

The birth of “Jade *magatama*”

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Abstract: This paper aims to examine the formation process of “*magatama*” (comma-shaped beads) typical of the Yayoi Period Japan. Based on the observation of beads both in the Jomon and the Yayoi Period, the author reveals that *magatama* in the Yayoi Period had been created under the influences derived from the previous Jomon culture and the Korean Peninsula in the initial and early Yayoi Period. Among the variation in bead styles in Jomon culture, the curved shaped one evolved into the Yayoi type jade *magatama*. Jade coming from the vicinity of the Itoi River in Niigata Prefecture had been used for bead production in the late Jomon Period, and was also chosen as the extensive material for *magatama* in the Yayoi Period. It is also noted that new bead production methods were introduced from the Korean Peninsula, by which bead material was divided into pieces after engraving straight lines. The author concludes that bead production specific to jade *magatama* had started first in the northern Kyushu and spread throughout Japan.

Keywords: *Magatama* (comma-shaped bead); bead production; jade; Jomon and Yayoi Period Japan.