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The analysis of population dynamics in the Jomon period in the Kinki and Chugoku regions, which are sparsely dotted with archaeological sites and structural remains such as pit dwellings, has been developed based on the so-called Archaeological Diagram of Ebb and Flow, which shows the locations of archaeological sites along the spatial axis and the typology or relative chronology of pottery along the temporal axis, together with the interpretation of individual data. When archaeologists started to use this approach over five decades ago, they assumed that the regions were populated by sedentary hunter-gatherers who settled in permanent villages. This approach was characterized by the following four methodological/theoretical features, though they were not explicitly stated. First, if artefacts were found at all, they were treated as evidence of human activities at that time. Secondly, the measurement unit for such activity period was a chronological subdivision of the relative dating of pottery. Thirdly, it was accepted that even a single unit of activity period could include the time difference in activity between two sites. Fourthly, the research targeted (clusters of) archaeological sites that were revealed in their entirety. Later, as more archaeological evidence was found, the number of archaeological sites increased, and so did the total number of activity periods represented as chronological subdivisions at each site, though neither quantitative nor qualitative criteria were developed for assessing human activities. Under the assumption of sedentary populations, an increase in archaeological sites would mean ever smaller territories for individual groups; therefore, the absolute numbers of artefacts and structural remains in a site being small inevitably leads to the conclusion that small population groups were confined to small territories. Meanwhile, the increase of chronological subdivisions which are represented as activity periods reinforces the presumption that sedentary population groups occupied their fixed territories. When this presumption is applied, along with the results of studies of typical districts, the districts that lack basic data are often assumed to have been similar to typical districts, which results in the reconstruction of uniform images. Thus, when research materials increase in quantity while assumptions are left unchallenged and the quantitative and qualitative criteria for assessing and describing human activities are left underdeveloped, the data is apt to be analysed, manipulated, and interpreted uniformly. As a result, the same conclusion can be drawn for different districts: small population groups held small fixed territories and continued activities within the boundaries without expanding. Going forward, it is essential to develop methodologies and theories that
can lay the foundation for examining individual cases without putting too much trust in assumptions so
that the abundant archaeological data can be properly interpreted to gain insights into the diversity of the
Jomon society.

Key words: Jomon settlement, archaeological site clusters, settlement pattern, ebb and flow, population
dynamics