

Regional groups of pottery industries in northeast Asia from the ancient times to early medieval times

In this report, the Japan sea rim area and its circumference from the 5th century to the 12th century are referred. The analysis of potteries sets up below three main pottery industry regions, the Mokhe = Jurchen culture group area, the Okhotsk culture area, and the eastern Mongolian steppe.

1. The Mokhe = Jurchen culture group area

The Mokhe = Jurchen culture group consisted of several local cultures, and was distributed over the large area of the Russian Far East and the China northeast part. Mokhe type jars, formed by the coil building technique and fired in an oxygen atmosphere, were most popular and characteristic vessels of the household industry in the Mokhe = Jurchen culture, and were manufactured and utilized in the whole area of that. The potteries fired in a reduced atmosphere of the Mokhe = Jurchen culture was manufactured by the special workers, and circulated in a different system from the household potteries.

2. The Okhotsk Culture area

The Okhotsk Culture distributed centering on the Sea of Okhotsk coast. As for detail chronology of the Okhotsk culture, Nobuo Ito's research serves as the foundation. The Okhotsk culture has been conventionally considered to be the culture by a comparatively homogeneous group. Surely, the Okhotsk culture was influenced of Mokhe = Jurchen culture, and its vessel forms became very similar to the Mokhe = Jurchen type around the 7th century. However, it divided into several quite different variants about the 8th century.

3. Eastern Mongol steppe

Some scholars think that the Zhalainuoer culture and the Burkhutui culture in this area affected the pottery styles of the Mokhe culture. However, the details of such situation are not clear because of the lack of pottery chronologies. Moreover, the manufacture of potteries fired in a reduced atmosphere started from the influence of Xiong-nu vessel production, and it will be held for a long time and that will be inherited to Qidan tribe's pottery production. Qidan's pottery making technique was introduced into the Mokhe = Jurchen culture group area.

The common assemblages of the pottery forms, in which deep jars were used mainly, existed in the wide area of northeast Asia. In that time various social changes like the increase of trades and cultural exchanges, or immigrations of populations or so, occurred there. In order to consider such changes archaeologically in detail, it is required to clarify the chronologies and simultaneities of pottery styles in whole territories of Northeast Asia. The pottery production in each area was ended almost simultaneously around the 11-12th century. The same change is seen also in the Japanese Islands. It is necessary to clarify the process to the end of the pottery production which linked up with the production, circulation, and the spread of glazed vessels and iron pots in East Asia.