

## A Study of the Wooden Implements in the Yamanokami Ritual

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The main purpose of the paper is to study the ritual implements made of wood in the *yamanokami* ritual (Yamanokamimatsuri). An analysis is attempted from the field of Folklore. The second purpose of the paper is to study the distribution of the *yamanokami* belief in the Kinki district. After a presentation of the latest research into the *yamanokami* belief in general, the *yamanokami* belief in Kinki is introduced and finally the functions of wooden implements in the ritual are examined. The results are as follows:

- (1) A *kagi* was used to beckon the *yamanokami* to come down to the people living in the mountain before they started working. Before the people set to work a *kezurikake* was hammered into the field to obtain permission from the *yamanokami* to work in the fields. These were implements that had magical functions. Through the influence of rice cultivation, the meaning of this practice changed so that the hammering became a symbolic action that stood for planting certain mountain spirits that were regarded as a source of life.
- (2) The ritual that crosses male and female dolls (*mataginingyō* "dolls made from crotches") was interpreted as a marriage of *yamanokami* and *tanokami* ("god of the fields") and thus originated the legend of the coming and going of the *yamanokami* and *tanokami*.
- (3) *Henoko*

A study of the dedication of *henoko* shows that the wooden penis is a symbol of strength and aggressiveness. The ritual originated from the cults of the hunters that lived in the mountains. Through the influence of rice cultivation, it changed to a ritual implement symbolizing reproduction that could have sexual intercourse with the female god *yamanokami*.