"Magemono"-The Japanese Wooden Implement

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"Magemono" is one of the wooden vessels that Japanese have so far used as their daily implement from olden time. It is a round vessel shaped by bending and securing a thin sheet of Japanese wood. Not only in practical life it has had many uses in Japanese social life as a whole, including production and occupational activities, but also it has been so widely used throughout their religious life including observance. Over all strata of society, the magemono has been utilized as magician's implement in a prayer for smooth delivery and as a vessel for disposal of placenta, membrane, amniotic fluid or naval string. At burial of remains, it was used as a funerary vessel. The magemono has been used not merely as a practical implement or convenience in their socio-economic life, but has widely been involved in Japanese religious life. In the latter case, it has been looked upon as an important vessel to transport the soul from this world into another, vice versa. Furthermore at a certain age in Japanese history, buddhist saints travelling all over Japan raising funds for pious purposes and pilgrims regarded the magemono as an essential implement. They not only regarded it as a useful vessel for water drinking, but used it to receive offering, which was considered as a sort of soul. This paper intends to elucidate the use and significance of the magemono as a soul-transporting vessel in citing concrete examples of use in history.