

Liji Excerpts

Translation: Legge

天子死曰崩，諸侯曰薨，大夫曰卒，士曰不祿，庶人曰死。在床曰尸，在棺曰柩。羽鳥曰降，四足曰漬。死寇曰兵。

The death of the son of Heaven is expressed by beng (has fallen); of a feudal prince, by hong (has crashed); of a Great officer, by Zu (has ended); of an (ordinary) officer, by Bu Lu (is now unsalaried); and of a common man, by si (has deceased). (The corpse) on the couch is called shi (the laid-out), when it is put into the coffin, that is called jiu (being in the long home). (The death of) a winged fowl is expressed by jiang (has fallen down); that of a quadruped, by zi (is disorganised). Death from an enemy in fight is called bing (is slain by the sword).

曲禮下

始死，充充如有窮；既殯，瞿瞿如有求而弗得；既葬，皇皇如有望而弗至。練而慨然，祥而廓然。

When (a father) has just died, (the son) should appear quite overcome, and as if he were at his wits' end; when the corpse has been put into the coffin, he should cast quick and sorrowful glances around, as if he were seeking for something and could not find it; when the interment has taken place, he should look alarmed and restless, as if he were looking for some one who does not arrive; at the end of the first year's mourning, he should look sad and disappointed; and at the end of the second year's, he should have a vague and unreliable look.

檀弓上

弁人有其母死而孺子泣者，孔子曰：「哀則哀矣，而難為繼也。夫禮，為可傳也，為可繼也。故哭踊有節。」

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.'

檀弓上

孔子曰：「之死而致死之，不仁而不可為也；之死而致生之，不知而不可為也。是故，竹不成用，瓦不成味，木不成斫，琴瑟張而不平，竽笙備而不和，有鐘磬而無簋虞，其曰明器，神明之也。」

Confucius said, 'In dealing with the dead, if we treat them as if they were entirely dead, that would show a want of affection, and should not be done; or, if we treat them as if they were entirely alive, that would show a want of wisdom, and should not be done. On this account the vessels of bamboo (used in connexion with the burial of 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 pandean pipes are complete, but not in tune; the bells and musical stones are there, but they have no stands. They are called vessels to the eye of fancy; that is, (the dead) are thus treated as if they were spiritual intelligences.'

檀弓上

子路曰：「傷哉貧也！生無以為養，死無以為禮也。」孔子曰：「啜菽飲水盡其歡，斯之謂孝；斂首足形，還葬而無槨，稱其財，斯之謂禮。」

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.' Confucius said, 'Bean soup, and water to drink, while the parents are made happy, may be pronounced filial piety. If (a son) can only wrap the body round from head to foot, and inter it immediately, without a shell, that being all which his means allow, he may be said to discharge (all) the rites of mourning.'

檀弓下

故禮義也者，人之大端也，所以講信修睦而固人之肌膚之會、筋骸之束也。所以養生送死事鬼神之端也。所以達天道順人情之大竇也。故唯聖人為知禮之不可以已也，故壞國、喪家、亡人，必先去其禮。

Thus propriety and righteousness are the great elements for man's (character); it is by means of them that his speech is the expression of truth and his intercourse (with others) the promotion of harmony; they are (like) the union of the cuticle and cutis, and the binding together of the muscles and bones in strengthening (the body). They constitute the great methods by which we nourish the living, bury the dead, and serve the spirits of the departed. They supply the channels by which we can apprehend the ways of Heaven and act as the feelings of men require. It was on this account that the sages knew that the rules of ceremony could not be dispensed with, while the ruin of states, the destruction of families, and the perishing of individuals are always preceded by their abandonment of the rules of propriety.

禮運

大順者，所以養生送死、事鬼神之常也。故事大積焉而不苑，并行而不繆，細行而不失。深而通，茂而有間。連而不相及也，動而不相害也，此順之至也。故明於順，然後能守危也。故禮之不同也，不豐也，不殺也，所以持情而合危也。

This great mutual consideration and harmony would ensure the constant nourishment of the living, the burial of the dead, and the service of the spirits (of the departed). However greatly things might accumulate, there would be no entanglement among them. They would move on together without error, and the smallest matters would proceed without failure. However deep some might be, they would be comprehended. However thick and close their array, there would be spaces between them. They would follow one another without coming into contact. They would move about without doing any hurt to one another. This would be the perfection of such a state of mutual harmony. Therefore the clear understanding of this state will lead to the securing of safety in the midst of danger. Hence the different usages of ceremony, and the maintenance of them in their relative proportions as many or few, are means of keeping hold of the feelings of men, and of uniting (high and low, and saving them from) peril.

禮運

文王之祭也：事死者如事生，思死者如不欲生，忌日必哀，稱諱如見親。祀之忠也，如見親之所愛，如欲色然；其文王與？《詩》云：「明發不寐，有懷二人。」文王之詩也。祭之明日，明發不寐，饗而致之，又從而思之。祭之日，樂與哀半；饗之必樂，已至必哀。

King Wen, in sacrificing, served the dead as if he were serving the living. He thought of them dead as if he did not wish to live (any longer himself). On the recurrence of their death-day, he was sad; in calling his father by the name elsewhere forbidden, he looked as if he saw him. So sincere was he in sacrificing that he looked as if he saw the things which his father loved, and the pleased expression of his face - such was king Wen! The lines of the ode (II, v, ode 2), 'When early dawn unseals my eyes, Before my mind my parents rise,' might be applied to king Wen. On the day after the sacrifice, when the day broke, he did not sleep, but hastened to repeat it; and after it was finished, he still thought of his parents. On the day of sacrifice his joy and sorrow were blended together. He could not but rejoice in the opportunity of offering the sacrifice; and when it was over, he could not but be sad.

祭義

祭之宗廟，以鬼饗之，徼幸復反也。成壙而歸，不敢入處室，居於倚廬，哀親之在外也；寢苦枕塊，哀親之在土也。故哭泣無時，服勤三年，思慕之心，孝子之志也，人情之實也。

In presenting the sacrifice (of repose) in the (to his parent) ancestral temple, (the son) offered it in his disembodied state, hoping that his shade would peradventure return (and enjoy it). When he came back to the house from completing the grave, he did not venture to occupy his chamber but dwelt in the mourning shed, lamenting that his parent was now outside. He slept on the rushes, with a clod for his pillow, lamenting that his parent was in the ground. Therefore he wailed and wept, without regard to time; he endured the toil and grief for three years. His heart of loving thoughts showed the mind of the filial son, and was the real expression of his human feelings.

問喪