Regarding Local Pottery in the Eastern Part (Mainly Kanto) of Japan

Asano Haruki

A great number of locally-produced pieces of pottery have been found through research excavations of the remains from the middle ages in the eastern part of Japan, but no serious studies have been made on them until recently.

In this report, four kinds of local pottery are described to show the characteristics of pottery in the middle ages in the east: Haji ware dishes for serving food, vases found in the northern part of Kanto for storing food, Katakuchi-bachi and Suribachi (bowls with pouring lips and earthenware bowls with inner textured surface used as mortars) for preparing food, and inside-handled pans for boiling food.

The first point is that Haji ware dishes that are classified into wheel-made ones and non-wheel-made ones started to spread in the east to signify the medieval society in the east. Incidentally, Haji ware in the east was produced in a different style from one in Kinai in the west.

The Second one is that Ga ware (tile-clay) vases that are found widely in the northern part of Kanto signified increased production of original earthen ware in the east.

The Third one is that Katakuchi-bachi bowls represented greatly increased production of local earthen ware in the latter half of the middle ages while Suribachi represented diversified centers of production and the appearance of locally domineering lords in the latter half of the middle ages.

The Fourth one is that Inside-handled pans, like Katakuchi-bachi and Suribachi, represented the increase of locally produced goods, and they also represented the germinating division of labor in production of Ga ware products such as flat pans and braziers that were popularly used in the pre-modern days.

Earthen ware products such as briefly mentioned above are only part of the pottery in the east in the middle ages. The complete variety of them are still to be investigated.