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- 1 Four terracotta figurines, or *dogū*, of the middle or late Jomon period have received this designation, the latest being the so-called Masked Goddess of ca. 2000 to 1000 B.C.E. (Fig. 1). This hollow figurine was discovered on August 23, 2000, during archaeological exploration of the Nakappara site in the Kohigashi district of Chino City, and it was officially declared a National Treasure on August 21, 2014.
- 2 While at least some 18,000 *dogū* are known in Japan, most were recovered from rubbish heaps and were extensively broken. By contrast, the 34-centimeter Masked Goddess was brought to light in a burial pit in several large fragments that had been carefully assembled and placed inside its hollow body. It is believed that this reflects an act of ritual breakage. Only nine other *dogū* have been brought to light from funerary contexts and all underwent minimal breakage, unlike the condition of most of the *dogū* from rubbish heaps.

Fig. 1. Dogu from Nakappara site, Nagano Prefecture, Jomon period, 2000 BC - 1000 BC (Togariishi Museum of Jomon Archeology, Chino city, Nagano)



Photo: Japan Realtime, Aug 22, 2014: Arts and Culture.

- 3 For more on dogū see *CSIG News*, Winter 2011, p. 9 for the exhibition *The Power of Dogū: Ceramic Figurines from Ancient Japan*.
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ABSTRACTS

In Japan, great reverence is paid to significant cultural forms of expression, such as important works of art or architecture. They are awarded the title of *kokuhō*, or National Treasure, by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, an office of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology.

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