The Jomon culture is one of the Far East Neolithic cultures, which adapted to the “miniature garden” world formed by the temperate humid climate and mountainous landscapes of the Japanese Archipelago. The people of the Jomon culture tended to settle in habitable areas just beyond the northern border of the temperate zone of the Japanese Archipelago due to difficulties in adapting to the cold climate. The Jomon population were not willing to expand northward into cold climate areas that were difficult to inhabit unless the living environment met their needs. Among such cold areas, the Jomon population found it worth their while to settle in northeastern Hokkaido because it was rich with marine resources and stones; however, the extreme weather conditions in the Okhotsk coast made it difficult for them to maintain the same lifestyle as in temperate areas and left many no choice but to withdraw from the area. In addition, some of the Jomon population are likely to have expanded into Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands when these areas became habitable as a result of the expansion of the temperate zone, but during the period of the early Holocene to the final Jomon they did not long term settle there as they could not change their lifestyle or adapt sustainably to the different ecosystem. The closer to the subarctic zone they got, the more difficult it became to fulfill the living needs of the Jomon population. In brief, it was extremely risky for them to expand into the subarctic zone in the northern boundary region of the Japanese Archipelago.

Key words: Jomon culture, Hokkaido, Russian Far East, adaptation to the cold climate, environmental changes