Chinese Folklore Culture Series
中国民俗文化丛书



# Funeral

# 丧葬卷

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# 第一章 葬前礼仪

Chapter One
Rites before the Funeral

Rites play a fundamental part in traditional Chinese culture. People use rites to regulate daily speech and behavior, or even life and death. Thus a set of rigorously stylized ceremony was formed.

Rites before the funeral involve preliminary treatments of corpses and the announcing of death, within which people's belief in death is reflected.

在中国的传统文化中,礼仪贵为根本。人们用礼仪来规范日常的言行举止,甚至将生死都囊括进来,形成了一套严格的程式化仪式。

葬前礼仪是对死者的遗体进行初步处理和发布死亡消息的一系列仪式,这些仪式蕴含了人们对死亡的信仰。

# Section One Confirmation of Death and Calling Back of Spirits
# 第一节 属纩与招魂

## Ⅰ. Confirmation of Death with Silk Floss

In traditional Chinese society, people begin to prepare for the funeral when their family members or the elders are sick into death. They first clean up both inside and outside of the house, and remove recreational facilities such as instruments in order to create a tidy and solemn atmosphere. They move the body from the bedroom to the hall in the main room immediately after death, providing a right place for the dead, and then put on new clothes for the dead. If the man was an official during lifetime, he should be put on new bright court dress to enter the nether world decently. While waiting aside, the family members should keep absolute silence and should not make loud noises or even cry so as not to disturb the deceased and to let them pass away peacefully. What they should pay special attention to is that the male should not die with his hands in the female's, and vice versa.

## 一、属纩

在中国传统社会中，当亲人或长辈病危的时候，家人便开始着手准备后事。首先将房屋里外打扫干净，然后将房屋内的乐器等娱乐设施撤去，营造出整洁、肃穆的氛围。当亲人或长辈在临终之时，家人要将他的遗体从卧室移到正屋的厅堂，即所谓的“正寝”，然后给他换上一身新衣。如果此人生前是做官的，则要替他换上一身鲜亮的朝服，使其临终时体体面面地进入阴间。等待的时候，在场的家属要保持绝对的安静，不能大声喧哗甚至发出哭声，以免惊扰到死者，以使其安详地寿终正寝。要特



That is to say, when a man ceases his last breath, his wife and daughter should not hold his hands; in case of a female, her husband and son should not hold her hands. Otherwise it will be considered ominous and likely to bring evil.

When family members or the elders have passed away, it is crucial to confirm whether they have died. There is a simple way that usually a little silk floss would be put between the man's nose and mouth, and whether the silk floss moves can help to decide if the man has really died. This is the so-called confirmation of death with silk floss. If the silk floss does not move, it shows the man has died, and then a ceremony will be held to call back his soul.

Ⅱ. Calling the Soul Back

Calling the soul back is a ceremony trying to call the souls of the dead back when they have just died, which is meant to ask

别注意的是，这时男性不能在女性的手中死去，而女性也不能在男性的手中死去。也就是说，当亲人咽气的那一刻，妻子和女儿不能握住男子的手，丈夫和儿子也不能握着女子的手，否则就是不吉利，会招致秽气。

当亲人或长辈过世之后，判断他是否已经死亡是十分重要的。这种判断方法也较为简单。当人死后，一般会在人的嘴和鼻子之间放上一小团棉花，然后观察棉花会不会动，以此来判断人是否已经断气，这种方法被称为“属纩”。当棉花不动时，就说明人已经断气，于是接下来便要举行招魂仪式。

**二、招魂**

招魂是人初死时，召唤死者灵魂的一种仪式，它含有再一次挽留死者的

them to stay in this world. According to ancient people, when people had just died, their spirits stayed near the body. So there was possibility to call their spirits back to their bodies and bring them back to life through certain ceremonies. Thus the ceremony of calling the soul back appeared.

The ceremony of calling the soul back was recorded in detail in *The Book of Rites*. When a man died, the person who presides over the ceremony will climb up the roof and hold the dead one's clothes in his hand while yelling towards the north which symbolizes the nether world, "You're expected to come back!" If the dead is a male, they call his name; in case of a female, they call her formal name. After doing this for three times, they roll up the clothes and throw down to the house where there is a servant waiting to catch the clothes with a box, who will then get into the house, take out the clothes and cover them over the body. People believed that clothes that had been worn would smell of people's body odor, which connected both human body and breath. Thus the soul would be attracted and get into the clothes following the familiar smell or shape. The box was a closed space which could seal the soul inside together with the clothes. Therefore, it was believed that

意思。古人认为，人在刚刚死去的时候，灵魂尚未远离躯体。因此通过一定的仪式，还可能让死者的灵魂重新归复于躯体，使人复活，于是招魂的仪式便随之出现。

招魂仪式在《礼记》一书中有着较为详细的记载。当人死后，即由主持招魂仪式的人爬上屋顶，手持死者的衣服，一边挥动衣服，一边向象征着"幽冥界"的北面空中大声呼喊："某某呀，你该回来了！"如果死者为男性，就呼喊其名字；如果是女性，则呼其字。如此连喊三遍，然后将死者的衣服卷起，扔到屋下，由侍者用箱子接住，最后回到屋中取出衣服，将其覆盖在死者的尸体上。古人认为，衣服由于被人穿过，很自然便会染上人的体味香泽，使人的"肉体"和"气息"实现双重联系，于是魂魄便能够被衣服所吸引，依循熟悉的味道或形状归附回

when they got back to the house and covered the clothes over the body, the soul would return to the body and bring the dead back to life.

The custom of calling the soul back prevailed in the *Qin* and *Han* dynasties, and has been handed down till now afterwards. Its form and tools have changed since modern times when people began to use long narrow flags to call back the soul. The flags softly drift about in the wind, looking quite ethereal. Seeing this, the soul will move towards the waving flag. Generally, the long narrow flags are about ten to thirteen meters high, and vary in color and shape according to the region and nationality. For example, the flag color of Manchuria Bannermen depends upon which banner the dead and their family belong to. The shape of the flag, which is similar to those used in traditional operas, has soft pieces embroidered with satin in the middle, and on the flag there is an embroidered golden dragon and the pattern of drooping colored ball on its edges. This kind of flags is commonly called "*Dulu* flag". There is another kind of flag of about 3.3 meters long, with the top in shape of a lotus leaf, the bottom sagged with a large

来。箱子作为一个封闭空间，能将归附的灵魂紧锁其中。因此，人们相信回到屋内，在死者身上盖上衣服后，灵魂便能自然回归到死者的身上，使死者复活。

招魂的习俗盛行于秦汉时期，此后一直流传至今。直至近代，招魂的形式和工具也发生了变化，人们开始使用幡旗来招魂。迎风飘飘的幡旗，绵柔且飘摇，显得十分空灵。魂魄见到后，便能够朝着这飘扬的旗帜归来。幡旗通常有三四丈高，颜色和形状因地域和民族的差异而各不相同。例如满族旗人死后的幡旗颜色，是根据死者的家族和死者所属的"旗"来决定的。幡旗的外形就如同传统戏剧表演时所用的大旗，中间有缎子绣成的软片，旗上绣有金龙，而边上则绣有彩球下垂的图案，所以这类幡旗又俗称为"嘟噜幡"。还有一种幡旗，它的上面设计成荷叶形的顶，下部垂挂

and wide ribbon embroidered with a red python, and the middle inlaid with floss as its waist. Besides, on the top of the flag hang two narrow strips of cloth. The pole of the flag is erected high and inserted in the center of a shelf painted red. In addition, there is a so-called "title flag", which is embroidered with the memorial tablet of the dead instead of a piece of embroidered cloth. According to legends that prevailed among ancients, spirits of the dead would attach to the spirit tablet after calling back the soul. There are rope loops for bars to go through at the base of the flag so as to be lifted by bearers guiding in the front of the funeral procession. The flags are usually erected outside the second door following the principle of "left for the male and right for the female": if the dead is male, the flag should be erected on the left side; if a female, it should be on the right side.

Among numerous minorities in China, there also exist similar ceremonies of calling the soul back, most of which are held when the body are still on the bed, while some are conducted at the funeral. Take the *Bai* Nationality living in *Bijiang* region of *Tongren* City, *Guizhou* Province as an example. If a family member died, they would invite *Sixieni*, the

绣有红蟒图案的大宽飘带，中间则用绒线镶腰，这种幡大概有一丈长。另外，从幡顶上挂下来两个窄窄的布条。整个幡杆被高高地挑起，并将其插在红漆架子的中央。另外，还有一种称之为"官衔幡"，幡的本身不是用的绣片，而是绣上了死去人的牌位。根据古时的传说，招魂后死者的灵魂就依附于这块灵牌之上。幡的下座两边有穿杠的绳套，以便于出丧的时候由杠夫抬着，走在最前面引导前行。幡旗一般是立在宅院第二道门的外面，遵循男左女右的原则。死者如果是男性，幡旗应立在门的左边；如果是女性，则立在门的右边。

在中国众多的少数民族中，也存在类似的招魂仪式，这些仪式大部分在停尸时进行，但也有在送葬时进行。诸如贵州铜仁市碧江地区的白族，家中如果有亲人去世，就会请来"司邪尼"，即主持葬仪

flamen presiding over the funeral, to host the soul-calling ceremony. A cock is killed and put in the dead one's arms for one or two hours. Then the cock will be roasted with fire and hung on the beam above the head of the body in a sack together with a bowl of steamed rice. At this moment, the *Sixieni* makes sacrifice while saying, "Have it with your dead father, and have it with your dead mother. We feel sad that you can't have it with us living. Wish you can protect us as well as our crops and livestock in the nether world." In other minority regions such as the Tibetan, the Mongolian, and the Nahki, lamas will be invited. The minorities in the northeast region of China will invite shamans to hold the ceremony.

If the dead cannot revive after the calling back ceremony, it can be confirmed that the dead have gone forever, and the funeral will be arranged formally.

的祭司来主持招魂仪式。先将一只公鸡杀死，放在死者的怀中，一般会放上一至两个小时，然后用火烧鸡，再煮一碗大米饭，将鸡和米饭一并装入麻布袋中，吊在死者头顶的房梁上。这时，"司邪尼"一边祭祀一边说："你和你死去的爸爸一起吃吧。你和你死去的妈妈一起吃吧。现在你不能和我们活人一起吃了，我们非常难过。但愿你在阴间保护我们，保护我们的庄稼和牲畜。"在我国的其他少数民族地区，如藏、蒙古、纳西等族，会请来喇嘛。东北地区的少数民族，则请萨满举行仪式。

当招魂仪式结束后，如果死者仍然不醒，那么就可以确定死者已经一去不复返，于是便要正式开始举办丧事。

# Section Two Announcing of Death and Hastening for Funeral
# 第二节 报丧与奔丧

## Ⅰ. Announcing of Death

If a person died, the news should be publicized at once by his family members, which is known as the announcing of death.

In ancient times, the procedure of announcing of death varied according to different identities and ranks. When the emperor died, the court would send a special envoy to inform all the feudal princes and his people. If it was a minister that passed away, his family members should report to the emperor and the court at first. In case of common people, their family members should inform their friends and relatives as well as neighbors right away. There were cases that the deaths of emperors were concealed, which mostly appeared in times of political unrest.

The announcing of death covers the name, life events and detailed time of birth and death of the dead, the date of the funeral as well as the date and place of interment, so

## 一、报丧

家中一旦有人去世了，就要立刻将噩耗公之于众，这被称为“报丧”。

在古代，针对不同的身份阶层，报丧的程序也不相同。当皇帝驾崩之后，朝廷会派出专使昭告天下，将消息告知诸侯和臣民。大臣去世，家人则要首先通报皇帝和朝廷。普通的百姓去世，家人应将消息及时告知亲友和周围的乡邻。皇帝的死讯也有秘不发丧的，这种情况多出现在政局动荡的时期。

报丧的内容包括死者的姓名、生平履历、生卒的具体时间、丧期、葬期及安葬地点等，以便亲友及时