

The Evolution of the Funeral Concept in the Pre-Qin Period from the Tan Gong of Li Ji

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ABSTRACT. *The Tan Gong of Li Ji records many aspects of funeral ceremonies in the pre-Qin period, and provides us with a text for examining the changes in etiquette during this period. This article analyzes and discusses the evolution of the funeral concept in the pre-Qin period through the changes in the concepts contained in the coffin system used in the pre-Qin period and the combination of funeral rituals and concepts contained in the Tan Gong of Li Ji.*

KEYWORDS: *Li Ji, ceremony, funeral concept*

1. Introduction

The funeral etiquette in ancient China was a unique etiquette system of the Han nationality. It was not only self-contained, but also has a long history. As early as the pre-Qin period, various etiquette systems were quite complete. As one of the "three rites", "The Yi Li" recorded the ceremonies such as crowns, marriages, funerals, and sacrifices of the Zhou nobility. The Li Yun of Li Ji said: "It is a ceremony, it must be in heaven, confused with the ground, listed in ghosts and gods, and reached in funerals, sacrifice, shooting, driving, crown, marriage, meeting, visit." "Shisang Rites", "Ji Xi Rites", and "Shi Yu Rites" recorded the funeral system of the Zhou dynasty, but did not mention the funeral system of the Xia, Shang and even the second generation. As we all know, the etiquette system in the pre-Qin period had a transition "from simplicity to complexity". For this, there is a piece of familiar material in The Lunyu:

Zi Zhang asked: "Do you know the tenth generation?" Zi said: "The Yin Dynasty inherited the etiquette of the Xia Dynasty, and the gains and losses can be known; the Zhou Dynasty inherited the etiquette of the Yin Dynasty, and the gains and losses, can also be known. and also." ¹

Although the three-generation ritual system has undergone a change "from

¹ Liu Baonan, Lunyuzhengyi, Beijing: Zhong Hua Press, 1990, p. 71.

simplicity to complexity", its specific gains and losses and changes in its concepts can only be assisted by other ritual texts other than the Yi Li. The texts of the funeral materials from the pre-Qin period will be published in the Tan Gong of Li Ji.

The Tan Gong of Li Ji is the third and fourth of the current the Li Ji. Because it is too long, it is divided into upper and lower two. The content mainly includes Confucius discussing funerals with students and recording Yu, Xia, and Shang, Zhou Funeral Ceremony Differences. With regard to the age of Tan Gong, scholars of different generations have different opinions. My teacher, Professor Wang E, has compared and reviewed the text, thinking that:

The first and second chapters of Tan Gong were written by Confucius and his students. Until the end of the Warring States Period, some people referred to Zuo Zhuan, Guo Yu and other Confucian documents, and compiled them into what we see.²

Although the Tan Gong was written in the late Warring States Period, it was edited several times, and the historical events recorded therein began in Spring and Autumn Period, arrested the Warring States Period, and spanned hundreds of years. Therefore, it can still be used as a study of the pre-Qin period First-hand material for the funeral system.

2. A Change of Concept in the Pre-Qin Coffin System

According to the records of the Shisangli of Yi Li, the funeral of the nobles of the Zhou Dynasty went through a series of complicated rituals such as "ShiSi", "Fu", "MuYu", "XiaoLian", "DaLian", etc. "DaLian" means putting the dead in a prepared coffin. There is a passage in Xici of Zhou Yi on the evolution of the early Chinese funeral system:

"The ancient burials are paid in thick clothing, buried in the middle of the field, without closure or tree, and have many mourning periods. Later saints will easily use coffins to cover them."³

It was mentioned that before the advent of the coffin, the ancestors were in the stage of "wearing firewood" and "not closing trees" in the long years. Regarding the origin of the "coffin", we can know from modern archeological excavations that at least about 6,000 years ago, there have been stone coffins and ceramic coffins.⁴This is exactly corroborated by the records in the Tan Gong of Li Ji:

The Yu dynasty used a tile coffin, the Xia dynasty used a JiZhou coffin, and the Yin people used a coffin, and the Zhou people added a wall and Sha. Zhou people buried ZhangShang in the coffin of Yin people, buried ZhongShang and XiaShang

² Wang E: Research on Liji Text Formation, Beijing: Zhong Hua Press, 2007, p. 268.

³ Li Daoping, Zhouyijijiezuanshu, Beijing: Zhong Hua Press, 1994, p. 631.

⁴ Wu Hong, The Art in a tomb, Beijing: San Lian Press, 2016, p. 13.

with JiZhou coffin of Xia dynasty, and buried WuFuzhishang with Yu dynasty tile.⁵

"The Yu dynasty used a tile coffin", Zheng Xuan said, "Beginning without firewood, The Yu dynasty advocates pottery." Starting with no firewood, it is aimed at "the ancient burial man, wearing thick firewood," Most likely before The Yu dynasty, only the dead bodies were covered with firewood and so on when they were buried. By the time the Yu dynasty, tiled coffins began to appear, only to replace them. According to Shuo Wen: "Tile is the general name of the earthenware that has been burned." Zheng Xuan said that "The Yu dynasty advocates pottery", "Tile" and "Tao" can be interpreted from each other and are really one thing. According to the conclusion of the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasty project, the rise and fall of the Xia Dynasty was from 2070 BC to 1600 BC. Before that, The Yu dynasty used tile or earthen coffins at this time, which is basically the result of archaeological excavations. Are consistent. Moreover, the appearance and widespread use of tiles is also a long process, so the Li Ji should be roughly credible.

"Xia Dynasty used JiZhou coffin", Zheng Xuan said: "The fire cooked is called Ji. Burning earth surrounds the coffin. Or TuZhou, so it is."⁶ Classic Interpretation said: "Burning earth becomes brick, surrounded by The coffin. "⁷Then" JiZhou "is to burn the earth into bricks and surround the coffin. This change is undoubtedly a step forward on the basis of the tile coffin.

In the Yin dynasty, there were coffins, and at the same time, a puppet was created on the basis of Jizhou. As the "Yin Dynasty admires Zi", the former tile coffin was replaced by a wooden coffin, and a sack was made of wood and placed outside the coffin. In the Zhou Dynasty, walls and Sha were added outside the coffin. The wall, also known as "Liuyi" and "Huangwei", is a cloth covering the coffin. The Zhou Dynasty people came out of the coffin, carried the coffin in a car, and placed a wooden frame like a tent in the shape of a tent, called Liu. Liu is covered with cloth, the top of the cloth is called Huang, and the surrounding is called Wei. Sha, also known as "Shashan", is a long-handled cloth fan that is held in the palm of the hand when it comes out, and is decorated on both sides of the car. The evolution of coffins from the Yu Dynasty to the Zhou Dynasty can be referred to the following table:

The Yu dynasty	tile coffin	-	-	-
The Xia dynasty	tile coffin	JiZhou	-	-
The Yin dynasty	wooden coffin	Guo	-	-
The Zhou dynasty	wooden coffin	Guo	Wall	Sha

We can see that from the appearance of the coffin in the ancient times to the gradual completion of the Zhou Dynasty, the etiquette has undergone a process of "from simplicity to complexity". We can also see the profit and loss of the three-generation etiquette mentioned by Confucius in the Lun Yu. But at the same

⁵ Lijizhengyi, Shanghai: Shanghai Classical Press, 2008, p. 237.

⁶ Lijizhengyi, Shanghai: Shanghai Classical Press, 2008, p. 237.

⁷ Lijizhengyi, Shanghai: Shanghai Classical Press, 2008, p. 237.

time we should also realize that the change of etiquette is only external, and the etiquette and the changes of ideas behind it are more worthy of discussion. Confucius said, "Is etiquette, is it only jade and cloth? Music, is it just bells and drums?"⁸ It is exactly this. The Song Dynasty scholar Ma Ximeng had a wonderful exposition on the change of ideas behind the ancient coffin system. He said:

The Yu coffin used a tile coffin, and in the Xia Dynasty, Jizhou was added, so he had the image of a coffin. The Shang Dynasty people believed that the tile coffin and Jizhou were both pottery products, and the pottery was made of soil. Over time, it would become soil, which could not protect the human body, so they replaced it with a wooden coffin. On the basis of the merchant's coffin, the Zhou Dynasty people added decorations such as walls and Sha to express their filial piety and not to make the living people hate the dead.⁹

This passage can be understood from two aspects: first, the early tile coffin and Jizhou only had the function of concealing. In order to protect the body of the deceased, the wooden coffin was used in its place. This transformation is undoubtedly of profound significance. Secondly, from the initial "wearing firewood" to the tile coffin, Jizhou, and later to the wooden coffin, its initial function was not to consider the admiration of the dead, but to isolate the dead from the living. This point has been revealed in his discussion, "Don't let the living hate the deceased." Because no matter how close the relationship between the deceased and the living is, the dead will always be afraid of the deceased when they die, and even become disgusted feelings. In the Tan Gong of Li Ji, there is such a record:

Guo Zigao said: "Buried means to hide. Hiding is to make people no longer see. So clothes can cover the body, the coffin is surrounded by clothes, and the soil is surrounded by the coffin. See?"¹⁰

Guo Zigao is a nobleman of the Qi Kingdom, Cheng Zigao. He is known for his simplicity. He mentioned a very important message in this passage. He believed that the burial means "hidden" in order not to let people see it. Kong Yingda pointed out that "Zigao means that people will be hated by living people after they die. Therefore, prepare clothes and coffins, to make them deep and not to be known."¹¹ In addition, he also mentioned "planting trees" and planting trees in this statement. It is used as a symbol of a grave. The tree planting has the same nature as the "Zhou Dynasty added wall and Sha" mentioned above, and it is also an embodiment of the Zhou Dynasty funeral "from simplicity to complexity". Cheng Zigao means that since the clothes are enough to cover the body, the coffin can cover the clothes, and the soil can cover the coffin. This is enough. There is no need to plant a tree on it as a logo. On this issue, Ma Ximeng has a paragraph:

In ancient times, the burial of the dead was too simple, just covering their bodies with firewood. Later, the philosophers attached great importance to the final

⁸ Liu Baonan, Lunyuzhengyi, Beijing: Zhong Hua Press, 1990, p. 691.

⁹ Wei Shi, Lijijishuo, Taipei: The Commercial Press, Vol. 117, p. 319.

¹⁰ Lijizhengyi, Shanghai: Shanghai Classical Press, 2008, p. 325.

¹¹ Lijizhengyi, Shanghai: Shanghai Classical Press, 2008, p. 325.

etiquette. The tile coffin used at first was still not good, so they replaced it with a wooden coffin. Later, they felt that the coffin was not good enough, so they added various decorations. The use of coffins to place corpses is to prevent dirt from damaging the body. Adding decoration to the coffin is to keep the living people from hating the dead.¹²

Looking at this paragraph together with the previous Ma's comment, we have a clear impression of the evolution of the coffin system in funerals, and we can understand the etiquette behind it. The process of changing etiquette and etiquette from simplicity to complexity was accompanied by a change in etiquette behind it. The "more completeness" of etiquette in the Zhou dynasty reflected a concern for human nature, which is exactly the process of etiquette formation in ancient times. What is lacking.

3. The relationship between funeral ceremonies and ideas

Although the funeral system in the pre-Qin dynasty changed "from simplicity to complexity", the corresponding funeral concept did not develop on the basis of normal mating. We can also look at this issue from two aspects. On the one hand, the external funeral festival has undergone a transformation from "simplification to complexity", but the etiquette has been destroyed in the Spring and Autumn Period, and the princes and even the ministers have become more and more numerous. Far more than it should be. E.g:

Gongshu Wenzhi boarded Xiaqiu, and Qu Boyu followed. Wenzhi said: "This place is so good. I want to bury it here after I die." Qu Boyu said: "If you like it, can you use it for me first?"¹³

Gongshu Wenzhi is the Minister of the Wei Dynasty in the Spring and Autumn Period, the grandson of Wei Xiangong. After seeing Xiaqiu in this paragraph, he hopes to be buried here after his death. Zheng Xuan said, "It is ironic that he wants to invade other people's fields." It can be known that Xiaqiu should be an arable land, and according to etiquette, it cannot be buried here.

Chen Qianxi became ill and ordered his son: "If I die, you must make a big coffin for me and let my two wives bury her for me." Later, Chen Qianxi died, and his son said: "The funeral is incompatible Ceremonial, let alone in the same coffin?" "So he did not kill his wife to be buried."¹⁴

Chen Qianxi did not know his era, but according to this passage, since he has two wives, his identity should be noble. He hoped that a larger coffin could be used after death, which would allow two wives to be buried with him, which is obviously not ethical, so his son did not implement it according to his wishes.

On the other hand, although the external funeral ritual festival is constantly

¹² Wei Shi, *Lijijishuo*, Taipei: The Commercial Press, Vol. 117, p. 391.

¹³ *Lijizhengyi*, Shanghai: Shanghai Classical Press, 2008, p. 299.

¹⁴ *Lijizhengyi*, Shanghai: Shanghai Classical Press, 2008, p. 14.

increasing, in the specific implementation process, many early funeral ideas have been retained. "The Tan Gong of Li Ji has this text:

Cheng Zigao got sick, and Qingyi came to see him and said, "Your illness is already very serious. If it develops into a serious illness, what is it like?" Zi Gao said: "I've heard this saying: 'It is good for people when they live No harm to people after death.' Even if I was not good for people when I was alive, can it be harmful to people after death? After I died, I chose land where there was no crop and buried me there."¹⁵

Cheng Zigao, the Minister of the State of Qi mentioned above, has no way of examining the origin of his thoughts, but judging from the relevant texts, he advocates simplicity and is a bit like the Mohist. Mo Zi's ten propositions include "saving use" and "saving funeral", which are exactly the same as Cheng Zigao's words. This passage is about Cheng Zigao's death. His family member Qing Yi asked him what he needed to do after his death. What needs to be seriously considered in this paragraph is Cheng Zigao's last sentence. He said, "After I die, I choose the land with no crops and bury me there." Zheng Xuan explained: "If crops are not growing, it means land that cannot be cultivated."¹⁶ Wu Cheng based on Zheng Xuan's argument:

Land without crops means that this land cannot be planted with grain. Zigao said that it is not beneficial to the people when it is not beneficial to the people when they are alive. It would be harmful to people to occupy arable land after death. Therefore, they chose to be buried on land with little crops.¹⁷

Therefore, land without crops refers to land that cannot be cultivated, because if the deceased is buried with arable land, it will inevitably affect farming, which is harmful to people. Cheng Zigao is reluctant to do this "doesn't help people," so he said so. This is in stark contrast to the previously mentioned Gongshu Wenzhi's desire to bury Xiaqiu after his death. At the same time, we can also see that the occupation of the following burials at the time was common, and this was clearly inconsistent with the etiquette contained in the funeral. Cheng Zigao's burial in "inedible land" seems more in line with the meaning of etiquette.

4. Conclusion

In The Xue Er of Lun Yu, Zengzi said: "Be careful of the deceased relatives, remember the ancestors long ago, the people will be."¹⁸ The changes of the concept, as well as the coordination of the funeral ceremonial festival and the concept, make a simple analysis and discussion on the evolution of the funeral concept in the pre-Qin period. From this we can know that the coffin system in the pre-Qin period had a process of "changing from simplicity to complexity", and this transformation

¹⁵ Lijizhengyi, Shanghai: Shanghai Classical Press, 2008, p. 324.

¹⁶ Lijizhengyi, Shanghai: Shanghai Classical Press, 2008, p. 324.

¹⁷ Wu Cheng, Lijizuanyan, Taipei: The Commercial Press, Volume 121, p. 376.

¹⁸ Liu Baonan, Lunyuzhengyi, Beijing: Zhong Hua Press, 1990, p. 23.

was not only at the level of utensils. More importantly, the etiquette behind this change, in the process of "more complete" etiquette, has more prominently cared about human nature. In addition, the change of etiquette from "simple to complex" is not a normal cooperative relationship with the concept of funeral in reality, but is influenced or dominated by individual concepts and social and environmental factors. Only when the two complement each other can etiquette run on a normal track.

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