

# Traditional, Current Situation and Attitude: Changes of Funeral Rites and Customs in Jining, Shandong Province

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## Abstract

The strong ancient Chinese society of the sense of “careful pursuit of distance” is embodied in the ancestral worship closely combining the view of soul and blood kinship, that is, that the deceased will survive forever and will continue to shelter the relatives still alive. Therefore, through the ages, people have been paying great importance to the funeral customs. After thousands of years of historical changes and cultural inheritance in Jining, Shandong Province, its traditional funeral customs still have a far-reaching influence on the current social life. How to evaluate with an objective attitude from the conceptual level is a key problem to be solved under the background of rural funeral reform in the new era. Only by paying attention to the social contribution of funeral rites and customs for the inheritance of filial piety and kinship, and actively guiding the local people to consciously break down from the vulgar customs that are not suitable for the requirements of The Times, can we better play their role in the construction of a harmonious society that cannot be ignored in the form of ancient times for the present.

## Keywords

Funeral rites and customs; Jining; Shandong Province; Historical tradition; Practical significance.

## 1. Introduction

In Jining, Shandong Province, funeral activities are more complex, which are not only family affairs, but also important matters of the family and village. They need to be fully prepared and arranged. However, “there are different styles and different customs”, and there are also many differences in the specific processes of different counties and districts. At present, the thematic research on Jining funeral has not been specialized for a long time. However, through the investigation of the etiquette and customs changes and objective evaluation, it has important historical value and practical significance for promoting the rural funeral reform in the new era. In view of this, on the basis of field interviews and historical examination, this paper strives to explore the tradition and current conditions of funeral rites and customs in Jining area, and view its social achievements to put forward some practical opinions.

## 2. Historical Tradition of Funeral Rites in Jining Area

Death, as an inevitable destination in the world, is the reality that all human beings cannot escape through the ages. Due to its unique cultural inheritance system, its historical tradition has a particularly far-reaching influence on modern society. The state of Qilu, represented by Jining area, has always attached great importance to funeral rites and customs. According to the relevant research results of archaeologists on Longshan cultural sites in recent years, as early as the late primitive society, other coffins and funerals have appeared in the surrounding areas of Jining [1].



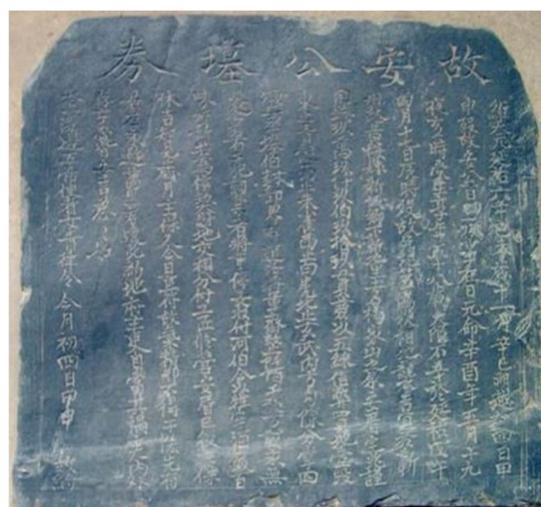
**Figure 1.** Funeral goods at Longshan Cultural Site

Due to the relatively low productivity, the body treatment is simple, but since entering the clan society, the blood source relationship between members is more clear and gradually recognizes the importance of death. “Funeral also, hide also; buried also, want people to see also, so the clothes are enough to decorate the body, the coffin in the coffin, the soil in the coffin, against the soil tree zai” [2], and began to produce a corresponding burial method.

The funeral rites and customs in Jining area have been initially formed in the Shang and Zhou Dynasties, which belong to the “fierce rites” in the “five rites”. During the Spring and Autumn Period, the local people’s awareness of “being careful in pursuing far away” was reflected in many documents about funeral in the patriarchal law, ritual and music system. Meng Yizi, a doctor of Lu, once asked filial piety to Confucius. Confucius replied: “no violation”, his disciple Fan Chi did not understand its meaning. Confucius said, “Life, the gift of things; death, the burial of rites, the sacrifice” [3]. Since the ancient people attached great importance to the important role of filial piety in funeral activities, it closely combines blood relationship and soul view in ancient Chinese society. For example, the ancient people only called dozens of names, and there are clear hierarchy, princes called “death”, and scholar-officials called “not Lu”. In addition, according to the differences in the age of death, there are also different exclusive words, such as “death”, minor death is called “war” and “death”, etc. In the long historical development, a series of more complex funeral rites and customs are derived.



**Figure 2.** Jining administrative division map



**Figure 3.** Yuan Dynasty Land vouchers

Jining in history, as one of the important birthplaces of Chinese civilization, as early as the Xia and Shang times, appeared still, dying, Jue, Bian Ming and other ancient countries. Zhou Dinglu was in Qufu. The Qin and Han Dynasties were successively affiliated to Xue County, Luzhou, Shanyang County, Tang and Song Dynasties, Jining Prefecture in Yuan and Ming, and Zhili Prefecture in the Qing Dynasty. At present, Jining has the jurisdiction of Rencheng and Yanzhou, Liangshan, Weishan, Jiexiang, Wenchuan, Yutai, Sishui and Jinxiang, and takes charge of two county-level cities, Qufu and Zoucheng.

During the Wei and Jin Dynasties, the funeral rites and customs in Jining were influenced by the rise of Buddhist beliefs and the advocacy of rulers. Changing the long-term tradition of the pre-Qin Dynasty to the Han Dynasty, "order thin burial, collect time service" [4]. Since the Song and Yuan Dynasties, the concept of thick burial has been reinherited, and added "land vouchers", "sitting", "land sacrifice", burning paper meditation, firecrackers, banquet and other new content has not appeared before.

Funeral activities in the Ming and Qing Dynasties can be said to gather the previous generations, Jining people prevailing retro wind, which is basically the return to the pre-Qin customs, but different, it does not put too much emphasis on the quantity and value of burial goods, but pay great attention to the extravagance of the whole ceremony [5]. Since modern times, with the dramatic social pattern, Jining area was influenced by cemeteries and other western concepts, and the local traditional funeral activities began to gradually simplify.

As a direct descendant of Confucius, the successive Duke Yansheng regarded funeral rites and customs as a crucial, which was also an important standard for the ancient people to measure their moral level. Thick burial concept has imperceptibly influenced all social strata, not only reflected in Zhuang serious, like the palace of Qufu Confucius' Cemetery, Weishan three sage tomb, the scale of the tombs, ordinary people will also die as white, do their best to run, and look forward to the deceased to continue to shelter relatives in the world, see the importance of funeral affairs. In the long-term historical changes, the specific connotation of funeral customs is constantly developing, and overlap with food, clothing, housing, festivals, religious beliefs and other social factors, centrally reflecting the values of Jining people.



**Figure 4.** Qufu Confucius' Cemetery

### **3. Funeral Customs of Han Nationality in Jining Area**

Since the 1950s, the local government has adopted various ways to promote modern cremation, and many new concepts of simple burial have gradually entered the vision of Jining people. However, according to the actual situation in recent years, after the death of the Han people, their relatives generally hold solemn ashes after cremation. After the traditional funeral customs, most continue to be implemented in Jining. The specific process can be roughly divided into the following links:

### 3.1. Early Mourning

In ancient times, the deceased needed to change into shrouds in ancient times, which was called "wearing clothes" in rural Jining countryside. Records of Rites mourning contains: "small collection, king, doctors, scholars, all with compound clothes and quilt". Before this, take the bath for the deceased. If the deceased is male, it is usually dealt with by the children and grandchildren, if female, by the daughter, granddaughter and other relatives, and place the "mouth money" of gold, silver or jewelry in the mouth. This is taken from "Great Funeral, Jade" [6]. The Policy of the Warring States Period also states: "Zou and Lu should not be raised, and death should not be included" [7]. In the archaeological excavation of the Dawenkou Cultural Site, the deceased was also found in the mouth. This ritual implies auspicious and safe, but the mouth must be taken out before the funeral. In Liangshan west of Jining, Wenchuan and other places, but also placed on the face of the deceased. During the period of funeral treatment, the children of the deceased can not go out at will. They should ask the "big master", that is, the funeral of the Lord, and the deceased according to the death date, check the specific date of the funeral, according to the address of "help relatives and friends", "inform relatives and friends to hang filial piety".

### 3.2. Hanging and Filial Piety

In Jining, especially in the outer towns, the deceased generally had to arrange pavilions, and the old Weishan Lake fishermen would set up spirits in the boat. "Canpreserves were held five or seven days after the funeral, with all relatives and friends, and the funeral period was the rich and the poor" [8]. In history, Jining area hanging filial piety activities, there were been strict ritual regulations, such as the Spring and Autumn Period, the state of "mourning" practice. Before the funeral, the children and grandchildren should hang filial piety in front of the spirit, "living in the cottage, sleeping pillow block", keep the long lamp day and night, and wearing heavy filial piety, arm black gauze. If there are deceased relatives and friends came to remember, the family members need to bow and salute, cry to thank their relatives and friends, called "Xie Xiao". "Send" refers to the night before the funeral, for the deceased to "travel" prepare "travel" ceremony, location is generally selected more open area, before the village began to draw a circle in the southwest, spare, burning wrapped son shouted: "a gold, two gen silver, three gen open south gate, the bright road on the southwest" [9]. Send the dead off.

### 3.3. Funeral

Sending the coffin to the cemetery is called a "funeral", which is the best process of family unity in the whole funeral customs. All relatives within Wufu should attend. Early in the band went to the home of the deceased to play sorrow and music. Taiping Imperial Tour contained: "Elegy, the music of the family, the bailiff, the sound of harmony" [10]. However, in the different areas that belong to the Jining area, there are also some differences in the specific requirements of the performance content. Take Jinxiang County and Yutai County in southern Jining as an example. Only the drummer in Jinxiang countryside has no singer, while the Yutai people pay attention to the vocal music [11]. The funeral, before, filial son after "whipped Beng", will be raised in half empty, fell to the ground, the more the number of fragments the better, only fall into fragments to facilitate the deceased "use" in another world. Shou material carried out, many relatives and friends lined up to protect the spirit, along the road emitting paper money, on the way if there is a husband stop to rest, children will kneel to cry, in order to show to be reluctant to part and retain the deceased.

After people arrived at the tomb, the dutiful son in the tomb patrol cleaning, and burned incense and toast, the drummer played the last music for the deceased, the bar man moved the longevity material into the tomb into the earth. Qianlong Yutai County Chronicles contained: "funeral, quilt, coffin at thick expense, the day before burial, late expert sacrifice, with three sacrifice,

stone, master, yu sacrifice instrument, scholar and officials more near Wen, old monk, asymptotically, its guest play, yu car, horse, etc., in the luxury, still can not go also" [12]. After all the activities, the funeral relatives and friends and "help" to salute the deceased before the tomb, the filial son stopped crying at the ceremony. The third day after the funeral, the grain had to be scattered on the tomb for a "round grave". The custom of Jining people planting trees before the tomb can be traced back to Confucius. According to the Records of the Grand Historian: "The tombs in the family were hundreds of trees, all different. The Confucius disciples planted their square trees, including tussah, powder, Luo Li, Anguo, Wuwei, and sandalwood" [13]. Today, all kinds of trees in Confucius' Cemetery reached more than 3,000 mu.



**Figure 5.** Funeral



**Figure 6.** Planting trees in front of the tomb

### 3.4. Sacrifice

Jining County of the Republic of China contains: "the tomb is the most convenient, rate in the second middle of the Spring and Autumn Period, the temple before the temple, no temple in bed, rate in New Year's day, Qingming, Zhongyuan, October and October sacrifice, its etiquette is no more than Chen Shi, burning paper money, sincere incense, respectful" [14]. In ancient Chinese society, if any immediate family members died, the children and grandchildren should decline personnel and official duties, at home for three years, namely "Ding sorrow". The tradition of building ancestral halls in front of the tomb began in the Han Dynasty. The Temple Steles of Duke Wenlu states, "with Qin, funny saints, destroyed ceremony, respected monarch and noble ministers, so there was no dare to camp the temple outside the Son of Heaven, and the Duke of the Han Dynasty built more ancestral halls in the tomb" [15]. The Han Lu Gong Temple and Jiexiang Wu Temple in Jinxiang are an important examples in Jining area.

And burn seven custom is formed under the influence of Buddhist culture in the north and south dynasties, the people think the death will be reincarnation, so in seven days for a cycle, up to the seventh, seven seven 49 days, every seven will sacrifice, the old jining dignitaries, will also invite surrounding temple monks to pray.

The 100 days after the dead, called "100 days", its specific rites and customs are basically the same as the seven. Another burning anniversary, burning third anniversary, this is the last special sacrifice, jining people pay special attention, since then no longer special ceremony, only in the tomb-sweeping festival, the Spring Festival, Spring Festival and other important lunar festival sacrifice with other ancestors, such as Qianlong Qufu county Chronicles included: "October, set side, said send cold clothes"[16]. However, some of the Jining districts, such as Yanzhou and Zou, held the sixth and ninth anniversary, but not the third anniversary. In addition, in the east of Jining, such as Surabaya and other places, there are some other funeral

customs, such as Dai Xiao did not paste couplets, do not go out for New Year greetings within three years [17].

#### 4. Hui Funeral Customs in Jining

As a unified multi-ethnic country with a long history, China is composed of Han and ethnic minority compatriots. Due to the different cultural traditions and religious beliefs of people of all ethnic groups, it is also different in funeral customs. In history, there were various ways of deceased burial, such as cremation, burial, water burial and hanging burial. At present, the ethnic minority residents in Jining area have the largest number of Hui people, about 50,000[18]. All the counties and districts are distributed. The History of Ming Dynasty contains: "Yuan time back over the world"[19]. The prosperity of the Jining Canal economy and the migration of Semuren officers and soldiers and merchants enabled the Hui ancestors to integrate into the local society from the Yuan Dynasty and formed the funeral customs with unique national characteristics.

The Jining garrison of the Yuan Dynasty was mainly distributed near Machang Lake in the west of the city, in order to raise military horses with the help of the beautiful water and grass by the lake. The Yuan army officers and soldiers who believed in Islam also built nearby places of worship. Therefore, the original several mosques in Jining area were concentrated in the west, and gradually expanded out, north to Wenchuan County adjacent to the Beijing-Hangzhou Canal, to Nanyang Town of Weishan County in the south, to Hutou Mountain of Jiexiang County in the west, to Xiguan community under the wall of the ancient city of Qufu, is still an important gathering place of the Hui people. Among them, Liuxing Street, where Rencheng District belongs, is the main village and town formed by the Hui ancestors and long settlement. In order to bury the dead, local people set up the Hui cemetery "West Dalin" to bury the dead nearby.

Since the late Qing Dynasty, with the spread of the modern social relief concept, Jining Hui people also appeared in the form of "righteous burial". According to Yuehua, a famous Hui newspaper in the Republic of China, "Jining was an important town in western Lu and merchants from the four sides during the gathering. Whenever the season is not correct, the epidemic, or have back to teach compatriots, travel in help, because of illness, far away from home, often need, in the winter cold, such as the summer, the teaching code is only three days, like this situation, real compassion. In view of this, for the relief death, daiji Bai together with the director of the temple, set up a funeral relief meeting, for the poor parents, powerless food, and foreign travelers died of illness, no relatives, all applications, by the funding, this is the same person out of sincerity also" [20].



Figure 7. Yuehua Magazine's Report on the Funeral of Muslims in Jining

The death of Jining Hui people is generally called “impermanence” or “return to the true”. Its funeral rites and customs are reflected in the two characteristics of “quick burial” and “thin burial”, namely, that is, without meditation, burning cartons, the deceased are wrapped in white cloth behind them, asked to recite the Koran and bury them in the common box of the mosque. Relatives and friends who come to face well will try to persuade the families of the deceased not to be too sad. The funeral activities of Jining Hui people generally did not delay time, not more than three days after the funeral and burial. Instead of inviting the barman and drummer to participate, the families of the deceased personally moved the body into the tomb and sealed the door with adobe. According to the relevant teachings of the Quran, the implementation of earth burial, no use of burial goods, more opposed to all kinds of extravagance and waste behavior. Except for special circumstances, men, women, children, regardless of the rich and poor, status, will be buried in the nearby Hui cemetery [21]. In addition, the family will do “days” to the deceased relatives, recite chanting, and make “oil fragrance” on this day to distribute relatives and friends.

## 5. The Attitude Towards Funeral Etiquette at This Stage

The Book of Songs contains: “Polygonum Polygonum, bandit Yi wormwood, sad parents, give birth to my labor” [22]. The selfless hard work of parents to raise children makes many children think that only holding tedious and grand funeral customs can reflect the “filial piety” of future generations. Under the imperceptible influence of the traditional Chinese thought, ancestor worship and filial piety culture jointly maintain the generational inheritance of the concept of “respecting the old and performing filial piety” in the funeral matters.

It can be seen from the specific process of funeral rites and customs in Jining area in recent years that if the lack of “help” in the whole activity, it cannot ensure the smooth continuation of the ceremony. Usually in Jining rural areas, “help” is not need to ask, most of them are distant relatives, neighbors, friends, will take the initiative to help after learning the news. Through the form of funeral, it can effectively close the contact with the village and neighbors, enhance the cohesion between the family members, and thus play a positive significance of strengthening the concept of unity. As the largest family cemetery in the world, Qufu Confucius' Cemetery is the reflection of the long-term dominant position of Confucian thought in the traditional Chinese society. Therefore, attaching importance to the social contribution of funeral rites and customs in the inheritance of filial piety and connection and kinship plays an important role in effectively promoting the construction of a harmonious society in the way of ancient times for the present.

As a long heritage of traditional culture, the Chinese nation, is not all perfect. Ji Ning Zhili Prefecture Records Said: “Jining decades ago, the society is made into a coffin, or cloth, or cloth with silk, something family to rent, now is poor, rich cost hundreds of gold, the poor is not dozens of gold, born eaves tile, died and the dragon pavilion phoenix building, there is a gift? Spend several months of work, rotary pay a waste of waste” [23]. In the local literature, we can often see the excessive operation, and resulting in the “damage to countless money put to the torch” historical records. At the same time, when the rulers regarded the funeral rites and customs, all dynasties strongly emphasized the “noble and cheap” and even were buried by people. The purpose is to ensure that the privileged class can always occupy a dominant position regardless of life and death, so as to achieve the purpose of maintaining the rule. This cultural dross continues today, still partially exists in the current funeral customs in Jining area, men respect for women, extravagance and waste, comparison, feudal superstition are its controversial components, which obviously runs counter to the spirit of the construction of a new socialist countryside.

At the present stage, the promotion of the correct concept of funeral and burial cannot be separated from the important means of education. Therefore, it should further implement the due role of the Red and White Council in grassroots funeral affairs, actively guide the general public to clarify the objective attitude of criticism and inheritance through various publicity methods, and consciously break down the customs that are not suitable for the requirements of The Times. While removing red tape, we should also appropriately retain the necessary solemnity of funeral etiquette and customs, give into account the will of the masses and the spirit of reform, especially respect the religious customs and funeral traditions of ethnic minority compatriots, and do not blindly “one-size-fits-all”, thus get twice the result with half the effort. In addition, the relevant departments should elect a batch of funeral reform work in recognition, organize the surrounding people to visit and study, and enhance the management of social welfare cemetery, increase the cost of civilized funeral subsidies, only let the local people get practical rights and interests in it, to more effectively promote the rural funeral reform.

## 6. Conclusion

As a product of ideology, funeral customs are closely related to the development of human society and are determined by the nature of production relations. With its unique historical factors, the funeral rites and customs in Jining area have been inherited and changed for thousands of years, and still reflect many cultural characteristics worth paying attention to at the present stage. In this regard, we should view it comprehensively and dialectically, critically inherit, and discard its dross, so that it can meet the needs of the current society. In this process, the simple use of traditional methods such as legal publicity and policy publicity is not enough to fully solve the limitations and shortcomings at present. The key is to let the local people spontaneously realize the positive significance of civilized funeral in real life, which is the important mission entrusted to the people of Jining City by the history and Times.

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