The Segmentation Structure of Circular Villages and Extraneous Houses

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In light of the phenomenon that a settlement included several extraneous houses, this paper aims to describe the structure of circular villages of the Middle Jomon period and the social context behind it. To this end, this paper examines circular village sites built in the middle phase of the Middle Jomon period in Kanto and Chubu regions to assess how the extraneous houses affected the formation of the segmentation structure of the villages.

In the middle phase of the Middle Jomon period, large posthole-type buildings originated from the Hokuriku region and pit dwellings typically seen in the Chubu Highlands region were introduced and accepted in some circular villages in the southwest of the Kanto region. This study analyses the distribution of these extraneous houses and consequently indicates that they seem to have been introduced directly from their respective places of origin, rather than spreading in orderly sequence from one village or district to the next. Moreover, this paper reveals that the acceptance and coexistence of extraneous houses were closely related to the contemporary fusion and coexistence of different styles of pottery including extraneous one.

In conclusion, this paper suggests the model of society that can reasonably describe the above-mentioned phenomena. It seems that in the middle phase of the Middle Jomon period (the Katsusaka-style Pottery period), the construction of circular villages involved multiple different lineages. These segmental groups maintained their respective identities and relations with other relatives outside of their settlements in distant places. A large tribal group whose territory coincided with the geographical distribution of Katsusaka-style pottery was segmented into various unilineal descent groups such as lineages and sibs. The geographically discontinuous distribution of building and pottery styles is likely to have been promoted by exogamy, which was generally seen in unilineal descent groups.

Key words: circular village site, segmentation structure, extraneous house, extraneous pottery, segmental tribe, Middle Jomon period, middle phase of the Middle Jomon, Katsusaka style pottery, lineage, sib, unilineal descent group, exogamy