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ANCESTRAL MEMORIAL RITE (Jerye)



According to a traditional Korean belief, when people die their spirits do not immediately depart; instead it takes four generations. For this period the deceased are still regarded as family members and Koreans reaffirm the relationship between ancestors and descendants through *jerye* on special days like *Seollnal* (Lunar New Year's Day) and *Chuseok* (Harvest Festival or Korean Thanksgiving Day), as well as on the day the ancestors passed away.

Respect for living elders was an act of filial piety (*Hyo*), and the *jesa*, or ancestral rite, was an extension of this. Filial piety is the most fundamental human act because it constitutes a repayment of the debt we owe our parents for giving birth to us. Koreans also believe that people can live well and happily thanks to benefits their ancestors bestow.

Pairs: Role Play

- Explain this Korean custom to a foreign visitor to Korea.
- Make a presentation on the procedure of the ancestral memorial rites.
- Do a web search for more information:
 - www.knto.or.kr or www.kois.go.kr