

平城京から出土した祭祀具

木製の人形(ひとがた)や斎串(いぐし)、ミニチュア土器、土師器壺に人面を描いた人面墨書土器などは、平城京の人々がさまざまな祭祀に用いたもので、溝や井戸などの水辺から多く出土する。人形は穢れ(けがれ)や病気などを移して水に流したとされる。人面墨書土器は諸説あるが、疫病神や鬼神などを描いたとされる。『延喜式』に類似の祭祀が記載されており、ここに息を吹き込んで水に流したと考えられている。いずれも、古代の人々にとっては、病気平癒や無病息災を願う真剣な医療行為だったのであろう。

Ritual Paraphernalia Recovered from the Nara Capital

Wooden human-shaped effigies and ritual wooden blades (igushi), miniature pottery, Haji ware pots with human faces drawn in ink, etc., were items utilized by people of the Nara capital in a variety of rituals, and are recovered in numbers from water-related sites such as ditches and wells. The human effigies are held to have had pollution and pestilence transferred to them, which was then flushed away with water. There are various theories regarding the ink-drawn human-face pots, but they are regarded as depicting images of the god of pestilence and other fierce deities. Similar rituals are recorded in the tenth-century text Engishiki, and it is thought that such objects were washed away after being invested with human breath. Regardless of the details, for people in ancient times, these were very likely acts of medicinal care in earnest hope for recovery from disease and for sound health.

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