palgrave pivot

# MOURNING RITUALS IN ARCHAIC & CLASSICAL GREECE AND PRE-QIN CHINA

Xiaoqun Wu

# Mourning Rituals in Archaic & Classical Greece and Pre-Qin China

Xiaoqun Wu

# Mourning Rituals in Archaic & Classical Greece and Pre-Qin China

palgrave
macmillan

Xiaoqun Wu
Fudan University
Shanghai, China

ISBN 978-981-13-0631-0 ISBN 978-981-13-0632-7 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0632-7

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018943296



This Palgrave Pivot imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd.
The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore 189721, Singapore

*In Memory of my parents, Yuanjie Wu and Benzhen Zhang*

# Preface

In this research, there are two major themes: one is ritual, and the other is comparison.

Ritual research can be described as the classic theme of anthropology, and many of the foremost anthropologists have dedicated themselves to this area. It is also one of the areas examined by sociologists. Classical sociology is the study of individuals or groups: it is not primarily concerned with ritual itself, but with how ritual reveals the nature, structure, and organization of a society. In history, however, ritual is not a traditional research topic. It cannot be denied that modern historical scholars devote a considerable amount of time to studying rites in the ancient world, but the connection between the study of ritual and the subject of history is not universally acknowledged, and comparative studies are rare. Some historians do pay attention to the role of key rituals in political life and group activities within the context that they are studying, but they typically focus is on how elites use rituals to consolidate their authority or achieve some specific purpose. In other words, historians rarely treat ritual as if it plays a crucial role in daily life, and usually overlook the possibility that rituals might have an impact on people's thinking.

In this book, our goal is to break through the fixed patterns of different disciplines with respect to both research methods and research subjects, and to construct an overarching theory. We do not attempt to distinguish, in doing so, between 'advanced' and 'low-grade' disciplines or methods: we recognize that each method has its own particular ideological structure. The primary difference is that in the study of rituals, the work of anthropologists and sociologists is to study the performance of

rituals in the field without the need for a diachronic analysis. It is the work of historians, therefore, to track the evolution of rituals over a long period of time and to analyze how and why rites have changed. In contrast to anthropologists and sociologists, who are able to collect primary data, historians' understanding of rituals largely depends on texts. The main challenge facing historians is to determine the extent to which ritual habits are, or were, actually guided by those texts.

Historical research has always been characterized by a great openness in regard to methodology. Historians have devoted considerable attention to absorbing methods from other disciplines in order to supplement and complement their own research tools, with the choice and application of methods dependent on specific issues and suitability for the material. In particular, for Chinese historians, a saying that 'There is no specific method of historical research' (史无定法) has been widely adopted. It is typically understood that methods should be selected according to the subject, the specific problem and the available material, and that their applicability and limitations should be emphasized, amended, or adjusted as appropriate. In short, methods themselves are not inherently superior or inferior: the issues are mainly whether they are a good fit for the problem and the material, and whether the use is appropriate. Historians must try to understand phenomena and theories according to the specific historical conditions, and there is no theoretical dogma for historians: rather, open and comprehensive studies should be conducted.

In this study, I examine the mourning rituals of ancient Greece and China during the Pre-Qin period. The first element of this work is an examination of *who* participated in the respective ritual. Who made the ritual? What was the purpose of this ritual? What results did it have? The next question that I address will move beyond 'what' and 'how' to address the deeper question of 'why is it so?'. Therefore, a specific analysis that incorporates cultural characteristics is particularly important. In this process, I will draw on a number of established theories and methods within ritual research, but I do not deliberately distinguish between the respective theories and methods of anthropology, sociology or psychology, and historiography: I am mainly concerned with the extent to which particular theories or methods best explain the problem. I believe that, in this way, this study can contribute greatly to an understanding of traditional Chinese and ancient Greek families and social structures.

Comparative study is a research method with great potential but many challenges, especially in relation to comparisons between China and the

West. Until now, however, there has been no clear and comprehensive analysis of the feasibility and methodology of comparative study, and there are no commonly accepted standards for it in academic circles.

In modern academia, ancient societies are studied in isolation by separate groups of scholars. There are reasons for this, some of which can be described as 'objective' and others as 'subjective'. The objective reasons are twofold. First, the closed nature of ancient societies led to the uniqueness of different civilizations, with different languages and different empirical knowledges, which has made scholars more inclined to adopt different methods to study them. Second, there are different interpretational traditions of Classics in civilizations, making it is difficult to study them with the same theories and methods. Similarly, there may be two subjective aspects. First, traditions of regionalism or nationalism may lead scholars to focus only on the history of their own particular region or country. Second, the modern inclination and demand for professionalism generally incentivizes scholars to become specialists in single, clearly defined areas of research rather than engaging in comparative study.

However, the benefits of comparative research are obvious, as it can help us to overcome the limitations imposed by narrow specialization. While the tendency to specialize has the advantage of bringing a certain familiarity with materials, problems, and research methods, it can also result in a lack of sensitivity to certain problems, as well as to new ideas for solving those problems. Conversely, when problems are examined in different historical and cultural contexts, challenges may arise that would not ordinarily be encountered within the default academic context. This may prompt us to think further and may draw out fresh insights, which can deepen our understanding of a familiar subject.

I will discuss the above issues in more detail in the introduction. This small book uses the comparison between mourning rituals in Archaic & Classical Greece and Pre-Qin China as an example to illustrate some of the principles and methods used in comparative studies. It focuses on three main aspects of mourning of the dead before burial—lamentation, mourners' gestures and behaviors, and mourning apparel—to demonstrate the cultural function, purpose, and social influence of mourning.

We find that although the rites of mourning share some basic similarities in terms of both procedures and functions, there are differences between these two ancient societies. In Greece, mourning remained mainly on the level of external forms and procedures, but was not used to facilitate the expression of philosophical thoughts. Therefore, the ritual of

mourning in ancient Greece was viewed as a divinely regulated procedure: richly ritualized actions as a cultural phenomenon have been retained in Greek folk tradition and remained at the level of ritual behavior, without involving the social order. Some of these rituals have survived even to the present day. In contrast, in the Chinese case the Confucian philosophers of the Pre-Qin period used rituals as a tool to explain their thoughts about how to organize a community (the clan society). For them, the ritualized procedures were certainly important, but there was something more profound underlying the ritual. Confucians have integrated funeral with the Confucian values of filial piety and the concept of kinship, which have had a profound impact on subsequent Chinese civilization.

K. C. Chang once pointed out that the development of Western civilization is fractured and jumpy, while the development of Chinese civilization is integrated and continuous.[1] It is worth exploring, then, whether this difference in the development path of the two civilizations might find a certain basis in their respective ritual features, especially in the sense of funeral rites. This idea is potentially significant both in terms of methodology and the development of problem consciousness.

Shanghai, China Xiaoqun Wu

## Note

1. Cf. K. C. Chang, *Art, Myth, and Rituals: The Path to Political Authority in Ancient China*, Harvard University Press, 1983, pp. 107–130.

## Reference

Chang, K. C. 1983. *Art, Myth, and Rituals: The Path to Political Authority in Ancient China*. Harvard University Press.

# Acknowledgments

The idea for this study first arose in 2009, at the Center for Hellenic Studies at Harvard University, where I was a Fellow from 2009–2010. From the very beginning, Professor Gregory Nagy suggested that I should do comparative research, as comparative studies were nearly always led by Western scholars and there were few Chinese scholars engaged in this type of research. He felt that as a Chinese scholar, I had not only received professional training in Western Classical studies but also possessed the knowledge and ideological background of Chinese traditional civilizations, and recommended that I should use these advantages to make a difference in comparative studies, in the hope that I might contribute to the development of this field. This book would not have been written without his ceaseless encouragement. In the initial phase of writing, Professor Douglas Frame and Professor Jan. N. Bremmer helped me with specific aspects. I would also like to express my appreciation to my colleagues at CHS, Dr. Andromache Karanika, Dr. Sarah B. Ferrario, Dr. Gunnar Seelentag, Dr. Dominic T. J. Bailey, Dr. Tarik Wareh, Dr. Andrej Petrovic, Dr. Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Emily Baragwanath, Dr. Miguel Herrero de Jauregui, Dr. Ivana Petrovic, and Dr. Sabine Gey for their helpful and valuable comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of the study.

Thanks are due to the peer reviewers for their helpful recommendations and suggestions for amendments.

I am especially grateful to Dr. Xiaoli Ouyang, my young colleague, for her constant encouragement and practical assistance in the completion of this book.

This book's index and references have been compiled by my graduate student A Hui, who also helped me to contact the British Museum to obtain copyright permissions for images.

This book is published in English, which is not my native language, and cannot be separated from the careful and meticulous editorial work done by Ms. Gemma Burford.

I thank my husband Xiaodong Guo, a professor of Confucianism, for helping me to deepen my understanding of Chinese materials.

I am grateful to my home institution, the Department of History in Fudan University, for its generous support in funding copyright permissions and copy-editing fees. This book also forms one part of the project entitled 'A Comparative Study on Private Funeral the 8th–3rd Century BCE in Greece and China' which was supported by a Chinese National Social Science Fund Project (16BSS010).

Last but not least, I need to thank the senior editor, Sara Crowley Vigneau, and editorial assistant, Connie Li, of Palgrave Macmillan.

Responsibility for the final contents is, of course, entirely my own.

---

The original version of this book was revised. Correction to this book can be found at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0632-7_7

# Contents

# List of Figures

CHAPTER 1

# Introduction

**Abstract** In the introduction, the author explains the purpose, method, and content of the book, including the following three aspects: reasons for conducting comparative historical studies, ritual as a research angle, and methodology. The author proposes three basic principles for the study of comparative history. First, comparative history should not involve any value judgement, nor adopt a position of defending the researcher's own culture as a point of comparison. Second, comparative study is not simply an attempt to identify specific differences and commonalities between two civilizations. Third, comparative studies should not attempt to derive easy and arbitrary conclusions through lists of phenomena or mechanistic analogies, but should be based on careful analysis.

**Keywords** Ritual • Comparison • Methodology • Archaic & Classical Greece • Pre-Qin China

## 1 Reasons for Conducting Comparative Historical Studies

Comparison is, in general, a common way of generating knowledge. As noted by Shankman and Durrant, 'Thinking is itself an inherently comparative activity. Nothing exists in isolation. We are always making comparison, whether we are aware that we are in fact doing so.'[1] As the purpose of comparison is to recognize the essence of things, it could be



X. Wu, *Mourning Rituals in Archaic & Classical Greece and Pre-Qin China*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0632-7_1

argued that there would be no knowledge without comparison. In any case, it is clear that human beings both understand themselves better and know others better through comparison. In other words, one culture and one people can understand their own problems more deeply through contrast with other cultures and peoples. In Geoffrey Lloyd and Nathan Sivin's words, comparison's 'chief prize is a way out of parochialism'.[2] The self is explored through the Other, but is not subsumed by the Other; rather, there is an interaction between them.

### *1.1 The Current Situation of Comparative Study between Ancient Greece and China*

Most researchers in the humanities agree that comparative study can bring great benefits, and may overcome the traditional limitations of specialization. In relation to actual comparative study between ancient Greece and China, according to Steven Shankman's and Stephen Durrant's observation, two different types of researchers have traditionally been interested in it. The first and foremost type of researcher is the sinologist: 'many of the most influential works of sinological study frequently mention classical Greece, and regard it as a crucial and perhaps even dominant point of reference for all educated Western readers'.[3] In other words, this kind of work is 'innately comparative and has sometimes labored under an anxiety generated by Greek literature and philosophy'.[4] The second category is 'native Chinese scholars, sometimes fresh from graduate study in the West, [who] often use Greek philosophy as a touchstone for their own tradition and even may be said to have labored under an anxiety induced by the Greek model'. The authors take the famous modern Chinese thinker Hu Shi as an example: 'comparative studies, such as his own implicitly is, should, he believes, attempt to uncover those aspects of the Chinese tradition that have the potential of directing China toward Western-style science and technology'.[5] As a result of this, for the former, 'Almost all of the earliest sinologists were steeped in the literature of the classical West and consistently used Greek and Latin studies as their frame of reference for the scholarly investigation of China.'[6] Therefore, it may be difficult for them to enter the problem consciousness and historical context of ancient China. Their haste to find keys that might assist them in solving the modern predicament of their own civilization has led, in some cases, to them indiscriminately viewing everything in Western classical civilization as a good example to be emulated.

On the other hand, as noted by Shankman and Durrant, 'specialists in Western philosophy and classical Greece largely ignore China'. (Of course, there are exceptions: the authors cited F. S. C. Northrop and G. E. R. Lloyd as examples)[7] Specialists in the classical West have rarely reciprocated comparison. One reason may be that, as one of the longest-established scholarly traditions in the Western academic field, Classics was also one of the most conservative and exclusive disciplines in the past. It was always discussed and developed within its own academic discourse system. Similarly, most local Chinese scholars in peaceful times have tended to assume that Chinese culture has many distinctive features, and often to view it as the West's 'other': believing that it is difficult to compare the two, or even that there is no comparability at all.

However, with the development of globalization processes, the above situation is changing. Even in Classics, historically viewed as a conservative and exclusive subject with its own academic discourse and logic system, there has been a growing interest in comparative study since the late twentieth century. Many scholars have acknowledged that comparing Greek and Roman civilizations with other ancient world civilizations can contribute new angles or methods for the study of Classics, as well as helping us to understand the different ancient cultures in greater depth and to reflect on wider discourses within traditional academic contexts. Walter Scheidel pointed out: 'Only comparisons with other civilizations make it possible to distinguish common features from culturally specific or unique characteristics and developments, help us identify variables that were critical to particular historical outcomes, and allow us to assess the nature of any given ancient state or society within the wider context of premodern world history.'[8]

The comparative study of ancient Chinese civilization and other ancient civilizations of the world has become an emerging practice in international academic circles over the past few decades. From the 1970s onwards, there has been comparison of the civilizations in 'The Axial Period' (initially led by the American sinologist Benjamin I. Schwartz[9] and then by the Israeli scholar S. N. Eisenstadt[10]). This was followed, in the 1990s, by comparisons between ancient Chinese and Greek scientific and medical ideas (led by Sir Geoffrey Ernest Richard Lloyd,[11] a classicalist at Cambridge University); between ancient Chinese and Greek thought (presided over by American scholars S. Shankman and S. W. Durrant[12]); between ancient Chinese, Greek and Roman historiography (dominated by the German scholars F.-H. Mutschler[13]); and between the Qin and

Han Empires and the Roman Empire (led by Walter Scheidel,[14] Stanford University professor of classical history), respectively. In addition, there are a number of comparative works focusing specifically on ancient Greece and ancient China.[15]

Nonetheless, few local Chinese scholars have so far participated in the field of international comparative studies. I hope that this study will inspire Chinese scholars from a variety of humanistic disciplines to make comparisons of their own, and to participate in the unpredictable and bracing cross-cultural conversation.

### *1.2 Basic Principles of Comparative History*

It is clear that the field of comparative study between ancient Greece and China is a challenging one. Because the pitfalls of comparative study are so numerous and so difficult to navigate, they may be impossible to avoid. One of the chief pitfalls is that in reality, all of us who make these comparisons are rooted in a specific cultural context, and where we stand can have a profound effect on what we say about a different cultural context. In addition, in contrast to comparative law and comparative literature, where there are well-established principles and methods, the feasibility and methodology of comparative history have not been systematically discussed and defined. It appears that when it is limited to simple contrasts between times, places, reasons, and methods, comparative history may be largely worthless. To address this problem, I would propose three basic principles for the study of comparative history, as follows.

- First, *comparative history should not involve any value judgement*, nor adopt a position of defending the researcher's own culture if what could be perceived as their own culture is a point of comparison. An ancient culture, distant in time, can sometimes be constructed as one's 'heritage', but any researcher needs to transcend differences between other cultures and one's own. Rather, the researcher should approach other cultures with the same rationality as their own when doing a comparative study. They should avoid giving priority to their own cultural tradition, or using the history and values of one side as criteria for judging the other side. The purpose of the comparison is not to prove who is superior or who is inferior, but rather to open up a new conversation that can provide scholars from both sides with a better understanding of the past, and insights into reality.

- Second, *comparative study is not simply an attempt to identify specific differences and commonalities between the two civilizations.* Rather, the researcher should conduct a deeper analysis of 'the differences among the similarities' and 'the similarities among the differences' in order to identify the origins of different modes of thinking and standards of behavior for two ancient peoples and understand why they followed different developmental paths of human history. This is because some phenomena may look similar on the surface, but carry different meanings and different ways of thinking, derived respectively from completely different historical and cultural contexts.
- Third, *comparative studies should not attempt to derive easy and arbitrary conclusions through lists of phenomena or mechanistic analogies* but should be based on careful analysis. Comparative study must be built on the foundation of case study; yet at the same time, individual case studies must be seen as embedded within their larger sociocultural context in contemporary history. As D. Rueschemeyer said, 'Analyses that are confined to single cases… cannot deal effectively with factors that are largely or completely held constant within the boundaries of the case (or are simply less visible in that structural or cultural context). This is the reason why going beyond the boundaries of a single case can put into question seemingly well-established causal accounts and generate new problems and insights.'[16]

In short, the objective of comparative research is the deeper understanding of a particular phenomenon, and the interpretation of meaning. The purpose is to find 'true' meanings through symbols; and from this, we may discover something new that could not have been uncovered through traditional modes of study.

## 2 Ritual as a Research Angle

Ritual has been recognized by many scholars, across disciplines, as fundamental to society. From several subject perspectives, the analysis of rituals has recently become more concerned with theories about how society operates. This applies both to anthropological and sociological field researchers carrying out on-site investigations of ritual, and to historians engaged in organizing and analyzing historical documents. They are all seeking an understanding of certain notions especially those beliefs that appear irrational by modern standards. However, one criticism often

encountered in ritual analysis is that it is overgeneralized, and there may be an assumption that a kind of 'ritual theory' can be applied to different societies and that such a theory can answer every question about every phenomenon. It is obviously problematic to understand the rituals in different societies and different cultures with an interpretive mode. In this regard, specific historical analysis combined with different cultural characteristics can help us to overcome this problem, and such ritual analysis is no longer synonymous with repetition. Of course, in this process, we still need to draw lessons from the theoretical methods of ritual studies in different disciplines.[17] Among the scholars and viewpoints that are most valuable to this study are those described below.

In the eyes of psychologist Jung,[18] myths and rituals are the patterns of manifestation of 'collective unconsciousness' and, through analyzing them, researchers can find the original means and essence of a community or a crowd. From a sociological perspective, Durkheim[19] regarded ritual as a tool which social groups use to express and strengthen their emotions and unity, and noted that through every concrete ritual activity, group members can achieve a coherence of emotion that holds the whole community together. Radcliffe-Brown[20] similarly stressed the social functions of ritual and its role in building the social structure and establishing common values. Thus, ritual is not the mere repetition of daily activities, but contains deeper meanings and contributes to the maintenance of a shared value structure which stabilizes the society. From the perspective of anthropology, Arnold van Gennep[21] characterized all the rites held at the turning points of life as 'rites of passage', recognizing that each rite marked a change in people's social roles.[22] Levi-Strauss[23] recognized myths and rituals as important ways to understand the deep structure of human culture.[24]

An important concept in relation to comparative history is Clifford Geertz's[25] concept of the rite as a kind of 'cultural performance'. As a directly observable dramatic activity, rituals contain cultural ideas and information, such as ethics, taboos, time, and space, so that we can gain insights into the value system of a specific culture or period of society through the study of its rituals. Rituals both determine and reflect the pace of life, for example, in relation to holiday celebrations; the relationships between people or groups within a community (e.g. father and son, older and younger people, men and women); appropriate interactions, such as business transactions or marriage restrictions; and the way in which people understand life and death. Ritual creates cultural symbols,[26] it serves as a

link between all aspects of social life, organizing activities and regulating social relations, and thus helps to strengthen the 'rationality' of the social system. It is important to note that, in contrast to the existing order of society, rituals evoke an ideal that can never be realized completely. However, the existence of this ideal model of social behavior—which is imitated at least to some extent—generates the psychological effect of stabilizing human emotions and imbuing participants with strong feelings about the 'specialness' of their own culture.

These observations apply not only to the rituals that can still be observed today, but also those which were conducted in ancient times and have since been discontinued. Because of their repetitive nature, rituals generally have stability and continuity: the main processes and elements of many rites may remain unchanged for thousands of years, and are re-enacted dramatically again and again, although the specific wording may change. In relation to ancient rites, we can find clues in documents, paintings, relief sculpture, and archaeological findings that enable scholars to reveal the original meanings of these rites. This process of uncovering meanings can be understood as decoding a 'cultural code', which can help us to understand the psychology of the public and the cultural spirit of that time from a new point of view. In studying these cultural performances, we can examine the internal meanings that are reflected by rituals, and the spirit embodied by those taking part in the performances. Such a mode of study, to some extent, makes knowledge about the ancient world visible at a high level of abstraction.

## *2.1 Concepts, Categories and Functions of Ritual in Ancient Greece and Ancient China*

Both the ancient Greeks and the ancient Chinese lacked the equivalent of the modern conception of 'ritual' in the strict sense. Neither the Greek language nor the Chinese possesses one specific term for 'ritual'. From the angle of modern comprehensive studies on ritual, however, we may say that both of these ancient societies were highly ritualized. In both societies, specific acts and procedures provided the means to rule individuals; to adjust the relationships between individuals, and between individuals and the society; and to express common ideas and values. These acts and procedures, conducted for people in special times and spaces, can be treated as 'rites' in the modern sense, and we can explore their historical, anthropological, sociological, religious, ethical, and philosophical significance.

In ancient Greek, according to the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 'the closest equivalent [to the term 'ritual'] is τελετή, but this term tended to be used in a much narrower sense for specific rituals of an exceptional nature, like those of the mystery cults; other terms, such as the frequent ἱερά, 'sacred things' or θεραπεία, 'service (of the gods)', are much wider; a term often used in Attic texts, τά νομιζόμενα, 'what is customary', underscores the importance of tradition.'[27] Jan N. Bremmer argued that the Greeks had at least three angles for approaching ritual acts and processes: 'First, they called many of their ritual activities *ta nomizomena*, 'what is customary.' Second, they often named rituals after their central, most striking act. Third, many elaborate rituals were called *heortai*, a term associated with good food, good company, and good entertainment. The *heorte* was an important way of celebrating the gods, which provided a pleasant interruption to the routines of everyday life. As the philosopher Democritus observed: 'a life without *heortai* is like a road without inns'.'[28]

Different kinds of rituals concerned the Greek people every day. During the *polis* period (from around the eighth century BCE to the third century BCE), there were many ritualized procedures in public life, for example, before discussing state affairs; at the beginning of a speech in court; during performances of tragedies and contests; before and after war, and even during battles; before and after farming and sailing, and so on. In family life, rituals ran through the whole of life for every ancient Greek. Most important were the four rites of passage for a Greek: birth, puberty, marriage and funeral.

The ancient Chinese cultural context was characterized by a multiplicity of *Li* (礼). This is not only a generic term covering all proprieties (or rituals),[29] but also a broader and more abstract concept: the *Li* could almost be explained as an all-encompassing cultural system, a way of structuring culture and a political principle for the regulation of social life, which went far beyond rituals. Confucianism used *Li* to create a series of theories to rule a country.[30] On the other hand, the form taken by *Li* is still the syllogism of different types of rites. '*Li*' is fundamentally dependent on different ritual actions as its basic carriers.[31]

*The Book of Rites* (《礼记》) summarizes the types and quantities of rituals in traditional Chinese society:

> 故经礼三百, 曲礼三千, 其致一也。(《礼记 • 礼器》)
>
> *But while the important rules are 300, and the smaller rules 3000, the result to which they all lead is one and the same.*[32]
>
> (*Rites in the formation of character · The Book of Rites*)

*The Book of Rites* classifies six basic kinds of rituals in traditional society: capping (the coming-of-age ceremony), marrying, mourning rites, sacrifices, feasts, and interviews (the meeting ceremony), which speak of personal affairs; while *The Rites of Zhou* (《周礼》) records five ceremonies, which refer to the business of the state. In the words of Chen Lai, a Chinese scholar, 'The feature of 'Etiquette-Music-Culture' (礼乐文化) in the Zhou dynasty is that rituals, including ritual behavior and ritual procedure, are ways to rule and/or adjust the relationships between the individual and others, the individual and the clan, and the individual and the group, to further cultivate social relationships and to ritualize social life, other than systems of politics, bureaucracy, land, economy, etc.'[33] The sinologist, Joachim Gentz also states,

> In the early Chinese discourse on *li* 礼, we find explanations in which ritual functions either (a) to differentiate social and political rank; (b) to support the state; (c) to make human behavior accord to the laws and measures of heaven and earth; (d) to regulate human emotions (*qing* 情); or (e) to serve and to influence divine forces, such as ancestors, to exert their beneficial influence. Common to all these explanations is the notion that ritual has to be understood as a twofold relationship.[34]

The author continues:

> Ritual is an outer formal expression of an invisible ideal order. A central point in all reflections on ritual in early Chinese texts is that an invisible ideal order and the visible ritual form should be brought into accord with each other. Ritual rules help to achieve harmony or, as Assmann puts it, coherence with the invisible ideal order. On the other hand, correct ritual expresses the realization of a correct order. The realization of correct ritual is thus the correct order itself. The underlying principle of this relationship is physiognomical: ritual is taken to be the visible manifestation and expression of an invisible ideal order which, as so often mentioned in *Lunyu* (论语), might be an inner quality of a person or some abstract category of order in any other realm.[35]

I agree with this.

### *2.2 The Research Overview and Questions Addressed by This Comparative Study of Ritual*

The most notable and important similarity between the rituals of these two ancient societies is that almost all of them are oriented towards 'this

world', in the sense that rituals rule human relationships, strengthen the community bond, and pray for an earthly life of happiness and peace. Thus, they lack a theology of 'that-sidedness' ('the other world'),[36] which fully embodies and illustrates the earthly concern of both civilizations. However, the rituals of ancient China and those of ancient Greece are different in result, although they are equivalent in approach, with basic similarities in procedure. In Greece, the rituals remain primarily on the level of external forms and procedures, rather than expressions of philosophical thought. Therefore, rich ritualized actions as a cultural phenomenon are restricted to the Greek folk tradition. Until now, we still can find similarities between ancient rituals and modern rituals in Greece.[37] In contrast, despite the changes of dynasties, in Chinese society all kinds of rituals still play a very important role—not only in daily life, but also in moral life and thought, and even in government operations. Why did the Chinese and Greek civilizations share similarities in rituals and, furthermore, were there huge differences between them during their respective periods of development? Viewed through the lens of comparative cultural studies, these are questions that deserve attention.

In Chinese academic circles, the study of proprieties ('*Li*') is an important field in the study of Confucian classics. There are essentially three types of research on it:

- The first is the study of *Li* within the scope of traditional Confucian classics, such as the *Commentary of Three Books of Rites* (《三礼注》) of Zheng Xuan in the Eastern-Han Dynasty. In the Tang Dynasty, there were the *Orthodox Exposition of The Book of Rites* (《礼记正义》) of Kong Yingda, the *Exegesis of The Rites of Zhou* (《周礼注疏》), and the *Exegesis of Etiquette and Ceremony* (《仪礼注疏》) of Jia Gongyan. In the Qing Dynasty, there were the *Exegesis of Etiquette and Ceremony* (《仪礼正义》) of Hu Peihui, the *Exegesis of The Rites of Zhou* (《周礼正义》) of Sun Yirang, and so on. These have been followed up with research by contemporary scholars, including Xuan Chien, Tianyu Yang, Lin Peng, Fei Wu, and others. This is similar to Western Classical studies, and constitutes a relatively specialized area of research.
- The second approach can be seen from the end of the Qing Dynasty to the present day. Under the influence of Western academics, some scholars began to doubt the value of studies of proprieties in the conventional study of Confucian classics. In their opinion, it was not important to discuss rituals, procedures, prayers, and ritual objects as

subjects of study in their own right, in the sense of 'A hoary head does research in the classics'. For example, a famous thinker of the Qing Dynasty, Liang Qichao, said: 'What is the value of *Li*? For thousands of years, it was really worthless to study the very trivial things, systems, and etiquette!' After that, some scholars used the texts and documents as the first-hand materials for research into legal history, custom, and cultural history in ancient China. Therefore, the study of proprieties in Confucian classics became a lens for studying history within a broader context of cultural studies; some of these representative works included Lai Chen's *Ancient Religion and Ethics—The Origin of Confucian Thought* (《古代宗教与伦理—儒家思想的根源》, 1996), Linhua Din's *The History of Mourning Apparel System in China* (《中国丧服制度史》, 2000), Shuyin Lin's *The Cultural Significance of the Mourning Apparel's System* (《丧服制度的文化意义》, 2000). Some scholars also combine archaeological materials with traditional society to elaborate Chinese cultural and historical characters. Representative texts in this genre are K. C. Chang's *Art, Myths and Rituals* (1983), *Chinese Bronze Age* (1999), and so on.

- Third, since the beginning of the twentieth century, some scholars have tried to study traditional rituals by means of Western academic methods such as sociology and anthropology, for example, Anzhai Li's *Sociological Research on Etiquette and Ceremony & The Book of Rites* (《仪礼与礼记之社会学的研究》, 1931). Although this book is relatively simple, it is the first one of its kind. This idea was further emphasized by some anthropologists in the second half of the twentieth century, but the historians rarely intervened.

In Western classics, there is also a long tradition of researching ritual—particularly in relation to ancient Greek rituals of mourning and funeral—and many books have been published in this field. There are two categories. The first category is general writings, such as Rohde's *Psychē: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality Among the Greeks* (1905), which was among the earliest discussions about the soul of the ancient Greeks. Later on, the Greek concepts of death and rituals were further discussed by Jan Bremmer (*The Early Greek Conception of the Soul*, 1983), Robert Garland (*The Greek Way of Death*, 1985), Marria Serena Mirto (*Death in the Greek World*, 2007) and others; D. C. Kurtz, H. A. G. Brijder, John H. Oakley, and so on, have excellent descriptions of ancient Greek funeral images in different periods in Greece ('Vases for the Dead: An Attic Selection,

750–400 BC', 1985; *Ancient Greek and Related Pottery*, 1985; *Picturing Death in Classical Athens*, 2004).

The second category is thematic writings, some of which are special studies. Feminist scholars, for example, have often emphasized the context of mourning, suggesting that women's mourning in the context of funerals created spaces for what they term 'dangerous words': see, for example, Casey Dué's *The Captive Women's Lament in Greek Tragedy*, Gail Holst-Warhaft's *Dangerous Voices: Women's Laments and Greek Literature*, 1992, and Helene P. Foley's, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy*, 2001. There are several other examples of thematic studies. Ian Morris' writings used archaeological material to refute the idea of changes in the social fabric corresponding with changes in the form and size of the funeral (*Burial and Ancient Society: The Rise of the Greek City-State*, 1987; *Death-Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity*, 1992); Margaret Alexiou combined ancient literature with modern anthropological fieldwork to conclude that the procedures and performances of Greek funerals continued to some extent even in modern Greek society (*The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, 2002); and there are also some scholars (such as Nagy) specializing in lamentations from a rhetorical point of view.

In short, for the present, the majority of the studies on funerals in these two ancient societies are confined to classical studies. Although there have been some works that attempt to break through the lines of thinking from traditional research, until now there has been little comparative study of Chinese '*Li*' (rituals) with rituals in other ancient civilizations.[38] It is still necessary to make greater efforts in innovative thinking, the diversification of historical materials, and the enhancement of text reading and analytical skills. This is, of course, a broad theme that cannot be fully addressed in a small book; but I am contributing to this area by analyzing the topic of mourning rites. This will be my first book in a series on the study of funerals in two ancient societies.

## 3 Methodology

### *3.1 Temporal and Spatial Scope of this Study: 'Archaic and Classical Greece' and 'Pre-Qin China'*

The focus of this book is the period from the eighth century to the third century BCE, which, in China, corresponds to the end of the so-called 'Pre-Qin' period in China. In general, the term 'Pre-Qin' refers to the time before the Qin Dynasty, which includes three dynasties—Xia Dynasty

(2200–1750 BCE), Shang Dynasty (1750–1100 BCE), and Zhou Dynasty (1100–256 BCE, subdivided into Western-Zhou Dynasty and Eastern-Zhou Dynasty)—which are collectively known as 'the Bronze Age in China' by some archaeologists.[39] However, very few writings survive from the time before the Eastern-Zhou Dynasty, so in Chinese academic circles 'Pre-Qin period' usually refers only to the Eastern-Zhou Dynasty. This, in turn, is subdivided into two time periods, namely the so-called 'Spring-Autumn period' (770–476 BCE) and the 'Warring-States period' (403–221 BCE).

In both cases, ancient Greece and ancient China, this book relates to a long period of time and a large geographical area. Both of these ancient societies consisted of multiple states, without centralization; yet the primary difference between these states was their leadership (different governments or kings) rather than culture or ethnicity. Of course, the Spartan was different from the Athenian, just as the natural-born national of Chu State (楚人) was different from the natural-born national of Qin State (秦人); yet they understood completely that all of them were Greeks, or members of the Huaxia nations (华夏民族), respectively. They could communicate in the same language, although there were different local dialects; they worshipped some main deities in common, although there were different protecting deities in different states; they had many customs in common, and even shared similar standards of values—in short, they had significant commonalities in culture and ethnicity. This is one of the bases for our discussion.

The reason for choosing such a long period for this research lies in that the subject of rituals is not concerned with concrete historical facts relating to a specific time only. Generally speaking, as a kind of action performed repeatedly over a long time period, most rituals maintain some degree of fundamental conservatism. The rite of mourning shares some features with other rituals in that they all possess substantial stability and hysteretic quality. Of course, as a social and cultural phenomenon, rituals inevitably evolve with different participants and ideas over the course of several centuries. However, rituals change very slowly. From both the Chinese and Greek sources, it is clear that even if some of the specific meanings and details of the original rites became vague or were lost as time went on, the ritual action and the broad outline still remained. Thus, the major procedures and factors of mourning remained largely consistent over the course of these four or five centuries.

### *3.2 Source Materials*

Researchers studying ritual are fortunate in that there is a wealth of source material available—a situation that is unusual for many ancient civilizations. A wide variety of archaeological materials relating to rituals have been discovered, from both ancient Greece and ancient China. Furthermore, the ancient Greeks left behind a vast body of creative literature, iconography, inscriptions, and laws relating to diverse rituals; while in the Chinese case, ancient philosophers wrote many systemic expositions on rituals.

Comparative studies may draw on a wide variety of sources—historical as well as archaeological, and pictorial as well as written. In the case of this study, however, I use primarily written records (alongside some other sources of evidence) for both cases. As the mourning of the dead takes place as a preliminary rite before burial and mainly deals with the feelings of the living and interrelated regulations and gestures, we cannot rely on tombstones, funeral goods, or monuments to explain how the dead were mourned. Accordingly, there are very few relevant archaeological remains from either China or Greece for the period in question.

For the Greek case, this book draws primarily upon literary sources such as epics and tragedies, as well as vase paintings, government laws, and some inscriptional material. Of course, we cannot treat the scenes portrayed in these materials as factual depictions of real historical events, places, and moments; but they may reflect the common feelings and actions of the Greeks during the *polis* period. These sources serve as a mirror that can reflect some of the internalized values and behavioral norms of ancient Greek society.

In the Chinese case, I mainly use classical Confucian documents. The Pre-Qin period, particularly the Warring-States period, is often seen as the 'golden age' of Chinese philosophy: philosophers (especially Confucians) concerned themselves directly with human experience and attempted to explain the problems confronting them in their daily lives through direct, rational philosophical inquiry. Many of them have left behind a very large number of written records. Moreover, the focus on ritual in these texts exactly reflects some of the core elements of ancient Chinese culture, as Martin Kern explains: 'The combination of newly discovered materials with newly discovered approaches holds particularly strong potential for fresh insights into the culture of early China, as the present volume will

help to show. Its double focus on 'text' and 'ritual', and especially on their manifestations in one another, tries to capture two central aspects of early Chinese cultural history—if not indeed two central aspects of it—and put each of them into a new perspective by relating it to the other.'[40] The importance of their activity and thought is not limited to a single historical period, because such documents constitute the beginning of a long tradition, which has had an enormous and profound influence in traditional Chinese society—arguably until as recently as 1949.

In Pre-Qin China, the most important scriptures on rituals are the two books *Etiquette and Ceremony* (《仪礼》) and *The Book of Rites* (《礼记》).[41] These two ancient texts, which stipulate and describe in detail different kinds of rituals, objects, participants, sacrificial procedures, and so on, indicate the significant social functions that the rituals were endowed with. These two books and *The Rites of Zhou* (《周礼》)[42] are generally called 'Three Books of Rites' (三礼) and have had a profound influence on Chinese culture. Although the three books were completed in different time periods, the rituals contained in all of them may have been carried out as early the late Shang period or as late as the end of the Warring-States period; and while some of them were indeed in existence, others may have been no more than ancient legends, or even derived from the author's own vision. Furthermore, many scholars from various periods and dynasties have made annotations to these books of rites. From a sociological point of view, we can regard these three books as existent social products and analyze what impact they have had on other social phenomena and people's thoughts and actions. They, like all social products, are derived from society, on the one hand, and affect society, on the other.

A common feature of the sources introduced above is that they do not present historical records, but creative materials. Therefore, we cannot determine what the two peoples actually did from the details of these sources: rather, in each case, the sources represent an ideal. The Greek sources reflect what the ancient Greeks were *supposed to do* in the rituals, or what the *polis* tried to instruct the people to obey within ritual contexts. Funeral laws are an expression of external control and cannot tell us what happened in reality. In the Chinese case, the laws come from philosophers who tried to teach people *what they should do* and *why they should do so*, not only in their actions (rituals), but also in their thinking. The thoughts of the philosophers serve as a kind of internal guide, which cannot tell us what happened in reality. It is important to understand, however, that all

of these laws and thoughts are not just arbitrary fantasies, but images of customs and fashions: they embody a certain common 'cultural memory' for a certain people.

This book aims to identify a common core of beliefs in Archaic and Classical Greece and Pre-Qin China that were shared by both elites and popular cultures. In other words, I regard rituals as symbols of social order and as the link between different aspects of life, in order to trace their respective cultural memories in these two ancient societies. On the other hand, the sources remain different in each case. The Greek evidence consists mostly of creative literature, paintings, and government laws, while all of the Chinese evidence comes from normative philosophical documents that reflect a tradition intending to regulate ritual behavior and provide a set of rules.

As the disparate nature of our sources is an important aspect of the study, it is important to pinpoint what these differences are, and understand their implications. The different nature of the sources illustrates that the two ancient peoples view the same ritual act with different foci, which is the crux of comparison. In other words, ancient Greek and ancient Chinese sources on the mourning of the dead present startling similarities and revealing differences. A comparative approach can help us to gain a deeper understanding of conceptualizations of the perception of proper behavior toward death, as well as to delve into the ways in which ancient societies tried to control and channel grief and its manifestations. In this book, I discuss four separate aspects of the mourning of the dead before burial in two ancient societies: the attitude toward death, lamentation, mourners' gestures and behaviors, and mourning apparel.

Another challenge, in the case of the Chinese materials, is the distinction between what has been referred to as 'great tradition' and 'little traditions'. As previously stated, this study relies primarily on classical Confucian documents; yet there were many different schools of philosophy and folk customs relating to mourning and funeral in the Pre-Qin period. However, for the traditional Chinese society, the influence of those different philosophy schools and folk customs was modest. We can treat them as 'little traditions' in contrast to Confucian thought, which is always the 'great tradition' in Chinese society. Confucian *Li* or 'proprieties' had begun to shape the political principles and to regulate social life since the Pre-Qin dynasty in traditional Chinese society. These proprieties have been illustrated in both abstract and concrete ways by Confucian scholars and politi-

cians throughout all dynasties, constituting the foundation of orthodox thought in ancient Chinese society and giving rise to a series of theories that were used to rule the whole country. Moreover, to some extent, the idea of *Li* of Confucianism is similar to the idea of the modern study of ritual, and in fact, the practical application of *Li* has the same function and effect as ritual. Since the Pre-Qin dynasty, scholars of Confucianism have emphasized that the interpretation of ritualized activities in *Li*' is a key to revealing internal meaning in ritual itself. Thus, *Li* in Confucianism became a kind of structured process or a set of symbolic activities of rite to express a common ideal and sense of worth to standardize the relationship between people and society—and, more broadly, to stabilize the social order and foster unity in traditional Chinese society.

### *3.3 Limitations of This Study*

No individual method of research is perfect. Some readers may feel that this study approaches the subject matter in a simplistic or schematized manner, in contrast to the rich cultural and historical contexts of these two ancient societies, and that it does not fully acknowledge the distinctiveness and complexity of each culture. We have to admit that to a certain extent, these are unavoidable challenges in any comparative study. It can nonetheless be argued that the process of abstraction, which occurs during the process of conceptualization, has its own justification and rationality in academic research. In order to achieve abstraction and conceptualization, and in recognition of the possible disadvantages of the inherent tendency towards simplification in comparative study, we are trying our best to address this issue through more detailed descriptions and case studies. These should not dissuade us from looking at the bigger picture, or from developing a broad vision and drawing conclusions from multiple cases. As Steven Shankman and Stephen Durrant have said:

> Certainly we agree that each of these traditions is enormously rich and complex. It seems to us that any comparative study will almost of necessity flatten and oversimplify one or the other (or both!) of these two great traditions. Perhaps this should not overly concern us. Progress in this difficult comparative endeavor will perhaps best come from a variety of approaches and studies. No one scholarly work can ever hope to say all that might be interestingly said in comparing the literary productions of two cultures as vast and diverse as those of ancient Greece and ancient China.[43]

## Notes

1. Steven Shankman and Stephen W. Durrant eds., *Early China/Ancient Greece: Thinking through Comparisons*, State University of New York Press, 2002, p. 6.
2. G. E. R. Lloyd and Nathan Sivin, *The Ambitions of Curiosity: Understanding the World in Ancient Greece and China*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 8.
3. Steven Shankman and Stephen Durrant, *The Siren and the Sage: Knowledge and Wisdom in Ancient Greece and China*, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000, p. 4.
4. Steven Shankman and Stephen Durrant, *The Siren and the Sage: Knowledge and Wisdom in Ancient Greece and China*, p. 4.
5. Steven Shankman and Stephen Durrant, *The Siren and the Sage: Knowledge and Wisdom in Ancient Greece and China*, p. 5.
6. Steven Shankman and Stephen W. Durrant eds., *Early China/Ancient Greece: Thinking through Comparisons*, p. 3.
7. Steven Shankman and Stephen Durrant, *The Siren and the Sage: Knowledge and Wisdom in Ancient Greece and China*, p. 5.
8. Walter Scheidel ed., *Rome and China: Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires*, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 5. He again said in another recently published book, 'Comparison allows us to identify problems and questions that are not readily apparent from the historical record of a given time or place or from specialized scholarship beholden to its own "local" priorities and discourse.' See Walter Scheidel ed., *State Power in Ancient China & Rome*, Oxford University Press, 2015, p. 3.
9. Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, Harvard University Press, 1985.
10. Johann P. Arnason, S. N. Eisenstadt and Björn Wittrock eds., *Axial Civilizations and World History*, Brill, 2005.
11. G. E. R. Lloyd, *Adversaries and Authorities: Investigations into Ancient Greek and Chinese Science*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996; *The Ambitions of Curiosity: Understanding the World in Ancient Greece and China*, Cambridge University Press, 2002; G. E. R. Lloyd and Nathan Sivin, *The Way and the Word: Science and Medicine in Early China and Greece*, Yale University Press, 2002; *Ancient Worlds, Modern Reflections: Philosophical Perspectives on Greek and Chinese Science and Culture*, Oxford University Press, 2004; *The Delusions of Invulnerability: Wisdom and Morality in Ancient Greece, China and Today*, London: Duckworth, 2005; *Principle and Practices in Ancient Greek and Chinese Science*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006.

12. Steven Shankman and Stephen W. Durrant eds., *The Siren and the Sage: Knowledge and Wisdom in Ancient Greece and China*, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000; *Early China/Ancient Greece: Thinking through Comparisons*, State University of New York Press, 2002.
13. Fritz-Heiner Mutschler and Achim Mittag eds., *Conceiving the Empire: China and Rome Compared*, Oxford University Press, 2008.
14. Walter Scheidel ed., *Rome and China: Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires*, Oxford University Press, 2009; *State Power in Ancient China & Rome*, Oxford University Press, 2015.
15. See, for example, Lisa Raphals, *Knowing Words: Wisdom and Cunning in the Classical Traditions of China and Greece*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992; Lisa Raphals, *Sharing the Light: Representations of Women and Virtue in Early China*, Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1998; David Scharberg, 'Travel, Geography, and the Imperial Imagination in Fifth-Century Athens and Han China', in *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 51 (Spring 1999), pp. 152–191; Jean-Paul Reding, *Comparative Essays in Early Greek and Chinese Rational Thinking*, Ashgate, 2004; Hyun Jin Kim, *Ethnicity and Foreigners in Ancient Greece and China*, Gerald Duckworth & C. Ltd., 2009; Alexander Beecroft, *Authorship and Cultural Identity in Early Greece and China: Patterns of Literary Circulation*, Cambridge University Press, 2010.
16. D. Rueschemeyer, 'Can One of a Few Cases Yield Theoretical Gains?', in J. Mahoney and D. Rueschemeyer eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 305–336.
17. In the first chapter of *Interaction Ritual Chains*, Randall Collins made a historical review of the social theories of ritual studies, and illustrating the development of various ritual theories. See Randall Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains*, Princeton University Press, 2004.
18. Cf. Carl Gustav Jung, *Man and His Symbols*, New York: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1964.
19. Cf. Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997; *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, New York: Free Press, 1965.
20. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, New York: Free Press, 1965; *The Andaman Islanders: A Study in Social Anthropology*, Charleston: Nabu Press, 2011; *Social Organization of Australian Tribes*, Chicago: Repressed Publishing LLC, 2012.
21. Cf. Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. by Monika B. Vizedon and Gabrielle L. Caffee, The University of Chicago Press, 1960.
22. After a hundred years, 'the rites of passage' has become one of the important theories of folklore, universally accepted by scholars as a social mechanism which indicated changes in humans' status, and as a classic concept of anthropological and other disciplinary research on rituals.

23. Cf. Claude Levi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, London: Penguin Press, 2011.
24. Also see James Boon and David Schneider, 'Kinship vis-à-vis Myth contrasts in Levi-Strauss' Approaches to Cross-Cultural Comparison', in *American Anthropologist*, new series, Vol. 76, No. 4, pp. 799–817.
25. Cf. Clifforf Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, New York: Basic Books Inc., 1973.
26. E. Durkheim said: 'without symbols, social sentiments could have only a precarious existence. […] But if the movements by which these sentiments are expressed are connected with something that endures, the sentiments themselves become more durable. […] Thus these systems of emblems, which are necessary if society is to become conscious of itself, are no less indispensable for assuring the continuation of this consciousness.' See Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, New York: Free Press, 1965, p. 265.
27. Simon Hornblower and Antony Spawforth eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edition revised, Oxford Press, 2003, pp. 1318–1319.
28. Jan N. Bremmer, *The Greek Religion*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 38; also cf. Jan Bremmer, 'Myth and Ritual in Ancient Greece: Observations on a Difficult Relationship', N. Oettinger, 'Entstehung von Mythos aus Ritual. Das Beispiel des hethitischen Textes CTH 390A', in M. Hutter and S. Hutter-Braunsar eds., *Offizielle Religion, lokale Kulte und individuelle Religiosität*, Münster, 2004, pp. 347–356.
29. It has always been an issue worth exploring—how to best describe Chinese words (especially some academic terms) in English publications.
30. As there have been a huge number of studies of *Li*, it is impossible to enumerate them one by one. For a general explanation of *Li* in English, see Cua, 'Reason and Principle in Chinese Philosophy', in Eliot Deutsch and Ron Bontekoe eds., *A Companion to World Philosophies*, Basil Blackwell, 1997.
31. Anzhai Li, *Sociology Research on Etiquette and Ceremony and the Book of Rites* (in Chinese), Shanghai People's Publishing House, 2005.
32. The most reliable English translation of classical Chinese works recognized by the academic community is from James Legge. All of the English translations of Confucian writings I quote in this book are from James Legge, *The Chinese Classics: With a Translation, Critical and Exegetical Notes, Prolegomena, and Copious Indexes*, Taipei, Republic of China, Southern Materials Center, 1985.
33. Lai Chen, *Ancient Religion and Ethic—The Origin of Confucian Thought* (in Chinese), Beijing: San-Lian Publishing House, 1996, p. 248.
34. Joachim Gentz, 'The Ritual Meaning of Textual Form: Evidence from Early Commentaries of the Historiographic and Ritual Traditions', in Martin Kern ed., *Text and Ritual in Early China*, University of Washington Press, 2007, pp. 124–148.

35. Joachim Gentz, 'The Ritual Meaning of Textual Form: Evidence from Early Commentaries of the Historiographic and Ritual Traditions', in Martin Kern ed., *Text and Ritual in Early China*, University of Washington Press, 2007, pp. 124–148.
36. In a strict sense, there is no absolute opposite relationship between 'this-sidedness' and 'that-sidedness' in the ancient world. For the convenience of the discussion, I borrow these two concepts from Kantian philosophy. In Buddhism, the word 'paramita' can substitute for 'that-sidedness'.
37. See Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, revised by Dimitrios Yatromanolakis and Panagiotis Roilos, second edition, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002. See also Karanika, Andromache, *Voices at Work: Women, Performance and Gender in Ancient Greece*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014.
38. However, I think that a book named *Comparer en histoire des religions antiques: controverses et propositions* should be taken into account (Calame, Claude and Lincoln, Bruce eds., *Comparer en histoire des religions antiques: controverses et propositions*, Presses Universitaires de Liège, 2012). The eight studies in this book are from the conference held on December 15, 2010 by the Chicago-Paris Workshop on the theme of the comparative history of ancient religions and cultures. A few specialists on the Greek and Roman world have provided a theoretical argument illustrated by a demonstration to adjust the comparative issues of current research and restore its credit by giving it a new style. As a reviewer says: 'This stimulating bilingual volume on an important topic in the study of ancient religions arose from an on-going international collaboration, and is consequently far more coherent than most collections of conference papers … With its high level of theoretical and methodological rigor, this book will be of value to all those interested in ancient religions, anthropological approaches to ancient cultures, and the intellectual history of the study of religions.' (Reviewed by Deborah Lyons, in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 2013.11.15.)
39. Cf. K. C. Chang, *The Archaeology of Ancient China*, 4th ed., Yale University Press, 1985.
40. Martin Kern, 'The Ritual Texture of Early China', in Martin Kern ed., *Text and Ritual in Early China*, University of Washington Press, 2007, pp. vii–xxvii.
41. The *Etiquette and Ceremony* is the earliest extant collection of ritual matters and social conduct of the Zhou dynasty. Most scholars agree that the final redaction of the book took place before the Qin dynasty. *The Book of Rites* is the anthology of books written by Confucian scholars from the Warring-States period to the Qin and Han dynasties about their interpretation of the scripture *Etiquette and Ceremonies*. It mainly deals with the meaning and significance of rituals as well as with rules of social life. As an important collection of Confucian thoughts, it is one of 'The Five Classics of Confucianism'.

42. *The Rites of Zhou* deals with Zhou's organization and institutions and is the most complete record of official systems in China, perhaps also the most complete record of ancient official systems in the world.
43. Steven Shankman and Stephen Durrant, *The Siren and the Sage: Knowledge and Wisdom in Ancient Greece and China*, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000, p. 8.

## References

Alexiou, Margaret. 2002. *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*. Revised. Dimitrios Yatromanolakis and Panagiotis Roilos, 2nd ed. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Arnason, Johann P. S., Eisenstadt, N., and Wittrock, Björn, eds. 2005. *Axial Civilizations and World History*. Brill.

Beecroft, Alexander. 2010. *Authorship and Cultural Identity in Early Greece and China: Patterns of Literary Circulation*. Cambridge University Press.

Boon, James, and David Schneider. 1974. Kinship vis-a-vis Myth Contrasts in Levi-Strauss' Approaches to Cross-Cultural Comparison. *American Anthropologist*, new series 76 (4): 799–817.

Bremmer, Jan. 1999. *The Greek Religion*. Cambridge University Press.

Bremmer, Jan. 2004. Myth and Ritual in Ancient Greece: Observations on a Difficult Relationship. Eds. M. Hutter and S. Hutter-Braunsar. *Offizielle Religion, lokale Kulte und individuelle Religiosität*. Münster, 347–356.

Calame, Claude and Lincoln, Bruce, eds. 2012. *Comparer en histoire des religions antiques: controverses et propositions*. Presses Universitaires de Liège.

Chang, K. C. 1983. *The Archaeology of Ancient China*. 4th ed. Yale University Press.

Chen, Lai 陈来. 1996. *Ancient Religion and Ethic—The Origin of Confucian Thought 古代宗教与伦理—儒家思想的根源*. Beijing: San-Lian Publishing House 三联书店.

Chen, Lai 陈来. 2002. *The World of Ancient Ideology and Culture—Religion, Ethics and Social Thoughts in the Spring-Autumn Period 古代思想文化的世界—春秋时代的宗教、伦理与社会思想*. Beijing: San-Lian Publishing House 三联书店.

Collins, Randall. 2004. *Interaction Ritual Chains*. Princeton University Press.

Cua, A. S. 1997. Reason and Principle in Chinese Philosophy. Eds. Eliot Deutsch and Ron Bontekoe. *A Companion to World Philosophies*. Basil Blackwell.

Durkheim, Emile. 1965. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. Free Press.

Durkheim, Emile. 1997. *The Division of Labor in Society*. Simon and Schuster.

Gennep, Arnold van. 1960. *The Rites of Passage*. Trans. by Monika B. Vizedon and Gabrielle L. Caffee. The University of Chicago Press.

Geertz, Clifforf. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books, Inc

Hornblower, Simon, and Antony Spawforth, eds. 2003. *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 3rd ed. rev. Oxford Press.

Jung, Carl Gustav. 1964. *Man and His Symbols*. Doubleday & Company Inc.

Karanika, Andromache. 2014. *Voices at Work: Women, Performance and Gender in Ancient Greece*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Kern, Martin, ed. 2007. *Text and Ritual in Early China*. University of Washington Press.

Kim, Hyun Jin. 2009. *Ethnicity and Foreigners in Ancient Greece and China*. Gerald Duckworth & C. Ltd.

Legge, James. 1985. *The Chinese Classics: With a Translation, Critical and Exegetical Notes, Prolegomena, and Copious Indexes*. Taipei: Southern Materials Center.

Levi-Strauss, Claude. 2011. *Tristes Tropiques*. Penguin Press.

Li, Anzhai. 李安宅. 2005. *Sociology Research on Etiquette and Ceremony and The Book of Rites*《仪礼》与《礼记》之社会学的研究. Shanghai People's Publishing House上海人民出版社.

Lloyd, G. E. R. 1996. *Adversaries and Authorities: Investigations into Ancient Greek and Chinese Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lloyd, G. E. R. 2002. *The Ambitions of Curiosity: Understanding the World in Ancient Greece and China*. Cambridge University Press.

Lloyd, G. E. R. 2004. *Ancient Worlds, Modern Reflections: Philosophical Perspectives on Greek and Chinese Science and Culture*. Oxford University Press.

Lloyd, G. E. R. 2005. *The Delusions of Invulnerability: Wisdom and Morality in Ancient Greece, China and Today*. London: Duckworth.

Lloyd, G. E. R. 2006. *Principle and Practices in Ancient Greek and Chinese Science*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Lloyd, G. E. R. and Sivin, Nathan. 2002. *The Way and the Word: Science and Medicine in Early China and Greece*. Yale University Press.

Mahoney, J. and Rueschemeyer, D., eds. 2003. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge University Press.

Mutschler, Fritz-Heiner and Mittag, Achim, eds. 2008. *Conceiving the Empire: China and Rome Compared*. Oxford University Press.

Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. 1965. *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*. Free Press.

Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. 2011. *The Andaman Islanders: A Study in Social Anthropology*. Charleston: Nabu Press.

Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. 2012. *Social Organization of Australian Tribes*. Repressed Publishing LLC.

Raphals, Lisa. 1992. *Knowing Words: Wisdom and Cunning in the Classical Traditions of China and Greece*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Raphals, Lisa. 1998. *Sharing the Light: Representations of Women and Virtue in Early China*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Reding, Jean-Paul. 2004. *Comparative Essays in Early Greek and Chinese Rational Thinking*. Ashgate.

Scharberg, David. 1999. Travel, Geography, and the Imperial Imagination in Fifth-Century Athens and Han China. *Comparative Literature* 51 (Spring): 152–191.

Scheidel, Walter, ed. 2009. *Rome and China: Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires*. Oxford University Press.

Scheidel, Walter, ed. 2015. *State Power in Ancient China & Rome*. Oxford University Press.

Schwartz, Benjamin I. 1985. *The World of Thought in Ancient China*. Harvard University Press.

Shankman, Steven, and Durrant, Stephen W., eds. 2000. *The Siren and the Sage: Knowledge and Wisdom in Ancient Greece and China*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Shankman, Steven, and Durrant, Stephen W., eds. 2002. *Early China/ancient Greece: Thinking through Comparisons*. State University of New York Press.


CHAPTER 2

# Attitudes towards Death in Ancient Greece and Ancient China

**Abstract** In this chapter, the author mainly discusses people's views on death in two ancient societies, specifically involving the following three aspects: (1) the popular views of death and what constituted 'a good death' in Greece and China; (2) a comparison of 'The House of Hades' and *Psychē* in Greece with '*Yellow Springs*' (黄泉) and *Gui* (鬼) in China; and (3) the power of the dead. From those, it is evident that the Chinese and the Greeks follow different modes of meaning-making when they face the same challenge of death. In ancient Greece, the Greeks' fear of not being buried may have been greater than the fear of death itself. In ancient China, the Chinese tried to '*serve the dead as they served them alive*'.

**Keywords** View of death • 'The House of Hades' • *Psychē* • '*Yellow Springs*' • *Gui* • The power of the dead

Before engaging in specific discussions of mourning, burial and funeral rituals, it is important to set these in a wider context by exploring personal attitudes towards death. In this chapter, I reflect on popular views about death in ancient Greece and ancient China, including the nature of death and how the dead were typically viewed in each society.



X. Wu, *Mourning Rituals in Archaic & Classical Greece and Pre-Qin China*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0632-7_2

## 1 The Popular Views of Death and 'A Good Death' in Greece and China

In Greece, the earliest and most detailed source relating to attitudes toward death appears in the works of Homer. From the epics, firstly we know that, in the mind of the Greeks, death is unavoidable and inevitable: in contrast to the gods, every mortal will die. Even Achilles, as the greatest hero in ancient Greece, cannot evade death, and his mother, the goddess Thetis, is similarly unable to prevent Achilles' death. She cried:

> ὤ μοι τέκνον ἐμόν, τί νύ σ' ἔτρεφον αἰνὰ τεκοῦσα;
> αἴθ' ὄφελες παρὰ νηυσὶν ἀδάκρυτος καὶ ἀπήμων
> ἧσθαι, ἐπεί νύ τοι αἶσα μίννυθά περ, οὔ τι μάλα δήν.
> νῦν δ' ἅμα τ' ὠκύμορος καὶ ὀιζυρὸς περὶ πάντων ἔπλεο.
>
> *Alas, my child, why did I rear you, cursed in my child-bearing? If only it had been your lot to stay by your ships without tears and without grief, since your span of life is brief and will not last long; but now you are doomed to a speedy death and are unfortunate above all men.*
> (Hom., *Iliad*, 1.414–417)[1]

Death is an inevitable destiny for humanity, and everywhere in the world ruled by the gods of Olympus, animals, plants, and people die: it is at this point that there is no difference between humans and animals and plants. By contrast, the divinity of a god or goddess is reflected in their transcendence of death.

Second, death is viewed as miserable and terrible, just as Homer's afterworld is obscure and dismal.[2] To illustrate this, let us look at the ghost of Parthenoclos in the *Iliad*, appearing in Achilles' dream:

> Ὣς ἄρα φωνήσας ὠρέξατο χερσὶ φίλῃσιν,
> οὐδ' ἔλαβε· ψυχὴ δὲ κατὰ χθονὸς ἠύτε καπνὸς
> ὤχετο τετριγυῖα· ταφὼν δ' ἀνόρουσεν Ἀχιλλεὺς
> χερσί τε συμπλατάγησεν, ἔπος δ' ὀλοφυδνὸν ἔειπεν·
> Ὤ πόποι, ἦ ῥά τίς ἐστι καὶ εἰν Ἀίδαο δόμοισι
> ψυχὴ καὶ εἴδωλον, ἀτὰρ φρένες οὐκ ἔνι πάμπαν·
> παννυχίη γάρ μοι Πατροκλῆος δειλοῖο
> ψυχὴ ἐφεστήκει γοόωσά τε μυρομένη τε,
> καί μοι ἕκαστ' ἐπέτελλεν, ἔικτο δὲ θέσκελον αὐτῷ.
>
> *So saying he reached out with his hands, yet clasped him not; but the spirit like smoke was gone beneath the earth, gibbering faintly. And Achilles*

*sprang up in amazement, and struck his hands together, and spoke a piteous word: 'Well now! Even in the house of Hades there is something—spirit and phantom—though there is no mind at all; for the whole night long has the spirit of unlucky Patroclus stood over me, weeping and wailing, and charged me concerning each thing, and was marvelously like his very self.'*

(Hom., *Iliad*, 23, 99–107)

Third, the dead were seen to have a 'privilege' to expect mourning and burial from the living, and the mourning and burial were the obligation of the surviving kin. Without funerary rites, the deceased were not considered fully dead, and their soul or ghost was thought to be condemned to wander restlessly between the worlds. To continue the above example, the dead man who appears in Achilles' dream asked him:

θάπτέ με ὅττι τάχιστα, πύλας Ἀΐδαο περήσω.
τῆλέ με εἴργουσι ψυχαί, εἴδωλα καμόντων,
οὐδέ μέ πω μίσγεσθαι ὑπὲρ ποταμοῖο ἐῶσιν,
ἀλλ᾽αὖτως ἀλάλημαι ἀν᾽εὐρυπυλὲς Ἄιδος δῶ.
καί μοι δὸς τὴν χεῖρ, ὀλοφύρομαι· οὐ γὰρ ἔτ᾽αὖτις
νίσομαι ἐξ Ἀΐδαο, ἐπήν με πυρὸς λελάχητε.

*Bury me with all speed, let me pass inside the gates of Hades. Far do the spirits keep me away, the phantoms of men that have done with toils, and they do not yet allow me to mingle with them beyond the river, but vainly I wander through the wide-gated house of Hades. And give me your hand, I beg you, for never more again will I return out of Hades, when once you have given me my share of fire.*

(Hom., *Iliad*, 23, 71–76)

Fourth, as is evident by a study of Homer's heroes, the Greeks sought eagerly to have a 'glorious' death. Greek heroes knew their mission and their destination: they understood that war was merciless, and that life was short, but they were neither pessimistic nor afraid of death. They were obsessed with honor, because they knew that this honor would cause them to be praised by future generations, and sung about by singers (*aoidos*). Therefore, when Hector knew he would die in the hands of Achilles, he said:

μὴ μὰν ἀσπουδί γε καὶ ἀκλειῶς ἀπολοίμην,
ἀλλὰ μέγα ῥέξας τι καὶ ἐσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι.

*Not without a struggle let me die, nor ingloriously, but having done some great deed for men yet to be born to hear.*

(Hom., *Iliad*, 22, 304–305)

Achilles more clearly expressed:

> Ἕκτορα κῆρα δ'ἐγὼ τότε δέξομαι, ὁππότε κεν δὴ
> Ζεὺς ἐθέλῃ τελέσαι ἠδ'ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι.
> οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ βίη Ἡρακλῆος φύγε κῆρα,
> ὅς περ φίλτατος ἔσκε Διὶ Κρονίωνι ἄνακτι·
> ἀλλά ἑ μοῖρ'ἐδάμασσε καὶ ἀργαλέος χόλος Ἥρης.
> ὣς καὶ ἐγών, εἰ δή μοι ὁμοίη μοῖρα τέτυκται,
> κείσομ'ἐπεί κε θάνω· νῦν δὲ κλέος ἐσθλὸν ἀροίμην,
>
> *as for my death, I will accept it when Zeus is minded to bring it to pass, and the other immortal gods. For not even the mighty Heracles escaped death, though he was most dear to lord Zeus, son of Cronos, but fate overcame him, and the painful wrath of Hera. So also shall I, if a like fate has been fashioned for me, lie when I am dead. But now let me win glorious renown.*
>
> (Hom., *Iliad*, 18, 115–121)

The idea that the hero fought for honor runs throughout the Epic. The hero proved his courage and strength, and won his honor: yet these actions often culminated in a 'beautiful death', which was one of the defining features of a hero. Death was the price that the hero had to pay, and a necessary aspect of the human experience. In other words, no matter how prominent heroes were, they were still 'mortal' humans, rather than 'immortal' gods.

After 700 BCE, the attitude toward death that we can see in Homer's epics still survived, but with the difference that heroes were displaced by the citizens of a *polis*. Nonetheless, the warrior's death retained a special status in Greek literature and vase paintings, and death in war always brought fame and admiration from the whole people (Fig. 2.1).

There was a cult of heroes in every *polis*. Just as 'the hero' was created as an aristocratic ideal in the eighth century BCE,[3] a citizen's death in battle was seen as contributing to a perfect *polis* during the *polis* period. At the same time, an ordinary citizen was given immortal honor. As Lysias said in a funeral oration to Athens soldiers:

> ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν αὐτοὺς καὶ μακαρίζω τοῦ θανάτου καὶ ζηλῶ, καὶ μόνοις ἀνθρώπων οἷμια
> κρεῖττον εἶναι γενέσθαι, οἵτινες, ἐπειδὴ θνητῶν σωμάτων ἔτυχον, ἀθάνατον μνήμην διὰ
> τὴν ἀρετὴν αὑτῶν κατέλιπον·

**Fig. 2.1** Part of a marble lekythos. Ca. 410 BCE–400 BCE. Part of a marble lekythos with a scene probably showing parents and a son killed in battle. An older man clasps the youth's hand while a woman makes a gesture of mourning. Inscribed with an elegiac inscription of four lines, of which only the last few letters remain. The British Museum

> *So I, indeed, call them blessed in their death, and envy them; I hold that for those alone amongst men is it better to be born who, having received mortal bodies, have left behind an immortal memory arising from their valor.*
>
> (Lysias, *Funeral Oration*, 81)[4]

It is important, however, to distinguish between death in battle and the death of an ordinary citizen. Death at home, in peace, was less celebrated and was understood to be part of normal life for the common people. Violent death was not a 'good' ending for the common people, who were seen as being at the mercy of fate and received mourning and funerals only from their families. Thus, the first three attitudes about death described above are applicable to them.

In the Chinese case, the classical statements of attitudes toward death are found in *The Book of Rites* (《礼记》) and *The Analects of Confucius* (《论语》), respectively:

> 大凡生于天地之间者，皆曰命。其万物死，皆曰折；人死，曰鬼；此五代之所不变也。(《礼记·祭法》)
>
> *Generally speaking, all born between heaven and earth were said to have their allotted times; the death of all creatures is spoken of as their dissolution; but man when dead is said to be in the ghostly state. There was no change in regard to these points in the five dynasties.*
>
> (*The Ways of Sacrifices · The Book of Rites*)
>
> 众生必死，死必归土：此之谓鬼。骨肉毙于下，阴为野土。(《礼记·祭义》)
>
> *All the living must die, and dying, return to the ground; this is what is called gui. The bones and flesh molder below and, hidden away, become the earth of the fields.*
>
> (*The Meaning of Sacrifices · The Book of Rites*)

From the texts, we can tell that, in the mind of the Chinese: first, everyone must die, and their bodies return to earth through decomposition; second, when a person died, what remained was called *gui* (鬼); third, since death is beyond the understanding of humans, it is difficult to talk about it, even for the wise. Ancient Chinese people's attitude toward death can be further explained as follows:

> 季路问事鬼神。子曰："未能事人，焉能事鬼？"敢问死。曰："未知生，焉知死？"(《论语·先进》)
>
> *Ji Lu asked about serving the spirits of the dead. The Master said, 'While you are not able to serve men, how can you serve their spirits?' Ji Lu added, 'I venture to ask about death?' He was answered, 'While you do not know life, how can you know about death?'*
>
> (*Xian Jin · The Analects of Confucius*)

From these statements, we can tell that Confucians thought that humans should concern themselves in the first instance with the affairs of other living humans. This is a kind of attitude of humanism.[5] Given the Confucian agnostic attitude towards death, Confucians changed directions to teach

people to appreciate life, longevity, and to show *filial piety* (孝) to parents when they have to face life and death.[6] The Confucian goes as far as to say:

> 孟懿子问孝。子曰: “无违。” 樊迟御, 子告之曰: “孟孙问孝于我, 我对曰 ‘无违’。” 樊迟曰: “何谓也?” 子曰: “生, 事之以礼; 死, 葬之以礼, 祭之以礼。” (《论语 • 为政》)

> *Meng Yi asked what filial piety was. The Master said, 'It is not being disobedient.' Soon after, as Fan Chi was driving him, the Master told him, saying, 'Meng-sun asked me what filial piety was, and I answered him,—'not being disobedient.' Fan Chi said, 'What did you mean?' The Master replied, 'That parents, when alive, be served according to propriety; that, when dead, they should be buried according to propriety; and that they should be sacrificed to according to propriety.'*
>
> (*Wei Zheng · The Analects of Confucius*)

> 事死如事生, 事亡如事存。(《中庸》18)

> *Thus they served the dead as they would have served them alive; they served the departed as they would have served them had they been continued among them.*
>
> (*The Doctrine of the Mean* 18)

The central concept here is that the deceased should be rendered service, in the same way as love and respect are shown to parents while they are still living. However, people do know that human beings cannot be revived; why, then, does Confucius teach people this? Because, on the one hand, in the event of the death of a loved one, we may be emotionally unwilling to accept it, and hoping that they can be resurrected; on the other hand, our intellect realizes that the dead cannot be recalled to life, and it is even impossible to prove that their souls will continue to exist. Therefore, people's attitude toward the dead has become a dilemma. If we treat them purely in a rational manner, this contradicts our emotions; if we are acting out of emotion, it is difficult for it to be fully accepted by reason. As a result, Confucius invented the compromise between the two ideas:

> 孔子曰: “之死而致死之, 不仁而不可为也; 之死而致生之, 不知而不可为也。是故, 竹不成用, 瓦不成味, 木不成斫, 琴瑟张而不平, 竽笙备而不和, 有钟磬而无簨虡, 其曰明器, 神明之也。” (《礼记 • 檀弓》上)

> *Confucius said, 'In dealing with the dead, if we treat them as if they were entirely dead, that would show lack of affection, and should not be done; or, if we treat them as if they were entirely alive, that would show lack of wisdom, and should not be done. On this account the vessels of bamboo (used for burial with the dead) are not fit for actual use; those of earthenware cannot be used to wash in; those of wood are incapable of being carved; the lutes are strung, but not evenly; the reed-pipes are complete, but not in tune; the bells and musical stones are there, but they have no stands. They are called 'spiritual utensils', indicating (that the dead are to be treated like spirits.'*
>
> *Tan Gong I · The Book of Rites*)

The passage continues:

> 孔子谓之明器者，知丧道矣，备物而不可用也。(《礼记・檀弓》上)
>
> *He who made the 'spiritual utensils' knew the principle underlying the mourning rites. They are things complete (to all appearance), yet cannot be used.*
>
> (*Tan Gong I · The Book of Rites*)

In this issue, I agree deeply with Fung Yu-Lan's understanding: 'hold to a midway course between these two alternatives, and take both intellect and emotion into consideration. The sacrificial and mourning rites described by them are, according to their explanations, poetical rather than religious, and their attitude toward the dead is likewise poetical rather than religious. […] To look at the dead from an exclusively intellectual viewpoint, and so decide that they have no consciousness, would be to lack affection. To look at them from an exclusively emotional viewpoint, and so decide that they do have consciousness, would be to lack wisdom. Men steer a course between these two alternatives by making utensils that are complete in form, yet cannot actually be used. They are made complete in form with the wish that they *might* be used by the dead, and in order thus to satisfy men's emotional hopes. But they are made so that they cannot actually be used, because our intellect tells us that the dead cannot utilize them.'[7]

Confucius refused to answer any questions positively about death. And his attitude of *'While you are not able to serve men, how can you serve their spirits?'* and *'While you do not know life, how can you know about death?'* let Chinese scholars argue, 'Confucius already adopted a skeptical attitude toward spirits, and believed that even if they did exist, it was better not to discuss them.'[8] Ying-shih Yu also said: 'Confucius suggests, in Chinese

intellectual history the emphasis seems to have been laid much more on the problem of life than on that of death. Sometimes one may even find that the latter is important not because it is a problem as such, but because it is, in the last analysis, a prolongation of the former.'[9]

A so-called 'good death' in Chinese was '*shanzhong*' (善终): its literal meaning refers to a good result or a good ending in general. When used in relation to people, it means the natural death of a person, but not the death of a criminal or unexpected disaster. In one of the oldest books, *The Book of Historical Documents* (*Shang-Shu* 《尚书》), there were five kinds of happiness for people:

> 五福：一曰寿，二曰富，三曰康，四曰攸好，五曰考终。(《尚书·洪范》9)
>
> *Of the five (sources of) happiness: the first is long life; the second, riches; the third, soundness of body and serenity of (mind; the fourth, the love of virtue; and the fifth, fulfilling to the end the will (of Heaven).*
> (*Great Plan · The Book of Historical Documents* 9)

The last one was '*kaozhong*' (考终), which meant 'enjoy a lifetime, longevity and death'. From the Pre-Qin period and through several subsequent dynasties in China, these attitudes constituted basic understandings about death which were accepted by most people—not only by Chinese intellectuals, but also by the common people.

## 2 'The House of Hades' and *Psychē*; 'Yellow Springs' (黄泉) and *Gui* (鬼)

In relation to the afterlife, the Greeks did not have a clear concept. Briefly, in the earliest times the Greeks apparently believed that everyone would go to a place called the 'House of Hades' or simply 'Hades' after death. This land of the dead was ruled by Hades and his queen, Persephone. There, the dead took the form of a kind of disembodied soul (*psychē*), such that physical contact was impossible. In the underworld, the *psychē* existed in a state that was neither unpleasant, nor particularly enjoyable. There, a few individuals were thought to suffer terrible punishments in Hades, but there was no trace of the idea that people would be either punished or rewarded for deeds done while alive.[10] Rather, they lived the same way as they did at the time of life, but without their loved ones and their pursuit

of honor. This is the basic Greek view of life after death.[11] For the Greeks, the division and opposition of the soul and the body was an insoluble problem: it was difficult for them to imagine it.

Homeric poems provide us with the earliest written documentation of the concepts of soul (*psychē*) and the world after death. However, in fact the Greeks did not have a clear concept of this. The word '*psychē*' in ancient Greek literally means 'breathe' (*psycho*),[12] in other words, it can be interpreted as implying that the Greeks believed that the advent of death was when the breath stopped, and *Iliad* vividly described the moment when the soul left the body:

> Ἀτρείδης δ' ἄρ' ἔπειθ' Ὑπερήνορα, ποιμένα λαῶν,
> οὖτα κατὰ λαπάρην, διὰ δ' ἔντερα χαλκὸς ἄφυσσε
> δηώσας· ψυχὴ δὲ κατ' οὐταμένην ὠτειλὴν
> ἔσσυτ' ἐπειγομένη, τὸν δὲ σκότος ὄσσε κάλυψε.
>
> *Atreus' son struck with a thrust in the flank Hyperenor, shepherd of men, and the bronze let out the bowels as it cut through, and his soul sped hurrying through the stricken wound, and darkness enfolded his eyes.*
>
> (Hom., *Iliad*, 14, 516–519)

A dead person had a hollow, non-physical soul that, like the person themselves, lacked life: it looked like a 'shadow' or a 'dream', and it was intangible. See:

> ἦλθε δ'ἐπὶ ψυχὴ Πατροκλῆος δειλοῖο,
> πάντ' αὐτῷ μέγεθός τε καὶ ὄμματα κάλ'ἐικυῖα,
> καὶ φωνήν, καὶ τοῖα περὶ χροί εἵματα ἕστο·
>
> *There came to him the spirit of unhappy Patroclus, in all things like his very self, in stature and fair eyes and in voice, and like were the clothes that he wore about his body.*
>
> (Hom., *Iliad*, 23, 65–67)

> αὐτὰρ ἐγώ γ' ἔθελον φρεσὶ μερμηρίξας
> μητρὸς ἐμῆς ψυχὴν ἑλέειν κατατεθνηυίης.
> τρὶς μὲν ἐφωρμήθην, ἑλέειν τέ με θυμὸς ἀνώγει,
> τρὶς δέ μοι ἐκ χειρῶν σκιῇ εἴκελον ἢ καὶ ὀνείρῳ
> …
> δαμνᾷ, ἐπεί κε πρῶτα λίπῃ λεύκ' ὀστέα θυμός,
> ψυχὴ δ' ἠύτ' ὄνειρος ἀποπταμένη πεπότηται.

*I wondered in my heart how I might clasp the ghost of my dear mother. Three times I sprang toward her, and my will said, 'Clasp her', and three times she flitted from my arms like a shadow or a dream.*
…
*as soon as the spirit leaves the white bones, and the ghost, like a dream, flutters off and is gone.*

(Hom., *Odyssey*, 11, 204–207, 221–222)[13]

Odysseus was portrayed as being unable to hug his deceased mother. But the ghost could be made manifest through spiritualism and asked for some information about the future (Hom., *Odyssey*, 10, 516–530).

Most Archaic poets expressed notions about the soul similar to Homer's. But after the hero's death, the destination was different from that of ordinary people. Some of them went to Hades, but most went to Elysium, which was called 'Happy Island', where they were not gods, but could enjoy happiness forever.

σοὶ δ' οὐ θέσφατόν ἐστι, διοτρεφὲς ὦ Μενέλαε,
Ἄργει ἐν ἱπποβότῳ θανέειν καὶ πότμον ἐπισπεῖν,
ἀλλά σ' ἐς Ἠλύσιον πεδίον καὶ πείρατα γαίης
ἀθάνατοι πέμψουσιν, ὅθι ξανθὸς Ῥαδάμανθυς,
τῇ περ ῥηίστη βιοτὴ πέλει ἀνθρώποισιν·
οὐ νιφετός, οὔτ' ἄρ χειμὼν πολὺς οὔτε ποτ' ὄμβρος,
ἀλλ' αἰεὶ Ζεφύροιο λιγὺ πνείοντος ἀήτας
Ὠκεανὸς ἀνίησιν ἀναψύχειν ἀνθρώπους·

*But for yourself, Menelaus, fostered by Zeus, it is not ordained that you should die and meet your fate in horse-pasturing Argos, but to the Elysian plain and the ends of the earth will the immortals convey you, where dwells fair-haired Rhadamanthus, and where life is easiest for men. No snow is there, nor heavy storm, nor ever rain, but always Ocean sends up blasts of the shrill-blowing West Wind that they may give cooling to men.*

(Hom., *Odyssey*, 4, 561–568)

τοῖς δὲ δίχ' ἀνθρώπων βίοτον καὶ ἤθε' ὀπάσσας
Ζεὺς Κρονίδης κατένασσε πατὴρ ἐς πείρατα γαίης,
καὶ τοὶ μὲν ναίουσιν ἀκηδέα θυμὸν ἔχοντες
ἐν μακάρων νήσοισι παρ' Ὠκεανὸν βαθυδίνην·
ὄλβιοι ἥρωες, τοῖσιν μελιηδέα καρπὸν
τρὶς ἔτεος θάλλοντα φέρει ζείδωρος ἄρουρα.

> *But upon others Zeus the father, Cronus' son, bestowed life and habitations far from human beings and settled them at the limits of the earth; and these dwell with a spirit free of care on the Islands of the Blessed beside deep-eddying Ocean—happy heroes, for whom the grain-giving field bears honey-sweet fruit flourishing three times a year.*
>
> (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 167–173)[14]

By the Late Archaic period and Classical period, however, this vague notion had changed: the expectation of post-mortem punishments and rewards for everyone was already beginning to be expressed. Some intellectuals believed that those who entered the blessed land were assigned to it after some kind of 'judgment'. In Plato's *Republic* (10. 614–612), there is a myth that makes this point at length: The souls of the wicked are punished for one thousand years, while the souls of the just dwell in bliss for the same length of time. (This myth may, however, have been invented by Plato.) Aristotle said in his book *On the Soul* that the soul would die out as soon as the human body was destroyed.[15] However, their assertions cannot necessarily be taken to represent popular beliefs.

Later, in Orphic poems, there is a notion that the soul could live in animals as well as in humans. According to the teachings, after the death, the soul would be reborn according to the good or evil in its lifetime to the higher or lower biological level, and the soul needed to be reborn multiple times to be relieved. It was possible that animals might have preserved the soul of a man who had been tested, which accounts for Orpheus' precept that the believers should not be slaughtered and must not eat meat, except in rituals. Moreover, the *psychē* was judged after each human incarnation, with the wicked sent to Tartarus for 300 years before being allowed to return to the land of the living. No detailed description of the teachings of Orpheus[16] has been passed down so far, but some classical writers had excerpted or quoted some of his residual verses in their own works. Plato, in his writings, made many references to Orpheus and his thoughts.[17] In addition, although Aristotle did not believe in Orpheus, he acknowledged the influence of the religion and, in his writings, talked about Orpheus' psalms about cosmic and soul theories.[18]

As in the case of similar thoughts advocated by the school of Pythagoras, Anaximander, and Pherecydes, however, those new ideas affected only part of the eschatology of a very limited group. In fact, until the second century CE, in his essay *On Funerals*, Lucian still describes the Homeric custom and belief in Greece which 'prevail everywhere'.[19] Because attitudes changed

slowly, as noted by Ian Morris: 'There was fundamental continuity in personal attitudes toward death from the earliest times to the Classical period and beyond. There were some eschatological changes, such as the arrival of Eastern ideas about the soul around 500, but I believe that these had very limited impact. What did change, though, was the communal use made of the dead, in rituals evoking and creating the structure of society.'[20]

In turning to the material from China, people believed, first of all, that people must be buried after they died. In other words, the body must be hidden.

> 国子高曰: "葬也者, 藏也; 藏也者, 欲人之弗得见也。是故, 衣足以饰身, 棺周于衣, 椁周于棺, 土周于椁; 反壤树之哉。" (《礼记 • 檀弓》上)
>
> *Guo-zi gao said, 'Burying means hiding away; and that hiding (of the body) is from a wish that men should not see it. Hence there are the clothes sufficient for an elegant covering; the coffin all round about the clothes; the shell all round about the coffin; and the earth all round about the shell. And shall we farther raise a mound over the grave and plant it with trees?'*
> (*Tan Gong I · The Book of Rites*)

Regarding the way of burial, Guo-zi gao's position is that as long as the body was clothed, the clothes in which it was buried did not have to be extravagant. The purpose of burying bodies was in order not to affect the lives of the living. This reflects the concept of the ancient Chinese: the two worlds of the living and the dead were separate and should not interfere with each other, nor communicate with each other. During the Pre-Qin period, the later destiny of the dead in the tomb was unclear. One possibility was simply that the souls would eventually dissipate. There was also the possibility that they might be reborn in various paradises. Either way, they would be removed from the world of the living.

In relation to concepts of afterlife, from about the eighth century BCE the term '*Yellow Springs*' was used in historical and literary writings to denote the home of the dead.[21] Over several thousands of years, the *Yellow Springs* was imagined to be located beneath the earth, a place conceived of as dark and miserable. By contrast, as early as the Shang period the idea of a 'heavenly court' had already arisen; but this was believed to be reserved only for the long-lasting souls of the kings and lords, as a depository of social authority. Thus, it could be argued that the Chinese already had a conception of a heavenly world above and an underworld

**Fig. 2.2** Figure of driving dragon, in the warring-states period. Silk screen, ink painting, 37.5 cm in length and 28 cm in width. Its purpose is to guide the soul of the dead to ascend to heaven. At the center of the picture is a bearded man who is a tomb owner, seen in profile. He stands upright, with a sword and a rein in his hand, controlling a dragon whose soul is soaring toward heaven. This reflects the ancestors of people after death: the soul is immortal, and people aspired to ascending to heaven by taking a dragon. Hunan Provincial Museum

below; the ideas associated with the fate of souls are in fact very vague and imprecise, and very little detail about it exists in the written records or images (Figs. 2.2 and 2.3).

It is safe to say that the Chinese did not have a clear notion of an after-world until the end of the Han dynasty, when Buddhism arrived on the scene.

**Fig. 2.3** Figure of phoenix and dragon, in the warring-states period. Silk screen, ink painting, 31.2 cm in length and 23.2 cm in width. Its purpose is to guide the soul of the dead to ascend to heaven. It illustrates a woman dressed in a long robe, viewed from the side and leaning slightly forwards, with her hands clasped in a devout pose. To the left of the woman's head, a phoenix bird is flexing and stretching its feet, apparently preparing to fly away. The phoenix occupies the most prominent position in the picture. To its left, and higher in the sky, is a stylized dragon figure, which is less clear than the phoenix itself. The whole picture is thought to represent the theme of praying for god to guide the soul of the dead to ascend to heaven. Hunan Provincial Museum

A widely held view among the ancient Chinese was that after death a person becomes a *gui*, but its image is still a human form. It seems that what was called *gui* in ancient China was different, in general, from the concept of 'souls'. *Gui* is not only the existence of the spirit: it can be described as the continuation of the overall existence of humanity. Today, what we usually think of as 'the soul' is only the continuation of the spiritual part after death. However, ancient Chinese *gui* were viewed as never having escaped from materiality, as evident from the belief that they needed offerings. Since the Spring-Autumn Period, ancient Chinese people have believed that the *gui* need the living to offer sacrifices to them; that they enjoy the sacrificial objects; that they can express their opinions on sacrifices, through dreams; and even that *gui* are able to snatch offerings from each other. In general, Chinese people cannot sacrifice to another family's *gui*, because the *gui* are able to know their kinship. *Gui* only enjoy the worship and sacrifices of their own families. In addition, just like the Greeks, the Chinese also think that the meeting between human and *gui* takes place mainly in dreams.

However, although the *gui* is mentioned from very early on, it is always a vague concept for the ancient Chinese. We do not know for sure whether it means ghost, soul, or something else. Around the same time, or a little later, several other words besides *gui*—namely *shen* (神), *ling* (灵), *hun* (魂), and *po* (魄)[22]—were used to refer to a person's status after death. Questions remain as to whether these words have the same meaning, or different meanings; and if different, what the relationships between them might be. There have been several different lines of argument. Even scholars are confused, and there are different understandings about it. What is clear is that these are ambiguous and vague concepts, even in different writings from the same author.[23] There is reason to believe that, for the ordinary Chinese people of that time, it was very difficult to have a clear concept of soul in their minds, and even more difficult to make subtle distinctions between the various words that were in use. It does not appear that ordinary people reflected on whether the soul is a spiritual existence or a material existence in the final sense. The only thing that is clear from these writings is that death is thought to follow inevitably when the *ling*, the *hun* or the *po* leaves the body.

## 3 The Power of the Dead

Although, for the common Greeks, the afterlife of the world was not impressive, the dead could not be ignored because they had power.

The reason why the Greeks held a complicated but grand funeral ceremony for the deceased was because they believed that, as mentioned before, after death the soul of the dead was seen as being like a shadow or a dream, which could not be touched but still desired consolation and sacrifice from the living. The greatest satisfaction and comfort for the dead was thus to receive a suitable mourning and funeral from the living relatives, which in turn was also seen to guarantee the happiness and peace of the living. On the other hand, the most serious punishment for the dead would be to go without mourning and funeral. Without this last hope, the dead would become a wandering ghost in the deep ocean of anguish, which was also against the will of the gods. Neglecting this duty would incur punishment from the gods, the peace of the living would be disturbed, and the prosperity of the family would be harmed. As I have previously noted, 'It is thus clear that the main functions of mourning and burial are to reduce fear of death, distress arising from the instability of life, concerns about the revenge of the dead, and other kinds of negative feelings when people face death. Obviously, the ancient Greeks regarded mourning and burying the dead as a sacred obligation, a manifestation of piety and a symbol of compliance with ancestral law.'[24]

In existing classical literatures, we are told that the Greeks took burying the dead seriously—from Homer's two Epics to Herodotus' and Thucydides' historical books, to the tragedies of the three great tragic poets and Plutarch's biographies. For example:

> ἔνθα σ'ἔπειτα, ἄναξ, κέλομαι μνήσασθαι ἐμεῖο.
> μή μ'ἄκλαυτον ἄθαπτον ἰὼν ὄπιθεν καταλείπειν
> νοσφισθείς, μὴ τοί τι θεῶν μήνιμα γένωμαι,
> ἀλλά με κακκῆαι σὺν τεύχεσιν, ἄσσα μοι ἔστιν,
> σῆμά τέ μοι χεῦαι πολιῆς ἐπὶ θινὶ θαλάσσης,
> ἀνδρὸς δυστήνοιο καὶ ἐσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι.
> ταῦτά τέ μοι τελέσαι πῆξαί τ'ἐπὶ τῦμβῳ ἐρετμόν,
> τῷ καὶ ζωὸς ἔρεσσον ἐὼν μετ'ἐμοῖς ἑτάροισον.
> ὣς ἔφατ', αὐτὰρ ἐγώ μιν ἀμειβόμενος προσέειπον·
> 'Ταῦτά τοι, ὦ δύστηνε, τελευτήσω τε καὶ ἔρξω.'

*Elpenor spoke to Odysseus: 'There, then, my lord, I bid you remember me. Do not, when you depart, leave me behind unwept and unburied and turn away; I might become a cause of the gods' wrath against you. No, burn me with my armor, such as it is, and heap up a mound for me on the shore of the gray sea, in memory of an unlucky man, that men yet to be may know of me. Do this for me, and fix upon the mound my oar with which I rowed in life in the company of my comrades.' Odysseus answered him: 'So he spoke, and I made answer and said: "All this, unlucky man, will I perform and do."'*
(Hom. *Odyssey*, 11.71–80.)

ΧΟΡΟΣ. τίς ὁ θάψων νιν; τίς ὁ θρηνήσων;
ἦ σὺ τόδ᾽ἔρξαι τλήσῃ, κτείνασ᾽
ἄνδρα τὸν αὑτῆς, ἀποκωκῦσαι
ψυχῇ τ᾽ ἄχαριν χάριν ἀντ᾽ἔργων
μεγάλων ἀδίκως ἐπικρᾶναι;

*Chorus: 'Who shall bury him? Who shall lament him?*
*Shall you dare to do this, to slay*
*your husband and then lament him,*
*and for his soul decree thanks that are no thanks*
*in return for his mighty deeds?'*
(Aes. *Agamemnon*, 1541–1548)[25]

From the numerous descriptions of the Greek funeral rites by the classical writers, we find that Greeks seemed to fear not being buried more than they feared death itself.

Because mourning and burial were the obligation of the surviving kinship, it was viewed as a privilege of the dead to receive proper funerary rites. This was considered a sacred law by the Greeks[26]: it was believed that if this obligation was not fulfilled, it would result in vengeance and punishment from the gods.

In the case of China, there was one thing that people were generally afraid of, namely that the dead might become so-called '*ligui*' (厉鬼). It was believed that if the *gui* did not have a home (tomb), or if somebody died from being wronged or persecuted, it would become '*ligui*', that is, an evil spirit. The best possible fate for the *gui* was to be able to enjoy the offerings of their children and grandchildren. If a person was '*forced to be killed*' (强死) it was seen as an abnormal death, meaning that after death, the person was more likely to become '*ligui*', to cause trouble for the living. In other words, people believed that the departed ghost would turn into a resentful, pernicious ghost haunting the living, unless the living were able to bury them or calm their anger. Such an idea prevailed in

Pre-Qin China. There are different ways to quell anger, either for the dead person themselves, or for the dead person's descendants.

There are a number of legends about ghosts: the most famous case of the Pre-Qin period is the revenge taken by the ghost of Bo You against his enemies. According to *Zuo's Commentary* (《左传》 *Zuo Zhuan*), the ghost of Bo You came back to his hometown for a few years after his death, warning that he would kill his enemies. The people of Zheng were very scared. However, the well-known politician Zichan succeeded in soothing the ghost of Bo You by appointing Bo You's son as his heir so that the ghost of Bo You could be duly worshipped.

> 郑人相惊以伯有, 曰: "伯有至矣。" 则皆走, 不知所往。. . . . . 子产立公孙泄及良止, 以抚之。乃止。子大叔问其故, 子产曰: "鬼有所归, 乃不为厉, 吾为之归也。" . . . . . 而强死, 能为鬼, 不亦宜乎? (《左传・昭公七年》)

> *The people of Zheng found the appearance of Bo You's ghost and frightened one another. Suddenly they would say: 'Bo You is coming!' On hearing this, the people scattered in panic without direction. […] Next month Zichan appointed Gongsun Xie and Liang Zhi (son of Bo You) officials in positions, then the ghost of Bo You's troubles were stopped. You Ji asked Zichan the reason why he did as that. Zichan said: 'The ghost who has a place to return to will not become an evil one and make troubles. Now I have found a place for him to shelter. […] Bo You was forced to be killed. In this case, should it not make trouble?'*
>
> (*Zhaogong · Zuo's Commentary*)

In short, '*ligui*' was viewed as a highly dangerous kind of ghost, which would tend to haunt the living. If the ghost of a recently deceased person was in the sense of being potentially angry and resentful against the living, and he/she would have some power to harm his/her enemies.

Another example is that in sacrificing to ancestors, the Chinese 'feed' the dead in order to honor them in the same way that they honor the living, but not for fear of them. For the Chinese, there is nothing to be feared about the dead as long as they are not '*ligui*': there is no ill-temper to be reconciled with or anger to be appeased, because the dead person remains a member of the family and the community. During the funeral, the dead are neither prayed to, nor worshipped seriously; nor are their favors sought, either through food offerings or any other means.

From the attitudes towards death in both ancient societies, we can tell that the Chinese and the Greeks follow different modes of meaning-making when they face the same challenge of death.[27] We will meet the problem of 'the differences among the same' when we look into the two civilizations through the lens of their dealing with the dead. This can be summarized as follows: in ancient Greece, the Greeks' fear of not being buried may have been greater than the fear of death itself. In ancient China, the Chinese tried to '*sere the dead as they served them alive*".

## Notes

1. The translation is from A. T. Murray, revised by William F. Wyatt, Harvard University Press, 1999.
2. Bruce Lincoln said: 'That nothingness was the expectation is clear from the P-I-E formulaic description of the otherworld as a realm "without labor; without hunger, without thirst; without illness, old age, or death." Though at first it all sounds quite enchanting, on further reflection one is forced to recognize that there is really nothing there.' See Bruce Lincoln, *Death, War, and Sacrifice: Studies in Ideology and Practice*, The University of Chicago Press, 1991, p. 15.
3. On the death of heroes in Archaic period, see Gregory Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry*, Revised Edition, The Johns Hopkins University, 1997.
4. The translation is from W. R. M. Lamb, Harvard University Press, 1930.
5. Hans Küng argued: 'Confucianism is a humanistic and moral religion in contrast to utilitarian folk religion. Indeed, with its accent on human relationships, Confucianism often counts as the moral religion par excellence, definitely capable of being put on a level with the ethos of Christianity.' See Hans Küng and Julia Ching, *Christianity and Chinese Religions*, Doubleday, 1989, p. 58.
6. Ying-shih Yu said, 'The whole development of immortality both as an idea and as a cult from its beginning in the late Warring-States period down through Han times may be best characterized by one word: worldliness. This worldly spirit, as has been observed, not only has its historical origin in the universal desire for longevity traceable to ancient China, ideologically it is also entrenched in the general, humanistic emphasis on life characteristic of the Chinese mind.' The author also discussed the differences in the idea of 'immortality' in Chinese and in English. See Ying-shih Yu, 'Life and Immortality in the Mind of Han China', in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 25 (1964–1965), pp. 80–122.

7. Fung Yu-Lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 1. *The Period of the Philosophers (From the Beginnings to Circa 100 B.C.)*, trans. by Derk Bodde, Princeton University Press, 1983, pp. 345, 346.
8. Fung Yu-Lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 1, p. 26.
9. Ying-shih Yu, 'Life and Immortality in the Mind of Han China', in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 25 (1964–1965), pp. 80–122.
10. Generally, see E. Rohde, *Psychē: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Greeks*, translated from the eighth edition by W. B. Hillis, Ares Publishers, Inc., 1987; Jan Bremmer, *The Early Greek Conception of the Soul*, Princeton University Press, 1983; Robert Garland, *The Greek Way of Death*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985.
11. Bruce Lincoln argues that this is a ubiquitous view of primitive Indo-European nations. He said: 'That nothingness was the expectation is clear from the P-I-E formulaic description of the otherworld as a realm 'without labor; without hunger, without thirst; without illness, old age, or death.' Though at first it all sounds quite enchanting, on further reflection one is forced to recognize that there is really nothing there.' see Bruce Lincoln, *Death, War, and Sacrifice: Studies in Ideology and Practice*, The University of Chicago Press, 1991, p. 15.
12. Marria Serena Mirto, *Death in the Greek World: From Homer to the Classical Age*, trans. by A. M. Osborne, University of Oklahoma Press, 2012, p. 10.
13. The translation is from A. T. Murray, revised by George E. Dimock, Harvard University Press, 1998.
14. The translation is from Glenn W. Most, Harvard University Press, 2006.
15. Aristotle, *On the Soul*, 402a1–20.
16. Cf. W. K. C. Guthrie, *Orpheus and Greek Religion: A Study of Orphic Movement*, Princeton University Press, 1993.
17. Plato, *Cratylus*, 400C, 408B; *Laws*, 829; *Republic*, 364E; *Symposium*, 218B; etc.
18. Aristotle, *On the Soul*, 410b; *Metaphysics*, 983b27–30, 1071b27, 1091b5–8; *Generation of Animals*, 734a19–20; etc.
19. Lucian, *On Funerals*, 2–10.
20. Ian Morris, 'Attitudes toward Death in Archaic Greece', in *Classical Antiquity*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Oct., 1989), pp. 296–320.
21. 'In the ancient Chinese mind, the Yellow Springs running deep beneath the ground both nourished life and inspired fear. […] the Yellow Springs refers to the final destination of all mortal human beings after death. As such the Yellow Springs evoked a different sort of ambivalence, because this was the place where one would be reunited with loved ones as well as enemies. Ancient texts offer examples for both views.' See Wu Hung, *The Art of the Yellow Spring: Understanding Chinese Tombs*, Reaktion Books Ltd., 2010,

p. 8. Also see Ying-shih Yu, '"O Soul, Come Back!" A Study in the Changing Conceptions of the Soul and Afterlife in Pre-Buddhist China', in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (1987), pp. 363–395.

22. It is difficult to find equivalent terminology to translate these words into English, so we just generally understand them as 'ghost' or 'soul'.
23. The orthodox Confucian view is best presented in Mu Chien, *Soul and Heart* (in Chinese), Taipei: Lien-ching chu-pan-she, 1976. Also see Ying-shih Yu, 'Life and Immortality in the Mind of Han China', in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 25 (1964–1965), pp. 80–122; Ying-shih Yu, '"O Soul, Come Back!" A Study in the Changing Conceptions of the Soul and Afterlife in Pre-Buddhist China', in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (Dec., 1987), pp. 363–395.
24. Xiaoqun Wu, 'An Angle of Comparative Civilizations: Ancient Funeral in China and Greece' (in Chinese), in *Guangming Daily*, July 8, 2013.
25. The translation is from Hugh Lloyd-Jones with commentary, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970.
26. According to Eran Lupu, the Greek Sacred Law deals with four subjects: sacred space (mainly sanctuaries), sacred officials (mainly priests), performance of cult (a particularly diverse class), and religious events (festivals and ceremonies). The funerary law is included in the cultic performance. See Eran Lupu, *Greek Sacred Law: A Collection of New Documents (NGSL)*, Brill, 2005, p. 9.
27. As for the different mode of thinking between the Western and the Chinese, see Chun-Chieh Huang, 'The Defining Character of Chinese Historical Thinking', in *History and Theory*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (May 2007), pp. 180–188.

## References

Bremmer, Jan. 1983. *The Early Greek Conception of the Soul*. Princeton University Press.

Chien, Mu钱穆. 2004. *Soul and Heart 灵魂与心*. Guang Xi Normal University Press 广西 师范大学出版社.

Fung, Yu-Lan. 1983. *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 1. *The Period of the Philosophers (From the Beginnings to Circa 100 B.C.)*. Trans. by Derk Bodde. Princeton University Press.

Garland, Robert. 1985. *The Greek Way of Death*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Guthrie, W. K. C. 1993. *Orpheus and Greek Religion: A Study of Orphic Movement*. Princeton University Press.

Huang, Chun-Chieh. 2007. The Defining Character of Chinese Historical Thinking. *History and Theory* 46 (2): 180–188.

Küng, Hans and Ching, Julia. 1989. *Christianity and Chinese Religions*. Doubleday.
Lincoln, Bruce. 1991. *Death, War, and Sacrifice: Studies in Ideology and Practice*. The University of Chicago Press.
Lupu, Eran. 2005. *Greek sacred Law: A Collection of New Documents (NGSL)*. Brill.
Mirto, Marria Serena. 2012. *Death in the Greek World: From Homer to the Classical Age*. Trans. by A. M. Osborne. University of Oklahoma Press.
Morris, Ian. 1989. Attitudes toward Death in Archaic Greece. *Classical Antiquity* 8 (2): 296–320.
Nagy, Gregory. 1997. *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry*. Rev. ed. The Johns Hopkins University.
Rohde, E. 1987. *Psychē: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality among the Greeks*. Trans. from the eighth edition by W. B. Hillis. Ares Publishers, Inc.
Wu, Hung. 2010. *The Art of the Yellow Spring: Understanding Chinese Tombs*. London: Reaktion Books.
Wu, Xiaoqun 吴晓群. 2013. An Angle of Comparative Civilizations: Ancient Funeral in China and Greece一个文明比较的视角——中国与希腊的古代丧葬仪式, *Guangming Daily 光明日报*, 8 July.
Yu, Ying-shih. 1964–1965. Life and Immortality in the Mind of Han China. *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 25: 80–122.
Yu, Ying-shih. 1987. 'O Soul, Come Back!' A Study in the Changing Conceptions of the Soul and Afterlife in Pre-Buddhist China. *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47 (2): 363–395.

CHAPTER 3

# Lamentation

**Abstract** This chapter focuses on lamentation in ancient Greece and Pre-Qin China. The singing of ritualized lament was the principal ceremonial activity performed during the pre-burial ritual of the Greeks, and the performance of dirges was the most important aspect of this ceremony. No record of any mournful song has been found in Confucian writings from the Pre-Qin period. In ancient China, the function of music was positive and affirmative, and usually it could not be used in mourning, burial, and funeral. In short, in Pre-Qin China, music and singing were regarded as forms of entertainment and thus not suitable activities for a funeral. The ancient Greeks paid much more attention to the singing of ritualized lament than the ancient Chinese.

**Keywords** Lamentation • Singing of ritualized lament • *Wailing without music and singing*

## 1 Greek Lamentation: Singing of Ritualized Lament

In her book *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, Margaret Alexiou identifies three basic categories of Greek ritual laments: those for gods and heroes, those for the fall of cities, and those for the dead.[1] In this book, I address only lamentation for the dead before burial.



X. Wu, *Mourning Rituals in Archaic & Classical Greece and Pre-Qin China*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0632-7_3

From the archaeological and literary evidence, we know that Greek lamentation involved movement as well as wailing and singing. Two Greek words express singing of the ritual lamentation, *thrénos* and *góos*, both of which mean a shrilling cry.[2] During the Homeric and Archaic periods, Greeks generally used *thrénos* for the dirge composed and performed by professional mourners and *góos* for the spontaneous weeping of kinwomen.[3]

The singing of ritualized lament[4] was the principal ceremonial activity performed during the pre-burial ritual of the Greeks, and the performance of dirges was the most important part in this ceremony. The theme of singing dirges, as Vermeule says, was 'the memory of the lives the two shared and the bitterness of loss'.[5] There were even professional mourners called *thrênôn exarchoi* (leaders of the dirge) for the formal lament. Garland remarks: 'They are referred to obliquely by Aeschylus and probably existed throughout antiquity, despite possible efforts by Solon to abolish them by banning the singing of prepared dirges.'[6] Alexiou also notes that 'in the Classical period the main responsibility for lamentation rested with the next of kin, particularly the women. But throughout antiquity there persisted the custom of hiring or compelling strangers to lament at funerals.'[7] We find dirges in Homer (*Iliad* 6. 499 f., 18.54–67, 22.430, 22.476–483, 23.10, 24.665, 747, and 761.), and in the *polis* period, we find dirges in tragedies:

ΧΟΡΟΣ. αἰαῖ αἰαῖ.
πικρὸν ὄδυρμα γαῖά, σ', ὦ
τέκνον, δέξεται.
στέναξε, μᾶτερ…
ΕΚΑΒΗ. αἰαῖ.
ΧΟΡΟΣ. νεκρῶν ἴακχον.
ΕΚΑΒΗ. οἴμοι.
ΧΟΡΟΣ. οἴμοι δῆτα σῶν ἀλάστων κακῶν.

*Chorus: Alas, alas!*
*The earth will receive you, dear child*
*whom we lament so bitterly.*
*Groan, mother …*
*Hecuba: Alas!*
*Chorus: Groan a dirge for the dead.*
*Hecuba: O my sorrow!*
*Chorus: Yes, sorrow for your woes that cannot be forgotten.*
(Eur. *The Trojan Women*, 1226–1232)[8]

ΧΟΡΟΣ. ἰὼ ἰώ·
μελέα μήτηρ, ἣ τὰς μεγάλας
ἐλπίδας ἐν σοὶ κατέκναψε βίου.
μέγα δ᾽ὀλβισθεὶς ὡς ἐκ πατέρων
ἀγαθῶν ἐγένου
δεινῷ θανάτῳ διόλωλας.
ἔα ἔα.
τίνας Ἰλιάσιν τούσδ᾽ ἐν κορυφαῖς
λεύσσω φλογέας δαλοῖσι χέρας
διερέσσοντας; μέλλει Τροίᾳ
καινόν τι κακὸν προσέσεσθαι.

*Chorus: Oh, oh!*
*Wretched is the mother whose great hopes for her life*
*have been mangled in this boy!*
*You were greatly blessed,*
*you were born from royal parents,*
*yet how terrible the death that has destroyed you!*
*Ah, ah!*
*Who are these men I see on the heights of Troy*
*Brandishing fiery torches in their hands?*
*A new disaster*
*is about to be added to Troy's tally of woe.*
(Eur. *The Trojan Women*, 1251–1259)[9]

τὼς καὶ ἐγὼ φιλόδυρτος Ἰαονίοισι νόμοισι
δάπτω τὰν ἁπαλὰν
Νειλοζερῆ παρειὰν
ἀπειρόδακρύν τε καρδίαν.
γοεδνὰ δ᾽ἀνθεμίζομαι,
δειμαίνουσα φίλους
τᾶσδε φυγᾶς ἀερίας ἀπὸ γᾶς
εἴ τις ἐστὶ κηδεμών.

*Danaids: 'Even so I, indulging my wailing, sing my Ionian melodies and tear my soft cheek colored by the Nile-summer, and my heart which is unused to tears. I cull the flowers of lament in anxiety whether there is a kinsman here to vouch for this, my friendless flight from the land of Aeria.'*
(Aes. *Suppliants*, 69–76)[10]

In ancient Greece, laments for the dead were performed by women during different ritual activities such as funerals, memorial services, and visits to the cemetery (Figs. 3.1 and 3.2).

**Fig. 3.1** Terracotta figure of a mourning woman. 650 BCE. Self-inflicted lacerations as a sign of mourning are suggested by incisions on the breast and by red paint applied to these and to the cheeks. The British Museum

**Fig. 3.2** Part of a marble lekythos. Ca. 420 BCE. Part of a marble lekythos with a scene showing two women clasping hands. The women are identified as Demostrate and Kallistrate. They are flanked by a mourning girl and a youth. The British Museum

Although lamenting for the dead was virtually the exclusive territory of women, this did not mean that a man could not lament death. Men were also entitled to sing about the dead, although they mainly sang for the death of heroes. As Nagy explains:

> [A man] could [lament], but such a lament would not be the lament he would sing on the immediate occasion of, say, mourning a death at a funeral. His lament would now be sung on the immediate occasion of a symposium, where he would be sharing his emotions not with fellow mourners but with his fellow symposiasts. Yes, he could still be singing the kind of lament he would sing at a funeral, or even the kind of lament that his women kinfolk would sing at that funeral. But his lament would be decontextualized. His lament would not be real lament but elegy.[11]

It is believed that a musical accompaniment usually attended the lament. Robert Garland argues: 'Although it is abundantly clear that *aulos*-playing accompanied the funerary procession to the grave, it is less certain that it was used for *prothesis*. A lyre is represented on two vase scenes depicting mythological *prothesis* but in neither case is it actually in use.'[12] However, poets of tragedies always mention some musical instruments:

> ΕΛΕΝΗ. ὦ μεγάων ἀχέων καταβαλλομένα μέγαν οἶκτον
> ποῖον ἁ μιλλαθῶ γόον ἢ τίνα μοῦσαν ἐπένθω
> [δάκρυσιν ἢ θρήνοις ἢ πένθεσιν];
> αἰαῖ.
> πτεροφόροι νεάνιδες,
> παρθένοι Χθονὸς κόραι
> Σειρῆνες, ἔιθ' ἐμοῖς γόοις
> μόλοιτ ' ἔχουσαι τὸν Λίβυν
> λωτὸν ἢ σύριγγας, αἰλίνοις κακοῖς
> τοῖς ἔμοῖσι σύνοχα δάκρυα,
> πάθεσι πάθεα, μέλεσι μέλεα·
> μουσεῖα θρηνήμασι ξυνῳδὰ
> πέμψετε Φερσέφασσα
> φόνια, χάριτας ἵν' ἐπὶ δάκρυσι
> παρ' ἐμέθεν ὑπὸ μέλαθρα νύχια παιᾶνας
> νέκυσιν ὀλομένοις λάβῃ.
>
> Helen: *'Ah, as I begin a long plaint for my long woes*
> *what strenuous keening shall I make, or what Muse shall I*
> *call to my aid*

*[with tears or laments or cries of sorrow]?*
*Ah me!*
*You winged maids,*
*virgin daughters of Earth,*
*you Sirens, O*
*bring Libyan shawm or shepherd's pipe*
*[or lyre] and consort with me*
*in my terrible griefs:*
*as songsters harmonious*
*with my lamentations*
*send forth tears in accord with my tears,*
*woes with my woes, and songs with my songs,*
*that Persephone*
*in her halls of night*
*may receive from me with my tears a paean,*
*deathly and joyless, for the dead!'*
(Eur. *Helen*, 164–178)

In brief, it appears that song and music are indispensable in Greek lamentation.

In recent years, laments have been interpreted by classicists as powerful speech-acts capable of inciting violent action or arousing dangerous sentiments among the people. Many scholars have pointed out that in the context of lament, women were able to voice subversive concerns, and speak in ways that they could not under any other circumstances. Casey Dué explained: 'Lament is the only medium through which women have a sanctioned public voice, the one weapon they have with which to defend themselves in desperate circumstances.'[13] To avoid over-interpretation and over-simplification, it is important to note that there were different laments for different situations, and to distinguish between at least four specific contexts:

1. As a special form of speech, funeral orations or the singing of laments could certainly reflect the ideas and emotions of the people. It is easy to understand why the public funeral for soldiers who died for their country was often treated as an opportunity to provide education in patriotism and to rekindle morale. At that time, people were overwhelmed with passion, full of grievance for their dead relatives, and filled with hatred towards the enemy. The feeling of grief could thus be used to kindle a passion for protecting the motherland and the

deceased's family. Pericles's funeral speech had such an effect (Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, 2.34–47). However, no female orators ever appeared on that kind of occasion, and female mourners were rare.[14]

2. In Greek tragedy, the female captives not only lament the dead but also 'lament themselves…. In this way tragedy reinvents the characteristic wish for death on the part of the mourner, and turns the mourner into the lamented dead.'[15] Here, I cautiously agree with the statement of Helene P. Foley: 'It is difficult to make sense of these aspects of Greek tragedy without assuming that the original audience brought to the plays not only contemporary experience of lamentation and death ritual but a cultural memory (one that Athenians themselves clearly believed to be genuine) of those aspects of the tradition that had been curtailed by law.'[16] Of course, we do not deny the rationality of using epics, tragedies, and vase paintings as sources, and do believe that those materials reflect the common feelings and behaviors of ancient Greeks. But at the same time, we should realize that those descriptions, to a great extent, represent the voice given by the tragic poet to Greek women. We cannot necessarily take those descriptions as representations of reality.[17]
3. In retaliation for the unnatural death of relatives, the lament of women was always full of hate and calling for vengeance. This kind of voice could be called a 'dangerous voice'. In referring to this abnormal condition, it is important to analyze specific events individually, rather than putting them together and over-generalizing.
4. In the case of natural death that occurred within the context of everyday life, it is far less convincing to interpret women's lament as 'dangerous voices'. From history, we know that in ancient Greece during the Archaic and Classical period, women had already withdrawn to the household, and men definitely occupied the primary economic and political positions in family and society. Women were not able to pose any threat to men, to others, and even to the whole of society. Therefore, it is unilateral and constitutes a poor description if the laments of women are broadly treated as a kind of 'dangerous voice'. Perhaps a more appropriate approach would be taking the singing of ritualized lament as a characteristic ritualized behavior in Greek mourning.

In short, as Josine H. Blok said: 'The opportunities for women in classical Athens to speak, be heard, and find their words recorded were determined by a set of rules, or rather by a hierarchical system of values. Within this system, the separation of the sexes ranked highest.'[18]

## 2 Chinese Lamentation: 'Wailing without Music and Singing' and 'Wailing and Leaping are Subject to Fixed Regulations'

No record of any mournful song has been found in Confucian writings from the Pre-Qin period. In ancient China, the function of music was positive and affirmative, and usually it could not be used in mourning, burial, and funeral. We can see the basic idea of music and the relationship between music and rituals from the Confucian perspective in *The Book of Rites*:

> 凡音者, 生人心者也。情动于中, 故形于声。声成文, 谓之音。是故治世之音安以乐, 其政和。乱世之音怨以怒, 其政乖。亡国之音哀以思, 其民困。
>
> (《礼记 • 乐记》)

> *All modulations of the voice spring from the minds of men. When the feelings are moved within, they are manifested in the sounds of the voice; and when those sounds are combined so as to form compositions, we have what are called airs. Hence, the airs of an age of good order indicate composure and enjoyment. The airs of an age of disorder indicate dissatisfaction and anger, and its government is perversely bad. The airs of a state going to ruin are expressive of sorrow and (troubled) thought.*
>
> (*Record of Music · The Book of Rites*)

> 是故先王之制礼乐, 人为之节; 衰麻哭泣, 所以节丧纪也; 钟鼓干戚, 所以和安乐也; . . . . . 礼节民心, 乐和民声。(《礼记 • 乐记》)

> *Therefore the ancient kings, when they instituted their ceremonies and music, regulated them by consideration of the requirements of humanity. By the sackcloth worn for parents, the wailings, and the weepings, they defined the terms of the mourning rites. By the bells, drums, shields, and axes, they introduced harmony into their seasons of rest and enjoyment … Ceremonies afforded the defined expression for the (affections of the) people's minds; music secured the harmonious utterance of their voices.*
>
> (*Record of Music · The Book of Rites*)

乐者，天地之和也；礼者，天地之序也。(《礼记・乐记》)

*Music is (an echo of) the harmony between heaven and earth; ceremonies reflect the orderly distinctions (in the operations of) heaven and earth.*
(*Record of Music · The Book of Rites*)

As noted by Fung Yu-Lan, 'The function of music, according to these passage, lies in regulating human emotions, and inducing them to be expressed in accordance with right principles, or in other words, within the proper mean. *Li* regulate human desires, while music regulates human emotions. The purpose of both is to act as a regulator so that man will keep to the mean.'[19] Therefore, 'wailing without music and singing' was the basic ritualized provision for the whole funeral.

The Confucian sages mention different levels of wailing, used at different stages and for different people. Three kinds of wailing can be identified for ancient Chinese: wailing before burial (葬前哭), wailing during burial (葬时哭), and wailing after burial (葬后哭 or 反哭). Here, only wailing before burial will be dealt with.

The most important principle relating to wailing is the need to moderate the wailing, and to balance it between too much and too little. Because of the requirement of the *Mean* (中庸) in ancient Chinese philosophical thought, nothing was allowed to be too extreme.[20] This principle is the same for all three kinds of wailing:

丧礼，哀戚之至也。节哀，顺变也；君子念始之者也。(《礼记・檀弓》下)

*The rites of mourning are the extreme expression of grief and sorrow. The graduated reduction of that expression in accordance with the natural changes (of time and feeling) was made by the superior men, mindful of those to whom we owe our being.*
(*Tan Gong II · The Book of Rites*)

This verse first affirms that mourning is a natural expression of grief. Second, it shows that people should overcome and restrain the greatest sorrows of being in life in various ways. '*jieai*' (节哀) means to moderate grief, or to reduce emotion from its most intense level to a lesser one. The third point is '*shunbian*' (顺变), which means that grief should gradually become gentler as time goes by, or that people should let sorrow slowly change, to make it somewhat relieved. The Confucian believed that the living should

not mourn too much for the dead: when a person reflects on the purpose of generation, they should understand that their parents give life to them, which is to be handed down from generation to generation. A living person who grieves so much that they harm their health would be seen as disappointing their deceased ancestors, and defying their will. Therefore, it is necessary to moderate grief through ritual and manners, and to adapt to the natural law to deal with this great turning point in life. These words express Confucian filial piety, which relates to how they treat their own body, how they treat their parents and how they understand their parents' intentions, and also clearly express the idea of the *Mean* in Confucianism.

> 弁人有其母死而孺子泣者, 孔子曰：“哀则哀矣, 而难为继也。夫礼, 为可传也, 为可继也。故哭踊有节。”(《礼记・檀弓》上)

> *There was a man of Bian who wept like a child on the death of his mother. Confucius said, 'This is grief indeed, but it would be difficult to continue it. Now the rules of ceremony require to be handed down, and to be perpetuated. Hence the wailing and leaping are subject to fixed regulations.'*
> (*Tan Gong I · The Book of Rites*)

> 父母之丧, 哭无时, 使必知其反也。(《礼记・檀弓》上)

> *In mourning a parent, there is no restriction to (set) times for wailing. If one be sent on a mission, he must announce his return (to the spirits of his departed).*
> (*Tan Gong I · The Book of Rites*)

We all know a child's cry is uncontrollable, so Confucius first affirmed Bian's true feelings toward his mother, and then pointed out that such sadness was not desirable because it was hard to sustain and could not be imitated by others—and it is also a non-*Li*, since if a kind of *Li* is not universal, and does not conform to the *Mean*, it cannot be promoted. It can be seen that the Confucius *Li* derives from an attempt to understand and standardize humankind in general, in order to balance the various principles behind human behaviors. As Fung Yu-Lan said, 'While Confucius laid emphasis upon the free expression of genuine nature and feelings, at the same time, he said that "these must be restrained by *li*.'[21]

> 伯鱼之母死, 期而犹哭。夫子闻之曰：“谁与哭者？”门人曰：“鲤也”夫子曰：“嘻! 甚也。”伯鱼闻之, 遂除之。(《礼记・檀弓》上)

> *When the mother of Bo-Yu died, he kept on wailing for her after the year. Confucius heard him, and said, 'Who is it that is thus wailing?' The disciples said, 'It is Li.' The Master said, 'Ah! is excessive.' When Bo-Yu heard it, he forthwith gave up wailing.*
>
> (*Tan Gong I · The Book of Rites*)

This verse is similar to the previous one discussed above. It shows that Confucius is still demanding to suppress private affairs. This reflects the Confucian principle of mean, which also has implications of being restrained, or not too much. It is a summary of a Confucian humanity principle.

It is thus clear that 'wailing without music and singing' and 'wailing and leaping are subject to fixed regulations' illustrate the difference between the way in which the ancient Chinese expressed their sorrow, and that of the ancient Greeks. In China, music and singing were regarded as forms of entertainment and thus not suitable activities for a funeral. The ancient Greeks paid much more attention to the singing of ritualized lament than the ancient Chinese.

## Notes

1. Cf. Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*.
2. Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, p. 102.
3. For more discussion, see Gregory Nagy, 'Ancient Greek Elegy', in Karen Weisman ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Elegy*, Oxford University Press, 2010; Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, p. 103; Casey Dué, *The Captive Women's Lament in Greek Tragedy*.
4. Many scholars study the metrical and stylistic elements of Greek dirges, which is not the focus of this book.
5. Emily Vermeule, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979, p. 15.
6. Robert Garland, *The Greek Way of Death*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985, p. 30. Garland also talks about the change in the different periods: 'In Homer the singing of the ritual lament is antiphonal, the hired singers leading off with their formal dirge, and the kinswomen following with their *goös*. In accompaniment to both parts of the lament, a chorus of women utter a refrain of cries.' (p. 30).
7. Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, p. 10.
8. The translation follows James Morwood, with explanatory notes, and with introduction by Edith Hall (2000), Oxford University Press.

9. The translation is from James Morwood with explanatory notes, and with introduction by Edith Hall (2000), Oxford University Press.
10. The translation is from H. Friis Johansen with introduction, critical apparatus, and the scholia with introduction and critical apparatus by Ole Smith, I Kommission Hos, 1970.
11. Gregory Nagy, 'Ancient Greek Elegy', in Karen Weisman ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Elegy*, Oxford University Press, 2010.
12. Robert Garland, *The Greek Way of Death*, p. 142. For more discussion, see Reiner, *Die rituell Toeenklage der Griechen*, Berlin, 1938, 67ff.
13. Casey Dué, *The Captive Women's Lament in Greek Tragedy*, p. 20; also see Gail Holst-Warhaft: *Dangerous Voices: Women's Laments and Greek Literature*, London and New York: Routledge, 1992; Helene P. Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001; Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*.
14. Michael Gagarin said, 'In seeking information about the lives of women in classical Athens, scholars have long looked to the speeches of the Attic orators which commonly portray women as restricted, physically to their homes and socially to the company of other women, children, and a few close male relatives.' See Michael Gagarin, 'Women's Voices in Attic Oratory', in André Lardinois and Laura McClure eds., *Making Silence Speak: Women's Voices in Greek Literature and Society*, Princeton University Press, pp. 161–176.
15. Casey Dué, *The Captive Women's Lament in Greek Tragedy*, p. 20.
16. Helene P. Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001, p. 153.
17. 'Tragic "women" are especially good for that: for while real-life Athenian women would not dream of talking about (let alone acting on) the kinds of conflicts and fantasies that these plays explore—and conversely there are certain things that men in real life are not expected to say, certain sounds they cannot be allowed to make, if they are to remain sufficiently different and distinct from women—in the Theater the power of disguise, and the license of impersonation, allows extraordinary liberties to be taken.' See Mark Griffith, 'Antigone and Her Sister(s): Embodying Women in Greek Tragedy', in André Lardinois and Laura McClure eds., *Making Silence Speak: Women's Voices in Greek Literature and Society*, Princeton University Press, pp. 117–136.
18. Josine H. Blok, 'Virtual Voices: Toward a Choreography of Women's Speech in Classical Athens', in André Lardinois and Laura McClure eds., *Making Silence Speak: Women's Voices in Greek Literature and Society*, Princeton University Press, pp. 95–116.
19. Fung Yu-Lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 1, p. 342.

20. For a discussion of the Golden Mean in ancient Greece and the *Mean* in ancient China, see Andrew Plaks, 'Means and Means: A Comparative Reading of Aristotle's *Ethics* and the *Zhongyong*', in Steven Shankman and Stephen W. Durrant eds., *Early China/Ancient Greece: Thinking through Comparisons*, State University of New York Press, 2002, pp. 187–206.
21. Fung Yu-Lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 1, p. 339.

## References

Alexiou, Margaret. 2002. *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*. Revised. Dimitrios Yatromanolakis and Panagiotis Roilos, 2nd ed. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Dué, Casey. 2006. *The Captive Women's Lament in Greek Tragedy*. University of Texas Press.

Foley, Helene P. 2001. *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Fung, Yu-Lan. 1983. *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 1. *The Period of the Philosophers (From the Beginnings to Circa 100 B.C.)*. Trans. by Derk Bodde, Princeton University Press.

Garland, Robert. 1985. *The Greek Way of Death*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Holst-Warhaft, Gail. 1992. *Dangerous Voices: Women's Laments and Greek Literature*. London and New York: Routledge.

Lardinois, André and McClure, Laura, eds. 2001. *Making Silence Speak: Women's Voices in Greek Literature and Society*. Princeton University Press.

Nagy, Gregory. 2010. Ancient Greek Elegy. Ed. Karen Weisman. *The Oxford Handbook of Elegy*. Oxford University Press.

Shankman, Steven, and Durrant, Stephen W., eds. 2002. *Early China/Ancient Greece: Thinking through Comparisons*. State University of New York Press.

Vermeule, Emily. 1979. *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

CHAPTER 4

# Mourners' Gestures and Behaviors

**Abstract** In this chapter, the author compares mourners' gestures and behaviors in ancient Greece and ancient China. The gestures and behaviors of mourners form important aspects of ritualized mourning. We can find a series of ritualized actions for mourners in ancient Greece. There were no specific requirements for mourners' gestures in ancient China. 'Beating the breast and stamping the feet' (捶胸顿足) were expressions of the greatest pain for the Chinese.

**Keywords** Mourners' gestures • *Prosthesis* • *Beating the breast and stamping the feet*

## 1 Greek Mourners' Gestures and Behaviors

The gestures and behaviors of mourners form important aspects of ritualized mourning. We can find a series of ritualized actions for mourners in Homer:

> τίλλων ἐκ κεφαλῆς οὐδ''Εκτορι θυμὸν ἔπειθε.
> μήτηρ δ'αὖθ'ἑτέρωθεν ὀδύρετο δάκρυ χέουσα,
> κόλπον ἀνιεμένη, ἑτέηφι δὲ μαζὸν ἀνέσχε·
> καί μιν δάκρυ χέουσ'ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσηύδα·
> "''Εκτορ, τέκνον ἐμόν, τάδε τ'αἴδεο καί μ'ἐλέησον αὐτήν, …"



X. Wu, *Mourning Rituals in Archaic & Classical Greece and Pre-Qin China*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0632-7_4

> *Thus spoke the old man, and with his hands he plucked and tore the grey hairs from his head; but he could not persuade the heart of Hector. And for her part, his mother in her turn wailed and shed tears, loosening the folds of her robe, while with the other hand she held out her breast, and shedding tears she spoke to him winged words: 'Hector, my child, respect this and pity me…'*
>
> (Hom., *Iliad*, 22.78–84)[1]

Beating of the head and breast, tearing the hair, cutting the face and clothes, crying and screaming with bitter tears, writhing in the filthy mud, and calling the name of the dead are all traditional displays of grief, and were seen as necessary duties that the living should perform for the dead.

From Greek tragedy, we can see that there were similar mourning actions during the *polis* period for ancient Greeks:

> ἀγὼν ὅδ' ἄλλος ἔρχεται
> γόων γόοις διάδοχος· ἀ-
> χοῦσι (δὲ) προσπόλων χέρες.
> ἴτ' ὦ ξυνῳδοὶ κακοῖς,
> ἴτ' ὦ ξυναλγηδόνες
> χορὸν τὸν Ἅιδας σέβει·
> διὰ παρῆδος ὄνυχι λευ-
> κὸν αἱματοῦτε χρῶτα φόνιον.
>
> *See, others in emulation*
> *take up the lament with lament of their own,*
> *and attendants' hands resound on their breasts.*
> *Take up, O fellow singers with misfortune,*
> *fellow mourners,*
> *the dance Hades honors!*
> *Across your cheek with your nails*
> *bloody your white skin!*
>
> (Euripides, *The Suppliant Women*, 70–77)[2]

Lamentation of the dead is also an important theme in Athenian vase paintings (Fig. 4.1).[3]

There is an unbroken series from the Late Geometric of the mid-eighth century to the Late Red-Figure of the Peloponnesian War years. Although there were many changes in ceramic and artistic portrayal, the essential conservatism of funerary iconography is remarkable.[4] We can find similar iconographic structures about *prothesis* from the Geometric period until later periods.

**Fig. 4.1** Attic Red-Figured Kylix. 510 BCE–500 BCE. Two winged figures (Hypnos and Thanatos) lifting a dead body (Sarpedon). In the center, the corpse of a colossal bearded man wearing a fillet is raised from the ground by two armed winged youths. Each of the youths wears a helmet (tilted back to the crown), cuirass, short chiton, sword at waist, and greaves. The one on the left has locked both his arms around the chest of the corpse, and wears a Corinthian helmet; the other, who clasps its knees, has a helmet decorated on the crown with anthemion, and with cheek pieces in the form of rams' heads: his scabbard has a snake ornament twined round it. On either side, a woman hastens forward with outstretched hands; the one on the left (who has a long chiton with row of dots on skirt, a mantle fastened on her right shoulder, and hair looped up with a fillet and stephane) holds a caduceus: the one on right (long chiton, mantle around neck, hair falling in single locks bound with fillet) lays her left hand on her breast with a gesture of despair. The British Museum

Paintings on Attic and Athenian funerary plaques and vases offer a detailed picture of the scene. The deceased is on a high bier, with his head on the spectator's right. The closest relatives stand by the bier: a man (presumably a son or the father of the deceased) waits at some distance to greet the guests who are arriving to pay their last respects and to take part in the funeral procession. Meanwhile, the kinswomen stand around the bier, with either the mother or the wife at the head, and the others behind.[5] Mourners stand, kneel, or sit on stools on either side of the bier as well as

below it, some gesturing with their arms, and others touching the bier or the corpse. Typically, there are two different gestures of mourning relating to the head: the females hold both hands to the head, tearing the hair, while the males hold one hand to the head, apparently beating it, but not actually tearing the hair.[6]

The raising of the arms, which can be traced back to Mycenean painted coffins and to the earliest vases of the Dipylon period, is perhaps the most frequent and the most ancient mourning gesture, although its precise origin and significance are unknown.[7] From the vases, we can see that women appear closer to the deceased, as they always touch the bier or bier cloth, while men process it with one hand on the hilt of their sword or dagger (Fig. 4.2).

On the vases, more women than men appear in the pictures. Moreover, children attend as well, and occasionally, slaves are represented too.

In another vase painting, two women mourners behind the bier have long straggly locks of hair streaming over their cheeks—the dishevelment of grief. The deceased, in contrast, has a neat and elegant coiffure.[8]

**Fig. 4.2** White-ground Lekythos. 470 BCE–440 BCE. A woman with her hair cut short as a token of mourning leans over the body of a dead youth. On the left, a girl and on the right, a youth raise a hand to the head in ritual mourning. The British Museum

From the representation of women mourners in vase paintings, we can tell that in ancient Greece, women mourned openly and emotionally.[9] Humphreys states that in Greece, 'convention required that men should maintain self-control in mourning, whereas women were encouraged to display wild grief: therefore, to restrict female participation in *prothesis* and funeral procession (*ekphora*) to kin and women over sixty markedly reduced both the aural and the visual impact of the procession.'[10] From Plutarch's record, we find some restrictions on funerals in Solon's laws, which include the provision of women's mourning, the restriction of the number of participants, the prohibition on lacerating the flesh, the extent of funeral, and so on. Plutarch said: 'He (Solon) also subjected the public appearances of the women, their mourning and their festivals, to a law that did away with disorder and licence… Laceration of the flesh by mourners, and the use of set lamentations, and the bewailing of any one at the funeral ceremonies of another, he forbade.'[11] In Plutarch's account, women's conduct at funerals is linked to their conduct at festivals, as these were the only two occasions when a respectable woman might venture out in public. As women mourners were frequently accompanied by the shrill music of the *aulós* (reed pipe), the scene must have resembled a dance, sometimes slow and solemn, sometimes wild and ecstatic. Perhaps, the violent tearing of the hair, face and clothes were not just acts of uncontrolled grief, but also part of the ritual indispensable to lamentation throughout antiquity that was forbidden after Solon.

## 2 Chinese Mourners' Gestures and Relevant Provisions for Daily Life

There were no exact requirements for mourners' gestures in ancient China. 'Beating the breast and stamping the feet' (捶胸顿足) were expressions of the greatest pain for the Chinese.

> 拜稽颡，哀戚之至隐也。稽颡，隐之甚也。(《礼记·檀弓》下)
>
> *Bowing to the (condoling) visitor, and laying the forehead on the ground are the most painful demonstrations of grief and sorrow. Laying the forehead on the ground is the greatest expression of the pain (from the bereavement).*
>
> (*Tan Gong II · The Book of Rites*)
>
> 辟踊，哀之至也，有算，为之节文也。(《礼记·檀弓》下)

> *Beating the breast (by the women), and leaping (by the men) are extreme expressions of grief. But the number of such acts is limited. There are graduated rules for them.*
>
> (*Tan Gong II · The Book of Rites*)

In the minds of Confucian sages, it was important for the feeling of grief to be expressed by both men and women. It was necessary for everyone to wail and cry when a family member died. While this kind of behavior may not be heroic, it is a type of human sentiment revealed naturally between family members. Nevertheless, the Confucian thinkers admonished people to do it in moderation. They reminded mourners that they should be 'laying the forehead on the ground' and 'beating the breast (by the women), and leaping (by the men)' when they wailed for the dead of their family. Moreover, it should be moderated. As Confucian sages wrote:

> 三日而食，教民无以死伤生。毁不灭性，此圣人之政也。(《孝经》)
>
> *After three days he may partake of food, for thus the people are taught that the living should not be injured on account of the dead, and that emaciation must not be carried to the extinction of life. Such is the rule of the sages.*
>
> (*The Canonical Book of Filial Piety*)
>
> 曾子谓子思曰: "汲! 吾执亲之丧也,水浆不入于口者七日。"子思曰: "先王之制礼也,过之者俯而就之,不至焉者,跂而及之。故君子之执亲之丧也,水浆不入于口者三日,杖而后能起。"(《礼记·檀弓》上)
>
> *Zeng-zi said to Zi-si, 'Ji, when I was engaged in the mourning for my parents, no water or other liquid entered my mouth for seven days.' Zi-si said, 'With regard to the rules of ceremony framed by the ancient kings, those who would go beyond them should stoop down to them, and those who do not reach them should stand on tip-toe to do so. Hence, when a superior man is engaged in mourning for his parents, no water or other liquid enters his mouth for three days, and with the aid of his staff he is still able to rise.'*
>
> (*Tan Gong I · The Book of Rites*)

In this conversation, Zeng-zi is attempting to show his pride in his parents by taking etiquette to extremes, but the *Li* is intended as a set of rules for people to follow generally, not individually. It would be meaningless for Zeng-zi to set a new standard for mourning if no one was

able to replicate it. Moreover, the expression of grief should also be reduced over time, from strong to moderate and then to weak, and finally stopped altogether. Any excessive expression of suffering was seen as potentially harmful to the mourner themselves, and Confucian sages criticized such extreme behavior, both on the grounds that it entailed disobedience to the deceased, and out of concern that to some degree it might destroy the order and stability of the family and society. The spirit of *Li* is for the sake of the smooth running of society, the continuation of life, and the good of the whole of humanity.

The relevant provisions for conducting daily life during the period of funeral were designed to ensure that the living expressed feelings of grief and a grieved mood. These provisions demanded that all entertainment activities, including music, must be stopped (so-called 'wailing without music and singing'). They also required that the eating of regular food should be replaced by a semi-liquid diet, such as rice and peanut milk, for the first few days of funeral. After that, the mourners (other than the elderly and physically weak) were permitted only to have vegetarian foods without alcohol and meat. Sex was forbidden, and normal clothing had to be changed for mourning apparel. Everyday concerns and routine work also had to be suspended:

> 子曰: "孝子之丧亲也,哭不偯,礼无容,言不文,服美不安,闻乐不乐,食旨不甘, 此哀戚之情也。" (《孝经》)
>
> *The Master said, 'When a filial son is mourning a parent, he wails, but not with a prolonged sobbing. In the movements of ceremony he pays no attention to his appearance. His words are without elegance of phrase. He cannot bear to wear fine clothes. When he hears music, he feels no delight. When he eats a delicacy, he is not conscious of its flavor. Such is the nature of grief and sorrow.'*
>
> (*The Canonical Book of Filial Piety*)
>
> 丧不虑居, 毁不危身。丧不虑居, 为无庙也; 毁不危身, 为无后也。
> (《礼记 • 檀弓》下)
>
> *While mourning (for a father), one should not be concerned about (the discomfort of) his own resting-place, nor, in emaciating himself, should he do so to the endangering of his life. He should not be concerned about his own resting-place; he has to be concerned that (his father's spirit-tablet) is not (yet) in the temple. He should not endanger his life, lest (his father) should thereby have no posterity.*
>
> (*Tan Gong II · The Book of Rites*)

The expression of grief serves to make daily life more challenging and less comfortable than usual, and disrupts routine: this is why there are many relevant provisions about daily life for the family of the dead person. The provisions urge the living to demonstrate their grief, and leave them little time and energy to continue their normal life.

Thus, we find detailed provisions for mourners in both of these two ancient societies. As a kind of collective event, the ritual of mourning must have rules of behavior. In the Greek case, from the sixth century onwards, many Greek *polis* had passed laws that were intended to regulate the funerary ritual.[12] All of these laws were mainly aimed at controlling the public display of wealth on the occasion of funerals by defining, in a restrictive way, what was acceptable and what was not. In the Chinese case, it was especially important for participants in a performance of mourning to aim at 'moderation', the so-called 'golden mean' between excessive emphasis on formality and inordinate expression of emotions. This attitude toward mourning shows that Confucian sages had a deep understanding of human nature.

## Notes

1. The translation is from A. T. Murray, revised by William F. Wyatt, Harvard University Press, 1999.
2. The translation is from David Kovacs, Harvard University Press, 1998.
3. Boardman said, 'The scene of *prothesis* which appears on all of them enjoyed a long history in Greek art from geometric times to the end of the fifth century, while the funerary plaques cover less than half that span, from about 600 to 480 B.C. The representations are nearly all on Attic pottery—geometric, black- and red-figure funerary vases, the plaques, and other vases, some of which are particularly associated with funeral ritual and served as offerings to the dead.' See John Boardman, 'Painted Funerary Plaques and Some Remarks on *Prothesis*', in *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, Vol. 50 (1955), pp. 51–66.
4. D.C. Kurtz presents an excellent overview of funerary iconography, cf. 'Vases for the Dead: An Attic Selection, 750–400 B.C.', in H.A.G. Brijder ed., *Ancient Greek and Related Pottery*, Amsterdam, 1985, pp. 314–328.
5. For the difference between men and women's gestures, see T. J. McNiven, 'Behaving Like an Other: Telltale Gestures in Athenian Vase-Painting', in B. Cohen ed., *Not the Classical Ideal: Athens and the Construction of the Other in Greek Art*, Leiden, 2000, pp. 71–97.

6. H. A. Shapiro, 'The Iconography of Mourning in Athenian Art', in *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 95, No. 4 (Oct., 1991), pp. 629–656, fig. 9.
7. Ahlberg considers that the two-handed gesture is 'the traditional formula of lamentation in Geometric art'. See Gudrun Ahlberg-Cornell, *Prothesis and Ekphora in Greek Geometric Art*, Göteborg: P. Åström, 1971, p. 77.
8. H. A. Shapiro, 'The Iconography of Mourning in Athenian Art', in *American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 95, No. 4 (Oct., 1991), pp. 629–656, fig. 9.
9. Plato regards crying as a kind of expression of the 'effeminate' (see Plato, *Republic* 605e.). From this, we can infer that, in the eyes of the great Athenian philosopher, emotional mourning is profitless for men. In contrast, for Aristotle, some strong emotion can evoke tears of pity. In fact, crying is one of the common topics in poetry, tragedy, philosophical and historical texts in ancient Greece. For related recent discussion, please see Thorsten Fögen, ed., *Tears in the Graeco-Roman World*, Walter de Gruyter, 2009.
10. S. C. Humphreys, 'Family Tombs and Tomb Cult in Ancient Athens: Tradition or Traditionalism?', in *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 100 (1980), pp. 96–126.
11. Plutarch, *Solon*, 21.4. While Plutarch's record remains controversial for some classicists, it is generally considered to be credible.
12. It does not only happen in Athens, but also in other *polis*, such as Sparta, Keos, Delphi, Gambreion, Katane, Thasos, and Syracuse, and so on, see Plutarch, *Lycurgus*, 27.3; *LSCG* 97A; *LSCG* 77C; *LSAM* 16; *LSAG* 315; *LSCG* suppl. 64; *SGDI* 2561.

## References

Ahlberg-Cornell, Gudrun. 1971. *Prothesis and Ekphora in Greek Geometric Art*. Göteborg: P. Åström.

Boardman, J. 1955. Painted Funerary Plaques and Some Remarks on Prothesis. *ABSA*, 50: 51–66.

Cohen, B. ed. 2000. *Not the Classical Ideal: Athens and the Construction of the Other in Greek Art*. Leiden.

Fögen, Thorsten, ed. 2009. *Tears in the Graeco-Roman World*. Walter de Gruyter.

Humphreys, S. C. 1980. Family Tombs and Tomb Cult in Ancient Athens: Tradition or Traditionalism? *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 100 (Centenary Issue): 96–126.

Kurtz, D. C. 1985. Vases for the Dead: An Attic Selection, 750–400 B.C. Ed. H.A.G. Brijder. *Ancient Greek and Related Pottery*. Amsterdam, 314–328.

Shapiro, H. A. 1991. The Iconography of Mourning in Athenian Art. *American Journal of Archaeology* 95 (4): 629–656.

CHAPTER 5

# Mourning Apparel

**Abstract** This chapter focuses on mourning apparel. In ancient Greece, there was a difference between everyday dress and mourning apparel, but there were no detailed requirements specified, other than the color of mourning apparel and the length of time for which it should be worn. In contrast to the Greeks, who did not pay much attention to the mourning apparel of mourners, Chinese mourning apparel constituted the most delicate and significant part of the funerary rites, especially in the rite of mourning. During the Pre-Qin period, from the rites of mourning to the funeral itself, the mourners were differentiated by their mourning apparel. Different kinships corresponded to different categories of mourning apparel.

**Keywords** Mourning apparel • 'Five-Suits' • Kinships • The Confucians

## 1 Greek Mourning Apparel Rites without Details

There was an expectation in ancient Greece that people should wear proper mourning clothing during the lamenting period. Although there appears to have been no specific provision for the apparel of mourners in the Greek Archaic and Classical periods, we still can find some relevant evidence in an inscription from Gambreion (ca. third century BCE, a Greek colony in Asia Minor, eight miles away from Pergamon), which refers to some provisions about mourning apparel:



X. Wu, *Mourning Rituals in Archaic & Classical Greece and Pre-Qin China*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0632-7_5

Νόμον εἶναι Γαμβρειώταις τάς πενθούσας φαιὰν ἐσθῆτα
μὴ κατερρυπωμένην χρῆσθαι δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἄνδρας καὶ τοὺς
παῖδας τοὺς πενθοῦντας ἐσθῆτι φαιᾷ ἐὰμ μὴ βούλωνται
λευκῇ. Ἐπιτελεῖν τὰ νόμιμα τοῖς ἀποιχομένοις ἔσχατον
ἐν τρισὶ μησὶν, τῷ δὲ
τετάρτω λύειν τὰ πένθη τοὺς ἄνδρας, τὰς δὲ γυναῖκας
τῷ πέμπτωι καὶ ἐξανίατασθαι ἐκ τῆς κηδείας καὶ
ἐμπορεύεσθαι τάς γυναῖκας ἤδη τὰς ἐξόδους
τὰς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ γεγραμμένας ἐπάναγκον.
τὸν δέ γυναικονόμον τὸν ὑπτὸ τοῦ δήμου αἱρουμενον
τοῖς ἀγισμος τοῖς πρὸ τῶν Θεσμοφορίων. ἐπεύχεσθαι
τοῖς ἐμμένουσιν. καὶ ταῖς πειθομέναις τῷ δὲ νόμῳ εὖ εἶναι
καὶ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων ὄνησιν, τοῖς δὲ μὴ πειθμένοις μηδὲ ταῖς
ἐμμενούσαις τἀναντία καὶ μῆ ὅσιον αὐταῖς εἰῶαι, ὡς ἀσεβούσαις,
θύειν μηδενὶ θεῶν ἐπὶ δέκα ἔτη. Τὸν μετὰ Δημήριον
στεφανηφόρον ταμίαν αἱρεθέντα ἀναγράψαι τόνδε τὸν νόμον
εἰς δύο στηλας καὶ ἀναθεῖναι, τὴν μὲν μίαν πρὸ τῶν θυρῶν τοῦ
Θεσμεοφορίου, τὴν δὲ πρὸ τοῦ νεὼ τῆς Ἀρτέιδος τῆς Λοχίας
(*LSAM*, 16, 4–33)

*There shall be a law among the citizens of Gambreion that the women in mourning shall wear clean grey clothes; and the men and the children in mourning shall wear grey clothing unless they prefer white. The ceremonies in memory of the deceased shall be performed within three months, and the men will stop wearing mourning clothes in the fourth month and women in the fifth month. Women will cease mourning and they shall participate in the processions prescribed by law. And the gynaikonomos, elected by the people to preside over the purification before the festival of Thargelia, will pray for the well-being of those who obey the law and the opposite to those women who do not conform with the law; and these women shall not be considered clean, because they have committed impiety, and they shall not sacrifice to any of the gods for ten years. And the treasurer, elected after the year when Demetrios was stephanephoros, will have this law inscribed on two stelai and place one in front of the doors of the Thesmophorion and the other one in front of the temple of Artemis Lochia.*[1]

This text reveals three points to us. The first part of the regulations concerns the physical appearance of both men and women. Mourners were supposed to wear dark grey clothes as an external marker of their official lamenting status. The second part of the law relates to the duration of mourning with mourning clothes, which lasted four or five months, with only one month's difference between men and women. The third

part of the law spells out the punishment. If someone does not stop mourning at the end of this period, he or, more likely, she would be punished; and the punishment is linked with public rites. The culprits would be barred from sacrificing to the gods, on the grounds that they have committed impiety.

We can find additional clues to mourning apparel from tragedy and from vase paintings. The colors of the mourners' garments differ. Although it is usually some deep color, it could be black, grey-black or red. Black is the common color mentioned in tragedy:

> παρόντας ἐν δόμοισι κοὐ πεφευγότας.
> αὕτη, τί πέπλους μέλανας ἐξήψω χροὸς
> λευκῶν ἀμέψασ' ἔκ τε κρατὸς εὐγενοῦς
> κόμας σίδηρον ἐμβαλοῦσ' ἀπέθρισας
> χλωροῖς τε τέγγεις δάκρυσι σὴν παρηίδα
> κλαίουσα; πότερον ἐννύχοις σεσεισμένη
> στένεις ὀνείοις; ἤ φάτιν τιν' οἴκοθεν
> κλύουσα λύπῃ σὰς διέφθαρσαι φρένας;
>
> *Theoklymenos: 'But wait! My quarry, I see, not fled. You, why have you changed your white clothes for black? Why did you take the knife and cut the hair from your noble head? Why are you weeping, moistening your cheek with pale tears? Has a persuasive dream in the night made you weep? Or have you heard a report from home that rends your heart with grief?'*
> (Eur, *Helen*, 1185–1192.)[2]

Red is the most popular color of mourning apparel in vase paintings, perhaps due to the technique of painting on vases.[3]

In summary, in ancient Greece there was a difference between everyday dress and mourning apparel, but there were no detailed requirements specified, other than the color of mourning apparel and the length of time for which it should be worn. This contrasts with the situation in ancient China, as described below.

## 2 Chinese Mourning Apparel Rites with High Detail

In contrast to the Greeks, who did not pay much attention to the mourning apparel of mourners, Chinese mourning apparel constituted the most delicate and significant part of the funerary rites, especially in the rite of

mourning. During the Pre-Qin period, from the rites of mourning to the funeral itself, the mourners were differentiated by their mourning apparel. Different kinships corresponded to different categories of mourning apparel.

The mourning apparel is defined by a series of rules that encompass the entire costume of a person during mourning, from head to toe, and is completely different from the apparel worn in everyday life and may even be the opposite.

> 丧服，斩衰裳，苴絰、杖、绞带,冠绳缨，菅屨者。（《仪礼·丧服》）
>
> *This mourning dress consists of an untrimmed sackcloth coat and skirt, fillets of the female nettle hemp, a staff, a twisted girdle, a hat whose hat-string is of cord, and rush shoes.*
>
> (*Mourning Garments · Book of Etiquette and Ceremony*)[4]

'*Cui*' (衰) is a piece of cloth worn down to the chest which means 'destruction', to indicate that the death of a loved one destroys people's hearts. '*Zhan*' (斩) means 'cut', which means that the mourning clothes do not have sewn edges; it is a rough way of sewing. The wider meaning of this word refers to the family members as a whole, now that the relationship with the deceased has been cut off. Because the mourning clothes were made of the roughest hemp, people showed their inner grief outwardly, and such sackcloth was '*jii*' (苴). Bands tied around the head or on the waist called '*shoudie*' (首绖) which means band of head and '*yaodie*' (腰绖) which means band of waist, also expressed the heart of the sorrow outwardly. '*Zhang*' (杖): commonly known as 'crying-stick'(哭丧棒), made of black bamboo for the father, and made of wood for the mother. Walking with crutches was needed to show that children were too sad for their parents to die. The headgear was also made of coarse linen. Shoes were made from braided grass straw (Fig. 5.1).

In summary, all the mourning apparel was made of coarse cloth. The closer a relative was to the deceased, the coarser the texture of the mourning apparel, and the less artificial processing there was: in other words, the roughness of the mourning apparel was in direct proportion to the nearness of kinship. In order to show the greatest grief and sorrow, the mourning apparel of the immediate family members was the roughest. In the eyes of Confucian sages, the love for a close family member is the most

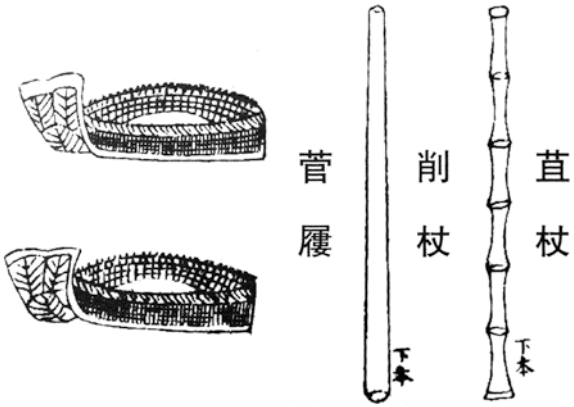


**Fig. 5.1** Picture of a crying stick and sandals. The rightmost of the two crying-sticks on the right side of the picture called '*jüzhnag*' (crutch of bamboo) is used for the father, and the second crying-stick called '*xuezhang*' (crutch of bamboo) is used the mother. The shoes in the left of picture are '*jianjü*' (sandals of *Jian*). Huang, Yizhou. *Understanding of The Books of Rites* (in Chinese), vol. 11, Shanghai Ancient Documents Press, 2014, p. 2179

primal and natural emotion. One of the most important meanings of the system of mourning apparel was to make mourning periods and apparels coherent with the relationships between people, and to connect different kinds of mourning apparel and the corresponding 'inferior' living conditions with the different moods of grief.

Because Chinese kinship was a complex system during the Pre-Qin period,[5] these specific provisions of mourning apparel were correspondingly complex as well. The system of mourning apparels is a set of very sophisticated designs. It may have started as early as the early years of the Western Zhou Dynasty, gradually evolving over time to reach its final version in the Spring-Autumn Period and the Warring-States Period. Without going into full details, the scheme set out in *Etiquette and Ceremony*[6] and *The Book of Rites* can be summarized as follows. There were five kinds of mourning apparel, collectively called '*Five Suits*' (*Wufu*, 五服):

- One was '*zhancui*' (斩衰), which was the first class of mourning apparel. This kind of apparel did not have taped edges, but had a strip of burlap on the chest. At the beginning of the rites of mourning, the son (called 'filial son' in Chinese terminology) was required to wear it for his father; ministers for their emperor; the father for the eldest son; the wives for their husband; and the unmarried daughter for her father. The mourning period lasted for three years.
- The second class of mourning apparel was called '*zicui*' (齐衰) and had taped edges with hemp cloth. At the start of the mourning rites, the children wore it for their mother, or the mother wore it for her eldest son. In each of these cases, the mourning period lasted also for three years. In addition, the husband was required to wear it for his wife; a man for his brothers; grandchildren for their grandparents; parents for their children, other than the eldest son; ministers wear it for their emperor's parents, eldest son, and grandparents; the daughter-in-law for her parents-in-law; and the unmarried daughter for her grandparents. The mourning period in these circumstances was only one year.
- The third class of mourning apparel was called '*dagong*' (大功), and was roughly finished. Men were required to wear this for their married sisters, their cousins, their unmarried female cousins, and their aunts. Women wore it for their husband's grandparents, their uncle's parents, and their brothers. The mourning period lasted for nine months.
- The fourth class of mourning apparel was named '*xiaogong*' (小功), and was finely processed. A man wore this for his great-grandparents, his uncle's grandparents, and so on; while a woman wore it for her husband's aunts and sisters. The mourning period was five months.
- The fifth class was called '*sima*' (缌麻), the name of which comes from a kind of processed linen cloth. A man wore this for his great-grandparents, his uncle and aunt's parents, his brother and sisters in the same clan, and his parents-in-law. The mourning period was three months (Fig. 5.2).

The mourning clothing revealed different relationships between the living and the dead, as well as among the living themselves. The rite of mourning was thus an occasion for expressing, and making claims about, relationships.

According to *The Book of Rites*, there were six principles for the mourning apparel:

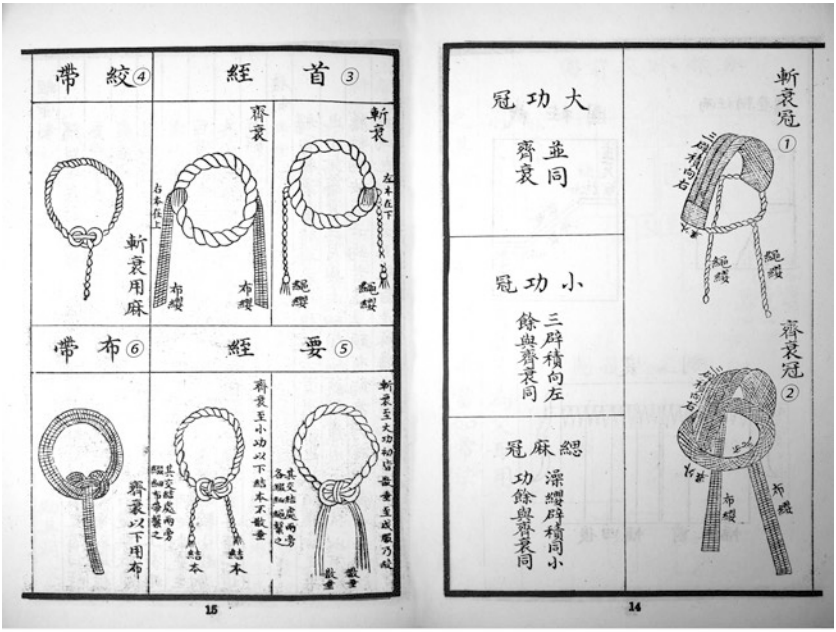


**Fig. 5.2** An illustration picture of headbands matching the different mourning apparel. This diagram is from a book dated to the Yuan dynasty in which its author collected the materials from previous times. See Duan-Li Gong, *Illustration of Wufu* (in Chinese), Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 1996, pp. 14–15

服术有六,一曰亲亲、二曰尊尊、三曰名、四曰出入、五曰长幼、六曰从服。
(《礼记・大传》)

*The considerations which regulated the mourning worn were six: first, the nearness of the kinship; second, the honor due to the honorable; third, the names (as expressing the position in the relative circle); fourth, the cases of women still unmarried in the paternal home, and of those who had married and left it; fifth, age; and sixth, affinity, and external relationship.*

(*The Great Treatise · The Book of Rites*)

Among these principles, the two that are most important are 'the nearness of the kinship' (亲亲) and 'the honor due to the honorable' (尊尊). The phrase 'the nearness of the kinship' refers to the principle of close and distant relatives. In this respect, the passing of an immediate blood relative or a grandparent demanded heavy mourning apparel, but the roughness of the apparel was gradually reduced with increasing familial distance, such that for more distant relatives there was no requirement to wear mourning apparel at all. The principle of 'the honor due to the honorable' refers to the different relationship between the eldest son and the younger ones. The eldest son was seen as the most honorable and the younger ones were expected to be humble. The mourning apparels fully reflect these two principles. The other principles of mourning apparels are essentially derived from these two principles.

There were other detailed rules as well:

> 斩衰, 括发以麻; 为母, 括发以麻, 免而以布。齐衰, 恶笄以终丧。男子冠而妇人笄, 男子免而妇人髽。其义: 为男子则免, 苴妇人则髽。苴杖, 竹也; 削杖, 桐也。(《礼记・丧服小记》)

> *When wearing the unhemmed sackcloth [for a father], [the son] tied up his hair with a hempen band, and also when wearing it for a mother. When he exchanged this band for the cincture [in the case of mourning his mother], this was made of linen cloth. [A wife], when wearing the [one year's mourning] of sackcloth with the edges even, had the girdle of the same, and the inferior hairpin, and wore these to the end of the mourning. Men wore the cap, and women the hairpin; men wore the cincture, and women the same after the female fashion. The idea was to maintain in this way a distinction between them. The dark-colored staff was of bamboo, that pared and fashioned at the end was of eleococca wood.*
>
> (*Record of Smaller Matters in the Dress of Mourning*· *The Book of Rites*)

> 袒、括发, 变也; 愠, 哀之变也。去饰, 去美也; 袒、括发, 去饰之甚也。有所袒、有所袭, 哀之节也。(《礼记・檀弓》下)

> *Baring the shoulders and binding up the hair (with the band of sackcloth) are changes, (showing) the excited feeling which is a change in the grief. The removal of the (usual) ornaments and elegancies (of dress) has manifold expression, but this baring of the shoulders and the sackcloth*

> *band are the chief. But now the shoulders are quite bared, and anon they are covered (with a thin garment)—marking gradations in the grief. At the interment they used the cap of plain white (silk), and the head-band of dolichos fibre; thinking these more suitable for their intercourse with (the departed) now in their spirit-state.*
>
> (*Tan Gong II · The Book of Rites*)

In short, the system of mourning apparels is so complex that there are various principles, both large and small, that have caused many details to be debated for thousands of years. The changes to the mourning apparel aimed to remove the beauty of ornament in order to display grief and sorrow. Meanwhile, in order to moderate the level of grief, it was necessary to change back to ordinary clothes gradually and slowly. From the classification above, we can tell that the mourning apparel system was a standard way of demonstrating relationships in the ancient Chinese family: from the mourning apparel which people adopted, their relationship with the dead in the extended family became evident.[7] This distinction truly reflected different kin relationships in the clan society, which was one of the most important functions of mourning for the ancient Chinese. The various kinds of mourning apparel functioned like a mirror reflecting a deeper ancient Chinese social reality and family relationships.[8]

A question emerging from these writings concerns the types of people who were expected to perform these rituals and to obey those petty norms. According to *The Book of Rites*, the performer of rituals should come from the upper class in society.

> 礼不下庶人，刑不上大夫。(《礼记·曲礼》上)
>
> *The rules of ceremony do not go down to the common people. The penal statutes do not go up to great officers.*
>
> (*Summary of the Rules of Propriety I · The Book of Rites*)

This general principle applies to all kinds of rituals. Although the 'Five-Suits' system is one of the provisions of the classic text, in reality it may not always have been strictly implemented. However, the significance of the 'Five-Suits' system for traditional Chinese society and culture does not lie only in the extent of its implementation. Even if the precise details of 'Five-Suits' were not strictly implemented, the functions of the 'Five-Suits' are still used to distinguish between relatives in rural China even to this day. Most people today do not know which of the five kinds of mourning clothes are actually referred to; they may not even know that the 'Five-Suits' refer

to five different kinds of mourning apparels. However, people all know that 'Five-Suits' are used to distinguish between family members and strangers, and that at the funeral, they are expected to wear mourning apparels for those people who fall into the 'Five-Suits' categories (but not for others).

Moreover, it is also important to understand that there were many theoretical and ideal elements in Confucian classical thought, from its beginning all the way down to the Qing dynasty, during which period the central government vigorously promoted it as the official ideology. As a mainstream ideology in Chinese traditional society, Confucian thought came to be established as the popular moral pursuit and standard of behavior for the entire population. Ritual, as a special cultural phenomenon, serves both as the mode *for* reality and the mode *of* reality. It does not merely reflect a certain social order and set of social relations externally, but also characterizes the prevailing social ideologies, thoughts and sentiments in a certain period. Therefore, we can look into the ancient lifestyle and ideological world through the medium of ritual.

While much of the Greek experience focuses on the verbal manifestation of lamentation as documented through epic poetry, and the choral parts of Greek tragedy, the Chinese sources focus on the need for proper mourning attire to be displayed. Regarding mourning apparel, it is a common custom worldwide for mourners to wear special clothing: even in modern times, mourning apparel continues to exist in many cultures, and to indicate the different relationships between the living and the dead. How, then, was the mourning apparel different in ancient China? Why was mourning apparel of such importance for the ancient Chinese? The reason is that as an external behavioral norm, the mourning apparel system in China embodied kin relationships in a more detailed and stricter way than that of the Greeks. 'Noble and low', 'young and old', and 'intimacy and alienation' were the most important dualities pertaining to the broader social relations in ancient China. The system of mourning apparel also became a standard way to measure the relational hierarchy in ancient Chinese society. For example, if someone took a '*zicui*', which was the second class of mourning apparel, it meant they were a close relative of the deceased; and if someone took '*sima*', which was the fifth class of mourning apparel, it meant that they were a distant relative of the deceased. The delicate mourning clothing system was designed to unite the family organization and to improve humanity in society. Its aim was to institute order for individuals and to reflect interpersonal relationships within the clans. We could say that the system of Chinese mourning apparel contained rich symbolic significance by adopting special costumes. The provisions of

mourning apparel and the mourning periods were different, to coordinate with different classes of relatives and different degrees of feelings.

Moreover, through rituals, ancient Chinese mourners understood how to show their grieving mood and then gradually regain peace and harmony in their minds. During the development of the mourning apparel system, the original meaning and the ritualized behavior of the mourning apparel gradually retreated to a position of secondary importance over time, and people began focusing more on the real meaning of relationships. In some cases, the lack of ritualized procedures and certain utensils during the ritual was accepted if the family was not rich enough, or under special conditions; yet the performer still had to understand the real meanings of it and to obey the norms. As Randall Collins said: 'One chief result of rituals is to charge up symbolic objects with significance, or to recharge such objects with renewed sentiments of respect. Along with this, individual participants get their own reservoir of charge.'[9] Putting on mourning apparel had become a critical occasion for rehearsing proper relationships, and was also a symbolic actualization of the social order.

## Notes

1. Ilias Arnaoutoglou, *Ancient Greek Laws: A Sourcebook*, Routledge, 1998, p. 143.
2. The translation is from David Kovacs, Harvard University Press, 2002.
3. In China, white clothing is symbolic of the dead, while red is not usually worn, as it is traditionally the symbolic color of happiness worn at weddings.
4. The translation is from John Steele, *The I-Li/ Book of Etiquette and Ceremony*, London: Probsthain & Co., 1917.
5. We can find clear explications of a system of lineage segmentation in a number of Zhou texts. See K. C. Chang, *Art, Myth, and Ritual: The Path to Political Authority in Ancient China*, Harvard University Press, 1983, pp. 16–17. For a detailed discussion of the clan and lineage system of ancient China, see K. C. Chang, 'The Lineage System of the Shang and Chou Chinese and its Political Implications', in K. C. Chang ed., *Early Chinese Civilization*, Harvard University Press, 1976, pp. 72–92.
6. In particular, *The Dress of Mourning Etiquette and Ceremony* (《仪礼·丧服》) reflects the mourning dress system in funeral rites and customs during the Zhou dynasty. Based on the closeness of kinship, the mourning dictates the style of dress and specific mourning periods for mourning the dead at funerals. This formed a system of 'Five-Suits', including '*zhancui*', '*zicui*', '*dagong*', '*xiaogong*', '*sima*'—five categories. It is the embodiment of the Zhou Dynasty's patriarchal ethical system in funeral costumes. Later it was

widely adopted and exerted far-reaching influence in ancient Chinese society. The rulers of all dynasties must draw lessons from the regulation of *The Dress of Mourning* in the formulation of the mourning dress system, and then thus forming a specialized study which is called 'The study of mourning dress'.

7. According to K. C. Chang, the most authoritative writings on ancient Chinese kinship terminology are those of Ruey Yin-fu; see his *Collected Works: The Nation and Some Aspects of Its Culture* (in Chinese), sect. G, 'The Chinese Family System', and sect. H, 'The Chinese Kinship System', Taipei: Yee Wen, 1972, pp. 723–1028. Also see: Han-Yi Feng, *The Chinese Kinship System*, Harvard University Press, 1948; Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, Beacon Press, 1969. On Greek kinship terminology, see M. Miller, 'Greek Kinship Terminology', in *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 73 (1953), pp. 46–52.
8. Chang says, 'The lineage (*tsu*) itself was probably the most important social framework for coercion; *tsu* rules were the society's fundamental law.' (K. C. Chang, *Art, Myth, and Ritual: The Path to Political Authority in Ancient China*, p. 35).
9. Randall Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains*, Princeton University Press, 2004, p. 38.

## References

Arnaoutoglou, Ilias. 1998. *Ancient Greek laws: A Sourcebook*. Routledge.

Chang, K. C. 1976. The Lineage System of the Shang and Chou Chinese and Its Political Implications. Chang, K. C. *Early Chinese Civilization*. Harvard University Press. 72–92.

Chang, K. C. 1983. *Art, Myth, and Ritual: The Path to Political Authority in Ancient China*. Harvard University Press.

Collins, Randall. 2004. *Interaction Ritual Chains*. Princeton University Press.

Feng, Han-Yi. 1948. *The Chinese Kinship System*. Harvard University Press.

Gong, Duan-Li 龚端礼. 1996. *Illustration of Wufu 五服图解*. Shanghai Ancient Documents Press 上海古籍出版社.

Huang, Yizhou. 黄以周. 2014. *Understanding of the Books of Rites 礼书通故*. Shanghai Ancient Documents Press 上海古籍出版社.

Levi-Strauss, Claude. 1969. *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. Beacon Press.

Miller, M. 1953. Greek Kinship Terminology. *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 73: 46–52.

Ruey, Yin-fu 芮逸夫. 1972. *Collected Works 文集*. Taipei: Yiwen Publishing House 艺文出版社.

Steele, John, Tran. 1917. *The I-Li/ Book of Etiquette and Ceremony*. London: Probsthain & Co.

CHAPTER 6

# Conclusions

**Abstract** We find that although the rites of mourning share some basic similarities in terms of both procedures and functions, there are differences between these two ancient societies. In Greece, mourning remained mainly on the level of divinely ordained or external forms and procedures, but was not used to facilitate the expression of philosophical thoughts without involving the social order. In the Chinese case, the Confucians of the Pre-Qin period used rituals as a tool to explain their thoughts about how to organize a community. For them, the ritualized procedures were certainly important, but there was something more profound underlying the ritual. Confucians have integrated funeral with the Confucian values of filial piety and the concept of kinship, which have had a profound impact on subsequent Chinese civilization.

**Keywords** The 'privilege' of the dead • 'Filial piety' (孝) • The Confucians

This book has compared the three main ritualized procedures and provisions of mourning before burial between Archaic and Classical Greece and Pre-Qin China. In terms of the rites of mourning before burial, these were taken very seriously in both ancient societies. There were many detailed requirements, and both peoples attempted to follow such ritualized procedures closely.



X. Wu, *Mourning Rituals in Archaic & Classical Greece and Pre-Qin China*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0632-7_6

Three important common features of mourning were shared by both of these ancient societies. First, mourning as a group model expressed the individual's emotion, but the rite of mourning was never a purely private affair. Mourning was a group event in both societies and constituted a duty for the whole family. Nagy says: 'In short, lament is a communalizing experience. It leads to a communalization of emotions in all their diversities.'[1] As one part of the rites before burial, in the rites of mourning, the mourners assembled together to mourn the deceased and to put the deceased in the social position of 'dead'. Meanwhile, by this rite, the mourners reaffirmed and rebuilt the relationships among themselves.

Second, rites of mourning had to be performed according to the customary procedures and by the proper people. Laments were performed by family members for family members, with the most responsibility placed on the immediate family. As Boardman remarks: 'It was essential that the dead receive the customary rites of burial, but it was equally important that he (*sic*) receive them from the proper hands. Responsibility fell on the immediate family.'[2] It has been implied that in ancient Greece, the right to inherit was directly linked with the right to mourn. Alexiou further argues: 'If the right to mourn was so closely linked with the right to inherit until the end of the fourth century, it is not hard to understand why the funeral legislation so persistently restricts the care of the dead to the immediate kin: only those 'within the degree of first cousins and their children' were permitted because only they in future were to have any claim on the inheritance'.[3] In ancient China, too, the right to inherit was linked with the right to mourn.

Third, the most notable and important similarity between the rituals in these two ancient societies was that almost all the rituals focused on 'this-sidedness' ('this world'), in that rituals ruled human relationships, strengthened community bonds, and included prayers for an earthly life of happiness and peace. Thus, their lack of theological knowledge of 'that-sidedness' ('the other world') fully embodies and indicates the earthly concern of the two civilizations.

It can be said that mourning rituals have some structural function in both ancient societies. In contemporary cultural sociologist Randall Collins' words: 'Movements carried out in common operate to focus attention, to make participants aware of each other as doing the same thing and thus thinking the same thing. Collective movements are signals by which intersubjectivity is created. Collective attention enhances the expression of shared emotion; and in turn the shared emotion acts further

to intensify collective movements and the sense of intersubjectivity. […] Collective effervescence is a momentary state, but it carries over into more prolonged effects when it becomes embodied in sentiments of group solidarity, symbols or sacred objects, and individual emotional energy.'[4]

Although the rites of mourning share some basic similarities in procedures and functions, there are some differences between the ancient Greek and Chinese societies.

First, in ancient Greece, being mourned—just like being buried—was the privilege of the dead, who were seen as entitled to require it from the living. The Greek burial process was not concerned only with the physical act of burying the body, but also with the customs of the proper ritual, through which the deceased was seen to be comforted. The Greeks believed that if this were not the case, the dead person would continue to harass the living until they were properly buried. Therefore, we can understand the importance of the mourning and burial of the dead for the ancient Greeks.

Accordingly, mourning the dead was a duty for the living, especially for the family members. For the ancient Greeks, this was a sacred law from the gods. When people followed the law, the dead would be pacified, gods would be satisfied, and the order of the mortal world would be kept well. This was the reason why, in Sophocles' tragedy *Antigone*, the character of Antigone was portrayed as taking the risk to mourn and to hold a ritualized burial for her brother against the *polis*' law. Although she did not really bury her brother, in the eyes of the Greeks, she had performed the rite of mourning and funeral deserved by her brother:

> καὶ δὴ λέγω σοι. τὸν νεκρόν τις ἀρτίως
> θάψας βέβηκε κἀπὶ χρωτὶ διψίαν
> κόνιν παλύνας κἀφαγιστεύσας ἃ χρή.
>
> *Well, I will tell you! Someone has just gone off after burying the body, sprinkling its flesh with thirsty dust and performing the necessary rites.*
> (Sophocles, *Antigone*, 245–247)[5]

This was also why Nicias was known as a pious and god-fearing person by the Athenians. For example, at 425 BCE, the Athenians defeated the Corinthians, yet two bodies of Athenian soldiers were forgotten on the battlefield. Upon discovering this, Nicias gave up the victory he had just

won in order to take up the two dead bodies—because, according to ancient Greek customary or unwritten law, the side which secured the right to take up its dead by a truce was thought to renounce all claims to victory. However,

> ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως ἐκεῖνος ὑπέμεινε μᾶλλον προέσθαι τὸ νίκημα καὶ τὴν δόξαν ἢ καταλιπεῖν
> ἀτάφους δύο τῶν πολιτῶν.
>
> *Notwithstanding this, Nicias endured rather to abandon the honor and reputation of his victory than to leave unburied two of his fellow citizens.*
>
> (Plutarch, *Nicias*, VI.6)

For this reason, he had been respected by the Athenians, and even after his defeat and surrender he retained the people's sympathy and understanding. In relation to Nicias' own death, Thucydides commented:

> ἥκιστα δὴ ἄξιος ὢν τῶν γε ἐπ᾽ ἐμοῦ Ἑλλήνων ἐς τοῦτο δυστυχίας ἀφικέσθαι δια τὴν
> πᾶσαν ἐς ἀρετὴν νενομις μένην ἐπιτήδευσιν.
>
> *Although of all the Hellenes, at least in my time, certainly the least deserving to reach this level of misfortune because of a way of life directed entirely toward virtue.*
>
> (Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, Book VII.86)[6]

A contrasting example is that the Athenians sentenced several victorious generals to death in 406 BCE[7] because they did not retrieve the corpses of sailors from water after the battle of Arginusae, making it impossible for their families to mourn and bury them. This made the respective families very angry, so they accused the generals and demanded that they be sentenced to death. In *Menexenus*, Plato expressed his sympathy for the dead in this sea battle, not only for not receiving mourning and burial from their families, but also for being deprived of their right to be buried in a state cemetery. He said:

> καὶ ἄνδρες γενόμενοι ὁμολογουμένως ἄριστοι, νικήσαντες μὲν τοὺς πολεμίους,
> λυςάμενοι δὲ τοὺς φιλίους, ἀναξίου τύχης τύχόντες, οὐκ ἀναιρεθέντες ἐκ τῆς
> θαλάττης, κεῖνται ἐνθάδε. C ὧν χρὴ ἀεὶ μεμνῆσθαί τε καὶ ἐπαινεῖν·

> *Albeit they met with undeserved misfortune, and were not recovered from the sea to find their burial here. And for these reasons it behoves us to have them in remembrance and to praise them always.*
>
> (Plato, *Menexenus*, 243C-D)[8]

This text clarifies why the Athenians killed the meritorious generals after their victory. It can be seen that the ancient Greeks regarded the mourning and burial of the dead as sacred duties for the living. It was the manifestation of devotion to God, and the symbol of observance of the sacred laws and ancestral provisions. In other words, the *psychē* had no real function in the world of the living, and vengeance was seen as coming from the gods, rather than from the dead themselves.

This implies to us that the focus of mourning (including the whole funeral) in ancient Greece was for the benefit of the dead, and intended not to act against the gods. As Margaret Alexiou says: 'Fear of the wrath of the dead or of the gods arising from the neglect of these duties is a recurrent theme in the laments throughout antiquity, and especially in tragedy.'[9] The attitude of ancient Greeks to death and funeral showed seems to suggest that, although the funeral always involved the living, the dead and others (such as the souls of the dead or the gods), the ancient Greeks paid attention to these three sides without neglecting anyone, and the rites of Greek mourning were focused more on the relationship between humans and gods than on relationships among humans.

Second, in ancient China, the traditional family was not a so-called 'nuclear' family, like the modern one consisting of parents and their children: it was an extended family which included several generations (at least five generations, or even as many as nine generations) from the same forefather in the so-called patriarchal society or clan society. A diagram of nine generations in a large family is as follows (Fig. 6.1).

The Chinese patriarchal clan system based on blood lineage operated in both political and social realms, and had a long history.[10] As a cell of the traditional Chinese society, the clansman was an effective and supplementary power in the social administration, and played an important role in social life. As Chang explains:

> Political authority was wielded by social groups basing their membership on blood relationships—a prominent feature of the ancient Chinese state. Furthermore, each of the clans was itself highly stratified, again

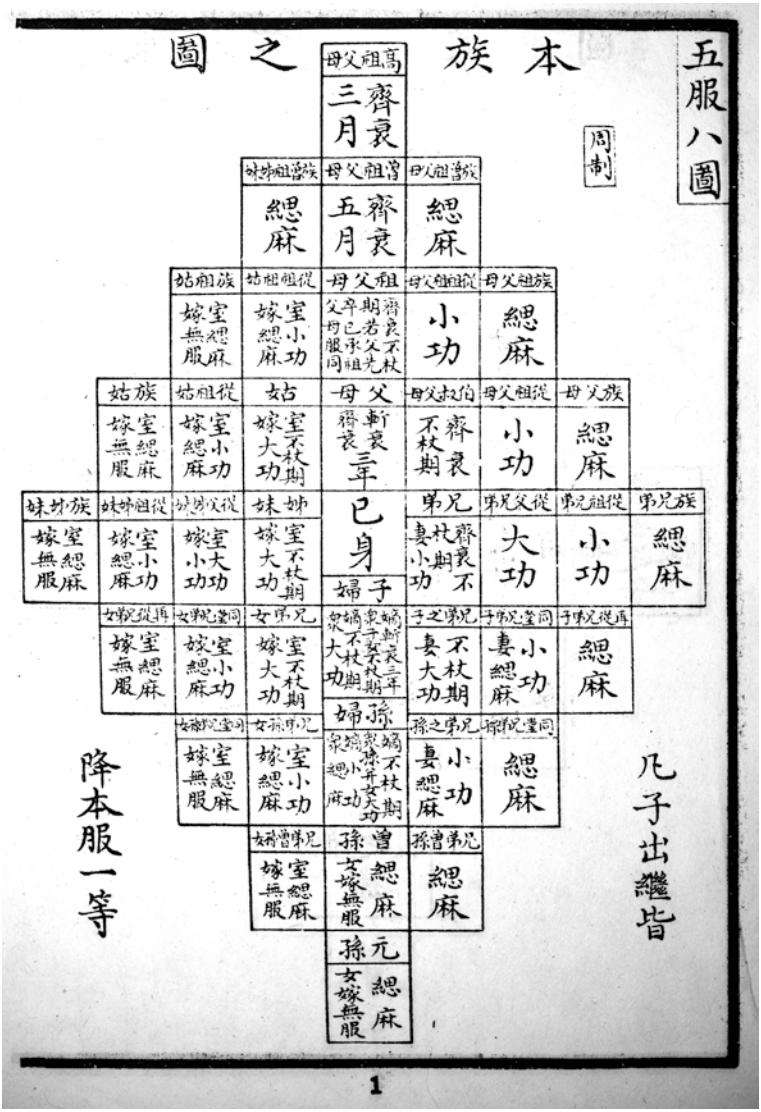


**Fig. 6.1** Diagram of nine generations. In the middle column of the diagram, from top to bottom, it explains how long the mourning period lasts for the ancestors of different generations. It is three months for great-great-grandparents, five months for great-grandparents, one year for grandparents, three years for parents, one year for sons, nine months for grandsons, and no mourning for great-grandsons & great-great-grandsons. Duan-Li Gong, *Illustration of Wufu* (in Chinese), p. 1

> along blood lines. Each clan comprised a number of lineage groups, and the members of each group were related to one another according to a genealogically demonstrable relationship. Individual lineages, and even individual members within each lineage, possessed unequal degrees of political status.[11]

The clan system was even more powerful than the central government in some ways, and could even influence legislation. For example, for offences of homicide, different judgements would be made in the respective cases of a son who killed his father and a stranger who killed someone else's father. The punishment was more severe for the son than the stranger, because in ancient Chinese thought, committing the crime of killing the father meant not only ending a life, but also overthrowing the tradition of great filial piety. Therefore, the focus of rite emphasized filial piety for parents in the Chinese rites of mourning and the whole funeral. The ancient Chinese put this responsibility specifically on the '*filial son*' (孝子). The mourning was to express filial grief and sorrow and to show 'filial piety'[12] to his parents. This type of ritual is intended to comply with the natural emotions of human beings on the one hand, and to guide and control human emotions on the other hand, so that most people can live in a relatively stable state. As quoted above, 'the rites of mourning are the extreme expression of grief and sorrow. The graduated reduction of that expression in accordance with the natural changes (of time and feeling) was made by the superior men, mindful of those to whom we owe our being'.

In *The Canonical Book of Filial Piety* (《孝经》),[13] the author says:

> 生事爱敬，死事哀戚，生民之本尽矣，死生之义备矣，孝子之事亲终矣。
>
> (《孝经》)

> *The services of love and reverence to parents when alive, and those of grief and sorrow for them when dead: these completely discharge the fundamental duty of living men. The righteous claim of life and death are all satisfied, and the filial son's service of his parents is completed.*
>
> (*The Canonical Book of Filial Piety*)

In the eyes of Confucian philosophers, the most challenging situation for a human being is described in *The Book of Rites*:

> 子路曰:"伤哉贫也!生无以为养,死无以为礼也。"(《礼记・檀弓》下)

> *Zi-lu said, 'Alas for the poor! While (their parents) are alive, they have not the means to nourish them; and when they are dead, they have not the means to perform the mourning rites for them.'*
>
> (*Tan Gong II · The Book of Rites*)

Accordingly, an unfilial conduct became a crime that must be punished. *The Canonical Book of Filial Piety* says:

> 子曰: "五刑之属三千, 而罪莫大于不孝。要君者, 无上; 非圣人者, 无法; 非孝者, 无亲, 此大乱之道也。" (《孝经 • 五刑章》)

> *Filial piety in relation to the five punishments The Master said, 'There are three thousand offences against which the five punishments are directed, and there is not one of them greater than being unfilial. When constraint is put upon a ruler, that is the disowning of his superiority; when the authority of the sages is disallowed, that is the disowning of (all) law; when filial piety is put aside, that is the disowning of the principle of affection. These (three things) pave the way to anarchy.'*
>
> (*The Canonical Book of Filial Piety*)

This highlights that filial piety played an important role in ancient Chinese life, not only in the ritual observance of ceremonies for the dead, but also in the actual filial behavior toward living parents. Since the Pre-Qin period, filial piety has become the very basis of all other virtues and a self-evident phenomenon for the Chinese, without any need of examination. Thus, a common saying of 'filial piety is the first one in all good actions' appears in Chinese folk literature. There is also a theoretical argument made by Confucian sages:

> 君子务本, 本立而道生。孝弟也者, 其为仁之本与? (《论语 • 学而》)

> *The superior man bends his attention to what is radical. That being established, all practical courses naturally grow up. Filial piety and fraternal submission!—are they not the root of all benevolent actions?*
>
> (*Xue Er · The Analects of Confucius*)

Through the several thousand years of recorded Chinese history, filial piety has not only played an important role in philosophy, but also in daily life and legislation. These ideals still inform funeral rites for many Chinese people today. The importance of filial piety distinguishes Chinese culture

from other ancient cultures too. Just as Donald Holzman says, we should realize that 'they are even more important in that they bring to light something that lies in the substratum of the Chinese soul, something that the foreigner might never suspect and that he finds difficult to understand without the proper background knowledge'.[14]

1. These two different foci in the two ancient societies about mourning initiated huge different historical developments of rituals, respectively.

In Greece, because it was believed that the dead sought mourning and burial from the living, people strictly observed the provision and process of the ritual. The mourning remained mainly on the level of external forms and procedures, but was not used to facilitate the expression of profound thoughts. Therefore, the richly ritualized actions as a kind of cultural phenomenon have been reserved in Greek folk tradition, and some survive even down to the present day.[15] However, because Greek rituals did not affect the social order or the model of government in reality, the ancient Greeks did not take them as media to expound some metaphysical ideas. It was no more than a living folk tradition, because the whole ritual was finished after the Greeks paid their dues to the dead and obeyed the sacred law. In other words, the Greeks just followed their rituals step by step, and performed only the ritual itself. Even the greatest Greek philosopher Plato thought it was nothing more than showing some kind of respect to the deceased. He says:

> ἐν αὐτῷ τε τῷ βίῳ τὸ παρεχόμενον ἡμῶν ἕκαστον τοῦτ'εἶναι μηδὲν ἀλλ'ἤ
> τὴν ψυχήν, τὸ δὲ σῶμα ἰνδαλλόμενον ἡμῶν ἑκάστοις ἔπεσθαι, καὶ τελευτησάντων λέγεσθαι καλῶς εἴδωλα εἶναι τὰ τῶν νεκρῶν σώματα, τὸν δὲ ὄντα
> ἡμῶν ἕκαστον ὄντως, ἀθάνατον εἶναι ψυχὴν ἐπονομαζόμενον, παρὰ θεοὺς
> ἄλλους ἀπιέναι δώσοντα λόγον, καθάπερ ὁ νόμος ὁ πάτριος λέγει, τῷ μὲν
> ἀγαθῷ θαῤῥαλέον, τῷ δὲ κακῷ μάλα φοβερόν, βοήθειάν τε αὐτῷ μήτινα
> μεγάλην εἶναι τετελευτηκότι.
>
> *It is a noble saying that the bodies of the corpses are images of the dead, while the being that is really each of us—named 'the immortal soul'—*

> *goes off to other gods to give an account, as the ancestral law says. … Furthermore, there is no great help available for the man who has died.*
> (Plato, *Laws* 12.959b.)[16]

The continuity of the lament between ancient traditions and modern Greek society has persisted over perhaps more than 3500 years, although the lament can now be seen as a form of folk custom, and the task of expressing ideas through ritual has been largely transferred to Christianity. After Christianity became established as the dominant religious form in the western world, the pursuit of peace and happiness of the afterlife became the main aim for the people. The view of ritual thus evolved away from that which had been adopted in ancient times, and the 'earthly' function of the rituals gradually receded.

In contrast, in the Chinese case the Confucian thinkers of the Pre-Qin period used rituals (*Li*) as a tool to explain their thoughts about how to organize a community (the clan society). As Benjamin I. Schwartz pointed out: 'The Chinese commentaries stress again and again the function of *li* in teaching human beings to perform their *separate* roles well in a society whose harmony is maintained by the fact that every one plays his part as he should within the larger whole. […] The order that the li ought to bind together is not simply a ceremonial order—it is a sociopolitical order in the full sense of the term, involving hierarchies, authority, and power.'[17] Thus, for the Confucian thinkers, those ritualized procedures were certainly important, but there was something more important behind the ritual.

> 子路曰: "吾闻诸夫子: 丧礼, 与其哀不足而礼有馀也, 不若礼不足而哀有馀也。"
> (《礼记・檀弓》上)

> *Zi-lu said: 'I heard the Master say that in the rites of mourning, exceeding grief with deficient rites is better than little demonstration of grief with super-abounding rites.'*
> (*Tan Gong I · The Book of Rites*)

This quote illustrates a general principle about mourning and funeral. It seems, in Confucian thought, that there is no stress on the ritualized behavior itself but rather the expression of a kind of feeling and thought. They are the ideas of filial piety and kin class distinction. These two ideas were developed and brought to culmination by the thinkers of the Pre-Qin period, a process that was always accompanied by concrete practices—

especially in terms of mourning and funeral apparel.[18] These discourses of the Confucian philosophers[19] have canonized and institutionalized these two ideas and exerted far-reaching effects on Chinese civilization. The earthly character of rituals[20] is still alive in the mainstream culture in traditional Chinese society, whether in official form or in non-governmental form. All rituals form a huge net, including everything in it. Ritual decides everything that is reasonable or unreasonable, and it becomes an essential order and regulation for contemporary society. Therefore, since the Pre-Qin period, through different rituals Confucianism has been able to penetrate deeply into social and private life and to create a unique cultural pattern of traditional Chinese society.[21] From this, we can say that '*Li*' have a central place in the traditional Chinese social order. '*Li*' is not merely an external means of social control through symbolic rituals (in this case, mourning rituals), but also embodies the internal logic of the Chinese way of life.[22]

## Notes

1. Gregory Nagy, 'Ancient Greek Elegy', in Karen Weisman ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Elegy*, Oxford University Press, 2010.
2. Donna C. Kurtz and John Boardman, *Greek Burial Customs*, Thames and Hudson, 1971, p. 143.
3. Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, p. 21.
4. Randall Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains*, pp. 35, 36.
5. The translation is from Hugh Llord-Jones, Harvard University Press, 1998.
6. The translation is from Steven Lattimore, Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1998.
7. Xenophon, *Hellenica* I.6–7.
8. The translation is from R. G. Bury, Harvard University Press, 1929.
9. Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, p. 4.
10. Strictly speaking, the patriarchal clan system disintegrated as early as the late Western-Zhou Dynasty, but its influence lasts over 2000 years in China.
11. K. C. Chang, *Art, Myth, and Ritual: The Path to Political Authority in Ancient China*, p. 15.
12. The idea of 'filial piety' is a very important idea for the Chinese and is listed as an essential part of life in the early texts *The Book of Historical Documents* (《尚书》) and *Zuo's Commentary* (《左传》), and at least as early as the end of the Former Han dynasty, and enters more and more frequently into the dynastic histories and other historical works. A Western scholar even argues: 'Filial piety in China came to be seen as having absolute value and

that the worship of one's parents (that is, one's creators) can be compared to the worship of God in the West.' (Donald Holzman, 'The Place of Filial Piety in Ancient China', in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 118, No. 2 (Apr.–Jun., 1998), pp. 185–199) But I disagree with this argument and consider it as a kind of over-interpretation. I prefer to explain the meaning of 'filial piety' as 'a respect with love, thanksgiving and duties'. In China (even today), filial piety means the love and support for the parents (*The Analects of Confucius*, II.7), especially the care of them during their old age and illness with cheerfulness and patience (*The Analects of Confucius*, II.8; IV.19, 21). It also means obedience, but not blind obedience, to the parents (*The Analects of Confucius*, IV.18.) and carrying on any unfulfilled life purposes of the parents (*The Analects of Confucius*, I.11). In a word, it is the ethical relation a person should maintain towards his or her parents and ancestors. As a virtue, it is considered to be the root of all virtues (*The Analects of Confucius*, I.2.). By tradition, this reverence is extended from being paid to one's own parents to being paid to other people's parents and implies paying respect to all elderly people in the community (*The Words of Mencius*, I.7).

13. *The Canonical Book of Filial Piety* (《孝经》) was probably assembled around the third or second century BCE. It has codified filial piety as a universal belief for Chinese people in the validity of the virtue. Although it is not a strictly philosophical text, it remained an important part of the Confucian canon until modern times.
14. Donald Holzman, 'The Place of Filial Piety in Ancient China', in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 118, No. 2 (Apr.–Jun., 1998), pp. 185–199.
15. Cf. Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*.
16. The translation is from Thomasl. Pangle, with notes and an interpretive essay, Basic Books, Inc., 1980.
17. Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, Harvard University Press, 1985, pp. 68.
18. Xuan Chien argues: 'Some important provisions relating to mourning dress entered the law that was formulated by the government after the Qin and Han dynasties, and adapted for the patriarchal clan system. The tradition of mourning dress was practiced for more than two thousand years in the traditional society of China. It was less than a hundred years until the eradication of the feudal society and the decline of the patriarchal clan system. […] From the beginning of the Western Zhou Dynasty, throughout the feudal society, to the founding of the People's Republic of China, some funeral rituals have been implemented among the people. Although the details will not be exactly the same as those of the Zhou Dynasty, some of the procedures still retain original features. The reason why the tradition

of mourning dress spread so widely and endured for so long is that it has a long history of roots and a profound social foundation.' See Xuan Chien, *Study on Three Books of Rites* (in Chinese), Nanjing Normal University Press, 1996, pp. 459, 579. I continue discussing these two ideas in relation to the different ritualized procedures of the funeral in the follow-up study.

19. As Xuan Chien said: 'Confucian philosophers think that *Li* education is a way of administering the country's learning which is directly related to the establishment of the state, social customs, and personal morality. …The *Li* is concerned with governance practices for the country in the world context, until the end of the Qing Dynasty.' See Xuan Chien, *Study on Three Books of Rites*, p. 1.
20. Chen Lai argued: 'Instead of affirming the necessity of ritual sacrifices from the perspective of religious belief, the intellectuals affirmed their social functions. They also showed that paying close attention to the realm of society and politics far outweighed the concern with the world of the gods.' See Chen Lai, *The World of Ancient Ideology and Culture—Religion, Ethics and Social Thoughts in the Spring-Autumn Period* (in Chinese), Beijing: San-Lian Publishing House, 2002, p. 14.
21. Schwartz compared the different attitudes and ideas of the two ancient thinkers, Confucius and Plato, about death and family. He analysed incisively: 'He (Confucius) concentrates on sentiments associated with the nuclear family and with the immediately departed. Gratitude toward parents for their nurturing love, responsibility of adult children for aged and feeble parents, and a prolonged sense of loss when they depart—these sentiments can be found in all cultures. The particular intensity of Confucius' focus on these dispositions nevertheless indicates an ongoing cultural stress on them which makes them something much more than simple universal 'natural sentiments'. It is basically in the family that one first finds the emergence of rules of behavior based on spiritual-moral assent rather than on physical coercion. The sentiments of gratitude and self-abnegation that dominate the prolonged mourning rites for parents may be considered the ultimate basis of that power of yielding (*jang*) on which all *li* are based. It is first of all in the family that *li* and *jen* are ideally fused. […] It is in the family that one learns how to exercise authority and how to submit to authority, and it is only the man of *jen* who can do both. The family is ideally the first school of virtue and the source of those values which make possible the good society. Plato, in contrast, provides us with all the reasons why the family is not the source of virtue. It is a particularistic 'private' group within the *polis* bent primarily on the promotion of its own economic interests. Instead of focusing men's minds on large public matters, it locks men into an overwhelming concern with the petty joys and sorrows of other family members. The company of wives and children provides lit-

tle room for intellectual enlargement. Hence the 'public' virtues can only be developed in the public arena.' See Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, pp. 99–100.

22. This is different from some western thinkers or scholars in the past who understood Chinese '*Li*', for example, Max Weber considered: 'Even in intra-familial relationships there was a ceremonious punctilio and a selfish fear of the spirits. […] The Confucian the pruning of freely expressed and original impulse was of a different nature. The watchful self-control of the Confucian was to maintain the dignity of external gesture and manner, to keep 'face.' This self-control was of an aesthetic and essentially negative nature. Dignified deportment, in itself devoid of definite content, was esteemed and desired. The equally vigilant self-control of the Puritan had as its positive aim a definitely qualified conduct and, beyond this, it had as an inward aim systematic control of one's own nature which was regarded as wicked and sinful.' See Max Weber, *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism*, trans. and ed. by Hans H. Gerth, The Free Press, 1951, pp. 233, 244. J. G. A. Pocock said: 'Since rituals are non-verbal, they have no contraries. They can therefore be used to produce harmony of wills and actions without provoking recalcitrance; if a man finds himself playing his appointed part in *li* and thus already—as it were *de facto*—in harmony with others, it no more occurs to him to play a part other than that appointed to him than it occurs to a dancer to move to a different rhythm than that being played by the orchestra. […] But precisely because rituals have no contraries, the values of a ritual-controlled society cannot be questioned or doubted, and the Confucian world, being without moral alternatives, is a closed society.' See J. G. A. Pocock, *Politics, Language, and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History*, The University of Chicago Press, 1989, pp. 45–46. Herbert Fingarette argued: 'The ceremony may have a surface slickness but yet be dull, mechanical for lack of serious purpose and commitment. Beautiful and effective ceremony requires the personal 'presence' to be fused with learned ceremonial skill.' See Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred*, New York: Harper and Row, 1972, p. 8. However, Benjamin I. Schwartz refuted: 'What I shall here contend, however, is that the view which Fingarette harshly attacks—namely that Confucius is vitally concerned with qualities, capacities, and inner mental dispositions which we associate not simply with concrete acts but with living persons as persons—is a correct view, and that Confucius' emphasis on these inner qualities is one of his true innovations. […] None of this implies the stark dichotomy of 'individual versus society' against which Fingarette inveighs. Confucius' individual is indeed a thoroughly social being and thoroughly oriented toward action. Yet the notion that this social nature and action-orientation are incompatible with a sustained

inner life of the person reflects Fingarette's own involvement with the modern Western psychology/sociology antithesis rather than anything found in the *Analects*.' See Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, pp. 72, 74.

## References


Alexiou, Margaret. 2002. *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*. Revised. Dimitrios Yatromanolakis and Panagiotis Roilos, 2nd ed. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Chang, K. C. 1983. *Art, Myth, and Ritual: The Path to Political Authority in Ancient China*. Harvard University Press.

Chen, Lai 陈来. 2002. *The World of Ancient Ideology and Culture—Religion, Ethics and Social Thoughts in the Spring-Autumn Period* 古代思想文化的世界—春秋时代的宗教、伦理与社会思想. Beijing: San-Lian Publishing House 三联书店.

Chien, Xuan 钱玄. 1996. *Study on Three Books of Rites 三礼通论*. Nanjing Normal University Press.

Collins, Randall. 2004. *Interaction Ritual Chains*. Princeton University Press.

Fingarette, Herbert. 1972. *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred*, New York: Harper and Row.

Gong, Duan-Li 龚端礼. 1996. *Illustration of Wu-Fu 五服图解*. Shanghai Ancient Documents Press上海古籍出版社.

Holzman, Donald. 1998. The Place of Filial Piety in Ancient China. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118: 185–199.

Kurtz, Donna C. and Boardman, John. 1971. *Greek Burial Customs*. Thames and Hudson.

Nagy, Gregory. 2010. Ancient Greek Elegy. Ed. Karen Weisman. *The Oxford Handbook of Elegy*. Oxford University Press.

Pocock, J. G. A. 1989. *Politics, Language, and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History*. The University of Chicago Press.

Schwartz, Benjamin I. 1985. *The World of Thought in Ancient China*. Harvard University Press.

Weber, Max. 1951. *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism*. Trans. and ed. by Hans H. Gerth. The Free Press.

# Correction to: Mourning Rituals in Archaic & Classical Greece and Pre-Qin China

*Xiaoqun Wu*

Correction to:


X. Wu, *Mourning Rituals in Archaic & Classical Greece and Pre-Qin China*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0632-7

There were few corrections to be made in the Chinese literature of the book which is now updated.

The updated original online version of this book can be found at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0632-7



X. Wu, *Mourning Rituals in Archaic & Classical Greece and Pre-Qin China*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0632-7_7

# Index[1]



[1] Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to notes.



X. Wu, *Mourning Rituals in Archaic & Classical Greece and Pre-Qin China*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0632-7