

Jomon Period

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This fiscal year a “Jomon boom” was seen, such as a special exhibit by the Tokyo National Museum “Jomon: 10,000 Years of Prehistoric Art in Japan.” Especially there were many with artistic point of view and spiritual world of clay figurines (*dogū*), using abundant colored pictures and illustrations.

As many excavation research projects were conducted in relation to reconstructive projects for the Great East Japan Earthquake, aspects along the Pacific coastal area in Tohoku are getting clear. There are many projects for organization of historic sites and academic research by universities.

Major research themes are spatial framework of Jomon culture, mode of life, technology, hierarchy, and spirituality. Magazines had interdisciplinary articles with anthropology, archaeozoology, and archaeobotany.

“Boundaries” of the Jomon period

Discussion on spatial boundaries of Jomon culture that were grasped vaguely before were published. It handled the relationship between western Japan and the Korean peninsula, and study on wide-range exchanges due to the discovery of “Obora-style pottery” from northern Honshu in Okinawa is developing in pottery clay analysis. Discussion on the Yayoi period’s beginning time heated up again with different analysis viewpoint and methodology.

Many theses were backed by fundamental study such as lineage based on exchanges, material interpretation paying attention to chains of movement, and extraction of ecological characteristics based on careful research.

As a result of lipid analysis on Incipient to Early Jomon pottery, it was revealed that the pottery was mainly used for processing aquatic resources.

Subsistence theory with multidisciplinary research

Abundant botanic artifacts were yielded mostly from southern Tohoku to northern Kanto. Transition is seen in study themes to tackle subsistence from excavated examples of large

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amounts of pottery with pressed grain marks and their interpretation, hemp cultivation in Early Jomon, utilization of wild plants like *sansho* (Japanese pepper), or pressed marks of mats and insects.

Interpretation of the Jomon society seen from paved stones or graves

There were interpretations on dwellings with paved stones and sites with arranged stones in eastern Japan, as well as rituals regarding discarded dwellings and funeral systems. As for funeral systems, lineages of burial behavior and funeral rituals were pursued. On the usage of jar burial, various theories were examined and a hypothesis for miscarriage and stillborn babies was supported based on relationship with capacity of pottery and size of buried objects.

Spirituality seen from clay figurines and beads

Outstanding was theories on ownership or usage based on observation/analysis for clay figurine study. Northeast Asia was pursued as the origin of Jomon beads. Also, its prototype was assumed as bone and antler objects.

Distribution of everyday material

Distribution/trade theory was active for everyday material such as obsidian, red pigment, and asphalt.