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SUMMARY

The archaeological settlement of Menashidomari in Esashi Town is located on the northeast coast of Hokkaido, approximately 80 km southeast of Cape Soya. Because the Kitami Mountains extend along the coast of the Okhotsk Sea in this region, there are generally few plains, except for alluvial plains such as the Tonbetsu and Horobetsu estuaries, and so the coast is mainly made up of steep coastal terrace. This coastal terrace has a height of 15 to 25 meters above sea level near the Menashidomari settlement of the Okhotsk Culture, and has been divided into six flat fields by the erosion of two streams, the Fuushinaipo (Yamuwakka) and the Chikapootsunai.

Regarding the Menashidomari settlement, we published “Studies on Okhotsk Culture, Vol. 4 The Menashidomari Site (1)” in the BULLETIN OF THE HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY MUSEUM No. 8 in 2016. This is a compilation by the late Professor Haruo Ohyi of the results of a survey conducted by the Northern Culture Research Institute attached to the Faculty of Letters, Hokkaido University, from 1967 to 1974. The results of the research by the Esashi Town Board of Education are also being discussed.

Investigations by the Esashi Town Board of Education are still ongoing at this settlement, and the results are being steadily reported. Discussions based on them are also actively developing (Kawana 2007; Takabatake 2020, 2023; Kumaki 2023, etc.).

The focus of the debate has been on the nature of this settlement, with particular attention being focused on the number of graves, the quality and quantity of swords buried there, and the large number of brown bear skulls accumulated within the pit dwellings.

This time, in the BULLETIN OF THE HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY MUSEUM No. 9, we will report on Pit Dwelling No. 2 and Pit Dwelling No. 3. The following four points can be cited as related to the above discussion.

1. Although the survey area is outside the main grave area, some potential graves have been confirmed.
2. It has been said that this settlement started in the Late stage, but it is possible that it dates back to the Middle stage.
3. There are notable examples of patterns that characterize pottery related to the transition period from the Middle to the Late stage of the Okhotsk Culture, with “Gijyou-haritsukemon” (pseudo-rope markings). This has the possibility of being related to the lineage of the Okhotsk culture groups.
4. An Okhotsk culture miniature pottery imitating Satsumon pottery was found at this site by us. This find is useful when considering the relationship with the Satsumon group.

(Masaki EDA, Tetsuya AMANO, Hiroko ONO)

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