

Rites of Passage Among many indigenous peoples of North America, a 16-year-old boy leaves his family and experiences a ritual in which he spends four days and nights alone in a small cave dug into the side of a mountain.

three stages: separation, Birth Rituals in Korea Many cultures have a rite of passage that marks the birth of a baby. However, there is reason to believe that such rites existed long before the beginning of history, before there was any system of writing to record the rituals. In caves and on rock walls all over the world, there are paintings from the Paleolithic Era (Old Stone Age) – exquisite art that may have been part of the people's rituals. They are universal, found in all cultures, and include certain birthdays, coming-of-age rituals, weddings, and funerals. Typical is the traditional wedding of the Bedouin – nomadic Arabs who move from place to place (although these days many are settling in urban areas). At the end, when he comes out of the cave, he is a man, with an adult name, and he knows what his livelihood will be. This ritual, called a vision quest, is an example of a rite of passage. Anthropologists use the term rite of passage for a ceremony or ritual of transition that marks a person's change from one status or social position to another. All rites of passage include transition, and incorporation of the person back into the society. At this time, the baby, dressed in a traditional outfit, is seated in front of a table with all kinds of objects on it. For example, they may include a bow and arrow (which represents the military), money (wealth), string (a long life), and a pencil and a book (knowledge). As a Thai person is dying, the family members encourage him or her to think about Buddhist scriptures – holy writing– or to repeat one of the names of the Buddha. In the next step, perhaps three days, one week, or 100 days later, friends, relatives, and monks take the coffin to the cemetery for the cremation, at which there is more chanting.

The Timelessness of Rites of Passage I The origin of such rites of passage is unclear. Anthropologists believe that this may be evidence of early religion and of the human need to mark the transitions from one stage to another in their lives—a universal, timeless need. He experiences cold, hunger, thirst, fear, and sleeplessness. Rites of passage are not found only in indigenous cultures. Islamic Weddings A wedding in any culture is an important rite of passage. In Islam, the specific stages of a wedding ceremony may vary from country to country, but most share certain characteristics. Of course, family members and friends want to achieve a good rebirth for the deceased, and this is a major goal of a Thai funeral. Around the coffin, people burn candles and a substance that produces a strong, sweet smell, and Buddhist monks come to chant—say prayers. His hope is to have a vision in which he receives insight and guidance about his future direction in life. Although such rites differ in details, they share certain characteristics. These include hot and spicy foods and broken crackers or cookies. In the past, close to the time of birth, there were various symbolic actions that signified an easy delivery of the baby. The mother traditionally eats seaweed soup, full of iron, to regain her strength. A Bedouin wedding can last up to a week and reflects the ancient Arab belief that marriage is not just a joining of two people; it is the joining of two families. At this party, there is song and dance, and the bride's hands and feet are exquisitely decorated with henna, a dark brown paste. Men perform a special dance with swords while women admire the bride's trousseau – the personal objects that she will bring to her marriage such as clothing, gifts from the groom's family, and jewelry. This is a symbol of her comfort in her new home.

Funerals in Thailand A person's final passage is death. He has with him several objects of symbolic value.

What Are Rites of Passage? In Korean

tradition, the rituals begin during the woman's pregnancy. Some of these rituals are still practiced today, but some are not. There are food taboos – certain foods that pregnant women are not supposed to eat. For example, family members left doors open, and did not repair rooms, doors, or fireplaces in the kitchen. Everyone is very interested in which object the baby reaches for because the belief is that this object indicates something about the baby's future. The first step in a Bedouin wedding is the proposal, in which the father of the groom (the man) and their close relatives visit the home of the bride (the woman) to ask for her hand in marriage. The next step involves negotiations between the two families and a marriage contract – a formal, legal agreement. The third step is the henna party, for just the bride and her female friends and relatives. The jewelry is usually large, made of silver and expensive stones, and decorated with calligraphy. Every culture has rituals in which the person and his or her family make this transition. In Thailand, a Buddhist country, people believe that after death, the person is born again, in another body. Then, after the person dies, the family takes the deceased to the temple. The family and friends show respect by washing the hand of the deceased. In the graves of even these very ancient people, objects have been carefully placed. The belief is that the smoke from the pipe goes up to the spirit world and allows power to come down. At the beginning of the ritual, he is a boy, with a boy's name. In the first stage, the person is separated from his or her previous status. Sometimes in this stage, as in a vision quest, the person is separated from the community. In the transition stage, the person is in between – not in either status. In the last stage, the person rejoins the society, now with the new status. The parents encourage the baby to choose something. The henna is more than just skin paint. It is associated with health, beauty, and luck. After this, the groom's relatives arrive at the bride's house. In the fifth step, the men and women sit separately, and guests bring gifts. In the last step, as the bride enters her new home, she and her new husband meet for the first time. One week after the wedding, the bride visits her parents and brings them gifts. Everything the person did in life – both good and bad – determines whether the next life will be a good one or not. The coffin is placed on a funeral pyre. At this point, people come up to it with white paper flowers, candles, and the sweet-smelling substance. It is believed that when the body still exists, the spirit can benefit from the chanting; however, when the body is burned, the spirit is cut off from the world. The family usually takes some of the ashes home, but some families keep the ashes at the temple. One of these is a pipe. Today, as in the past, there is special care to keep the mother and baby well after the birth. She is also not supposed to drink cold water for 21 days. At the age of 100 days, there is a special ceremony. More important is the first birthday