From Folk Ritual to Resources of the Literature:  
**SHICHIGOSAN** and **OKAMI**

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This paper considers the haiku season words originated from folk rituals as the resources of literature and examines how they have developed.

One example is *Shichigosan* (a gala day for children of three, five, and seven years of age). This is rather a new ritual, established in urban settings. Today it is a superficial ritual to dress children up to celebrate their climb up the ladder of life, rather than a ritual to make a transformation from the existing to a new situation. When this ritual is used as a resource of literature in haiku, the word is intended to conjure images of growing children, their gorgeous gala dresses, and their behaviors in the ritual process. A focus is placed on the meaning of being a temporary ritual, rather than a social ritual.

Another example is *Okami* (a ritual held on the New Year’s Eve to tell a fortune for the next year). This was originated from the word “okami” referred to in a tanka poem of Minamoto no Toshiyori in *Horikawa Hyakushu* (*Horikawa One Hundred Poems*) and continued to appear in *kiyose* and *saijiki* (catalogues of haiku season words) compiled in the early modern times. Surviving documents indicate that there were some variations in who and how to perform this folk ritual though these details cannot be actually confirmed. In haiku, the word “okami” is often used to indicate year-end sentiments or a sense of time. The word conjures a fantastic image, suggesting the time and space on the boundary with a fantasy world, rather than an annual event.

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