, northern white wares and bluish white (*qingbai*) wares from Zhejiang and Guangdong. The most numerous are Chinese yue ware, a kind of proto celadon. While officials and upper class people at Dazaifu used yue bowls and plates from the 9<sup>th</sup> century, by the 11<sup>th</sup> century their use had spread to lower class people. The Korokan served as the distribution centre for ceramics until the mid 11<sup>th</sup> century, after which the merchants of Hakata assumed control of ceramics. Sites thought to be private warehouses of Song merchants have been found in Hakata (Kamei

1995, pp. 132). Celadon ceramics from Longquan, Zhejiang, replaced yue ceramics in the mid 11<sup>th</sup> century through mid 12<sup>th</sup> centuries (Kamei 2000, pp. 136). Findings from the Mottaimatsu Site in Kagoshima Prefecture, southern Kyushu, which yielded ceramics from the latter half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, indicate that in addition to Hakata there were other distribution centres (Yamamoto 2003). At that time, bowls with lotus petal motifs incised on their exteriors are found, along with bowls and plates with a peculiar dark green glaze, from Tong'an, Fujian. By the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, the rate of flow of Chinese ceramics into Japan increased. Some of the sites under the modern city of Hakata yield counts of Chinese ceramics as high as 24 percent. Ceramics can be found from Okinawa in the south up to the Tohoku region, though the elite of northern Japan preferred to use lacquered wooden bowls. From the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the amount of ceramics decreases suddenly in the Japanese main islands.

In the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Chinese ceramics are very rare in the main islands of Japan, while they are abundant in the Ryukyus. During the Ming ban on trade (1368–1522) the Ryukyu Kingdom of Okinawa maintained close diplomatic ties with China and engaged in trans-shipment of Chinese goods. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century Chinese ceramics became more common in the central areas of Japan, in sites such as Himeji, and Ichijodani, where the Asakura family had their regional capital from 1470 to 1573. In the former site about half of the ceramics are local earthenware, while the other half are Chinese celadon, white, and blue and white wares and Japanese wares such as Bizen, Tamba, Shigaraki, Tokoname and Hizen. In bowls and plates Chinese wares were seven times more common than Seto or Mino (Kamei 2000, pp. 58).

In the case of Ichijodani, ceramics from the houses of the samurai and merchants consisted of about fifty percent earthenware and thirty percent Echizen ceramics. Chinese ceramics were about ten percent. However in the residence of the Asakura family members the proportion of trade ceramics was about thirty percent. They imported ceramics for daily use, including a rare antique white ware four-eared jar.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century trade ceramics were found in higher frequencies in the northern areas of Tohoku and Hokkaido and in the southern regions of Kyushu and Okinawa, whereas in the central area local Mino and Seto ceramics were also available (Suzuki 2000). Nevertheless even in these latter areas Chinese bowls and plates remain three to five times more abundant than the local ceramics (Kamei 2000, pp. 60). Most of the Chinese blue and white is from the Jiajing Period (1522 to 1566) when trade was restored after the ban on trade under the Ming. At this time silver was mined in Japan and exported to China in huge quantities. Kamei believes that ceramics were brought in Chinese ships to Hakata and Sakai and were then distributed through domestic networks. In domestic ceramic production, in the early part of the medieval period, production was not for daily use. Elite and ritual wares such as four-eared tsubo, ewers and bottles, were



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produced in Kamakura for the Togoku region. Three types of ceramics developed, all based on prototypes from the ancient period. These were ash glazed, *sue*, and *kawara* type wares. The ash glazed types developed into high quality hard fired ceramics. Grey stoneware was produced in round and flat bottom variants. Soft grey earthenware was also used for ritual, storage and heating.

### Changes in land tenure and local government

In the 7<sup>th</sup> century under the Taiho Promulgations, the *ritsuryo* system of centralized state land tenure was established, despite opposition of independent uji chieftains. Ownership of land resided with the emperor. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century the system was changed from levying tax and corvee on individuals to land under cultivation. Also in Late Heian times, huge private estates (*shoen*) were created, removing land from the public domain and redirecting the revenues made from them to large temples and aristocratic families (Totman 2000, pp. 100–105). They were originally parcels of land brought into cultivation by temples, but in later times they were estates of cultivated fields designated to support particular temples or other institutions, by imperial decree. In the late 12<sup>th</sup> century a second class of officials, land stewards (*jito*) were assigned to both public and private lands to supervise the collection of taxes and the regulation of production. As the military rulers (*shogun*) gained power in the 13<sup>th</sup> century they appointed military governors (*shugo*) throughout the country to maintain law and order. In the Muromachi period local lords (*daimyo*) exercised aristocratic control over their castle towns; however in cases of the trading ports of Sakai and Hakata, citizens' councils governed, and also managed defences. In Kyoto groups of townsmen regulated affairs in their district but in the Azuchi Momoyama period these groups were brought under close regulation.

### Development of new economic institutions

Two economic institutions that had appeared earlier and continued to develop during the Kamakura Period were the shipping agents who took rice and other products of the *shoen* estates on consignment for distribution to markets (*toimaru*) and co-operative guilds which provided favorable reciprocal trade advantages and reduced competition (*za*) (Yamamura 1990, pp. 394). Many Heian artisans functioned as house provisioners, providing goods and services to elites. During the 12<sup>th</sup> century many of the elite institutions licensed specialised *za* to provide many kinds of supplies (Totman 2000, pp. 109). The *za* developed mostly in the Muromachi period. They enjoyed the sponsorship of nobles of religious institutions to whom they paid dues in return for protection of their monopoly privileges and exemption from barrier charges and market fees.

In the Muromachi period there were advances in agriculture, commerce, transportation, village organization, and urban development. There was a strong demand

for goods and services from the shogunal court and the resident *shugo daimyo*. The policies of the sengoku daimyo aimed at fostering local commerce by new groups of merchants and at reducing barriers to trade within their domains. Two powerful new social forces emerged: a self-conscious mercantile group and an increasingly restive and market oriented economy. The *toimaru*, originally agents who supervised rent shipments for estate proprietors, began to handle the affairs of more than one patron and went into business for themselves, becoming powerful traders, as in Sakai (Morris 1981, pp. 33).

Double cropping of rice and barley, which had begun in western Japan in the Kamakura period, spread to eastern Japan by the Muromachi period. Improvements occurred in fertilizing, irrigation, and mining of gold and silver. The building of massive castles and castle towns by daimyo stimulated haulage and forestry. The need for peasants to convert at least part of their crops into cash to pay taxes and levies also contributed to the development of markets and commercial activity.

### **Changes in social classes**

Each class developed its own residential and community patterns and patterns of consumption, which can be seen in archaeological sites. The aristocratic centralised life of the Heian imperial court in Kyoto was maintained by the civil aristocracy (*kuge*) whose courtly background set the standard of taste in Heian times. In the Muromachi period actual power was transferred from the *kuge* to the provincial warrior class (*bushi* or *samurai*). A great number of private landed estates (*shoen*) came under the control of the warrior class. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century a legal code of the warrior class set out the rights of the warrior class and the duties of the Kamakura-appointed officials such as military governors and stewards. The rise of the merchant class in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries is particularly important, as we shall see in the case of Sakai, outlined below.

### **Religious changes**

Space does not permit me to discuss in detail the effects of religious changes on life in medieval Japan. Two new forms of Buddhism introduced in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, Shingon and Tendai, had centres outside Kyoto, at Mount Koya and Mount Hie. Their warrior monks exerted considerable power over Kyoto, although Buddhism did not spread widely among the masses in Heian times. Pure Land Buddhism became popular in the latter half of the Heian Period, and became a separate sect in the Kamakura Period. New Japanese sects such as Nichiren, arose in the Kamakura period through charismatic leaders. Zen Buddhism was introduced from China in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century, first to Hakata, and later to Kamakura, where a close relationship between Zen and the military leadership was established. Both Rinzai and Soto sects of Zen flourished, along with early forms of Japanese Buddhism in large centers such as the Todaiji and Kofukuji in Nara. Song

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traders supported Buddhist temples in the Hakata region (Kamei 1995, pp. 134–135). In the Muromachi period several large Rinzai temples of Kyoto became deeply involved in international trade and diplomacy (Collcutt 1981), while other Rinzai temples eschewed such activities. Christianity was introduced by Iberian missionaries from 1549. While it flourished in some areas for several decades it was snuffed out in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to the formal religions mentioned above I would argue that a new commercial mentality, rooted in the rise of industrialization and a cash economy in South China in the Song Dynasty (960 to 1279) greatly affected the values of Japanese elites and townspeople. These changes were linked to the developments in Buddhism mentioned above, and the great Zen temples of Kyoto were engaged in international trade (Collcutt 1981).

### Sakai

#### Historical background

As one of the major medieval centres of the Japanese islands, Sakai displays the expanding, multifunctional roles which typify towns of this period. Its rise in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries is seen by some as the beginning of modern Japan, but its decline and loss of independence in the 17<sup>th</sup> century is also seen as a regression into Tokugawa feudalism (Morris 1981, pp. 23–25). Both a local and international entrepot, and an important trade port for the land locked Nara Basin, Sakai, originally a fishing village, is situated on old communication routes running from Osaka Bay through low mountains into the Nara Basin, and also along the coast of Wakayama to the religious centre of Kumano (Figure 2). Sakai had long been a strategic transportation node. From the 5<sup>th</sup> century it was the site of monumental tombs of the rulers of the Kinai (Kyoto Nara Osaka region). The location of such impressive tombs outside the Nara Basin, in the Kawachi Plain, must have been partially motivated by a desire to impress visitors who voyaged into the Inland Sea, the maritime *terminus* of the Silk Road. It was an important stop on the pilgrimage route to Kumano, and a port for local produce. It was a military port during the Namboku Cho period (1336–1392) and an important port of trade within the Japanese islands. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century it became an international port and in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries it became a centre for manufacturing. Through its link with Okinawa it also had access to goods from Southeast Asia. The city was dominated by a number of powerful Shinto shrines situated along the main thoroughfare that ran parallel to the shoreline. In the area of Sakai port, a well thought to be used for agriculture has been dated to the late 12<sup>th</sup> and early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, suggesting that the area was a small settlement with garden plots at that time (Tsuzuki 1994, pp. 85). Early farmers may have used drainage water from nearby huge 5<sup>th</sup> century tumuli for agriculture and ditches

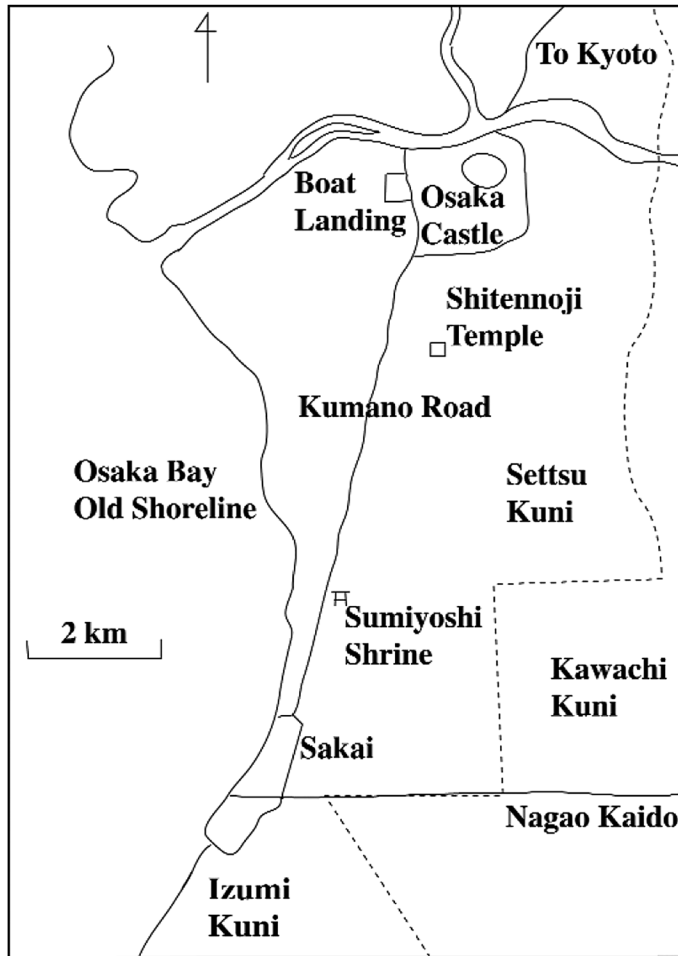


Figure 2. Location of Sakai

from the tumuli may have been used part of Sakai's moat (1994, pp. 85). Tsuzuki (1994, pp. 96) states that a substantial area within the moat was inhabited by people who had farm plots.

At the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the northern part of Sakai lay in the shoen of Settsu, while the southern part was located in the Waizumi shoen. This location on such a boundary, at the junction of old roads, gave it a strategic advantage for internal trade in the Kinai as well as for international trade (Figure 4). Later, Sakai became the shugo territory of the Hosokawa family, who were *kanrei* (shogunal deputies). At this time it was already an important trading centre for the small polities of Kyushu and the Chugoku (southwestern Honshu). In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Shokokuji Temple of Kyoto

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received the rents from the properties in Izumi Sakai, while Settsu Sakai was under the proprietorship of the Sumiyoshi Taisha Shrine (Morris 1981, pp. 25).

During the Onin Wars (1467–1477), aristocrats, priests, and townspeople from Kyoto and surrounding areas sought refuge in Sakai and the city developed rapidly. During the 15<sup>th</sup> century it was the base for 19 tribute missions from Japan to the Ming (Senboku Koko Shiriyokan 1996). The Ming tribute missions were complex ventures with multiple sponsors for which the Sakai merchants acted as ambassadors for the Hosokawa family (Fukuoka Style 1993, pp. 38). In the tribute mission of 1451, 1200 persons traveled in the ships and 350 travelled to the capital, Beijing (Ito 1998). Interests in the tribute missions were held by the Five Great temples of Kyoto, the Sakai merchants, the Hosokawa family of high officials in Kyoto, and the merchants of the Ouchi clan in Hakata (Sakai Shi Hakubutsukan 1993, pp. 8). In the latter half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century a self governing council was established. At the height of its prosperity in the 16<sup>th</sup> century it was governed by a council of 36 prosperous merchants, three members carrying out the administration in monthly rotation (Kiyonaga 1990, pp. 151). At that time, many communities had a kind of autonomous governing council, responsible for the payment of taxes. Morris states that Sakai's governing council (*egoshu*) originated as a shrine guild. It was self governing, as was the port of Hakata in Kyushu. Sakai also traded with Okinawa, which was given preferential trade status with the Ming and had extensive connections with Southeast Asia.

In addition to foreign trade, it was an important centre for casting weapons and guns (late 16<sup>th</sup> century), salt production, and the making of ink stones. It was also a centre for making gunpowder, which was made from saltpeter brought from Thailand (Senboku Koko Shiriyokan 1996, pp. 4), and was also a centre for the development of the tea ceremony. The military role of Sakai is important, as well as its commercial and cultural attributes. Sakai merchants were ultimately controlled by warriors since they were the only group who could afford the services and luxuries of the city (Morris 1981, pp. 34).

The city underwent two episodes of destruction, the first, at the time of the Oei Disturbance (1399), ten thousand houses were destroyed in the central part of the town, leaving a burnt earth layer. To cope with the threat of widespread disturbance and a takeover by the warrior Oda Nobunaga in 1569, the inhabitants began to build a moat around the main town, an area of one by three kilometers. The construction of the moat follows the practice of other smaller medieval centres. Sakai did capitulate to Nobunaga in 1569 but was not harmed, since it was valuable only when it was economically fully functional. In 1615, at the time of consolidation of power of Tokugawa and the fall of Osaka castle, the entire city of some twenty thousand houses, was destroyed, to be rebuilt after the institution of a new survey and different land units (Fukuoka Style 1993, pp. 36).

Trade goods moving to China from Sakai included sulphur, copper, sword blades, gold screens and art objects. Goods from China included ceramics, craft work, medicine, books, paintings, and other Chinese objects. Sakai merchants were also involved with the incense trade from southern China and Southeast Asia (Kiyonaga 1990, pp. 149). Sakai was a center for metal casting and export; in the 14<sup>th</sup> century it was the shipping port for special temple bells cast in the Tannan region of Kawachi, the plain to the west of Sakai, and the city itself was a centre for casting coins and weapons. It had access to silver and iron from Tajima in the Hyogo region. Buddhist texts, wood block printed in Sakai, were also shipped from there (Fukuoka Style 1993, pp. 36; Kiyonaga 1990, pp. 153). Weaving of expensive types of cloth was also important and shuttles and spindles have been recovered from archaeological sites of commercial goods. Warehousing was an important activity of Sakai merchants (Watsky 2004, pp. 20).

Sakai merchants who also traded in weapons became patrons of the arts, sponsoring the tea ceremony (Sen 1998). The merchant princes (*gosho*) of Sakai commanded the technology to circulate goods from Sakai to the Japanese hinterland and vice versa; they financed the local (*shugo*) daimyo and shoen officials at high interest rates, and they were engaged in foreign trade. Moreover they had a bold entrepreneurial and independent mentality (Kiyonaga 1990, pp. 151).

### **Sakai sites**

Situated on the beach sands of Osaka Bay, Sakai contains archaeological deposits about four metres deep. From excavation, the history of the site before the Nambokucho period is not clear, although there are some scattered remains from the Kamakura, Heian, and Nara periods. In 1962 archaeologists located the burned soil layer left by the destruction of the site in 1615, 1.5 metres below the present ground surface and in 1975 they began excavations which continue to the present (Sakai 1997). Up to the present hundreds of localities have been excavated. A few of the excavations are summarised below.

#### **Commoners' residential area**

This excavation contained deposits from the fire of 1615 and yielded a wooden slip (*mokkan*) dating to Tensho 13 (1588). It appears to be part of a commoners' residential area, containing a stone wall and a stratified deposit. Ceramics were: haji ware (small plates, suribachi, and hibachi) 47 percent; Japanese wares (Bizen, Seto, Mino, Karatsu) 17.8 percent; Chinese and Korean ceramics, 8 percent; Minato (local) wares 16.5 percent; local tile wares (hibachi) 10.8 percent (SKT 19: Sakai Shi Kyoiku Iinkai 1984).

#### **Small buildings**

To the north and west of the central part of Sakai, in an area which shows no sign of

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the burning of 1399, there are the remains of small buildings with stone pillar bases, along with wells and various kinds of pits. The artifacts include soft grey (*kawara*) ware large mouth storage jars, and plates, and soft red (*haji*) and grey plates. These were used for storage and serving food. Japanese hard fired ceramics included Bizen ware, wide mouth storage jars and shredding and mixing bowls (*suribachi*), Tamba bowls and Seto bowls, plates, and jars. Chinese wares include white ware bowls and plates from Fujian, and celadon bowls, plates, and platters (chargers) from Longquan, Zhejiang (SKT 21, 61: Sakai Shi Hakubutsukan 1993, pp. 89).

### Warehouse site

A slightly elevated location, 4.4 metres above sea level, about fifty metres from the shore at the time of occupation. The excavation in 1989 of about fifty square metres in area exposed fifteen layers, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the end of 14<sup>th</sup> century with a total depth about five metres. The finding of a long narrow line of grey tile bricks for supporting buildings indicates a group of warehouses near the shore. This type of grey brick storehouse architecture has been found from the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In Layer 4, dating to the latter half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, parts of a residential compound (*yashiki*) with a building facing a garden and a garden entrance (*tsuri en*) were recovered. In Layer 3 dating to 1615, there are warehouses and fragments of tea wares (Tsuchiyama 1996; SKT 39 Sakai Shi Hakubutsukan 1993, pp. 60).

### Buildings destroyed in the fire of 1615

This area yielded a two storey building containing many tea ceramics along with the foundations of 8 other buildings all burned in 1615. One of the buildings, 6m×7m, had a sunken floor paved with long rectangular grey tiles. On the east side of the building was a two storey building with door and windows. It yielded burned and fallen plaster, a tea grinding mortar, and red earth (*kabe*) for plastering the walls of a tea house as well as the remains of a garden with a built up hill (*chikuyama*) (SKT 47).

### Coin molds

Coin mold deposit (Sakai Shi Kyoiku Inukai 1997) The 1991 excavation contained several living surfaces dating from 1615 (layer 1) to the fire of 1399 (level 7). Of the total of 3,841 mold fragments recovered, there were two types: molds for thin plain coins (85%), and molds for inscribed coins (15%). The inscribed coins comprised 19 types, from Tang to Northern Song. These types were produced in Sakai in the mid to late 16<sup>th</sup> century (Shimatani 1998) (SKT 78).

### Residential area of townspeople

There are seven living surfaces, dating from the early to middle 15<sup>th</sup> century to 1615. Structures were small buildings set on supporting stone bases, along a road, with wells encased in soft grey ware circular tiles. Water was stored in large Tokoname jars. From Layer 5 there was evidence of long narrow tansaku lots. From Layer 3, Storage buildings were found with each house (SKT 200: Tsuzuki 1994).

### Writing hall

A large scale *shoin* type (writing hall) building, discovered in 2000. The finds reflect changes in the tea ceremony, in which Sakai merchants began to use Japanese and Southeast Asian wares, but retained their interest in Chinese wares. The finds included Japanese Karatsu, Bizen, Mino, Shigaraki, Iga, Tamba, and Raku Wares; Chinese blue and white from Zhangzhou and Jingdezhen, white wares, celadons, overglaze enamelled, Huanan Three Color, and brown wares; and Thai, Vietnamese and Burmese wares (Kanazawa 2004). This site exemplifies the trend toward the ‘grass hut style’ of tea ceremony, a less elaborate form removed from warrior elite control, and featuring Japanese and Southeast Asian as well as Chinese ceramics (Sleusser 2004).

### Tea master’s tea house and warehouse

Architectural remains include a tea house and storage area. There were about 500 ceramic vessels, all burned, comprising imported ceramics (61%), Japanese ceramics (25%), and local earthenware (14%). Many of the food serving vessels are Chinese blue and white while the storage vessels are Japanese (SB 301: Sakai Shi Hakubutsukan 1993, pp. 63–64).

### **Nucleation and urbanisation**

East-west transects of Sakai prepared by Tsuzuki (1994, pp. 66–67) show four stages of development from the mid to late 15<sup>th</sup> centuries to 1615. Warehouses begin to replace small houses along the front road by Osaka Bay in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. Tea houses were built near the warehouses. An agricultural zone can be seen in the western side, inside the moat, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century but by the early 17<sup>th</sup> century part of this zone has been transformed to craft industries such as casting.

### **Evidence of trade**

Sakai was one of the premier trading ports in medieval Japan. Linked to the central government and to the heartland of Yamato, it had a particular commercial and financial role. The ceramics found in Sakai illustrate its importance as a local and international center. From SKT 39 and other sites, Chinese ceramics were extremely popular up to



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| Period                                  | Period 1<br>First half of 12th –<br>first half of 13th century                                                            | Period 2<br>Latter half of 14th –<br>first half of 15th century                             | Period 3<br>Latter half of 15th –<br>first half of 16th century                           | Period 4<br>Latter half of 16th –<br>Early 17th century                             |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aspect of Trade                         |                                                                                                                           |                                                                                             |                                                                                           |                                                                                     |
| Major types of Trade ceramics           | White ware bowls<br>Xiamen type, Type 4                                                                                   | Longquan type celadon                                                                       | Longquan type celadon<br>(Zhejiang, Fujian coastal<br>kilns. Jingdezhen blue and<br>white | Zhangzhou type blue and<br>white. SE Asian ceramics                                 |
| Traders                                 | Hakata traders                                                                                                            | Hakata traders                                                                              | Sakai traders                                                                             | Sakai traders                                                                       |
| Trade port and route                    | Xiamen. Quanzhou. Fuzhou<br>- Taiwan - Ryukyu -<br>Bonotsu - Hakata -<br>Hakata - Hyogotsu - Omono<br>- Sakai             | Ningbo - Ryukyu trade<br>centre - Bonotsu - Hakata -<br>Sakai                               | Fuzhou. Ningbo - Ryukyu<br>trade centre - Bonotsu -<br>Tosa - Sakai                       | Zhangzhou Yuegang -<br>Taiwan - Ryukyu trade<br>centre - Bonotsu - Funai -<br>Sakai |
| Primary factor in change of trade route | Southern Song trade                                                                                                       | Opening of Ming<br>Tributary trade (1404)                                                   | Base for Ming tribute<br>(1469)                                                           | Tally trade                                                                         |
| Domestic circulation system             | Local circulation                                                                                                         | Local circulation                                                                           | Local circulation                                                                         | Circulation over<br>whole country                                                   |
| Ceramic model and copy                  | Chinese white 4 ear <i>tsubo</i><br>to Seto 4 ear <i>tsubo</i> . Xiamen<br><i>wanyao</i> type, Jinjiang wares<br>to Seto. | Jian <i>temmoku</i> bowl to Seto<br><i>temmoku</i> bowl. Longquan<br>bowl to Seto flat bowl |                                                                                           | Zhangzhou kiln white<br>Plate - Shino plate - blue<br>and white plate               |
| Chinese political change                | Southern Song to Yuan                                                                                                     |                                                                                             |                                                                                           | Ming-Qing (1644)                                                                    |
| Japanese political change               | Heian to Kamakura                                                                                                         | Namoboku cho to<br>Muromachi                                                                | Onin Wars, Warring States                                                                 | Azuchi Momoyama - Edo                                                               |

Figure 3. Trade ceramics from Sakai (from Morimura 1998)

the time of the conflagration of 1615, comprising sixty percent of the assemblage (Figure 3). Other ceramics were Japanese Bizen and Karatsu. After 1615, Imari comprised about 30% of the ceramics and Chinese ceramics declined to about thirty percent. In other localities Chinese ceramics were about 30%, while Bizen and Karatsu comprised seventy percent.

Shifts in the ceramics used in the tea ceremony in Sakai reflect general changes in taste and the availability of Chinese objects (Senboku Koko Shiryokan 1996). Up to the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Chinese white wares, celadon, and *temmoku* were the primary tea utensils. In the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, Murata Shuko, the pre-eminent tea master, developed new fashions in tea consumption, favouring Japanese ceramics such as Bizen and

Shigaraki as well as Fujian celadon (Sen 1998, pp. 159–160). Despite his influence Sakai merchants continued to use Ming ceramics until the latter half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. From the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, celadon comprised fifty to sixty percent of the ceramics from Sakai, and white wares, twenty to thirty percent. From the latter half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, blue and white, which had been scarce up to that time, increased, comprising sixty percent of the trade ceramics at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. It was used not only for the tea ceremony but also for daily eating utensils.

### **The development of new economic institutions**

The mercantile and financial role of the Sakai merchants can be seen in the finding of baked clay coin molds in SKT 78. The total number of Chinese and other Asian coins from the Sakai excavations is over 2,279,000. Plain coins of the type made in Sakai have been found in sites from Hokkaido to Okinawa. They have a higher copper content than some Chinese or Korean coins. The inscribed coins are thinner than their Chinese counterparts and the casting is rougher. Coin molds have been found in Kyoto, Kamakura, Hakata, and Sakai, but only Sakai has produced the plain type (Shimatani 1998). Yamamura (1990, pp. 385) has addressed the question of why the Kyoto government did not mint coins in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. He states that Japan did not constitute a full fledged nation state in the international community: it remained a part of the political economic sphere dominated by China. After the 9<sup>th</sup> century the government did not command the political power to have coins accepted and used nationally.

### **Changes in social classes**

Differences in the scale of residential sites within Sakai indicate the emergence of the Sakai merchants, often referred to as merchant princes (*goshō*). These sites have higher proportions of foreign ceramics. The appearance of large warehouses in the 16<sup>th</sup> century along the coastal road also indicates the ability of Sakai merchants to control large inventories and to arrange for their shipment. Tsuzuki (1994, pp. 91) states that similar warehouses developed in Kyoto but at a later date.

### **Changes in land tenure and local government**

There is little archaeological evidence for the rise of the political independence of Sakai and the development of the ruling council. However, following the destruction of the city in 1615 new land divisions were instituted by the Tokugawa government and these can be seen in some structures which post date 1615.

**The northern centre of Tosaminato and the territory of the Ando clan**

The extreme northern part of Honshu constituted the edge of Japanese power for many centuries. Japan's northern frontier, Hokkaido, lay beyond the boundaries of the *ritsuryo* state. The consolidation of political control by the central government took many centuries. Although there were Hokkaido style *kofun tumuli* in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, which have yielded iron agricultural implements and iron weapons, there is no evidence of political control from the Kinai centre. Sato (1994) mentions the importance of maritime communication routes in the Ancient period (7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> centuries). In the Tohoku region, groups of villages (*mura*) supported fortified centres (*jo*) and tribute and trade with the Yamato state flourished. Yamato attempted to prohibit private trade from time to time (Sato 1994, pp. 76). Northern products included fine horses, hawks, sea mammal skins, bear skins, and sea weed.

Fukushima-jo, a large site earlier than Tosaminato, is located on the northern shore of Lake Jusan (Senda 1994). Thought to date to the 10<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries, it is triangular in area, about one kilometre on each side and 625,000 square metres in area. It has inner and outer enclosures. The eastern side of the outer enclosure has an earth rampart twelve to thirteen metres wide and three to four metres high, extending for one kilometre, while the inner enclosure is rectangular, two hundred metres on each side, with a moat and rampart. While there are no historical sources concerning the site it is thought to have been built by the East Branch of the Ando clan (Sato 1994, pp. 78). Sato states that its defensive works were built on the same scale as those of Dazaifu, the centre for trade with Korea and China, located in northern Kyushu. There are several other medieval sites on the south shore of Lake Jusan such as the Karakawa site (Aomori Ken 1996, pp. 6) which has a rampart and ditch, two groups of semi subterranean pit dwellings, pillar bases, stone steps, and the remains of a five storey pagoda. The emergence of the Ando clan as key players in the northern trade indicates a shift in social classes in the region and the development of new economic institutions. The Ando clan was originally of indigenous Emishi (Ainu) origin (Sakakibara 1996, 2001, pp. 27).

At the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, internal lug clay cauldrons and external lug iron cauldrons appear in Tohoku while in Hokkaido, Satsumon pottery declines and is replaced by internal lug pottery which spread from Tohoku. Other changes reflecting influence from Tohoku include the adoption of iron tools for making wooden eating utensils and a shift from semi subterranean dwellings to houses on the ground surface, as well as a shift from a baked clay fireplace at the edge of the house (*kamado*) to a sunken hearth. Suzu ceramics, produced in the Noto Peninsula area of the Japan Sea Coast, have been recovered from this and later time periods. In the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, the period of the control of northern coastal trade by the Ando clan based at Tosaminato, the Japanese became established along the southern Hokkaido coast. Other trading forts

were built at that time. As mentioned in the introductory section, very large caches of coins have been found in Hokkaido, indicating vigorous trade and the accumulation of monetary wealth.

There was a struggle in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century for control of the Tsugaru Peninsula by the Ando and Nanbu clans. The traditional region of the Nanbu lay to the south of the Ando. The Ainu offered strong resistance to Japanese incursions in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the time of the Koshiamuin Uprising. As the Matsumae clan attempted to establish control in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Ainu built fortified sites termed chasi. Over 25 of these sites are known.

### **The Tosaminato site**

The Tosaminato site is situated at the northern tip of Honshu, on the northwest shore of the Tsugaru Peninsula, where the Iwaki River empties into Lake Jusan, a lagoon with a narrow opening to the Sea of Japan (Figure 4). The site is located on a long sand bar running north to south. Encompassing 550,00sqm, it has been the scene of more than a decade of excavations, and the topic of symposia (Kokuritsu 1994) and exhibitions (Kokuritsu 1998b). Excavations by the National Museum of History and Folklore were undertaken in 1991 to 1993 and further excavations were undertaken by Shiura Township and the Aomori Prefectural Board of Education in 1995 and 1996 (Aomori 1996, 1998a, b) as well as Toyama University (Shiura 1998).

### **Regional nucleation**

Extending east to west across the peninsula is a rampart with a large ditch on its southern side, which divided the site into two parts. To the north of the rampart was the Ando clan residence, protected by another ditch one hundred metres to the north of the main ditch. Although east and west ditches have not been found, it is very probable that the Ando residence was surrounded by ditches which formed a rectangle of about one hundred metres. This has been determined by remote sensing (Senda 1994, pp. 56–59). Excavations in 1993 in this area yielded evidence of pit dwellings believed to have belonged to artisans. The main ditch fill contained Suzu ceramics dating to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Uno (1994, pp. 113) mentions that very small quantities of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century ceramics have been found in Tosaminato, suggesting that the site was not entirely unpopulated at this time. In the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries the trading sphere of eastern Japan, including Hokkaido, expanded. Uno (1994, pp. 132) states that there were important links between Taga Jo (castle), Hiraizumi, and Fukushima-jo. Fukushima-jo functioned more as an armed garrison outpost than as a trading post (Miura 1994). In the 12<sup>th</sup> century the trade goods from eastern Japan were circulating throughout all of Japan and Tosaminato played a role in this trend.

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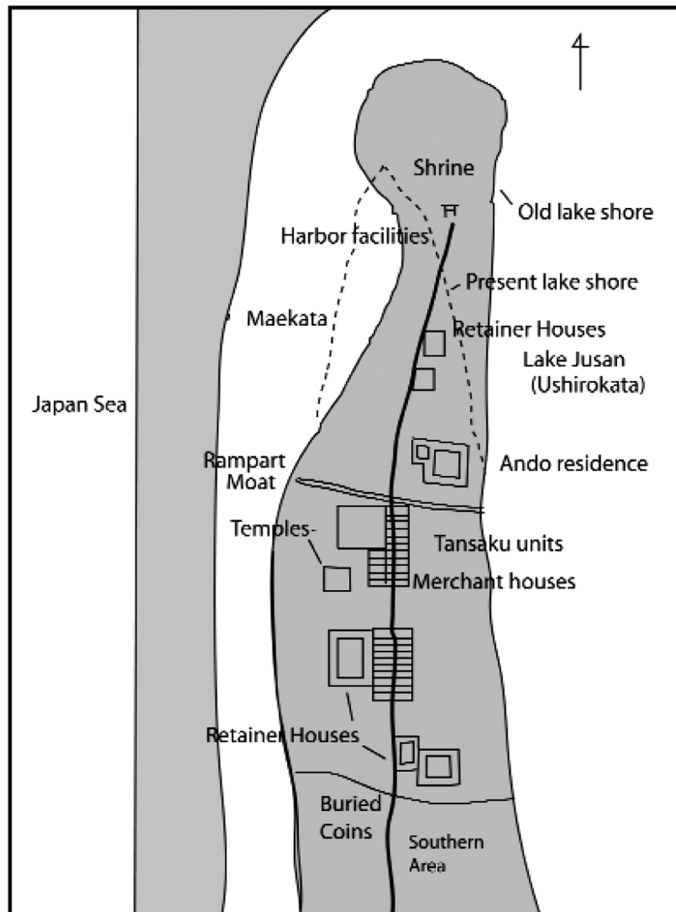


Figure 4. Map of the Tosaminato Site. (adapted from Saito Toshio 1994)

The western side of the sand bar faces a narrow stretch of water separated from the Japan Sea by a beach and sand dunes. In medieval times ships entered this channel, which was deeper than at present, or waited near its access to the Sea of Japan, to the south of the site. On the side of the sand bar lies the large lagoon, Lake Jusan, also called the Back Lagoon (Ushirokata).

Excavations areas 5, 7, 8, 9, 18, and 96 were devoted to the area of the Ando clan's residence and headquarters. The excavators uncovered pits, posts, planking, the remains of a post built building, a well, pit houses, some of which appear to have been used for blacksmithing, indicating that craftsmen were working in this area. Artifacts from this area date from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, the most active period being the latter half of the 14<sup>th</sup> and the early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. To the north of the area of the Ando

residence is the area of the retainers' quarters (Localities 10, 11, 15, 16, and 74; Saito 1994). To the northeast of the retainers' area there may have been long narrow fields in the tansaku pattern (Maekawa 2001, pp. 5). A major road running north to south, 7.2 metres wide, was located, as well as an east to west road 2.7 metres wide. In addition to the roads remains of buildings suggest a dense concentration of irregular structures which are thought to be merchants' quarters. Dating of this area is similar to the Ando headquarters.

The third area, (Localities 6, 17, and 71) is comprised of individual houses (*yashiki*) built with posts set in the ground and bounded by fences and ditches, which faced a central north to south road. Artifacts were dated from the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century to the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Roads from the south of the site led to the Myojin Shrine and the Tanrinji Temple. Amino (1994, pp. 24) notes that Jishu Buddhist and Hiyoshi Jinja Shinto networks were established along the Japan Sea coast. The Machiya Area, Area 3, yielded evidence of long narrow land divisions of the tansaku type. As Area 3 developed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Tosaminato assumed an urban appearance (Aomori Ken 1996, pp. 8).

### **Evidence for increased trade**

The site yielded a density of hard fired ceramics which was higher than the norm for Tohoku and Hokkaido. These ceramics included Seto, Suzu, Tokoname, Echizen, earthenware (*chusei haji*), Koryo ceramics and Chinese white, celadon, and brown wares (Suzuki 1998a, 1998b). From the Ando residence, luxury ceramics included Seto and celadon incense burners and *tenmoku* bowls. Glass beads found in the Ando headquarters are found in many northern trade sites. Suzuki notes that abundant abalone shells and hearths that may have been used for boiling them are found in the Shimokita region of Aomori Prefecture. Abalone shell may have been traded from Tosaminato to the central parts of Japan (Suzuki 1998b, pp. 24).

The Port Area was tested by an excavation in 2000 (Locality 4: Sakakibara 2001). This area is located on the northwest side of the peninsula on the Fore Lagoon side. The shoreline was artificially faced with gravel for a distance of about two hundred metres and there are posts from a wharf, as well as round logs, perhaps for hauling up small boats. In the gravel layer, Chinese celadon, Suzu, and Seto wares dating mostly from the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century were recovered.

The internal plan of Tosaminato comes from a proto type established in Kyoto and repeated in Kamakura and smaller communities such as Kusado Sengencho—a shrine in the extreme north, elite residences in the northern areas, commercial and factory areas further to the south and major east-west and north-south roads (Uno 1994, pp. 122).

Tosaminato was superceded by the Katsuyama Kan, built by the Muto Clan on the

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Watarishima Peninsula of Hokkaido. It flourished from the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Consisting of buildings on three flat areas on a slope, divided by a ditch and surrounded by a stockade, it yielded large quantities of Chinese ceramics, as well as many tea containers and tea bowls (Miura 1994). In the late 16<sup>th</sup> century Kakizaki Yoshihiro, the local lord who controlled the southern tip of the Oshima Peninsula, Hokkaido, accepted the expanding authority of the military ruler Hideyoshi. In 1599 he aligned with the Tokugawa, and assumed the family name of Matsumae. The Matsumae clan was granted control of the trade in marine products and other resources of the northern territory, which was called Ezo (Totman 2000, pp. 219).

### **Discussion**

Two medieval trading communities with different political economies provide glimpse of life at the center and periphery of town life in mediaeval Japan. Each is embedded in a local context built up through long spans of history. In addition to having a common Japanese cultural background they are linked by the circulation of Chinese goods and diverse relations to a central power in Kyoto. Trade routes extending from them to the north and south and to mainland Asia show dramatically that the Japanese Islands consisted of a series of interlocking open systems.

Sakai, the major port for the central power in Kyoto, had several sectors. Domestic and foreign trade were important. The tribute missions to Ming were important financial projects for Sakai merchants, who were financiers. High quality casting and printing are evidence of a skilled, intensive, manufacturing centre. A distinctive elite culture can also be seen.

In Tosaminato the Ando clan, an indigenous elite group, lived in a rectangular compound with retainers and attached craftsmen. Resources from the northern maritime regions were the major commodities and the site has a clearly demarcated mercantile component.

### **Acknowledgements**

I offer hearty thanks to Dr Simon Kaner and the Sainsbury Institute for a stimulating conference and the enthusiastic exchange of information and ideas. Mr. Morimura Ken'ichi of the Sakai City Board of Education, and Prof. Ono Masatoshi of the Japanese National Museum of History have been particularly helpful in making information available to me. I also thank the members of the Shiura Board of Education, Aomori, for making available many sources concerning Tosaminato.

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