A Study of Circular Settlements of the Early Jomon Period in the Kitakami River Basin

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This paper examines the characteristics of circular settlements of the Early Jomon period, consisting of large rectangular dwellings, in the Kitakami River Basin. Large rectangular dwelling remains were generally arranged in lines in the ruins of the first half of the Early Jomon period in the Sanriku Coast and Kitakami Mountain region. In sharp contrast, such dwellings were arranged in a radial manner at the Ayaori Shinden Site. Moreover, those at the Ganjadate Site in the Kitakami River Basin were built in a different style and arranged in a perfect circle. In light of these findings, this paper describes regional variations in the style and arrangement of large rectangular dwelling remains from the first half of the Early Jomon period in the Sanriku Coast and Kitakami Mountain area and the Kitakami River Basin, and explains the unique characteristics of the Ayaori Shinden Site. The Osuzukami Site, large-scale circular settlement ruins from the latter half of the Early Jomon period, includes dwelling remains that show characteristics typically associated with the northern Tohoku region on the Japan Sea side. Located on an important route passing through the Ou Mountain Range, the Osuzukami Site is assumed to have had a close relationship with the Japan Sea side region.

Key words: Early Jomon period, large rectangular dwelling remains, circular settlement, Tohoku region