Miaotikou-type Colored Earthenware
of Dawenkou Culture

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This paper deals with Miaotikou-type colored earthenware discovered from remains belonging to the Dawenkou culture, and aims to clarify the contents of the cultural communication between the basin of the Wei He and the middle and lower basins of the Yellow River, by examining the spread of this type of earthenware to the Dawenkou culture in the Shangtong area.

Firstly, the earthenware was analyzed according to the manner in which it was excavated in each area and at each site. Then, it was pointed out that Miaotikou-type colored earthenware was used in daily life together with other pottery in the Yanshao culture in the middle and southern basins of the Yellow River and the basin of the Wei He. The custom of burying colored earthenware in graves does not seem to have existed. Secondly, in the early Dawenkou culture in the Shangtong area, Miaotikou-type colored earthenware is found in graves as burial goods. It is possible that the proper function of colored earthenware as food vessels changed into that of funerary pottery. Furthermore, it is possible that some shapes and patterns of Miaotikou-type colored earthenware of the Yanshao culture were selectively adopted into the early Dawenkou culture in the Shangtong area. Finally, an analysis of the tombs of Dadengzi and liulin sites, suggests that the colored earthenware was only buried in the graves of rich people with many burial accessories; therefore, it is highly possible that the colored earthenware was treated as a symbol of authority in the group. In any case, the people of the early Dawenkou culture did actively adopt the colored earthenware. This is shown in the fact that they changed the usage of colored earthenware from food vessels to burial goods, and the fact that they preferred the finest and most complicated patterns for the grave-ditch-type colored earthenware.

The colored earthenware must have been brought to the Shangtung area by a commercial route. The grave-ditch-type colored earthenware in the early Dawenkou culture seems to have been brought through communication, mainly the trading of goods, without any accompanying transfer of people from the basin of the Wei He and the middle and central basins of the Yellow River.