How Have \textit{Tsubo} and \textit{Kame} Been Used?

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Jars (\textit{tsubo}) and jars with wide mouths (\textit{kame}), which are seen less frequently today, were once used not only for their intended purpose, but also for various other purposes. They were used, in addition to general storage, as equipments of production. They were also used for saving money; as tools of incantation, faith, or magical formula; for resonance; to hold merchandise; as a toilet; for water keeping; for persimmon tannin, manure; for use at the well; for drainage; for storage of crops, miso (fermented soy bean paste); as an ossuary; for sake (rice wine), and many other purposes.

Excavation gives only a few clues to their usage. However, the site of the Asakura Clan in Ichijōdani, Fukui prefecture, typical of the late Medieval times, provides us with interesting information through the great variety and volume of excavated pottery, since people of all classes lived in this castle town at that time. The site is located quite near the kiln of Echizen ware (a kind of pottery), so Echizen ware predominate in number, varying from a large \textit{kame} with a capacity of 272l, to a small \textit{tsubo} of 0.392l. The usage of the large \textit{kames} attracts our attention. In the Asakura site, the number of buried \textit{kames} in one \textit{kame} range from one, two, or three, up to very many. Up to 28 buried \textit{kames} were discovered at one site. These buried \textit{kame} seem to have been used as equipments of production, such as indigo \textit{kames}, or storage vessels for oil, etc. It seems that there were several indigo \textit{kames} at the same site, this can be estimated from the traces of utilization inside the \textit{kames}, the number of the \textit{kames}, and other tools found with them. Large \textit{kames} have been used for indigo \textit{kames}, down to the Modern Age. In the Modern Age, indigo \textit{kames} are used by burying sets of \textit{kames}, with four to a set. For indigo dyeing, it appears heat insulation facilities were also required, in addition to the indigo \textit{kames}. However, so far the existence of such facilities cannot be verified from any excavation data or the various scroll paintings. Since groups of more than one buried vessel cannot be confirmed before the 16th century, it can be also estimated that the dyeing technique made a step forward in the 16th century, and further development was made in a certain period of the Edo period, with the invention of heat insulation facilities.

Asian eating habits necessitated the use of water \textit{kames} because of the large amount of water used, and the use of storage vessels for seasonings and pickles, as seen in Korea. Japan, as a member of Asia, was equally active in the production and utilization of large \textit{kames} were equally active, but in the Edo period, the production of large \textit{kames}, with a few exceptions, seems to have declined. One reason for this was the spread of wooden articles, that is, the large-scale production and utilization of wooden buckets and casks.