

Comparative Study of Funeral Customs in China and Russia

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Abstract. Funeral customs are an important part of folk culture, which is a concentrated manifestation of a nation's view of death. This paper outlines the origin and development of funeral customs in China and Russia, describes the contents and characteristics of funeral customs in China and Russia according to the three stages of pre-funeral preparation, funeral and burial, and post-funeral worship, summarizes the commonalities and differences and traces back the commonalities and differences between the two through comparative research, interprets the underlying logic of Chinese and Russian cultures from the perspective of the concept of life and death, improves the understanding of the two countries' national cultures and provides references to the inheritance and development of China's funeral customs, and provide reference for the inheritance and development of funeral customs in China.

Keywords: Funeral customs; Chinese and Russian funerals; cultural exchange.

1. Introduction

Funeral practices are an important part of the folk culture of various countries. Death is inevitable and a major event of life, and burial, as a ceremony to honour the dead, represents the memorial of the living to the dead. A nation's unique funeral customs and burial culture reflect, to a certain extent, the nation's perception and attitude towards death. In China, funeral customs are influenced by Confucian culture, which generally shows the characteristics of attaching importance to clan inheritance and focusing on bloodline affinity; while Russian funeral customs are influenced by religious beliefs, and the funeral process and details must be in line with the religious norms, demonstrating piety of faith. Chinese and Russian funeral customs have many differences, but also some similarities, the characteristics of these funeral customs and the national culture of the two countries are closely linked.

At present, there are some research results on funeral customs in the academic world, but the overall results are relatively small. Domestic scholars in the study of funeral customs mainly focus on the study of funeral customs in various parts of China, especially in ethnic minority areas; and in the comparative study, most of them are comparisons of funeral customs between East Asian countries such as China, Japan, China and South Korea, and there is a lack of comparative research on Chinese and Russian funeral customs, and there are not enough academic results. In Russian academia, the research on funeral customs mainly focuses on the two major directions of "religion" and "ethnicity", and there is also a lack of comparative research between China and Russia.

Against this background, this paper tries to take the comparative analysis method as the basic research method from the cross-cultural point of view, through comparing the origin and development, process and details of funeral customs in China and Russia, analysing the similarities and differences, and digging out the deeper reasons behind them, in order to explore the cultural connotation through the national traditions, to understand the underlying logic of the Russian national culture in a more profound way, and to promote the cultural exchanges between China and Russia to be more in-depth; at the same time, in the analysis of the funeral customs in both countries, we will find that there is a lack of comparative research between China and Russia. At the same time, in the process of comparing and contrasting the funeral customs of the two countries, we will reflect on them, take the best and get rid of the dross, and promote the continuous development of our own folk culture.

2. Importance of Funeral Practices

2.1 Funeral customs and funeral rituals

Folklore is the naturally formed and agreed-upon habits and customs of a region's people in the course of their long production and life, influenced by geography, economy, politics and other factors. Folklore culture originates from the needs of local human social group life, and is constantly formed, expanded and evolved in specific ethnic groups, times and regions, and is created, enjoyed and inherited by the public. The folklore of a region encompasses many aspects: production and labour, social organization, festivals and rituals of life. Among them, a series of folklore related to birth, old age, sickness, death, marriage and funeral are unique and distinctive, reflecting in detail the way the ethnic group handles the major events of life. Starting from this kind of folklore, we can deeply analyse the underlying logic of the ethnic group's culture and further deepen our understanding of the ethnic group's culture. Funeral customs are one of these folk customs.

Funeral customs refer to a series of behaviours carried out by the living to commemorate the dead, including the preparation before the funeral, the funeral and burial, the worship and remembrance of the dead after the burial, and other agreed-upon practices and rules. In different ethnic groups and regions, funeral customs vary. Influenced by geographic constraints and local cultures, different regions and ethnic groups have their own unique forms of burial, such as earth burial, sky burial, cremation, water burial, and secondary burial. In recent years, with the development of the global economy, the price of land is high, and the traditional burials are causing more and more economic pressure on people, in addition, the negative impacts of some funeral customs, such as pollution of the environment, are also becoming more and more obvious. A number of countries and regions through the funeral reform, the funeral industry to regulate and rectify, so that the local funeral customs in the development of inheritance at the same time there are some trade-offs.

In the funeral customs, funeral ceremony is one of the important links, is the local funeral customs characteristics of the concentrated embodiment. The direct purpose of the funeral ceremony is to let the deceased rest in peace, but in fact, all the processes of the funeral ceremony are organized by the living, and the atmosphere of the funeral is solemn or relaxed, sad or joyful, depending on the attitude of the living towards death. The perception of death of the living and the rules of the funeral interact with each other, constituting a unique local funeral custom. From a certain point of view, it can be said that although the funeral is a matter for the deceased, it has great significance for the living.

2.2 Important role of funeral practices

2.2.1 The role of psychological comfort

Funeral customs stipulate the process of commemorating the deceased. Generally speaking, the whole funeral ceremony is grand and grand, from the preparation before the funeral to the sacrifice after the burial, the requirements for all kinds of details are trivial and strict. This enables the living who have just lost their loved ones or friends to temporarily detach themselves from their grief and get an emotional and spiritual cushion amidst the mechanical busyness in accordance with the provisions of funeral customs.

Take the Russian Orthodox funeral as an example, the funeral custom stipulates that the body should be washed with warm water and soap, posed with the cross in the hand, and there are many requirements on the colour and style of the life jacket, the orientation of the body, and the arrangement of the house. After all the work is done according to custom, the living are not allowed to spend the night in the room where the body is buried to avoid the influence of "unclean spirits". At this time, the busy people separated from the dead, to other rooms to tidy up, rest, temporarily removed from the atmosphere of the funeral, to continue normal life. In Chinese funeral customs, "wailing" is one of the Confucian funeral rites. Wailing and mourning comes from the Zhou rituals, and is also known as the "favouring dance", "feeding dance" and "weeping dance". By crying out loud, people express

their grief over the death of someone close to them and give vent to their emotions in order to gain inner comfort. In the Book of Discipleship, there is a description of funeral customs: "After three years of mourning, one is always sad and gagging, one's residence is changed, and one's wine and meat are cut off". After three years of mourning, children are considered to have done their last duty, and from then on, "to do for the dead is like doing for the living". After three years of hardship, people are able to get out of the sadness of losing their parents, and start enjoying good food and wine again, and devote themselves to a new life. In western Africa, the atmosphere of the funeral is relaxed and lively, to participate in the funeral guests dressed in brightly coloured clothes, around the coffin dancing "mourning dance", meaning that the deceased with a light pace to the world of bliss, so as to encourage the living out of grief. On the day of the funeral, the host should prepare meals for the guests, and the funeral site will also play some rhythmic music and dance music, so that the funeral will be carried out in a lively atmosphere, to dilute the grief of the loss of loved ones and friends.

In addition, in many places in the funeral customs, before the burial of the body will have a special mortician to dress up, so that the deceased look more decent. Through some aspects of funeral customs, the deceased in life unfinished wishes can be in another way after death "to achieve", which also allows the living have a way to the deceased "compensation". It can be seen that, no matter by what means, funeral customs carry the infinite mourning of the deceased by the living, and at the same time, mediate the psychology of the living to a large extent, and bring spiritual comfort to people.

2.2.2 The role of national identity construction

Due to the requirements of funeral customs, the funeral is a heavy task, and under normal circumstances, the main family holding the funeral will invite relatives and friends to help, and the neighbours and relatives of the deceased will also come to mourn on their own initiative. In this process, people of different status and age take up different responsibilities and undertake various tasks in funeral customs respectively. Generally speaking, the men of the family are responsible for external communication and procurement, while the women are responsible for liaising with relatives and entertaining guests. If one neglects or avoids the work required by funeral customs, one will be condemned by public opinion and be ostracized and excluded from subsequent life and social intercourse. In Tibet, China, the funeral procession is usually very large, even if they have had a grudge against the host family in the past, they have to come to the funeral, and must not be confined to personal grudges and violate the custom, which is a social standard to measure the sentiments, character, and bosom. In Europe and the United States, under the influence of Christianity, acquaintances who had a grudge against each other would eventually forgive the deceased for the mistakes he or she had made in life and pray for his or her happiness in the afterlife. Under the provisions of funeral customs, people follow the unique funeral rites of their own ethnic group, practice their ethnic culture in person and on the ground, gain a deeper understanding of their own culture, and strengthen their sense of identity and belonging to their ethnic group.

This shows that funeral rites strengthen the communication between members of ethnic groups and enhance the sense of unity in interpersonal relationships. The traditional cultural elements contained in funeral customs also emphasize the ethnicity of the customs, enhance the sense of belonging of the participants in the funeral process, and have the function of constructing national identity.

2.3 The Necessity and Importance of Research on Chinese and Russian Funeral Customs

In the context of the new era with the theme of peace, development, cooperation and win-win situation, China and Russia are important strategic cooperation partners with each other, but the exchanges between the two countries in the field of traditional culture are still in an unbalanced state, and the channels of exchanges are dominated by the official, and the exchanges among the civil society need to be guided more strongly, and the breadth and depth of the exchanges are in urgent need of strengthening. In general, China and Russia have a long history in history, culture and other fields, and there are similarities in many customs, which is conducive to the exchange and cooperation

of the two peoples, mutual understanding; but by the cultural landscape, religious beliefs and other factors, there are many differences in the national customs of the two countries. In order to avoid friction due to cultural differences and achieve win-win situation in exchange and cooperation, China should take the initiative to understand the customs of the Russian people, learn Russian folk culture in depth and follow the customs of the country.

As an important part of folk culture, Russian funeral customs reflect, to a certain extent, the Russian people's perception of death and their attitude towards death. Therefore, the comparative study of Chinese and Russian funeral customs is an important theme to deeply analyse Russian culture, understand the heart of the Russian nation, and strengthen cultural exchanges between the two countries. Through the comparative study of Chinese and Russian funeral customs, analysing the commonalities and differences between the two from the perspective of the underlying logic of national culture is an important way to promote mutual understanding between the two peoples.

In addition, both China and Russia have practices related to funeral reform, and the governments of the two countries have put forward different reform methods and optimization approaches based on the actual situation of their countries. Referring to the relevant initiatives of Russian funeral reform also provides new ideas for the sustainable development of funeral customs in China.

3. Comparison of Chinese and Russian Funeral Practices

3.1 Origin and development

3.1.1 Origin and development of Chinese funeral customs

Records of Chinese funeral customs began in the late Palaeolithic period. A common funeral ritual was to sprinkle haematite stone powder on or beside the dead, signifying the giving of new blood and new life to the dead. During the Xia, Shang and Zhou periods, funeral rites were gradually systematized and standardized, The formation of traditional farming civilization made man and nature establish an interdependent relationship, "with the sky as the father and the earth as the mother" ("Guan Zi"), and thus gave birth to the funeral "all living beings must die, and death must be returned to the earth" ("Zhou Li"), and earth burial became a common practice in the Central Plains.

During the same period, the concept of "generous burial" began to prevail, and funeral rituals developed in the direction of grandeur. The Book of Songs - Xin Nan Shan describes the Zhou people sweeping tombs and offering sacrifices in cemeteries: "They made wine and food to enjoy the sacrifices, to eat the food, to eat the food, to eat the food, and to celebrate the blessings." In the Qin Dynasty, Emperor Qin Shi Huang used 720,000 people to build a tomb for himself, "with a height of 50 zhang and a circumference of more than five miles, called the 'Imperial Tomb'", which started the tradition of feudal rulers spending a lot of manpower and financial resources to build mausoleums, which was emulated by later generations. The Qianling Tomb of the Tang Dynasty, the Thirteen Tombs of the Ming Dynasty, the East Tomb of the Qing Dynasty, the West Tomb and other famous tombs in ancient times, all of them are magnificent, grand and magnificent, the layout of the crypts is exquisite, the decorations are fine and subtle, which has numerous exquisite items buried. These tombs, on the one hand, concentrated on the wisdom and ingenuity of the ancient people, while on the other hand, the strict rules of their form also reflected the strict hierarchy under the feudal rule.

The concept of "generous burial" created a culture of extravagance and comparison, and was attacked by Confucius, Mozi, and many other learned men. In order to solve the problems brought about by "thick burials", Confucius once put forward the concept of "thin burials" and called for the simplification of funeral rites. The period of Wei Jin and North and South Dynasties is the simplest era of funeral etiquette in China's feudal society. In modern times, due to the traditional burial customs and the concept of "thick burial", all kinds of resources, such as timber, land, etc., overconsumption, the government-led promotion of a number of funeral reform measures, advocating the "generous care and thin burial," changing the monopoly of the funeral industry to a more simple and simple

funeral etiquette, promoting the selective inheritance of our funeral customs based on the objective reality, and continuing to develop in the direction of adapting to the times.

3.1.2 Origin and Development of Russian Funeral Customs

In the ancient Rus' period, under the influence of Russia's native polytheism, people generally followed the tradition of cremation, burying the body near the house after cremation. 988, Archduke Vladimir of Kiev made Orthodox Christianity from the Byzantine Empire the state religion, which made the Rus' people say goodbye to polytheistic beliefs, and follow the Orthodox funeral customs, practicing earth burials. From the excavation of the Kremlin in Moscow wooden coffins from the second half of the twelfth century, coffins of this period were generally made of oak, generally cylindrical, and were not fastened with nails. According to Slavic custom, the body of the deceased was wrapped in birch bark, also without oak, and such coffins were called "bundles (корсты)". According to historical records, the practice of using birch bark instead of oak coffins continued in the fifteenth century. 1703, Peter the Great issued a decree prohibiting oak harvesting in some areas, and the cylindrical oak coffins were gradually replaced by square coffins, which consumed less material.

Modern Russian funerals can be broadly categorized into two types: religious and non-religious. Religious funerals are prevalent in Russia, especially in rural areas, while non-religious funerals are generally found in modern cities. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, especially after 1992, the price of funerals in Russia has increased so dramatically that some families are unable to afford them and have had to ask the state and the church for assistance. According to a Russian survey in 1995, 130,000 people died in Moscow during that year, 20,000 of whom were denied cremation because they could not afford the cost. 1996, the Russian government enacted the Law on Funeral Business in an attempt to solve the difficulties of burial in the country. 2022 In March, the Russian State Duma began to hear a new proposal for a Law on Funerals. The proposal of the Law intends to avoid all illegal practices in the funeral process through government supervision, to systematize the work of the industry and to guarantee the rights of the bereaved. Russian funeral customs have changed over the years, and the details of funeral rites have evolved under external influences, but the ideological basis has remained the same, i.e., the belief in the existence of the soul of a person after death.

3.2 Content of funeral customs

3.2.1 Preparation for Funeral

3.2.1.1 Preparation for Funeral in China

In modern China, the main steps of funeral preparation include small coffin, large coffin, funeral report, mourning, mourning, stopping the spirit, guarding the spirit, etc. Small coffin refers to the deceased to tidy up the appearance, wear a good life jacket, put out a comfortable and decent posture. Life jacket is generally cottoned, prohibit the use of animal skin, traditionally believed to wear animal skin buried people will be reborn as animals. The big coffin is when the deceased is moved into the coffin in front of the family and sealed with nails, and wealthy people may place burial items in the coffin. When someone dies in the family, the family formally notifies relatives, friends and neighbours of the death and the funeral arrangements in the prescribed form, which is known as "reporting the death". Relatives and friends bring gifts, couplets, wreaths, etc., to the funeral, which is known as "mourning".

In ancient Chinese funeral customs, after the body is put into the coffin, it needs to stay at home for a period of time before it is sent to be buried, and this behaviour is called "funeral". The word "funeral" is taken from the word "bing", meaning "guest". "When the Zhou people were buried on the Western Steps, they were like guests." (Li Ji: Tan Gong Shang) The deceased could no longer be considered a member of the family, but at this time the body stayed at home, but it was like a guest who was about to go on a long journey. In ancient times, the length of time a casket stayed in the home depended on a number of factors, and the rules varied from one dynasty to another, with different rules for the most privileged and the least privileged. In modern times, this custom is still

followed, but the casket usually stays at home for only one night, also known as the "stopping of the spirit". On this night, family and friends come to the funeral home to say goodbye to the deceased. The partner and children of the deceased sit by the casket, thanking friends and relatives who have come to visit and ensuring that the lights in front of the casket are kept on, an act known as a "wake". This behaviour is called a "wake", and it also expresses people's condolences for the deceased. In modern society, due to the housing problem, there are two types of wakes: family wakes and wakes at funeral parlours.

3.2.1.2 Preparation for Funeral in Russia

In the opinion of Russians, a painless natural death is a blessing from heaven. If a person's natural death is quick and easy, then his soul goes to heaven; if he is tortured before death or shows a lot of pain during his natural death, then his sins deepen and his soul cannot escape from hell after death. In order to make it easier for the soul of the dead to go to heaven, people often move the body to a floor that has been covered with straw or linen, and open doors, windows and chimneys to make it easier for the soul to leave. For the same reason, if someone in the family is about to die, the mourners place a cup of holy water, a bowl of flour or honey porridge on the windowsill. In some regions, honey porridge is also prepared to entertain relatives and friends who come to offer condolences after the funeral.

The main steps in the preparation of the Russians before the funeral are: baptism, dressing, coffin and prayers. Baptism is performed immediately after the death of a person, and the procedure consists of scrubbing the body of the deceased while a special prayer is read. If the deceased is a man, the baptismal process is done by a male relative; accordingly, the baptism of a female deceased is done by a female relative. The purpose of this custom is to bring the deceased to God in purity and innocence. The "dressing" consists of putting on the clothes, boots or shoes of the deceased, holding the cross with the hands folded over the chest and wrapping it in a white blanket or shroud. The family of the deceased then carries out the "encoffining" process, placing the body in the coffin, arranging the iconostasis, and placing a nickel over the eyes, which is customarily done to prevent the deceased from opening his eyes and seeing the living, dragging them into the grave. Throughout the preparations before the funeral, prayers are interspersed at times, wishing the deceased happiness in the afterlife.

After confirming the death of a family member, the bereaved relatives would cry and wail loudly. This was not only a natural expression of grief, but also a common custom. Ancient Slavs believed that the spirits of the dead might seek revenge on the living, so in order to appease the dead, people cried loudly or hired specialized criers. It is a common belief among Russians that if the dead is properly mourned, then his soul will be more peaceful and therefore will not return to disturb the living. In the 16th-century code of laws, the Stolgraft, this custom was condemned as a breach of etiquette; in the 18th century, Peter I In the 18th century, Peter I officially banned "wailing" at royal funerals. However, these measures did not affect the tradition of wailing, which is still practised today in some regions of northern Russia.

3.2.2 Funerals and burials

3.2.2.1 Funeral and Burial in China

The term "funeral" refers to the transport of the coffin from the place where it is resting to the cemetery. In the process of funeral and burial, there are many rules and regulations that need to be strictly observed. When the funeral, send off friends and relatives in accordance with the blood relations of the proximity of the relatives to dress accordingly, wearing mourning clothes, wearing mourning scarf, in some areas there are also in the head of the white scarf, hairpin white flower custom. Generally speaking, the funeral procession should also be sorted according to blood affinity, but in the modern funeral process, this requirement has been gradually diluted, and people are more inclined to participate in the procession according to the proximity of the relationship, and there are often cases in which the deceased's close friends and next-of-kin jointly accompany the casket.

In the funeral procession, the eldest son of the deceased wears several hats and has the most important responsibility. On the day of the funeral, the eldest son needs to sweep away the floating soil on the coffin with a broom, and put copper coins on the corners of the coffin as "sweeping money and lifting the coffin"; then he performs the "resignation ceremony", and carries the big head of the coffin with the assistance of all the people, and removes the coffin out of the place where the coffin is parked, which is called "going out of the spirit". This is called "leaving the coffin". When the coffin leaves the hall, the eldest son needs to hold a soul-guiding flag and turn around the coffin three times on the left and three times on the right to show his reluctance to give up, and break the tile pot used to burn paper money. Folk believe that after the pot is broken, the deceased can take the burnt paper money to the netherworld for use. Afterwards, the eldest son walked in the funeral relatives at the forefront of the procession, friends and relatives followed, walking between the crying and mourning. At the front of the funeral procession, there is a leader, along the way to insert the "road flag", that is, with five-coloured paper or white paper made of small triangular flags, guiding the soul of the deceased. The eldest son is required to throw paper money at street corners or intersections to show that he has bought off the ghosts around him and helped the deceased to go on his way. If the eldest son is too old or ill to fulfil the requirements of the funeral custom, some of these duties may be handed over to the first eldest grandson instead.

Customs such as the eldest son being responsible and wearing mourning clothes reflect the profound influence of Confucian culture, which focuses on blood affinity, on Chinese funeral customs.

3.2.2.2 Funeral and Burial in Russia

In Russian funeral customs, people usually put a few coins into the mouths of the deceased during the funeral as the travelling expenses for the soul's long journey to the other world. In some regions of northern Russia, the coat that the deceased used to wear during his or her lifetime is draped over the coffin to protect the soul from the cold during the journey. On the way to the funeral, branches of spruce and fir trees are sprinkled along the way, as they are said to be able to "fill in the path to death, so that the dead do not return to the world and do not disturb the life of the living".

During the summer months, Russian burials are carried out quickly, usually within 24 hours of death, and often those who die in the morning are buried by sunset. In other seasons, the speed of burial depends on the circumstances. Generally, the casket is taken to the church where a requiem service is held in accordance with religious rules, and the funeral procession proceeds to the cemetery to bury the deceased, playing funeral music along the way. The time of the funeral is appointed by the priest and is usually held during the day; the night before the funeral, the bereaved family may take the casket to the church for a one-night stay in order to purify the soul of the deceased. In the Russian funerary custom, in order to have the deceased departed not to return home, the funeral procession stops at the first intersection along the way and spins the coffin three times in the sunlight, an act known as "obfuscation of the traces ("путать следы")". All those accompanying the coffin should hold a lighted candle and wear a turban or hat to protect themselves. Throughout the process of the coffin being buried, the people follow the priest in reciting prayers and chanting the Holy Trinity Benediction. During this process, each family member and friend involved in the burial goes forward in turn to add a shovelful of earth to the coffin as a sign of obedience to the Divine Providence and to bid farewell to the deceased.

After the deceased has been taken for burial, the women who remain in the house are required to clean the room and wash the floor. In some regions, funeral customs even require people to scrub the walls, clean the furniture, scrub the kitchen and make the home tidy again. The participants in a funeral procession, on their return from the cemetery, usually go to the bathhouse to have a bath, a steam to remove the "uncleanness" of the cemetery.

3.2.3 Post-funeral worship

3.2.3.1 Post-funeral Worship in China

In Chinese funeral customs, there is the saying of "the first seven days", "in the netherworld to seek a living destiny, seven days for a period; if at the end of the seven days, the living destiny has not

been found, it can be renewed for seven more days, and at the end of the seventh seven days, it will be born in one place" (Yoga Treatise). It is generally believed that on the seventh day after the death of a deceased person, the soul will return home to visit the deceased, after which it will enter the cycle of reincarnation. On this day, family members should cook a meal for the deceased, and then go into the room to avoid the deceased's seeing the family's hearts and minds, which will affect the reincarnation. In some areas, there are also customs, such as burning a kind of paper money in the shape of a ladder for the deceased on the day of the seventh day of the first month, so that the deceased can leave the earth by following the "heavenly ladder". In addition to the "first seven days", some regions have a tradition of holding a paper-burning ceremony every seven days, seven times in total, known as the "burnt seven days". Burning the "first seven" and "seventh seven" are held by the son of the deceased, which is called "having a head and a tail"; "third seven" is held by the daughter-in-law of the deceased; "fifth seven" is held by the daughter-in-law of the deceased; and "seventh seven" is held by the son of the deceased, which is called "having a head and a tail". Daughter-in-law organized by the deceased; "fifth seven" organized by the daughter of the deceased, and in some areas by the granddaughter of the deceased. "Burning seven" custom throughout the forty-nine days after the death of the deceased, in the "seventh seven" after the end of the funeral, the family in the yard to put a firecracker, expel the evil spirit, to meet the good luck, marking the end of the funeral.

In some areas of China, there is a custom of holding a funeral banquet after the funeral. At the funeral banquet, the host family usually prepares sumptuous dishes and drinks to reward the friends and relatives who have come to pay their respects. The dishes served at a funeral feast are often determined by local traditions, and sometimes some of the deceased's favourite dishes from his or her life are served in memory of him or her. The atmosphere at a funeral feast is generally sad and solemn, as people gather to ease their grief and get through difficult times together by sharing food.

Influenced by the Confucian tradition of filial piety, the Chinese attach great importance to paying tribute to the deceased and have a tradition of sweeping tombs and paying homage to their ancestors on the Qingming Festival. Tomb-sweeping takes many forms, but the general procedure is to first clean the tombstone with brooms and rags and remove the surrounding weeds to keep the grave clean and tidy; then offer food and fruits in front of the grave, burn some paper money, bow down and worship, and ask for blessings from the ancestors for the family's good weather. Some families have the tradition of offering flowers and burning paper models to their deceased ancestors on the Ching Ming Festival.

3.2.3.2 Worship after Funeral in Russia

Russians usually pay attention to the 3rd, 9th and 40th days after a funeral. At these three special points in time, the relatives of the deceased are required to go to the church to hold a requiem service and perform specific worship activities according to the requirements of the doctrine. Russians believe that the soul of the deceased leaves the world on the third day and goes on the path of new life. On this day, the relatives and friends of the deceased should organize a funeral for the deceased and bury him in accordance with the requirements of funeral customs. On the ninth day after the death of the deceased, the soul of the deceased is taken by angels to God, who judges the sins of the deceased during his life and puts him to the test, so that "the righteous go to heaven and the sinners go to hell". This process continues until the 40th day after death, during which time the angels ask God for forgiveness on behalf of the deceased. Therefore, the relatives of the deceased pray on the third, ninth and fortieth days not only in memory of the deceased, but also to thank the angels who defended the deceased before God. If the relatives do not follow the tradition of honouring the deceased, it may result in the deprivation of the deceased's right to reside in heaven, which may also bring guilt to the relatives in the religious sense.

On the 9th day, after the requiem service in the church, the relatives of the deceased should prepare a sumptuous post-burial feast according to the regulations. One of the most representative dishes is honey porridge (кутья), mostly made of rice, honey and sultanas, which symbolizes the new life in the afterlife. In addition to honey porridge, there may also be buckwheat porridge, pancakes, pies, fish, borscht, etc. Before starting the feast, the people recite the Lord's Prayer, praying for the

deceased. During the feast, people talk about the deceased's life. There should not be too many dishes at the feast, just enough to eat. The leftovers from the feast should not be thrown away and should be distributed to the poor. On this day, relatives of the deceased should also visit the cemetery. On the 40th day, the relatives of the deceased should organize a memorial service, go to the church to recite prayers, clean the graveyard and polish the crosses on the tombstones.

4. Differences and Similarities and Analysis of Reasons

4.1 Differences and similarities between Chinese and Russian funeral customs

4.1.1 Common points of Chinese and Russian funeral customs

4.1.1.1 Specific content of Chinese and Russian funeral customs in common

China and Russia have similarities in the content of funeral customs, which are jointly influenced by social, ethnic, religious and cultural factors. First of all, the mainstream form of burial in both countries is earth burial, the material of the coffin is mostly made of wood, complex funeral rituals are held before burial, and a long period of commemorative activities are carried out according to the system after burial. Funeral customs in China and Russia have shown similar development trends in the course of historical development. Secondly, from the point of view of the funeral form, the overall performance of the trend from luxury to frugality: such as the concept of "thick burial" to "thin burial" in China, the reduction of the Russian coffin consumables, and the gradual simplification of the steps of the funeral ceremony in the two countries. Finally, from the perspective of emotional expression, funeral customs in both countries tend to be restrained and standardized. For example, the number of prayers to be recited has been reduced, and the format of epitaphs has been simplified. In addition, the modern funeral atmosphere in both countries is mournful and solemn, and does not promote the venting of emotions, but rather the expression of mourning through specific language.

4.1.1.2 Similarity of the logical basis of Chinese and Russian funeral customs

People in both China and Russia attach great importance to funeral customs, which is because they believe that following traditional funeral customs can bring benefits to the deceased and enable them to enter the next stage of life smoothly. Before the soul enters the next stage, it is given an evaluation of its previous life and decides where it will go after that, based on the merits of the evaluation and the good or bad funeral rites performed for it by its living friends and relatives. This reflects the fact that the two peoples have similar underlying logic, i.e., the belief that the soul still exists after a person's death. It also shows the two peoples' view of good and evil, where a person's goodness or badness affects his fate after death, as well as the hope that good will be rewarded and evil will be punished.

4.1.1.3 Consistency in the practical utility of Chinese and Russian funeral customs

The realistic function of funeral customs in China and Russia is consistent, that is, they both make people busy through complicated ceremonies and play the role of psychological comfort; at the same time, the funeral customs of both countries require relatives and friends to come and participate, which invariably enhances the connection between people and promotes the unity of the blood clansmen.

Funeral customs of China and Russia occupy an important position in national culture, and the execution of funeral affairs in accordance with funeral customs can play a role in passing on national religious culture and deepening national identity. At the same time, funeral customs are constantly being updated and developed to meet the objective reality. In order to inherit the funeral culture while reducing the damage to the environment, the governments of both China and Russia have implemented relevant measures for funeral reform.

4.1.2 Differences between Chinese and Russian funeral customs

4.1.2.1 Formal differences in Chinese and Russian funeral customs

Funeral customs in China and Russia differ in form. For example, in the place where the funeral customs take place, the important place for Chinese funeral activities is the home of the deceased,

and the activities such as stopping the spirit, guarding the spirit, and mourning are often set in the home of the deceased; whereas in Russian funeral customs, in addition to the home of the deceased, the church is also an important place, and the deceased should stay in the church on the night before the burial in order to seek for the cleansing of the soul. In terms of funeral-related language, Russian Orthodox funerals require the recitation of specific prayers to bless the deceased; whereas in China there is no uniform requirement for the language of blessing, which is generally determined by regional traditions or family traditions.

4.1.2.2 Conceptual Differences in Chinese and Russian Funeral Practices

The conceptual differences between Chinese and Russian funeral customs are mainly reflected in the clan concept and the importance of blood affinity. In the Chinese clan concept, the dead family members are the "guests", should not continue to stay at home, but as soon as possible to forget the past, into the cycle of reincarnation, so the use of the word "funeral" to refer to the process of the funeral ceremony, to the newborn baby's name will deliberately avoid the name of the ancestor. Ancestors' names are also deliberately avoided when naming newborns. In the Russian clan concept, the soul of the deceased stays in the family for a longer period of time, and even though the deceased has passed away, the family still considers him or her a part of the family, and some families give their newborn child the name of an ancestor, in order to bring back the good qualities of the ancestor in the child, or to give the child the blessing of the deceased ancestor. In addition, the Chinese place a higher value on the closeness of blood ties than Russians do, and funeral processions are usually arranged according to the closeness of blood ties.

In addition, in terms of the tendency of the living to be consoled, the Chinese pay more attention to the real world, hoping that the cause of the deceased will be inherited and the spirit of the deceased will be carried forward, which is believed to be able to bring comfort to the spirit of the deceased in heaven. The Russians, on the other hand, are more concerned about the life of the deceased's soul in the other world and hope that the deceased can enter heaven and listen to God's teachings from a close distance.

4.2 Reasons for the emergence of similarities and differences in Chinese and Russian funeral customs

4.2.1 Causes of commonalities in Chinese and Russian funeral customs

The causes of the similarities between Chinese and Russian funeral customs can be interpreted from several angles. Geographically, both China and Russia have a vast land area, a vast plain and a developed farming civilization. Under these conditions, the people of the two countries have a natural dependence on the land, and there is a belief that "people return to the land after death", so burials are prevalent. The land of the two countries is suitable for the growth of tall trees, such as oak, pine and cypress, and in the cultures of the two countries, trees often have a sacred, peaceful, eternal and immortal image (such as the Russian poet Isakovsky in the poem "oak" oak tree with the eternal and life force associated with; the Chinese believe that the pine and cypress is the wood of the gentleman, "the years are not cold, no way to know the pines and cypresses, and the things are not difficult, no way to know the gentleman" ("Xunzi")), people often use the wood to make coffins to hold the remains, reflecting respect and blessings for the deceased.

It is widely believed that funeral ceremonies affect the quality of the deceased's "life" after death, so they are often organized in a grand manner, which tends to lead to wastefulness and extravagance. In ancient China and Russia during the Rurik dynasty, some wise monarchs and courtiers in both countries proposed to cut down on funeral expenses and implement simple funerals, and formulated policies accordingly. Since the political systems of both countries were feudal monarchies at that time, the policies were implemented from the top down and achieved a very good promotion effect, with simplified funeral ceremonies and reduced consumption of resources, showing a trend from extravagance to frugality.

The people of China and Russia share a similar culture of viewing good and evil, i.e., punishing the evil and promoting the good; the good will be given a better life and the evil will be punished.

When good and evil deeds are not rewarded in this world, people expect to be compensated after death, so they derive the concepts of "the soul still exists after death" and "good and evil deeds in life will affect the life after death", and write corresponding legends or seek corresponding explanations in religions. They have written corresponding legends and stories or sought corresponding explanations in religions.

In addition, as both countries have developed from farming civilizations, with weak mobility of people and close ties between neighbours and relatives, the funeral behaviour of one family has gradually developed into a collective event involving the majority of people in the area, and funeral ceremonies are necessary as important occasions for communicating with friends and relatives. Funeral practices provide an outlet for people to vent their emotions, and in the midst of grief, people are busy together, comfort each other, and establish a more intimate connection.

4.2.2 Reasons for differences in Chinese and Russian funeral customs

Chinese and Russian funeral customs differ in both form and content, and these differences come from the different cultural backgrounds of the two countries.

Traditional Chinese funeral customs require that most of the activities, such as stopping the spirit and keeping the spirit, must be completed in the home of the deceased, and the conduct of funeral affairs is usually entrusted to the deceased's immediate family members or elders who are highly respected in the family. Neighbours and friends, no matter how close they were to the deceased during his or her lifetime, are often classified as "outsiders" and are not allowed to participate in the core affairs of the funeral. These requirements stem from the importance the Chinese place on the concept of "family" and trust in blood ties. Chinese society is a "relationship-based" society, and the core of relationship construction is the blood family relationship. Trust between people in China also revolves around blood relations. And Russians' trust is built on the basis of common religious beliefs. Under the influence of Orthodox Christianity, believers have a natural trust and respect for Orthodox churches and are willing to entrust their dead to the church for their last night on earth and to recite specific prayers for the dead in accordance with the religious culture. Russians believe that these acts purify the souls of the dead and bring good to them.

In terms of conceptual differences, the Chinese, in contrast to the Russians, are more orientated towards natural "reincarnation" and have a "Taoist approach to nature". The Chinese generally believe that after death, people should follow the laws of heaven, forget the past and enter a new cycle of reincarnation, and should not continue to stay in this world, which gave rise to the legend of "Mona's Soup", "The Yellow Spring Road" and other stories; they tend to regard their dead relatives as supernatural powers, mysterious beings, and hold the dead in high esteem. They often regard their dead relatives as mysterious beings with supernatural powers, hold a reverent attitude towards the dead, avoid names and objects related to the dead, and sometimes hope to get help from the dead. Out of this "reincarnation" concept, the Chinese believe that the soul of the deceased enters the reincarnation or with the world into one, the deceased himself ceased to exist, it is important for the deceased to give a higher level of spiritual significance to the deceased, emphasize his social value, so that he "died a good death!". The Russians, on the other hand, believe that after death, a person still maintains his or her memories and character, but only exists in the form of a soul, which continues to live on in the other world. They see their dead relatives as part of the family and believe that certain signs are a sign that the soul is returning home to "visit its loved ones". As a result, Russian funeral culture is relatively more oriented towards a person's sense of self and self-improvement on a personal level.

5. Conclusion

Funeral customs are an important presentation of a nation's concept of life ethics, an important way for that nation to memorialize the past and face death, and a concentrated manifestation of its view of death and life. Funeral customs stipulate the way of expression that people take when sending off the dead and remembering the ancestors, guide people to deal with the death event, and bring spiritual comfort to people. At the same time, funeral customs also carry the responsibility of

inheriting traditional culture and building national identity. The study of funeral customs in China and Russia can deepen the understanding of the two peoples.

Funeral customs in China and Russia are affected by economic, political and cultural conditions, and in the process of historical development, they have been in line with the trend of the times, constantly making self-corrections and innovations, so as to make themselves meet the needs of development; at the same time, some of the contents of the funeral customs have been preserved and inherited to this day, forming the unique funeral cultures of the two countries. This paper compares the development trajectory of funeral customs of the two countries, traces back the common points and differences, summarizes the similarities and logical differences between the two cultures, and also provides some reference suggestions for the reform of funeral customs.

In recent years, with the improvement of material level, people pay more and more attention to the needs of the spiritual level. How to live with high quality and how to die with dignity have become important issues in today's era. Death is not only a topic of life for individuals, but also a focus of attention for society. In the current context of ageing population, there is a widespread fear of ageing and death in Chinese society. The concept that Russians are more open to death plays an enlightening role to a certain extent in China's death education.

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