

"Rise at night and eat your fill, and there ye have napkins to wipe your mouths!" while the Cheremiss simply said, "That is for you, ye dead, there ye have food and drink!" In this region we hear of offerings continued year after year, and even of messengers sent back by a horde to carry offerings to the tombs of their forefathers in the old land whence they had emigrated.

Details of this ancient rite are to be traced from the level of these rude races far upward in civilization. South-East Asia is full of it, and the Chinese may stand as its representative. He keeps his coffined parent for years, serving him with meals as if alive. He summons ancestral souls with prayer and beating drum to feed on the meat and drink set out on special days when they are thought to return home. He even gives entertainments for the benefit of destitute and unfortunate souls in the lower regions, such as those of lepers and beggars. Lanterns are lighted to show them the way, a feast is spread for them, and with characteristic fancy some victuals are left over for any blind or feeble spirits who may be late, and a pail of gruel is provided for headless souls, with spoons for them to put it down their throats with. Such proceedings culminated in the so-called Universal Rescue, now and then celebrated, when a little house is built for the expected visitors, with separate accommodation and bath-rooms for male and female ghosts. The ancient Egyptian would set out his provision of cakes and trussed ducks on reed scaffolds in the tomb, or would even keep the mummy in the house to be present as a guest at the feast. The Hindu, as we have seen, offers to the dead the funeral cakes, places before the door the earthen vessels of water for him to bathe in, of milk for him to drink, and celebrates on the new and full moon the solemn presentation of rice-cakes made with ghee, with attendant ceremonies, so important for the soul's release from its twelve months' sojourn with Tama in Hades, and its transition to the heaven of the Pitars, the Fathers. In the classic world such rites were represented by funeral feasts and oblations of food.

(To be continued.)



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