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The Concept of Civilization in Modern Studies of the Neolithic in China and Japan

This paper presents a brief overview of studies exploring the origin of civilizations in modern archaeology of China and Japan and mostly concerning the Neolithic period. The analysis of publications shows that in Chinese and Japanese archaeology, original scholarly traditions have been developed, with their own methodological foundations and terminology. We outline the key ideas relating to the origin of civilization, elaborated by researches in China (Su Bingqi, Yan Wenming, Li Boqian, Xu Hong, Gao Jiangtao) and Japan (Harunari Hideji, Watanabe Hiroshi, Sasaki Fujio, Yasuda Yoshinori). We show that most Chinese scholars consider the formation of state a sine qua non of transition to the civilization stage. However, the problem of identifying criteria of civilization and state formation using archaeological data has not been resolved to date. Examples of archaeological markers of civilization proposed by Chinese specialists are listed. In the works by Japanese researchers, no connection between the emergence of the state and civilization has been revealed. Most Chinese archaeologists date the emergence of civilization and of the first state formations to the Late Neolithic (Dawenkou, Hongshan, Liangzhu, Longshan, etc.), ca 3500–2000 BC. There are alternative hypotheses—the Early Bronze Age (Erlitou culture) and the Late Bronze Age (the Spring and Autumn period). In Japanese archaeology, there are two main positions regarding the time when civilization had formed—the Jōmon period (Neolithic) and the subsequent Yayoi period (Bronze Age). Scholarly and external (including political) factors that have influenced modern concepts of the origin of civilization require special historiographic research.

Keywords: *China, Japan, civilization, Neolithic, archaeological criteria of civilization.*

Introduction

The notion of civilization is one of the key concepts in the Humanities and Social Sciences. The meaning of this term may widely vary in different fields and scholarly schools, which hampers the mutual understanding of scholars specializing in various areas, as well as interdisciplinary research. V.G. Child (1950) made the greatest contribution to adapting this concept to archaeological methodology and identifying criteria for the emergence of civilization, using archaeological evidence. Subsequently, the criteria he formulated have been revised and refined many times (Kradin, 2006). In Russian scholarship, this issue was primarily discussed by V.M. Masson (1989). However, the tasks of selecting indicators of

the transition to civilization, their correlation with each other, and adaptation to specific archaeological realities are still relevant; they attract the attention of scholars in different countries of the world. Chinese and Japanese studies discussing the origin and development of civilizations employ their own distinctive terminology, which may complicate the analysis of publications. In this case, not only the knowledge of the subject matter is required, but also familiarity with theoretical approaches followed by the specialists from these countries.

Searching for the roots of Chinese civilization has been one of the main issues since the beginnings of archaeology as a modern scholarly field in China. Back in the 1920s, during the movement of "criticism of ancient history", Professor Li Xuanbo from Peking University stated that "the path of archaeological research" was "the only way to solve the problems of ancient history" (cited after (Li Boqian, 2016: 5)). The most important landmarks were the discovery of the Late Yin capital in the Xiaotun village in Anyang in 1928, the discovery of the Erligang culture, which was earlier than Xiaotun, excavation of the Shang settlement in Zhengzhou in 1950, as well as the discovery of the Erlitou site and culture in Yanshi in 1959. These and subsequent achievements of archaeologists have made it possible to confirm the information of historical sources about the ancient Chinese state of Shang-Yin and raise new questions concerning the authenticity of the Xia State, as well as the time and region of the emergence of Chinese civilization, etc. Chinese archaeologists still focus on these problems. At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, the major multidisciplinary projects "Chronology of Xia–Shang–Zhou" (1996–2000) and "Comprehensive Study on the Origins and Early Development of Chinese Civilization" (2004–2015) were carried out in China. In addition to field research, Chinese archaeologists elaborated the theoretical foundation of the issue, attempting to establish signs of transition to the stage of civilization that could be identified using archaeological evidence. History of research into the origins of civilization (usually using the example of China) in the archaeology of the People's Republic of China has already become the subject of several overviews summarizing and analyzing the results in this area (Lin Yun, 2016; Chang Huaiying, 2016; Bao Yifan, 2020; Wang Zhenzhong, 2020).

Throughout the 19th–20th centuries, Japanese scholars have deepened and expanded our knowledge about the past in the Japanese Archipelago. One of the most important achievements was the identification of the *Jōmon* period (*jōmon jidai* 縄文時代) and *Yayoi* period (*yayoi jidai* 弥生時代)*.

The concept of the "*Jōmon* civilization", or "*Jōmon* utopia", gained popularity in Japanese society in the late 1980s–mid 1990s. This shift in the attitude towards the ancient history of Japan changed on the basis of economic and social upheavals, and there emerged the idea about the *Jōmon* period as a time of flourishing, marked by increased wealth accumulation and social stratification. This concept was largerly based on the discovery of the Sannai-Maruyama site in Aomori Prefecture in 1994 (Yamada Yasuhiro, 2020: 32–33). New finds, which had not been previously discovered at the *Jōmon* sites, and the high level of skills among the inhabitants of the settlement caused a sensation in Japanese society. Publications on that site emphasized the uniqueness of Japanese heritage as compared to Chinese civilization (Seki Yūji, 2020). In the late 20th–early 21st century, the theory of the existence of civilization in the *Jōmon* period has been spreading in the Japanese scholarly community. According to this theory, the *Jōmon* society of hunters and gatherers was comparable to classical civilizations of Egypt, India, Mesopotamia, and China in terms of its level of material culture (Umehara Takeshi, Yasuda Yoshinori, 1995; Yasuda Yoshinori, 1997; Sasaki Fujio, 1999). However, the majority of scholars remain skeptical about this idea, and point out the weakness of its factual basis and supporting evidence, such as the absence of developed agriculture, towns, and literacy in the *Jōmon* period. Instead, they associate the emergence of early civilization on the Japanese islands with a wave of migration from the mainland and with the *Yayoi* culture (Fujio Shin'ichiro, 2002: 5–8; Yamada Yasuhiro, 2015: 63–64).

This article does not claim to cover in full all of the evidence. Its purpose is to make a brief overview of current research on the problem of the emergence of early civilizations in East Asia in the archaeology of China and Japan. For that purpose, it will discuss the relevant terminology used in Chinese and Japanese scholarly literature, and present the main concepts elaborated by Chinese and Japanese scholars in their research on the archaeology of the Neolithic.

*The Japanese term *jidai* 時代 has several meanings—'age, period, century'. In our work, the term "period" is used to designate the entire time of the *Jōmon* (subdivided into initial, middle, etc.), and *Yayoi* periods. The term "culture" (*bunka* 文化) as applied to the Jōmon period designates the material culture and worldview in specific subperiods.

Terminology and theoretical principles used in the studies on the origins of civilizations in China and Japan

The term *wenming* 文明, which in the modern Chinese language denotes the concept of "civilization", first appeared with the meaning of 'bright, shining'* in the "Wenyan zhuan" commentary, ascribed to Confucius (551–479 BC), to the classical Chinese philosophical treatise "Yi Jing" ("Book of Changes", 10th–4th centuries BC) (Morohashi Tetsuji, 1967: 596). The term was used when assessing the level of social development by the Chinese writer Li Yu (1611–1680) in the Early Qing period. In its modern meaning, the term *wenming* came into Chinese from the Japanese in the early 20th century (Popova, 2020: 5–6).

The work of F. Engels "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State" (1884) is the most important methodological basis for Chinese scholars of the Humanities until this day. Following Engels, most Chinese scholars understand "civilization" as a certain stage in the development of human society. In accordance with the thesis that "the state is a product of society at a specific stage of development" (Engels, 2019: 271), shared by most Chinese experts, the main indicator of the transition to the stage of civilization is the emergence of a state (Su Bingqi, 1988: 1; Lin Yun, 2016: 5; Xu Hong, 2016: 13; Gao Jiangtao, 2019: 21). Some scholars completely connect these concepts (Yi Jianping, 2014: 144). An exception is the point of view of Ye Wenxian, who believes that the transition to civilization does not necessarily entail the emergence of a state (2016).

The idea of an inextricable link between states and civilization fosters theoretical research of Chinese archaeologists on the emergence of early states. In recent years, in addition to the works of K. Marx and F. Engels, the concept of chiefdoms by E. Service and M. Sahlins (Evolution…, 1960; Service, 1975) and the theory of early states proposed by H.J.M. Claessen and P. Skalnik (The Early State, 1978) have become the sources for methodological developments in this research field. Therefore, the most important problems of theoretical archaeology in China are adapting these theories and translating the borrowed terminology. Currently, the apparatus of concepts and terms for studies on the origins of civilization and state has not been unified. One source is the body of terms available in traditional Chinese historiography, such as *guguo* 古国 'ancient state', *fangguo* 方国 'principality, domain', *bangguo* 邦国 'principality, domain, possession, city-state', etc. These terms allow for various interpretations, and boundaries between them are blurred. This makes communication difficult even within the Chinese academic community, not to mention dialogue with foreign colleagues. Another component is terminology that comes from works written in English. A single standard for translating and interpreting these terms has not yet been developed. In order to avoid confusion in Chinese publications, these terms are provided not only in translation, but also in the original, for example: English "chiefdom", Chinese *qiubang* 酋邦; English "early state", Chinese *zaoqi guojia* 早期国家; English "proto-history", Chinese *yuanshi* 原史 (see (Xu Hong, 2016; Chang Huaiying, 2016; Gao Jiangtao, 2019)).

Another theoretical basis for studying the issues of civilization in the archaeology of China is the concept of the "urban revolution" by Child (1950). Almost at the same time, one of the founders of the Institute of Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and its long-time director Xia Nai (1910–1985), as well as the famous American archaeologist of Chinese origin Zhang Guangzhi (1931–2001), both of whom were influenced by the ideas of Child, presented their definitions and criteria of civilization. It is currently believed that it was precisely Xia Nai who was the first scholar in the People's Republic of China to connect the concept of "civilization" with archaeology, and emphasize the importance of archaeological information for determining the origins of Chinese civilization. He introduced these points in a series of lectures on the Japanese television channel NHK, which were recorded in 1983 (Gao Jiangtao, 2005: 46). Later, he reworked these lectures into a monograph "The Origins of Chinese Civilization" (Xia Nai, 1985). Xia Nai defined civilization as a stage in social development when the tribal system disintegrates and state organization with class differences emerges. In addition to this prerequisite for the transition to civilization, he identified three more criteria revealed by archaeological evidence: towns as centers of political, economic, cultural, and religious activities; literacy; and metal production (Xia Nai, 1985: 81). Xia Nai suggested that civilization emerged in China no later than the Late *Erlitou* stage, but accumulation of quantitative indicators for a qualitative transition occurred in the previous period from the Late Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age (Ibid.: 82–100). In 1984, Prof. Zhang Guangzhi from Harvard University

*Or 'adorned and brightened' in the translation by J. Legg (see: Wen Yan, Qian, in *Chinese Text Project*, URL: https://ctext.org/book-of-changes/wen-yan (accessed 08.01.2021)).

was invited to present a course of lectures at Peking University. Later, he published the lectures in the book "Six Lectures on Archaeology" (1986) (Sun Qingwei, 2021: 65). The first lecture discussed the importance of studying the history and archaeology of Ancient China for world history. During this lecture, Zhang Guangzhi proposed his version of the list of signs of civilization: literacy, towns, metal production, state structures, religious buildings, and monumental art (1986: 14). According to Zhang Guangzhi, mechanisms of transition to civilization were by no means universal. He suggested two models: 1) the Western, "breakthrough" model, distinguished by acute social, economic, and cultural transformations; 2) the worldwide (non-Western), "sequential" model, characterized by prolonged preservation of cultural elements, including the time of transition from barbarism to civilization. China represents the second civilizational model (Ibid.: 17–24). The ideas of Xia Nai and Zhang Guangzhi formed the basis for further research into the emergence and development of civilization in China, using archaeological evidence.

In the Japanese language, the notion of "civilization" appeared in the Meiji period (1868–1912), together with ongoing active Westernization, accompanied by the adoption of Western ideas about society and history, which resulted in new terms and variants of their use. The term "civilization" *bunmei* 文明 was first used by Fukuzawa Yukichi in his work "Conditions in the West" (1866–1870), and later in his treatise "An Outline of a Theory of Civilization" (1875). The scholar opposed the concepts of "civilization" and "savagery" by comparing the level of social, political, cultural, and spiritual development of the leading capitalist states and of Japan, which lagged behind. In his understanding, Japan occupied an intermediate position between "civilized" (England, France, USA) and "savage" (African countries, Australia) countries (Kawajiri Fumihiko, 2010: 136). In conjunction with *bunmei*, the term *kaika* 開化 'civilization' was used at that time. The phrase *bunmei-kaika* 文明開化 became also widely employed. However, along with the original meaning, it was used for referring to a specific historical phenomenon of the Early Meiji period, and was also a synonym for the term "modernization" (Ibid.: 137). In the early 20th century, the term "culture" *bunka* 文化, as well as the borrowed term *karuchā*: カルチャー (transcribed English 'culture'), emerged.

The words *jinbun* 人文 'civilization, culture', *kyōka* 教化 'culture, civilization, enlightenment, education', *kaimei* 開明 'civilization, enlightenment' and the term *shibirizēshon* シビリゼーション (civilization) borrowed from English are used in the modern Japanese scholarly language along with *bunmei* and *kaika* in the meaning of "civilization" (Ruigo dai jiten, 2002: 1046–1047). These are more common in social, political, and cultural studies.

The term "civilization" is not widely used in the context of contemporary Japanese archaeology. It is absent from available archaeological dictionaries, and is present only in the Japanese-English-German dictionary of archaeological terms as *bunmei* (Melichar, 1964: 7); whereas the term "culture" (*bunka*) is commonly used, especially when describing the *Jōmon* period (Wa-Ei taishō…, 2001: 87, 129, 252; Shin Nihon…, 2005: 407–408).

In Japanese scholarly literature, the term "civilization" traditionally describes early proto-state entities, which emerged in the Late *Yayoi* period and flourished in the *Kofun* period. However, in recent decades, the idea of the existence of civilization in the *Jōmon* period has become more widespread, based on the concept of the "stratified *Jōmon* society" (Umehara Takeshi, Yasuda Yoshinori, 1995; Yasuda Yoshinori, 1997; Sasaki Fujio, 1999).

Researching the sites and collections of the *Jōmon* period began in the late 1870s by so-called hired foreigners—Western scholar-naturalists (E.S. Morse, P. von Siebolt, J. Milne, W. Gowland, N. Munro) (Yamada Yasuhiro, 2015: 17–24; Ikawa-Smith, 1982: 299–301). In addition to the methodology of archaeological and anthropological research, they introduced to Japanese scholarship terminology based at that time on a "system of three ages". Subsequently, using new evidence on pottery assemblages, the Stone Age was divided into two periods: cultures of the *Jōmon* type (*Jōmon-shiki bunka jidai* 縄文式文化時代) and cultures of the *Yayoi* type (*Yayoi-shiki bunka jidai* 彌生式文化時代) (Yamanouchi Sugao, 1932; Morimoto Rokuji, 1935). After the Second World War, the idea about the uniqueness of the *Jōmon* period began to emerge; at its early stage, this idea was under the marked influence of European scholarly concepts. In the early 1960s, the "*Jōmon* period" *Jōmon jidai* 縄文時代 and the "*Yayoi* period" *Yayoi jidai* 弥生時代 were recognized as unique stages in the ancient history of the Japanese Archipelago, equivalent to the concepts of the "Neolithic" and "Bronze Age". Ten years later, these terms became widespread: from popular and educational literature to scholarly monographs.

The turning point in identifying the role of the *Jōmon* period in the development of the ethnic and cultural identity of Japan were the 1950s–1970s, when

the idea of a "new Japan" with "new history" and "new ages for Japan" emerged in the scholarly community. In the 1970s, a clear sequence of the ancient history of the Archipelago was established: the Paleolithic, *Jōmon*, *Yayoi*, *Kofun*, and historical period (Yamada Yasuhiro, 2015: 60–68). This was accompanied by the development of concepts about the uniqueness of Japanese civilization throughout the period of its existence, in comparison to continental civilizations, primarily China.

Concepts of transition to civilization in the contemporary archaeology of China and Japan (evidence of Neolithic cultures)

Chinese scholars have proposed two main variants concerning the time of transition to civilization: 1) the Late Neolithic—cultures of *Dawenkou*, *Hongshan*, *Songze*, *Liangzhu*, and the *Longshan* cultural community; 2) the Early Bronze Age—the so-called Xia period (23rd–16th centuries BC). However, the famous Chinese historian He Ziquan believed that societies of the Shang (16th–11th centuries BC) and Western Zhou (11th–8th centuries BC) periods were at the stage of chiefdom, while state and civilization emerged only during the Spring and Autumn period (722–481 BC) (Wang Zhenzhong, 2020: 121–122). Currently, the more commonly accepted version is that of the Neolithic origin of civilization in China.

In the late 1980s, Su Bingqi (1909–1997), a member of the Institute of Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Professor of Peking University, presented his view of the emergence of Chinese civilization as a process including three stages: ancient culture *gu wenhua* 古文化, ancient cities *gucheng* 古城, and ancient state *guguo* 古国 (1988). Later, he proposed the concept of emergence and development of the state, which also implied three stages: ancient state *guguo* 古国, principality *fangguo* 方国, and empire *diguo* 帝国. Moreover, the third stage in the emergence of civilization (ancient state) corresponded to the first two stages in the development of state (ancient state and principality). Su Bingqi also distinguished three models of state formation: the primary type *yuansheng xing* 原生型, secondary type *cisheng xing* 次生型, and reproducing type *xusheng xing* 续生型 (1997: 108–139). Su Bingqi proposed this theoretical framework after studying archaeological cultures of the Neolithic (Xinglongwa, Zhaobaogou, Hongshan, Fuhe), Bronze Age (Lower Xiajiadian culture and Upper Xianjiadian culture), and Early Iron Age (the culture of the state of Yan) in Southern Manchuria. The starting point was the discovery of sites of the Neolithic Hongshan culture (4600–2900 BC) in Southeastern Manchuria, primarily the Niuheliang group of sites, which included a temple, altars, and burial mounds. According to Su Bingqi, large burial and ritual complexes, as well as advanced art (terracotta sculpture, jade artifacts), testified to the emergence of supra-communal social structures and the transition to civilization. Initially, Su Bingqi believed that the Hongshan culture was at the stage of "ancient culture" and did not show signs of "ancient state". Later, he revised his opinion, attributed that culture to the stage of "ancient state", and suggested that its chronological framework corresponded to the reign of the mythical ruler Huang-di, whose state center was located in the Yanshan Mountains in North China. The culture of the lower layer of Xiajiadian (2000–1300 BC) in the northeastern region and the Liangzhu culture (3300–1700 BC) in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River corresponded to the stage of "principality". The first empire in the history of China was Qin (221–206 BC) (Ibid.: 86–106, 111–129).

Since the formation of state in Manchuria took place earlier than on the Central Plain, Su Bingqi attributed it to the primary type. He believed that the idea of state was borrowed by the population of the Huanghe River Basin from the cultures of the northeast. On the Central Plain, the largest site of the "ancient state" stage was the fortified settlement of Taosi (ca 2500–2000 BC) in Shanxi Province; the stage of "principalities" was represented by the states of Xia, Shang, and Zhou. Individual Chinese principalities also had their own history of statehood. The most representative of these principalities was Qin, which experienced all the stages: "ancient state" under Xiang-gong (833–766 BC), "principality" under Mu-gong (683–621 BC), and empire under Qin Shihuang. According to Su Bingqi, Qin was an example of a secondary type of state; the reproducing type was represented by the states founded by nomads on the territory of China after collapse of the Han Empire (Ibid.: 129–139).

Despite the lack of clear criteria for transition to civilization and formation of a state, the vagueness of formulations and an abundance of metaphors, which make it difficult to understand and use the theory of Su Bingqi, it had a huge effect on Chinese archaeology. Currently, the ideas of Su Bingqi have been elaborated by the Professor of Peking University Yan Wenming, by the Researcher at the Institute of Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, head of excavations at the Erlitou site Xu Hong, and by one of the supervisors of the "Xia–

Shang–Zhou Chronological Project", the Professor of Peking University Li Boqian.

In 1995–1997, Yan Wenming offered his own approach to solving the issue. He believed that Huangdi reigned in the 3rd millennium BC; in archaeology, his kingdom is represented by the evidence of the Longshan cultural community in the basin of the Huanghe River. Concerning its level of political organization, the Longshan society was at the stage of chiefdoms. However, Yan Wenming considered this borrowed term not very suitable for describing Chinese history and preferred to use the terms "prehistoric state" *yuanshi guojia* 原始国家 or "ancient state" *guguo* 古国. The fortified settlements of Erlitou, Sanxingdui, and some other sites were "kingdoms" *wangguo* 王国, which in Su Bingqi's terminology roughly corresponds to the stage of "principalities" *fangguo* 方国. Later, Yan Wenming dated the transition to "ancient states" to an earlier time, the mid 4th millennium BC, when representatives of various Neolithic cultures in five regions of present-day China—*Yangshao* on the Central Plain, *Dawenkou* on the lower reaches of the Huanghe River; *Daxi*, *Qujialing*, and *Shijiahe* on the middle reaches of the Yangtze River; *Songze* and *Liangzhu* on the lower reaches of the Yangtze River, and *Hongshan* and *Xiaoheyan* in the Yanshan Mountains—moved from tribal organization to a state (Yan Wenming, 1997). Thus, the entire period of 3500–2000 BC can be considered "the age of ancient states" *guguo shidai* 古国时代. The ideas of Yan Wenming, Xia Nai, and Su Bingqi found their reflection in the authoritative comprehensive book "The History of Chinese Civilization" (2006), prepared by a team of authors from Peking University and translated into many languages (including Russian). Yan Wenming was Editor-in-Chief of the first volume, which provides information on the Neolithic roots and early stage in the development of Chinese civilization (Istoriya…, 2020: 82–136).

Unlike most of his predecessors and contemporaries, Xu Hong avoided the concept of "Chinese civilization" while discussing the archaeology of the Neolithic, and raised the question as to the origins of civilization on the mainland of East Asia. According to his point of view, starting from the late period of the *Yangshao* cultural community and up to the *Longshan* period inclusively (3500–1800 BC), population groups in different areas of the Huanghe and Yangtze River Basins entered a period of deep social restructuring; many tribes and ancient states *guguo* 古国 competed with each other. This period corresponds to "the age of ancient states" *guguo shidai* 古国时代, or the "age of city-states" *bangguo shidai* 邦国时代, or the age of chiefdoms. Society became more complex with population growth; class differentiation was accompanied by cultural contacts and conflicts between various local population groups. All these processes were reflected in the material culture, the traces of which survived as archaeological objects. The most striking examples are the sites of the *Liangzhu* culture and fortified settlements of Taosi and Shimao (Shaanxi Province). Specific indicators of the transition to civilization are: 1) systems of settlements grouped around one large central settlement; 2) ditches and walls surrounding settlements; 3) large structures created using the *hangtu* method of earth compaction; 4) buildings of the palace type; 5) large altars; 6) large burial complexes. Differences in quantity and quality of the grave goods testify to significant social stratification. Gradually, various communities formed an extensive communication network; however, within this network they retained their independence and self-sufficiency. Starting around 1800 BC, towns and large settlements of the *Longshan* cultural community on the Central Plain ceased to exist. They became replaced by the *Erlitou* culture, which absorbed traditions of the previous period. The area of this culture included the entire territory on the middle reaches of the Huanghe River, while some of its elements penetrated remote areas up to present-day Hong Kong. According to Xu Hong, this fact, as well as the emergence of the capital city of Erlitou, testified to the first territorial state in the middle reaches of the Huanghe River and transition from multiple "civilizations of city-states" *bangguo wenming* 邦国文明 to a single "dynastic civilization" *wangchao wenming* 王朝文明. The emergence of the *Erlitou* culture marks the beginning of the Bronze Age in China and constitutes a watershed between the pre-dynastic and dynastic periods of Chinese history (Xu Hong, 2016: 15–16).

As with Su Bingqi, Li Boqian offered a tripartite model for the development of state: "ancient state" *guguo* 古国, "kingdom" *wangguo* 王国, and "empire" *diguo* 帝国. The period of "ancient states" lasted from about 3500 to 2500 BC. In addition to the Niuheliang complex, Li Boqian included the Lingjiatan site in Anhui Province and the Xipo site in Henan Province in the group of "ancient states". Upon comparing the assemblage of jade items from these three sites, Li Boqian came to the conclusion that there were three paths of transition to civilization. The first path was based on theocracy, as was the case with Niuheliang, where zoomorphic images and ornaments dominated. The second path was based on a combination of

military, political, and religious power, as was the case with Lingjiatan, where cultic items and ritual weaponry were present. The third path was based on political and military power, as was the case with Xipo, where only *yue* jade axes were found. Li Boqian's "ancient state" is synonymous with the term "chiefdom". The initial stage of "kingdoms" is represented by the Liangzhu site of the *Liangzhu* culture and by Taosi site of the *Longshan* culture on the Central Plain. After analyzing these complexes, the following signs of transition to civilization and formation of a mature state were formulated:

1) stratification of settlements and emergence of particularly large ones;

2) construction of defensive structures around the settlements;

3) appearance of large ritual complexes;

4) stratification of burials, emergence of organized cemeteries;

5) organization of specialized areas for artisans' workshops in the settlements, appearance of storage facilities;

6) presence of specific weaponry and/or ritual objects which could serve as symbols of power;

7) appearance of literacy and signs of its exclusive use in large settlements;

8) presence of foreign cultural borrowings in large settlements;

9) signs of relations of control and subordination between settlements of different levels;

10) spread of cultural influence over a certain territory (Li Boqian, 2016: 6–7).

Gao Jiangtao from the Institute of Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences did a comprehensive analysis of archaeological evidence, including location and spatial organization of settlements, size and function of buildings, structure and size of burials, composition of grave goods, etc. Under the possible influence of Li Boqian's views, Gao Jiangtao proposed the concept that there were three models of transition to civilization and emergence of state in the Late Neolithic of China: the Taosi, *Hongshan*, and *Liangzhu* models. The common prerequisite for civilization and statehood was the emergence of economic and social inequality, which primarily found its material expression in the differences in size and structure of burials, and composition of grave goods. The Taosi model was distinguished by sophisticated social stratification, with possible presence of a noble class. The basis of statehood there was the power of the ruler-*wang*; a system of rituals played an important role in political life. In terms of the form of government, Taosi was a city-state. The most important difference in the *Liangzhu* model was that the state was based on religious rather than secular power. This is confirmed by an insignificant number of symbols of political and/or military power (high status weaponry) among the grave goods as opposed to abundant jade artifacts used in religious rituals. The *Hongshan* model was in many ways similar to the *Liangzhu* model. The role of religion in the life of society was extremely important; religious power occupied a central place in the state system, but secular power of the ruler-*wang* also existed at the same time. State entities during the Late Neolithic might have also emerged in the lower reaches of the Huanghe River and middle reaches of the Yangtze River. However, settlement sites in these regions have not been studied fully enough to draw conclusions about the social and political structure of the population (Gao Jiangtao, 2019: 23–28).

In Japanese archaeology, the theory of civilizational development of ancient societies has been traditionally applied to the *Yayoi* (middle and late stages, 6th century BC to 3rd century AD) and *Kofun* (3rd–7th centuries AD) periods (An Illustrated Companion…, 2020: 84). The term "civilization" began to be used for describing the *Jōmon* period starting in the late 20th century, which, however, has not found support among the majority of specialists. The most important theoretical area, which we will discuss in more detail, is the study of the material culture of this period for detecting sophisticated social structures.

Large-scale construction on the entire archipelago triggered activization of archaeological works, starting in the mid 1960s (Habu, Okamura, 2017: 13–15), which resulted in discovering new sites and in new directions for research into the *Jōmon* period. Active studies of archaeological sites of the *Yayoi* culture in the 1940s–1960s led to the concept of the "stagnant period of *Jōmon*" which, according to some scholars, was pushed away by a new culture experiencing a strong continental influence (Tsuboi Kiyotari, 1962). The idea of the "rich *Yayoi* period" was confirmed by the discovery of new sites, primarily the settlement of Toro in Shizuoka Prefecture, which was discovered in 1943. At that site, in 1947, the first comprehensive interdisciplinary research in Japan was carried out. The excavations of 1947, 1952, 1965, and 1999–2003 resulted in discovering twelve dwelling pits, two pile structures, a ritual building (also of the pile type), remains of a well, irrigation canals, and rice fields at the settlement. Archaeological evidence included items made of wood, bone (including oracle bones), iron,

and stone, as well as pottery, glass beads, etc. This settlement existed during the 1st–5th centuries AD (Late *Yayoi–Kofun* periods) (Okamura Wataru, 2014). Publication of evidence from the Toro site among the "Japanese people exhausted by war" resulted in the idea of the *Yayoi* period as a time of "peaceful villages of farmers surrounded by rice fields", confirming the reality of the mythical "Central Land of the Reed Plain" *Toyoashihara no Nakatsukuni* 豊葦原中国. This discovery played an important role in spreading the knowledge about the origins of the Japanese culture, and anchored images of the *Jōmon* and *Yayoi* periods in the public consciousness (Yamada Yasuhiro, 2015: 119, 133–134).

In the 1980s, research on the *Jōmon* period was based on social theory appearing primarily in the writings of Hayashi Kensaku and Harunari Hideji. After analyzing the spatial structure of burial complexes and orientation of bodies of the deceased, Hayashi Kensaku (1977) suggested a dual system of social organization. Harunari Hideji (1973) studied specific aspects of intergroup marital ties and the kinship system in the *Jōmon* period, based on the practice of ritual tooth extraction (the *basshi* ritual). Most research at that time followed the idea of a "poor and equal society of hunter-gatherers", which appeared in the 1960s. The features of burials, such as differences in the position and orientation of the dead, different types of tooth extraction, presence or absence of grave goods, etc., were interpreted not as signs of a hierarchical society, but as embodiment of a horizontal division according to the principle of "us versus them" (Yamada Yasuhiro, 2020: 29).

Possible existence of hierarchical relations in the Japanese Neolithic, as opposed to the idea of a "poor equal society", was discussed in the second half of the 1980s. Sasaki Fujio was the first scholar who spoke about inequality in the *Jōmon* period, but his suggestion was not accepted. Sasaki Fujio (1973: 40–42) did not use the term "hierarchy", but proposed a vertical form of social differences after analyzing the data from settlement complexes.

The emergence of the theory of a "stratified society of the *Jōmon* period" was associated with discovery of new archaeological complexes, such as the Torihama shell mound (Fukui Prefecture, initial–early period, ca 12,000–5500 BP). Abundant organic remains (tools of bone and wood, lacquerware, well-preserved wicker baskets, canoes, textile fragments, nuts, seeds), as well as pottery, stone tools, ritual items, ornaments, etc. were found at the site. This discovery resulted in the idea of the Neolithic *Jōmon* society as a society of "wealthy hunter-gatherers" with an advanced spiritual and material culture (Yamada Yasuhiro, 2020: 29). The discovery of large ritual and settlement complexes with abundant and well-preserved organic material evidence dating from the Initial to Final *Jōmon* period in different parts of Japan provoked a powerful response in academic circles and the elaboration of new theories.

In the late 1980s to early 1990s, the ideas of a "segmented society" and slave-owing relations in the *Jōmon* period appeared. After comparing data on the indigenous peoples of the northwestern coast of North America with evidence from the burial complexes of the Kamegaoka culture (final period, 2700–2300 BP), Kobayashi Tatsuo suggested the existence of slaves at that time (Yamada Yasuhiro, 2015: 171–172). This was most convincingly argued for in the work of Watanabe Hitoshi "*Jōmon* Stratified Society" (1990), where it was studied in comparison with ethnographic evidence of hunter-gatherers of the North Pacific (the indigenous peoples of Northern America and Siberia, and the Ainu). According to Watanabe Hitoshi, the structural basis of the *Jōmon* society was a hierarchical system separating the rich and poor; there was also a differentiation of subsistence strategies among the male population (salmon and marlin fishing, bear hunting, etc.). When describing social relations, Watanabe Hitoshi used concepts and terms that had not been previously applied to discussion of the *Jōmon* period, such as aristocracy, rich and poor, hierarchy, power, prestige, etc. (Yamada Yasuhiro, 2020: 29–31).

The height of the theory on the "stratified society of the *Jōmon* period" was the concept of "*Jōmon* civilization" or "*Jōmon* utopia" (Yamada Yasuhiro, 2015: 98–100). The settlement of Sannai Maruyama (Aomori Prefecture, early–middle period, ca 5900–4400 cal BP)—the largest *Jōmon* site, with hundreds of semi-dugouts and pile structures, large burial ground, utility areas, etc.—plays a central role in this concept. A unique "ritual structure" was discovered in 1994: the remains of a three-tiered building on supporting posts. Archaeological collections were enriched with wicker and lacquered items, stone and bone implements, pottery, ornaments of shells and jade, as well as floral and faunal evidence (Habu, 2004: 108–134). The study of the complex has changed the perception of the period and has outlined the direction of new research. Based on the interpretation of remains of the tiered structure as a cultic place, the concepts of "stratified social inequality in the *Jōmon*", the "town of *Jōmon*", "Tohoku Kingdom" (or "Northern Kingdom of *Jōmon*"), "forest Neolithic culture", "wooden civilization", and "temple" theory were put

forward (Sasaki Fujio, 1999; Yamada Yasuhiro, 2015: 63–65; 2020). This site was advertised as "the great discovery, rewriting the history of Japan". High-flown language was used in popular and academic literature ("hierarchy", "slavery", "city", etc.). For example, Koyama Shūzō insisted that a "hierarchical society divided into an aristocratic class, common people, and slaves" was present in the settlement of Sannai Maruyama (Yamada Yasuhiro, 2020: 31), which caused much criticism and contributed to a negative attitude towards the theory of the "stratified society of the *Jōmon*" among many scholars. Despite all this, this theory continued to gain ground in the 2000s. Many researchers tend to see traces or vestiges of a transegalitarian society in the *Kamegaoka* culture. Nakamura Oki, Sasaki Fujio, Taniguchi Yasuhiro, Takahashi Ryuzaburo and others worked in this area (Ibid.: 32–33). Signs of social inequality were identified based on the contents of burials (differences in the composition of grave goods (Nakamura Oki, 1999: 50–51) or choice of burial place (Sasaki Fujio, 2002)).

Thus, until the 1960s, it was customary to refer to the *Jōmon* people as "poor, sedentary hunter-gatherers", but after the emergence of new analytical methods and the involvement of experts from related fields, a new perspective has appeared. Today, we understand that the *Jōmon* people were actually highly developed hunter-gatherer-fishermen, with sophisticated social stratification (Sasaki Fujio, 1973: 40–45). This people possessed a technologically diverse toolkit, high level of pottery production (Yamada Yasuhiro, 2015: 68–70), specific funeral and ritual practices, and a fertility cult (Sasaki Fujio, 2002), as well as an integrated approach to adaptive strategies (Yasuda Yoshinori, 1997: 10–12).

There are two points of view on the origins of civilization in contemporary Japanese archaeology. The first is based on the theory of a sophisticated hierarchical society emerging in the Middle to Final *Jōmon* period, when favorable climatic conditions and a variety of adaptive strategies (gathering, hunting, early forms of agriculture) made it possible to achieve a high level of development in the material and spiritual culture. This was most clearly manifested in construction of large settlement complexes and sophisticated structures from earth embankments, stone, and wood. Followers of the other view do not deny the high level of development in the material culture of the *Jōmon* period, but believe in the existence of several regional cultures, which evolved at that time on the basis of a hunting and gathering economy, while an agrarian economy appeared on the territory of Japan only with the influx of the carriers of the *Yayoi* culture.

Conclusions

The analysis of works on the origins of civilization, written by Chinese and Japanese archaeologists, has revealed ongoing discussions in scholarly communities of both countries on the time and nature of transition to the stage of civilization. There is still no unified approach to identifying criteria for this qualitative leap in the development of societies. The most common hypotheses suggest the emergence of civilization in the Neolithic (the *Longshan* period in China, *Jōmon* period in Japan) or Bronze Age (in particular, the *Erlitou* culture in China and the *Yayoi* culture in Japan). Currently, the majority of scholars in China tend to share the idea that powerful cultural centers where statehood began to take shape in different regions on the territory of present-day China, and transition to civilization occurred in the Late to Final Neolithic (ca 3500–2000 BC). A consensus has not yet been reached in Japanese archaeology. Two more aspects of the Chinese scholarly tradition are the belief in interdependence of processes behind the emergence of civilization and state, which stems from reliance on the works of F. Engels, and desire to compare (not always critically) archaeological evidence with information derived from traditional historiography. Japanese scholars who study the archaeology of the Neolithic–Bronze Age are deprived of the opportunity (and need) to rely on chronicles, and are less hampered by ideological restraints; their main focus is on social structures of ancient societies.

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