

Redrawing of Prehistoric “Shell Trade” Based on the Archaeological Analysis of Shell Deposits in Okinawa : Analysis of Shell Deposits of *Gohora* (*Strombus latissimus*) and *Imogai* (*Conus* spp.)

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“Shell trade” is a long-distance trade between Okinawa and southwest Japan contains Kyushu conducted from Yayoi period to Kofun period, and large conch shells as the material of shell bracelets like *Gohora* (*Strombus latissimus*) and *Imogai* (*Conus* spp.) which are unique to the coral sea of Okinawa and adjacent islands are the main target of this trade. In this study, shell deposits of the Okinawa islands related to “shell trade” are analyzed. In addition, measurements of shell bracelets excavated in the consumption area are used as a “standard-size” for the size of shells actually traded. Looking at the state of shell deposits, they are classified into four groups; primary gathering deposits with various size shells (a), deposits of standard-size shells (b), deposits contain standard-size shell, but several shells seemed to be extracted from them (c), and deposits without standard-size shells (d). The former three (a, b, c) are pre-trade, and the latter one (d) is post-sorting stage and presumed to be post-trade remains. Following the archaeological chronology, the “shell trade” started during the early Early Yayoi to the middle Early Yayoi period. At that time, deposits of *Gohora* and *Imogai* shell deposits are consisted of “standard-size” shells. “Shell trade” extended over the northern Kyushu during the late Early Yayoi to the middle Middle Yayoi. A lot of deposits of *Gohora* material were discovered. They seem to be post-trade remains. The late Middle Yayoi period was the heyday of “shell trade”. A few shell deposits are discovered, and they are pre-trade remains. Shells seem to be traded efficiently because there is no deposit without “standard-size” shells at that time. The end of the Middle Yayoi to the middle Late Yayoi period was the time “shell trade” came to an end. *Imogai* shell deposits are large in shell number and contain “standard-size” shells. They seem to be not traded remains. The Early to Middle Kofun periods was the time when “shell trade” resumed. Selected “standard-size” shells are included in deposits of *Gohora* unfinished materials. Although shell number is large in *Imogai* shell deposits, some “standard-size” shells are extracted from them. They seem to be in the stage of being selected. In the Late Kofun period, although *Imogai* shell deposits consisted with smaller shells than “standard-size”, they might be intended to use as products other than shell bracelets. Deposits are classified into the stage of gathering shells and the stage after sorting at that time.

Key words: Shell trade, Shell deposit, *Imogai*, *Gohora* (*Strombus latissimus*), Okinawa
