To-ya Saishi and Miya-za

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This article organizes the concept of the "to-ya system" and presents an indicator for thinking about the "to-ya system." While studying specific examples in the Kansai regions by comparison, this article investigates the reality of to-ya saishi and its variations with an attempt to reconsider the past study results that have regarded various forms of saishi (religious services in Shinto shrine) as or "to-ya saishi" all together.

This article takes the cases of Yamasakicho in Shiso City, Hyogo Prefecture (former Yamasakicho, Shisogun), Higashioni City in Shiga Prefecture (former Aitocho, Echi-gun), and Kameoka City in Kyoto Prefecture as specific examples, and studies the structure of to-ya saishi in each region and its characteristics. The subject is examined from the following four viewpoints. The first viewpoint is the problem of the conventional "to-ya system." Particularly in the case examples in Shiso City in Hyogo Prefecture, mura-gumi are closely united, and the role of to-ya is assumed by to-gumi by rotation every year in units of rinpo (neighborhood) instead of houses. Is it possible to discuss this form of saishi within the same framework as the conventional "to-ya system"? The second viewpoint is to study the folkloric meaning of the za-iri ritual as shown in the case examples in the regions of Kuchitanba and Omikoto in Kyoto. The third viewpoint is the characteristics of to-ya and its specific role. The name, role and characteristics of to-ya are very different according to regions. Such differences in names and characteristics of to-ya are discussed. The fourth viewpoint examines the folkloric meaning of an organization of seniors called "miyashu," in particular the role assumed by the seniors called "juninshu" in the villages of Kuchitanba and Omikoto. The correlation among the "seniority system," "to-ya system," and "miya-za" are also investigated.

Key words: Miya-za, to-ya, to-gumi, choroshu, seniority system