

Burial customs in Japan and Italy

By Taylor Gray

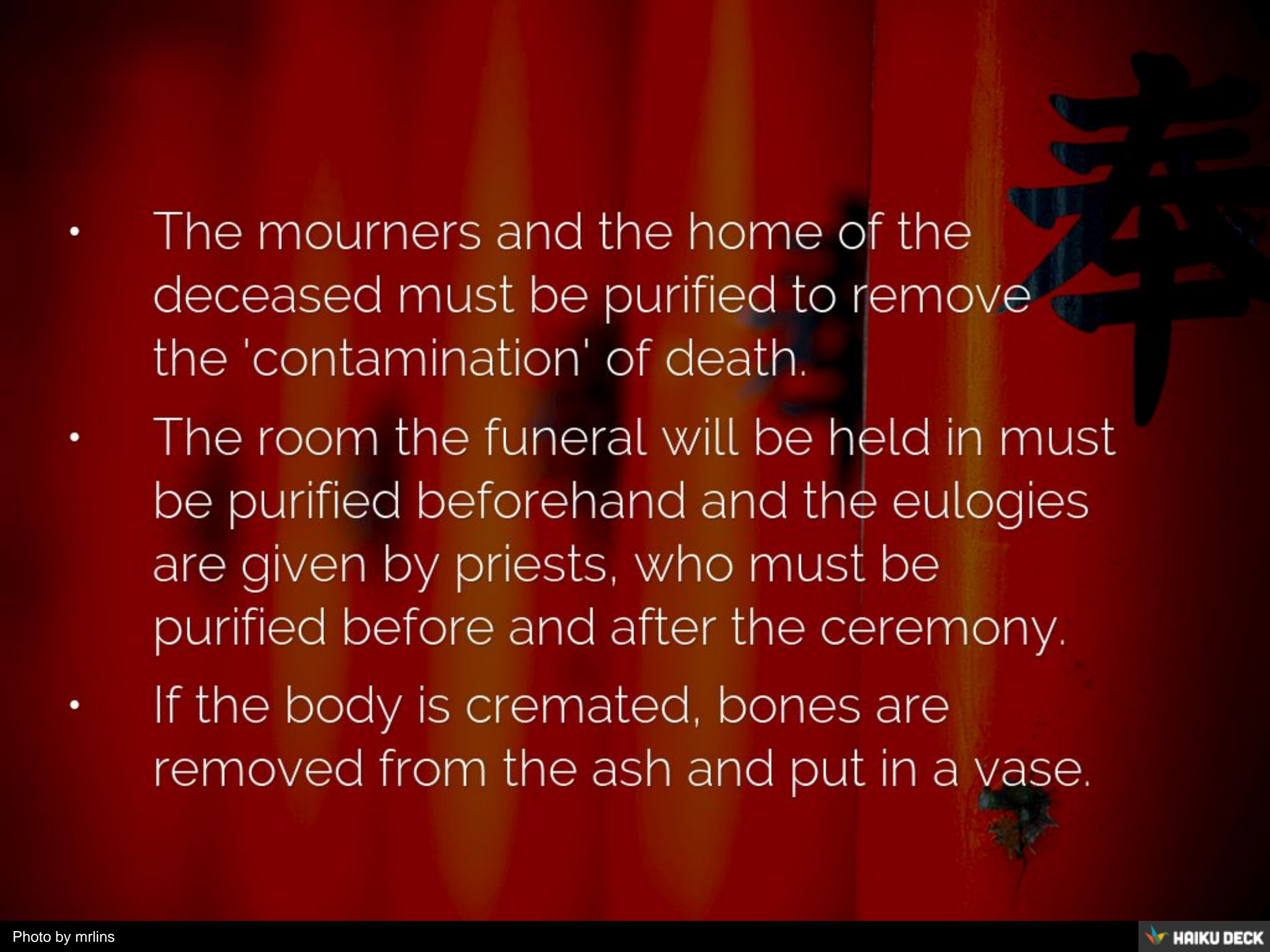


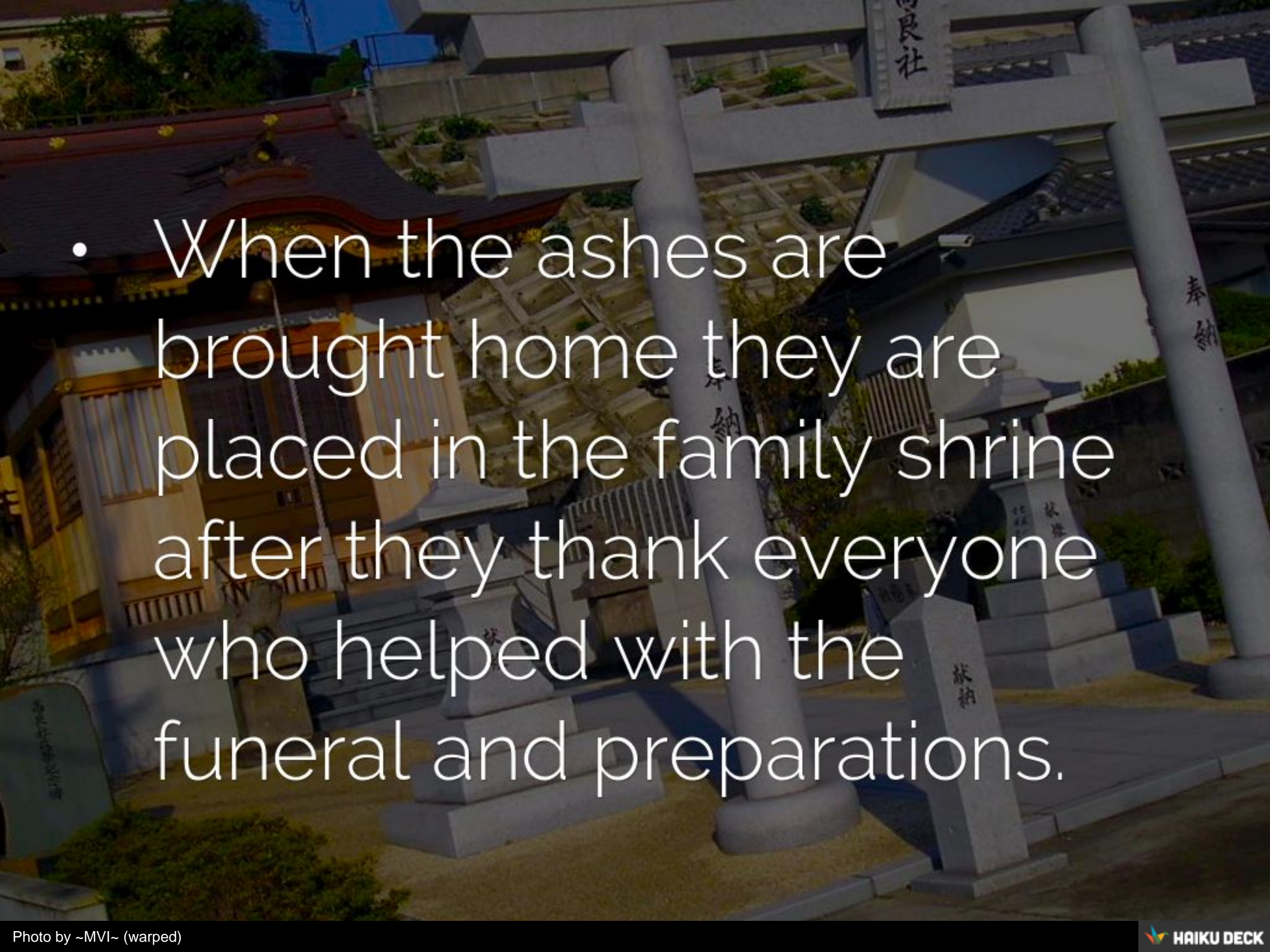


Shintoism and Buddhism
are the main religions
practiced in Japan and they
each have their own burial
customs.

Shinto

- Shinto is Japans oldest and most traditonal religion.
- Shinto people believe that spirits abide in the natural things on earth, like rocks, flowers, and animals.
- The preparation rituals are all focused on purification so the deceased can join the spirit world.

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- The mourners and the home of the deceased must be purified to remove the 'contamination' of death.
 - The room the funeral will be held in must be purified beforehand and the eulogies are given by priests, who must be purified before and after the ceremony.
 - If the body is cremated, bones are removed from the ash and put in a vase.

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- When the ashes are brought home they are placed in the family shrine after they thank everyone who helped with the funeral and preparations.

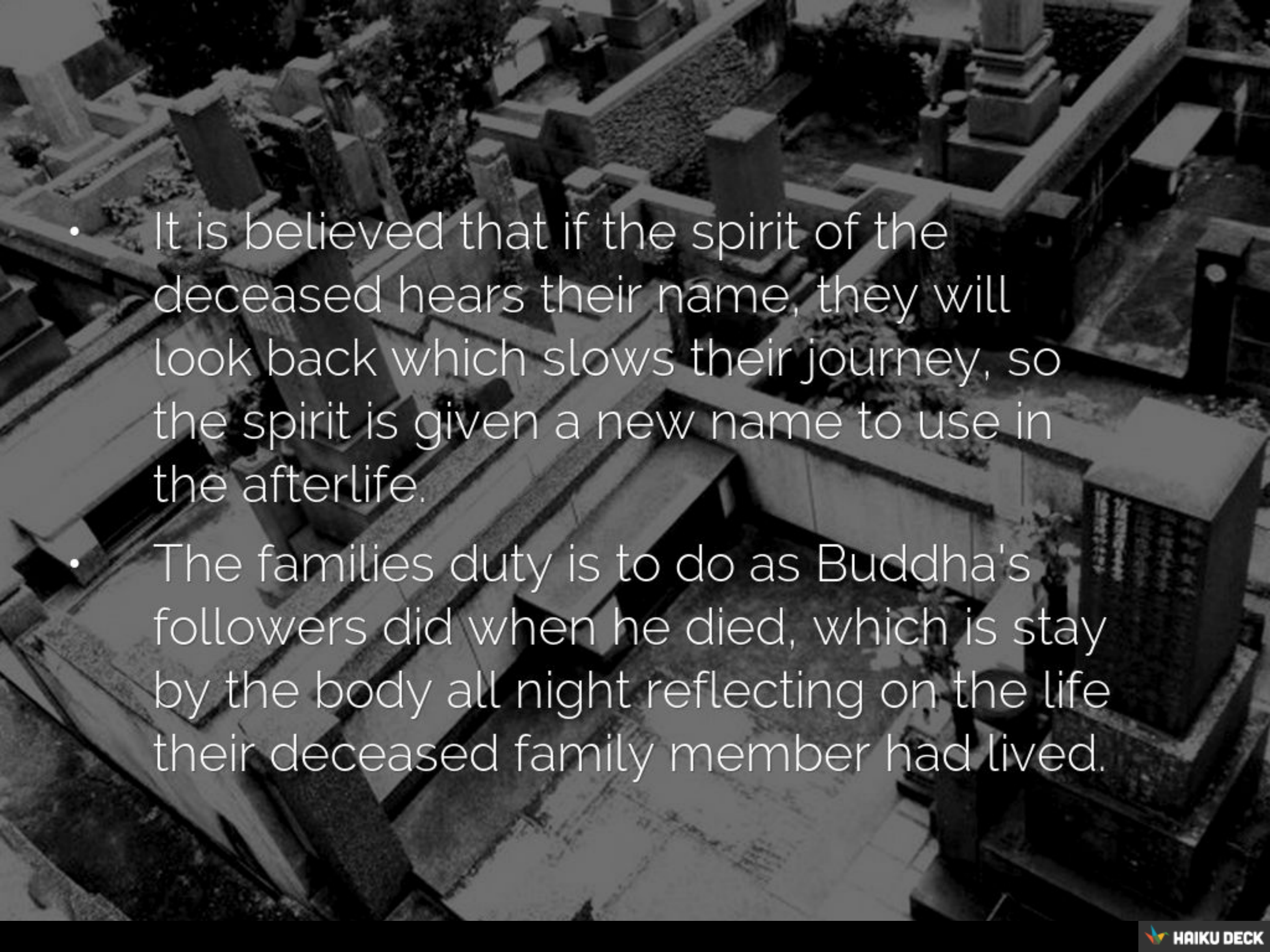
Buddhist

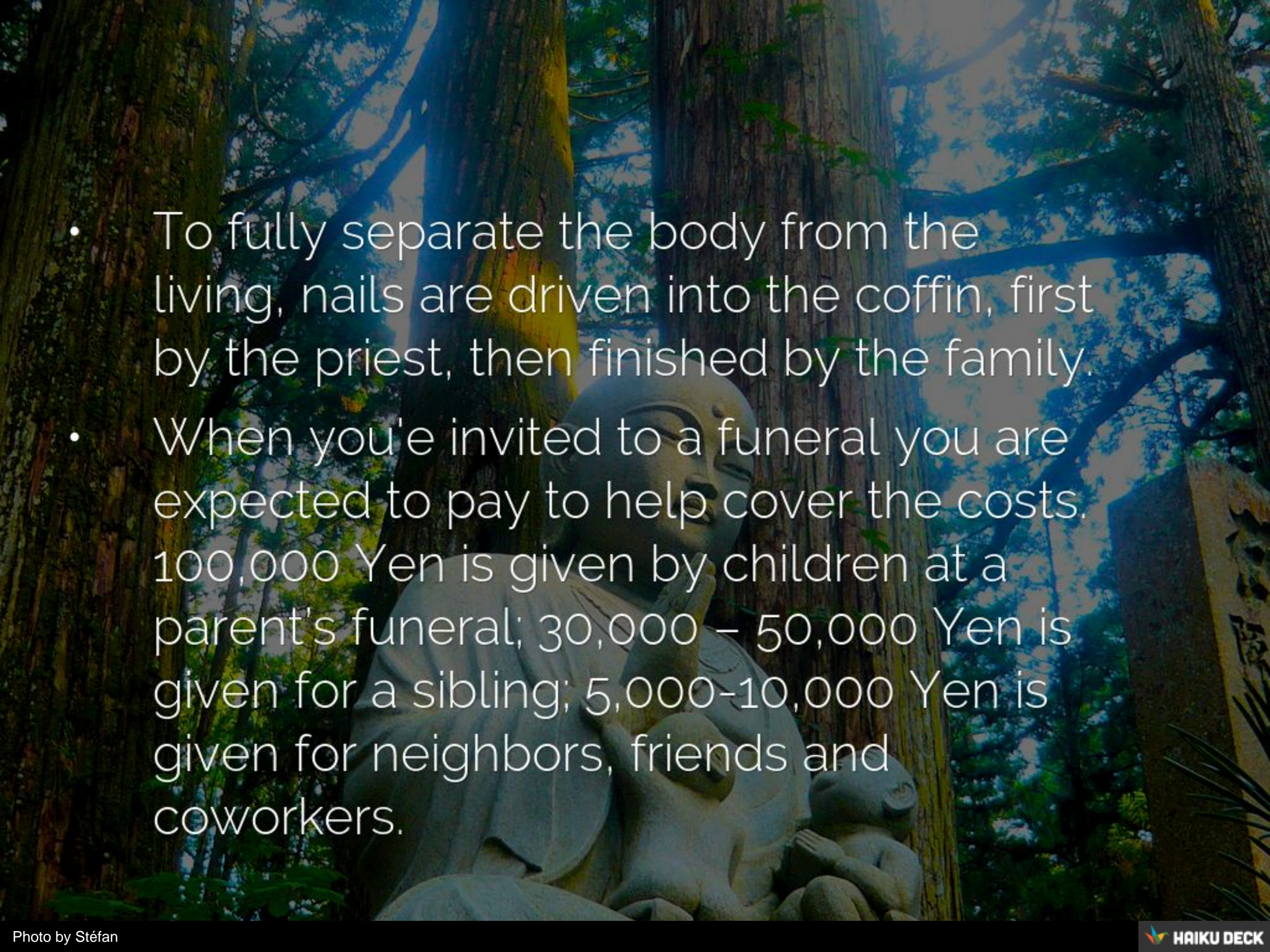
- Buddhist funerals in Japan are considered a farewell ceremony.
- Buddhists believe that when someone dies their spirit goes on a journey, to the 'Pure Land' where one refines themselves in a new life away from the distractions of humans until they reach the state of nirvana.

- Nirvana is a state in which there is no suffering, desire, or sense of self, and the subject is released from the effects of karma and the cycle of death and rebirth.
- The mourners of the deceased are considered a support system for the spirit on its journey.
- The family members jobs are to 'check in' on the spirit throughout its journey.

- In most funerals the rites are backward; The kimonos are folded backwards and the body is covered head first. This is done to keep everyday acts from being associated with death.
- The deceased persons favorite things are kept with the body in the coffin.

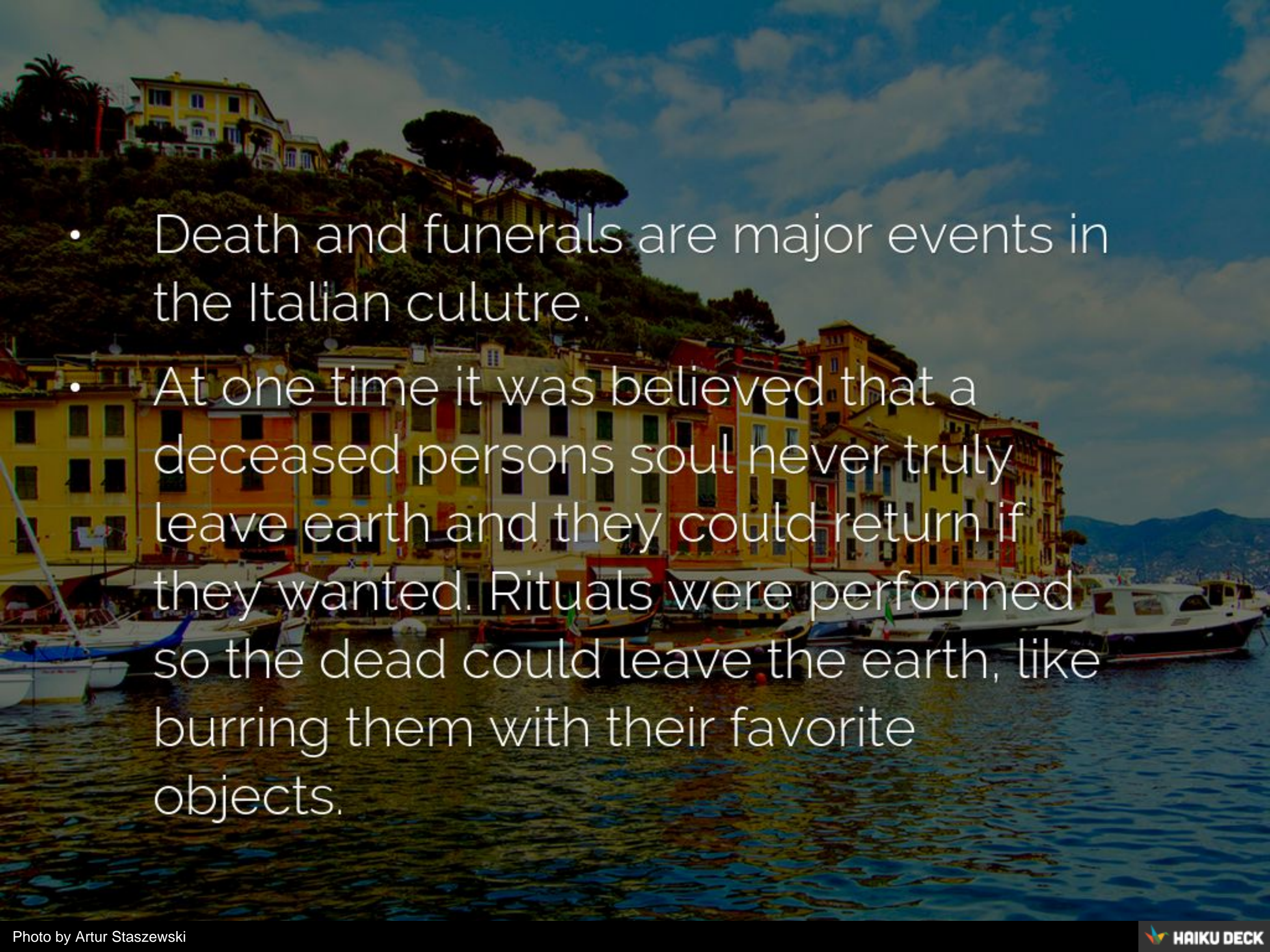
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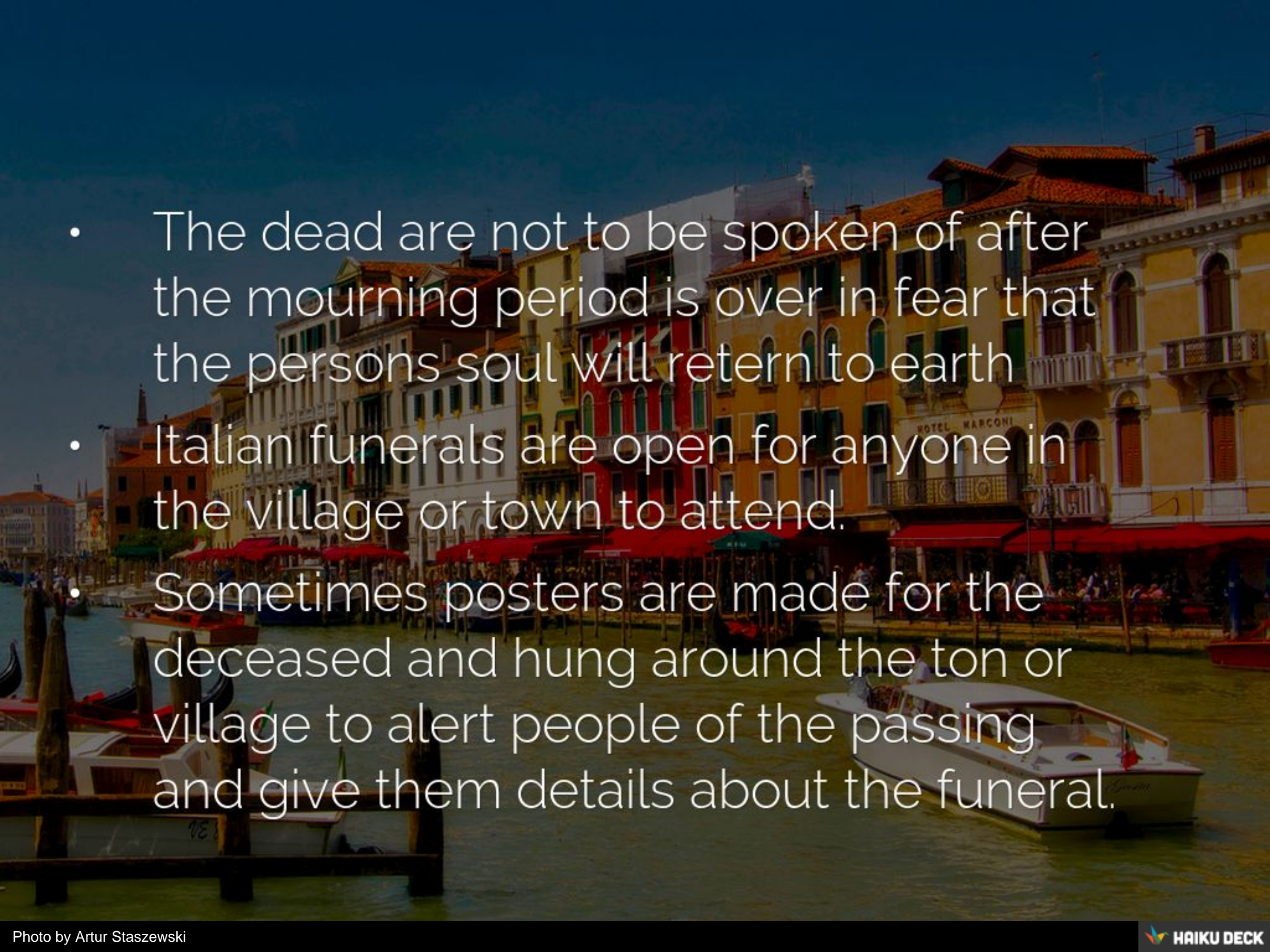
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- An aerial, high-angle photograph of a cemetery. The image shows a dense arrangement of various tombstones and grave markers, some rectangular, some square, and some with intricate designs. The perspective is from directly above, looking down on the rows of graves. The lighting is somewhat dim, giving the scene a somber and quiet atmosphere. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image in a white, sans-serif font.
- It is believed that if the spirit of the deceased hears their name, they will look back which slows their journey, so the spirit is given a new name to use in the afterlife.
 - The families duty is to do as Buddha's followers did when he died, which is stay by the body all night reflecting on the life their deceased family member had lived.

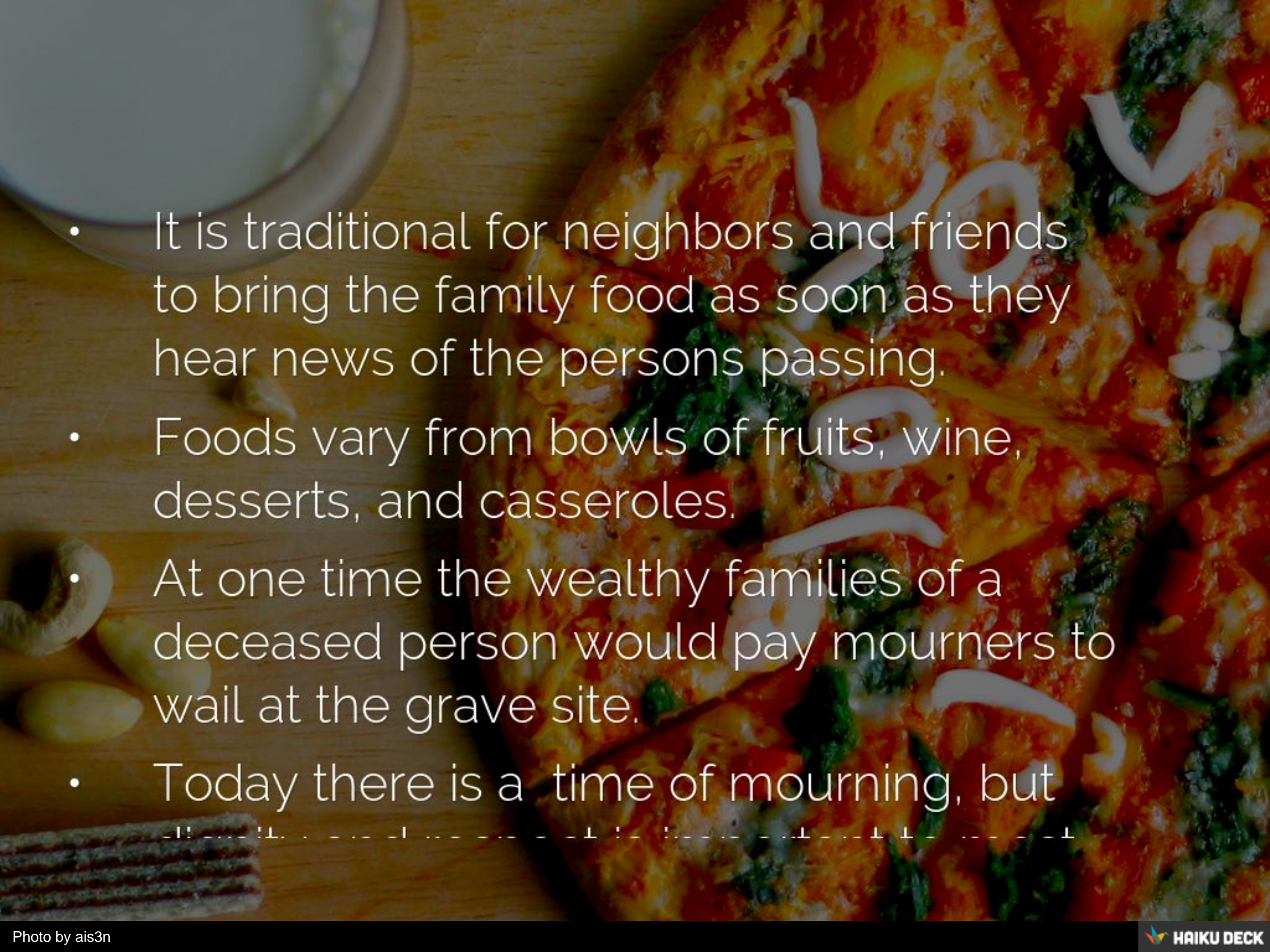
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- To fully separate the body from the living, nails are driven into the coffin, first by the priest, then finished by the family.
 - When you're invited to a funeral you are expected to pay to help cover the costs. 100,000 Yen is given by children at a parent's funeral; 30,000 – 50,000 Yen is given for a sibling; 5,000-10,000 Yen is given for neighbors, friends and coworkers.

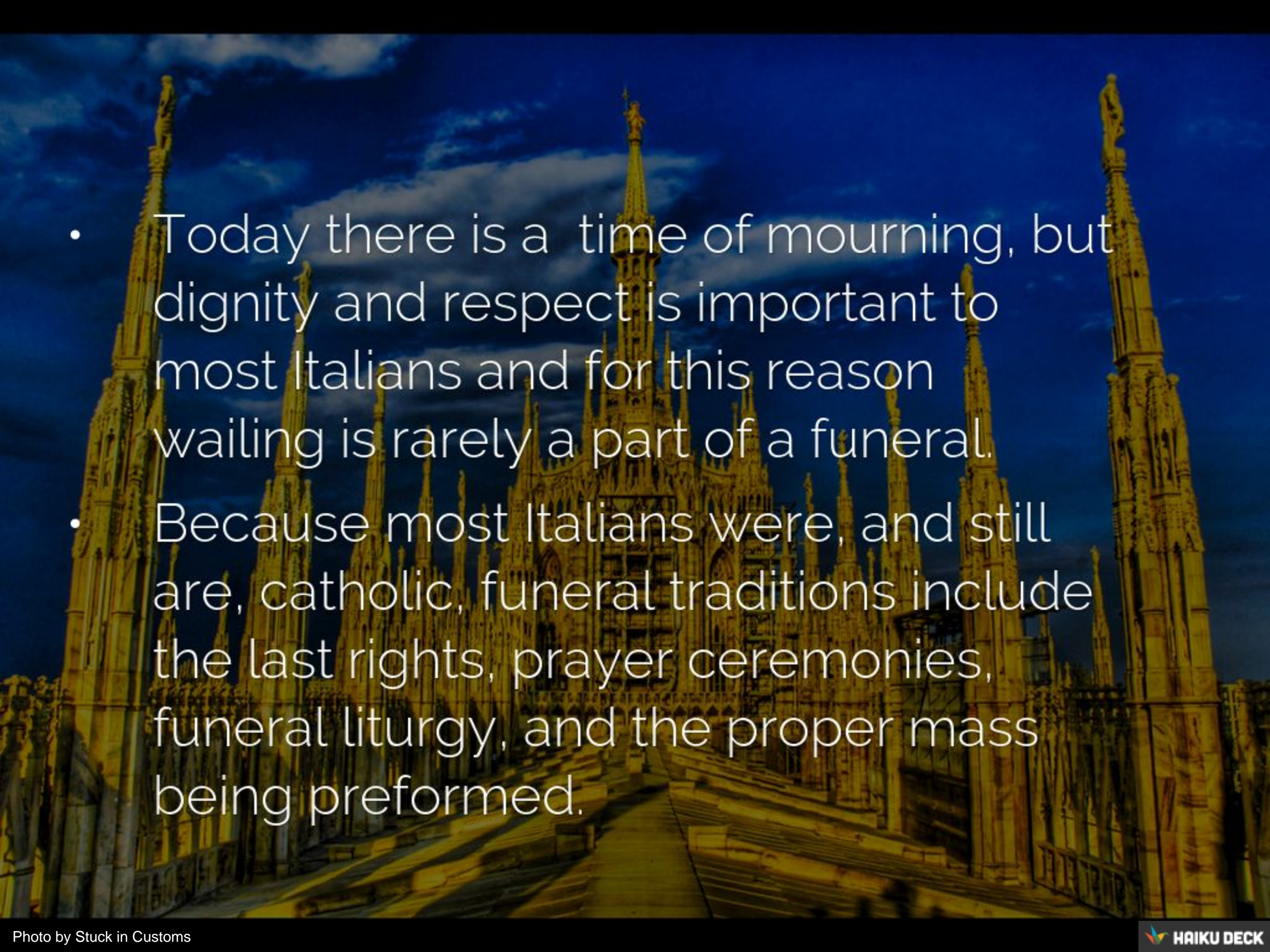



Italian culture is very superstitious and ritualistic. Most of their traditions are consistent with Catholicism.


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- Death and funerals are major events in the Italian culture.
 - At one time it was believed that a deceased person's soul never truly leaves earth and they could return if they wanted. Rituals were performed so the dead could leave the earth, like burring them with their favorite objects.

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- A scenic view of a Venetian canal, likely the Grand Canal, with colorful buildings lining the water. The buildings are multi-storied with various facades in shades of yellow, orange, and red. There are balconies and windows with shutters. In the foreground, several boats are visible, including a white motorboat and a gondola. The water is calm, and the sky is clear. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and historic.
- The dead are not to be spoken of after the mourning period is over in fear that the persons soul will return to earth
 - Italian funerals are open for anyone in the village or town to attend.
 - Sometimes posters are made for the deceased and hung around the town or village to alert people of the passing and give them details about the funeral.

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- It is traditional for neighbors and friends to bring the family food as soon as they hear news of the persons passing.
 - Foods vary from bowls of fruits, wine, desserts, and casseroles.
 - At one time the wealthy families of a deceased person would pay mourners to wait at the grave site.
 - Today there is a time of mourning, but

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- Today there is a time of mourning, but dignity and respect is important to most Italians and for this reason wailing is rarely a part of a funeral.
 - Because most Italians were, and still are, catholic, funeral traditions include the last rights, prayer ceremonies, funeral liturgy, and the proper mass being preformed.

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- Giving flowers to the family of the deceased is one of the more common traditions in Italy. They are used to decorate the church and casket.
 - Open casket is traditional. It is a common practice to kiss the cheek or forehead of the body. Children are encouraged to touch the hand or kiss the cheek to show respect.

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- A photograph of a traditional horse-drawn carriage, likely used for funerals. The carriage is dark-colored with large, spoked wheels. A driver in a top hat sits at the front, holding the reins. Several passengers are seated in the back. The carriage is being pulled by a dark horse. The background shows a grassy area with trees and a blue sky with light clouds.
- People at the funeral used to walk by foot from the church to the grave site. Today the attendants follow the horse drawn carriage or the hearse that the casket is moved in.
 - Traditionally, each person at the funeral may walk up to the casket and place a flower or throw a handful of dirt on the casket.

Citations

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- Italian Funeral Traditions. LoveToKnow. Web.



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