Eye Folklore: A Base of Omens, Knowledge, Taboos and Magic
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This article deals with folkloric events over the eye, marking the start of the study of folklore of the senses, which are studied as the basis of folk beliefs e.g. in the form of omens, knowledge, taboos and Magic. The article first examines the theory of the Hitotsume-kozo (one-eyed boy) of Kunio Yanagita and also indicates traditions for the power of the eye in annual events outside the above categories. Subsequently, it focuses on the tradition of the one-eyed fish and daruma dolls as auspicious and confirms that a one-eyed status should be understood as an expression of transition and transformation. Furthermore, it indicates a narrative tradition that prioritizes the left eye and finds that one-eye is also a taboo expression. Finally, this article analyzes the folklore composed of the actions of “seeing” by dealing, especially with “kunimi,” “okami,” “nirami (glare)” in Ichikawa Danjuro, “tsukimi (moon viewing),” etc. As a result, the need for further detailed examination of the contents is clarified, although actions of “seeing” were conventionally thought to mean soothing someone’s soul. In future, the author of this article would like to analyze more “seeing” folklore and comprehensively examine the folklore of five senses.

Key words: One-eyed boy, One-eye, Daruma doll, Okami, See, Glare