

Jomon Period

NAKAMURA Kosaku¹

A major trend in the past few years of Jomon period study is the conceptual reexamination of “Jomon,” such as its ranges in time and space, periodical divisions within the Jomon period, differences between eastern and western Japan, and so on, as was represented in YAMADA Yasuhiro’s *Tsukurareta Jomon Jidai (Created Jomon Period)*. Especially fiscal 2015 saw publication of featured articles on issues regarding the beginning of the Jomon period in two major commercial archaeological journals *Archaeology Quarterly* and *The Archaeological Journal*. Also, ANZAI Masahito’s *Jomonjin no Seikatsu Sekai (The World of the Jomon People)* is a general information book based on a historical view that each phase, divided by some climate changes, shows fluctuations of cultural/social structures within the Jomon period, with well summarized fields such as environmental and social factors in recent Jomon period study.

There is a controversy on methodology of spiritual culture study. TANIGUCHI Yasuhiro edited featured articles on stone rods that are the largest ritual tools unique to the Jomon period, and while he pointed out the existence of three viewpoints: 1) objective description, 2) extraction of patterns and etic explanation, and 3) emic interpretation to Jomon people; he argued that it takes subjective judgement to categorize and classify stone rods with various utilizations even in pursuit of objectivity, and detailed observation of use and excavated situations are necessary. This poses an issue concerning all artifacts, not limited to stone rods. On the other hand, OSHIMA Naoyuki interpreted all Jomon artifacts and features as symbolization of the moon, water, uteruses, snakes, and so on in *Jomonjin no Sekaikan (World Views of Jomon People)*, based on theories by Eliade and others. While his efforts to explain from a unified viewpoint thoroughly should be evaluated, enough explanation was not given in some parts. TAKAHASHI Ryuzaburo gave featured articles on ethnoarchaeology in *Kodai* Vol. 138, trying to introduce new viewpoints into Jomon study.

Fiscal 2015 continued to see many examples of a study style to discuss regional relationships by classification and organization of various data. For stone tool study, distribution of Aotora stones from the Hidaka Mountains in Hokkaido and regional

¹ c/o Kokugakuin Tochigi Junior College, 608 Hirai-cho, Tochigi City, Tochigi 328–8588, Japan
(knakamura@kokugakuintochigi.ac.jp)

typology of stone arrows were examined. For pottery study, there were works on rare and symbolic pottery types such as spouted vessels and vessels with unusually shaped feet, in addition to deep bowls which are used as the standard for chronology. Clay analysis of pottery is also important.

There were many studies on environmental data and resource utilization. YONEMOTO Shiori examined stress markers on human bones. KUWABATA Mitsuhiro organized study of the influence of Kikai Akahoya eruption comprehensively. KAMIJO Nobuhiko discussed plant processing tools systematically, based on classification of archaeological data and added experiments. Other than the above mentioned, accumulation of results is seen in identification of seed marks by analysis of starch remains and replication methods, carbon and nitrogen isotope analysis on carbonized substances, and so on. HABU Junko discussed the possibility of social destruction due to excessive reliance on plants.

Characteristics of fiscal 2015 were the increase of various Jomon enthusiasts among the general public as seen in clay figurine guidebooks, cookie shaped potshards, popularity votes on clay figurine characters, as well as free magazines and modern art with Jomon themes and so on.