

Rethinking the earliest Late-Jomon pottery complex in western Japan

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Abstract: Recent typological studies on the earliest Late-Jomon pottery in western Japan seem to stray off into a vicious circle or a logical disorder, in discussing with the existing relative chronology. There is one attribute representing plural diagnostics; at one time served for fixing a chronological stage, and at another for defining a typological tradition. This often makes it difficult to tell whether the attribute represents the position in a chronological chart or in a lineage. This paper, in order to discuss the structure of the pottery complex in question to the purpose, at first provides an alternative chronological chart, showing recent evidence of great importance from the west-end of Honsyū Island. The chart is constructed on the basis of one attribute of pottery decoration—that is the shape of a capital J motif—, and other different attributes are ready for further argument. Therefore, though the chart seemingly becoming looser as a time scale than before, comparative study of pottery in both terms of local sub-styles and cross-regional traditions can be achieved, with no confusing the nature of each diagnostic.

In the course of constructing the new chart, a suggestion is given on the interrelation between the Namiki/Ataka style and the Nakatsu/Fukuda style. Then, it is pointed out that pottery in question found in the west-end of Honsyū Island shows a distinct characteristic in cord twisting. Here had anti-clockwise cord impressions and other areas had clockwise ones. In addition, from the point of view of incised decoration on the whole surface, it is argued that the basic structure of the earliest Late-Jomon pottery complex in western Japan would have been composed of a double tradition symbiosis; the vertical decorating was from the Fukuda tradition, and the horizontal from the Sukumo one. It is followed that such a structure could have penetrated into each region within the Nakatsu/Fukuda style. It might well be assumed that the vertical decorating was descended from the eastern Japanese style in the Middle-Jomon, and the horizontal from the indigenous.

Keywords: Jomon; pottery; chronology; diagnostic; tradition; symbiosis.

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