

# Symbolic Meanings of Ritual Objects in Thai and Chinese Horror Films<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The article examines the symbolic meanings of ritual objects in Thai and Chinese horror films, focusing on their representation of each nation's cultural and religious contexts, as well as the role of material culture in spiritual practices, using Cultural Relativism and Comparative Studies Theory as frameworks. The study explores six films—three from Thailand and three from China—and reveals that Thai films emphasize Buddhist practices, while Chinese films reflect influences from Confucianism, Taoism, Mahayana Buddhism, and folk beliefs. The study highlights similarities and differences in these representations, offering a foundation for further study on ritual objects in film.

**Keywords:** Symbolic; Meanings; Ritual objects; Horror film

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## 1. Background of Study

### 1.1 Introduction<sup>4</sup>

Religious practices in Thailand and China are deeply rooted in long-standing cultural histories, shaped by centuries of interaction and exchange. Both regions incorporate diverse belief systems, resulting in unique yet overlapping expressions of spirituality. During my time in Thailand, I observed significant differences in religious and sacrificial items compared to those in China, although some shared influences were evident. This sparked my interest in the origins, cultural significance, and ritual roles of these objects. The concept of material expression—including both “symbolism” and “ritual objects”—will be explored in relation to previous scholarly interpretations, particularly those of Ostashchuk (2017, 88-96). Cultures assign symbolic meanings to objects, images, and words, connecting them to human consciousness through guided, experience-based associations. Unlike signs, symbols represent deeper concepts within cognition, essential for understanding spiritual and historical contexts. They evolve to convey non-literal meanings central to cultural identity.

Additionally, Alam (n.d., 1-52) classifies symbols into socio-cultural, scientific, and economic categories—for instance, “Indian occasion” as socio-cultural, “ $\pi$ ” as scientific, and money as economic symbolism. He also highlights religious symbols like the Wheel of Dharma, Yin and Yang, and the Cross, demonstrating how symbols transcend cultural expression to reflect broader aspects of human experience. Patera (2012, 1-46) further explains that ritual objects carry symbolic meanings, each representing specific concepts. For instance, a 'bowl' used in a ritual might symbolize “libation,” but this meaning applies only within the ritual's context, especially in a sacred space. Hodder (1987, 1-22) mentions that objects carry meaning in rituals, representing the key features of the ceremony throughout the process. Similarly, Nugteren (2019, 1-13) explains that while cow dung is typically used as fertilizer in India, in rural Rajasthan it is repurposed to create divine images, illustrating how the same object can take on different symbolic roles depending on the cultural context.

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<sup>4</sup> This article was edited for grammar and clarity using ChatGPT.

Building on these insights, the role of material expressions in religious practices is also explored through cinema, which serves as a powerful medium for cultural exchange. Previous scholars have explored religious material expressions, focusing on themes like life and death (Supantee, 2005:1-54), or examined these objects within a single cultural context (Xu, 2022:1-55). Cinema, however, offers a unique opportunity to study how ritual objects and religious symbolism transcend cultural boundaries (Yu, 2023:232-237). Yu notes that films reflect the unique cultures, beliefs, and values of their regions, vividly depicting these elements through cinema. This connects with the article's focus on material expressions and beliefs in Thai and Chinese horror films, where ritual objects play an important role in the story. Horror films, often linked to faith, use ritual objects to explore religious themes. While some scholars focus on symbols in film, they often miss the deeper cultural and religious meanings behind them (Fransson, 2015:1-18). Additionally, certain studies examine only one religious culture (Pasichnik & Piletsky, 2022:35-41). This study analyzes how ritual objects are presented in both Thai and Chinese horror films, focusing on six films released between 2020 and 2023. While Thai horror films are more numerous, the number of Chinese horror films is fewer due to stricter censorship policies in mainland China, which limit horror film production (Li, Y., 2021:1-49). However, since 2020, Chinese horror films have seen an increase in number. The study examines religious material expressions in these films, outlining its framework, objectives, methodology, and findings, with particular attention to the similarities and differences in the representation of ritual objects.

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

1. To analyze and interpret the meanings and beliefs associated with material expressions in Thai and Chinese faith-related practices in horror films.
2. To investigate the similarities and differences in the material expression and cultural implications between Thai and Chinese faith-related practices and beliefs cultures in horror films.

## **1.3 Research Methodology**

Data were collected by analyzing material objects in Thai and Chinese horror films using a descriptive-analytical method. The literature review

compares the similarities and differences in religious material expressions between the two countries. Six films, three from Thailand and three from China, were selected for the analysis. Thai Films include *Wake up The Puppet* (ปลุกพญานัต) (Chotikritsadasophon, 2023:1-2), *The Undertaker* (สัปเหร่อ) (Srinual, 2023:1-13), *The Medium* (ร่างทรง) (Pisanthanakun et al., 2021:1-13); Chinese Films include *The Story of Night Watcher* (打更人怪谈) (Ji & Sheng, 2023:1-4), *Get in The Dark* (纸人回魂) (Cheng, 2023:1-15), *Folk Stories: The Tricksters* (民俗怪闻录之诡戏班) (Zhang, J., 2023:1-3).

This study uses four modes of comparative analysis to highlight similarities and differences, addressing a gap by explaining the causes of differences. The micro-scale approach will focus on specific objects or customs. According to Freidenreich (2004, 80-101), a comparative approach should highlight both differences and commonalities while minimizing subjective analysis. This balanced method promotes constructive dialogue, fostering deeper understanding and appreciation across faith traditions. In line with Harrison and Parker's (2010, 233-240) this research will classify comparative study items and consider modes, scale, and scope based on the study's objectives. Using cultural relativism (Wm. H. Dall & Boas, 1887: 587–589) the goal is not to judge the superiority of one country's beliefs but to understand the symbolic meanings of ritual objects in different cultural contexts, promoting cross-cultural understanding without placing subjective judgments.

## 2. Theoretical Frameworks

### 2.1 Comparative Studies Theory

This section explains how to conduct comparative studies, along with the purpose and anticipated results of this study.

According to Freiburger (2018, 2-14), when conducting a comparative study, the crucial initial step is to clarify the study's objectives. Freiburger identifies four modes of comparison:

- a) Concentrate on comparing similarity
- b) Examine the differences

c) Find the connection between a group and type by examining myths or folklore from various cultural contexts to identify distinctions.

d) Refocus by analyzing phenomenon “A” through comparison with phenomenon “B.”

Freiberger suggests that the taxonomic and illuminative modes are two key factors used for studying religion. The taxonomic mode classifies elements, while the illuminative mode compares cultural aspects. In his work on asceticism, he uses taxonomy to classify components and illumination to highlight related ideas in both Brahmanism and Christianity. He outlines three scales of comparison: macro (comparing religions based on one phenomenon), meso (intermediate scale), and micro (focusing on specific studies like customs or objects). He emphasizes using analogy to identify similarities and differences. This method will be used in this article to examine similarities and differences.

As for Harrison and Parker (2010, 233-240), they point out that Qualitative research in comparative studies determines the sampling range and focuses on identifying differences and similarities between groups. They highlight the importance of systematic and analogous comparisons, noting that the design of a comparative study is shaped by its objectives.

Additionally, Freidenreich (2004, 80-101) asserts that in order to foster interreligious communication, he focuses on contrasting similarities and differences. He also claims that understanding requires finding common ground, even while similarities are significant. He suggests comparison can highlight gaps in one story by contrasting it with others, raising questions, and applying principles across narratives.

To summarize, Freiberger recommends using both illuminative and taxonomic modes in religious studies, with the approach tailored to the study’s objectives. Harrison and Parker emphasize the importance of qualitative research, analogy, and systematic comparison, while Freidenreich notes that comparative studies should focus not only on similarities or differences, but also on the underlying reasons for variation.

## 2.2 Cultural Relativism

“Cultures cannot be ranked hierarchically and must be understood in their context.” This point is strongly supported by Wm. H. Dall & Boas (1887, 587–589). Later various scholars expressed similar views on this issue.

Cultural relativism, as described by Karanmiana (2022, 1) holds that human ideas and behaviors are shaped by cultural contexts and that one culture's values should not be used to evaluate another. It places a strong emphasis on acknowledging differences without assuming superiority and understanding a culture through its values, beliefs, art, and customs. Expanding on this notion, Runzo (1988, 343-364) argues that religious orientation is influenced by birthplace, with more inclined to adhere to the prevalent religion in their region. It emphasizes that no religion is fundamentally right or wrong since worldviews are shaped by beliefs and doctrines.

Mungthanee (2017, 47-53) links religious practices to material culture, where materials hold deep cultural significance. This aligns with relativism, suggesting that rituals have unique meanings shaped by context. For example, the Issan people believe planting the Mayom plant near their house fosters love, a belief specific to their region. Such variations highlight that cultural and religious practices are context-dependent, without implying any practice is incorrect.

To summarize, Karanmiana's cultural relativism argues against judging another culture's values as right or wrong. Runzo emphasizes that religious relativism asserts no religion is uniquely correct, focusing instead on how religion shapes ideology and worldview. Mungthanee highlights that material objects may carry different meanings in different religions, aligning with the concept of relativism.

In conclusion, cultural relativism—which stresses understanding and respecting the practices of other cultures—is essential in cross-national contexts with diverse religious traditions. This approach highlights the importance of recognizing and valuing cultural differences, a perspective reflected in my study on religious expression in films.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Similarities of Material Expressions in Thai and Chinese Horror Films

Material Expression		Thai	Chinese
Ceremonial items	Incense incense stick	✓	✓
	Three incense stick	✓	✓
	Funeral banner	✓	✓
	Amulet	✓	✓
	Buddha Image	✓	✓
Food and drink	Cooked rice	✓	✓
	Egg	✓	✓
	Dessert	✓	✓
	Sacred water	✓	✓
Sacred flower	Lotus	✓	✓
Others	Blood	✓	✓

Table 1: Similarities of Material Expressions in Thai and Chinese Horror Films

In both Thailand and China, religious material expressions include common practices such as burning incense, lighting candles, offering flowers, and, in certain contexts, performing blood sacrifices. However, the significance and forms of these practices vary widely between different religious traditions and regional cultures within each country.

Incense and candles are essential in ceremonies, with incense symbolizing purification and spiritual connection both in Thai (Yadav et al., 2020: 1420-1439) and Chinese (Li, T., 2015:66-87). Furthermore, the amount of incense sticks used during worship has a specific connotation, as explained in the article “*How Many Incense Sticks Are Required for Paying Respect to a Spirit House*” (2022, 1-8) states that in Thai customs, one incense stick is used for funerals or worshipping spirits, symbolizing individuals or specific groups. Similarly, in Chinese practice, one incense stick, often called “peace incense,” is used daily to pray for safety and well-being when honoring ancestors or deities at home (“*How Many Incense Sticks Are Usually Used to Pay Tribute to Relatives,*” 2021:1-15). In China, three incense sticks are commonly used in worship, symbolizing Heaven, Earth, and

Ancestors in Taoism, or the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha in Buddhism. This conventional practice is followed unless specific instructions are given (Taoist Incense Burning Etiquette, 2015:1-5). Likewise, in Thailand, using three incense sticks follows the same principle of respect for the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. According to the article *“How Many Incense Sticks Are Needed for Paying Respect to a Spirit House”* (2022,1-8), this three-stick offering is also a common practice in Thai culture. Candles, symbolizing light in the Buddhist (Naipinit et al., 2013: 282-288), represent guidance towards gods and Buddhas. Funeral banners, influenced by Buddhism (Titrassamee et al., 2014:134-138), are common in both countries. In China, these banners also reflect Confucian traditions (Liu & Li, 2022:1-5), including flags and the banner system. In Thailand, Buddha statues and amulets are used for peace and protection (Swearer, 1995:263-280; Runra & Sujachaya, 2019:53-59), and similar purposes are attributed to Buddha images and amulets in China (Ghosh, 2013:110-114). However, these amulets differ in style, reflecting local beliefs, folk culture, and religious influences beyond Buddhism.

Offering rice to deities to ensure bountiful harvests is a practice rooted in agricultural traditions in both Thailand (Thai Ginger, 2023:1-2) and China (Lei, 2024:1-10). Eggs and poultry play a significant role in farming societies, where they are sacrificed to show respect to spirits and deities in both Thai (Thiét, 2018:98-113) and Chinese (Newman, 1996:13-14) traditions. Sacred water, a symbol of life and purity, is also used in offerings in Thailand (Dhammakij, 2019:310-322). Similarly, in Chinese practices, water, known as “sacred water”(Cao, 2023:176-185), is valued for its purity and is used to repel bad spirits. In Thai culture, desserts are considered auspicious offerings, believed to bring protection and tranquility (Kamonsinmahat, 2022:1-11). Likewise, in China, desserts are thought to bring happiness, and offering them to deities is intended to secure their favor and blessings (Guo, 2023:1-5).

The influence of Buddhism is evident in the use of lotus flowers for worshipping Buddha statues in both Thailand (Phonpho, S., 2014: 1353-1367) and China. In China, flowers are also offered to Buddha, with the lotus being one of the most common choices. A well-known Chinese saying, “offering flowers to



Buddha” (佛前供花), reflects this practice and is considered one of the ways to make merit in Buddhism (Shi, 2016:3-26).

In the selected Thai and Chinese horror films, we can see that blood is offered to spirits or evils, believed to sustain them as their basic food (Owens, 1993:258-269), which is considered a combination of Animism, folk religion, and black magic or witchcraft, whereas, in China, blood sacrifice is rooted in Confucian traditions (Li, T., 2015:66-87).

To sum up, shared material expressions in Thailand and China, such as incense stick, candles, Buddha statues, and offerings, reflect Buddhist influence and cultivational practices. Blood sacrifices highlight connections with spirits. These parallels show a cultural convergence, symbolizing a shared desire for harmony, good fortune, and stability.

### 3.2 Differences of Material Expressions in Thai and Chinese Horror Films

Material Expression		Thai	Chinese
Ceremonial items	Yellow candle	✓	✗
	Black candle	✗	✓
	Red candle	✓	✗
	Nine sticks for divine, god, and worship San Phra Phum	✓	✗
	Spiritual house “San Phra Phum”	✓	✗
	White string	✓	✗
	Phan Bai Si	✓	✗
	Crow feather	✓	✗
	Memorable tablet	✗	✓
	Rooster blood	✗	✓
	Image of Yamantaka	✗	✓
	Yant	✓	✗
	Willow branch	✗	✓
	Amulet paper	✗	✓
	Joss paper	✗	✓

Material Expression		Thai	Chinese
	Hell money	✕	✓
	Paperman	✕	✓
Food and drink	Apple	✕	✓
	Orange	✕	✓
	Betel leaves and nuts	✓	✕
	Red beverage	✓	✕
	Black beans	✓	✕
Sacred flower	Marigold	✓	✕
	Jasmine garland	✓	✕
	Phuang malai	✓	✕
	Agave amica (Tuberose)	✓	✕
	White Chrysanthemum	✕	✓
Festival	Ceremony of Zhongyuan Festival (Chinese Ghost Festival)	✕	✓

Table 2: Differences of Material Expressions in Thai and Chinese Horror Films

Thailand and China share practices like lighting lamps, offering flowers, and burning incense but differ in details. In Thailand, yellow candles symbolize Buddhism, and black candles honor the Hindu deity Rahu. In China, red candles symbolize happiness and are used daily. In Chinese horror films, red candles symbolize harmony between the living and the spiritual realms (Ang, 2021:1-11). Incense sticks play a key role in both Thai and Chinese ceremonies, linking the human and spiritual worlds. In Thailand, the number of incense sticks varies, one for funerals and nine for divine beings, as indicated in *“How Many Incense Sticks Are Needed for Paying Respect to A Spirit House”* (2022, 1-8).

Thai beliefs are significantly influenced by Brahmanism. The “San Phra Phum,” (Singh, 2019:1-11) or spiritual houses, honor land deities and ancestral spirits, blending Brahmanism and Buddhism. Tying a white cotton rope on the wrist symbolizes protection and good luck (Neui, 2016:52-83) also comes from Brahmanism. The “Phan Bai Si,” a tree-like emblem made of banana leaves that

is commonly seen in Thai rituals (Titrassamee et al., 2014:134-138), is the consequence of combining Brahmanism and Thai animism. Crow feathers are also employed in certain sacrifice procedures, according to Hindu tradition (Arasu, n.d.:1-7).

Thai beliefs combine Buddhism, Brahmanism, Hinduism, and animism, while Chinese beliefs include Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and folk traditions, with Confucianism focusing on ancestral tablets (Li, T., 2015:66-87) Taoism influences Chinese sacrificial practices through the use of talismans, symbols, and rooster blood offerings, reflecting Yin-Yang and Confucian blood sacrifice traditions. Sak Yant in Thailand originated in Indian Yantra (Martin, 2015:1-84) Sak Yant, known for its spiritual protection and incantations, incorporates magical elements tied to the spiritual realm. In Chinese Guanyin imagery, the deity holds a willow branch, symbolizing purification, healing, and protection from evil. This tradition, rooted in Taoism, may trace back to ancient India, where branches were used for cleaning teeth and lips, signifying purification in Indian culture (Xiao, 2014:81-102). In China, paper amulet is primarily associated with Taoism (Hartati, 2021:13-22). Some amulet papers are kept, while others are burned, depending on their purpose. Historically, China transitioned from burying real people and objects to using paper substitutes after the invention of papermaking (Zhang, X., 2018:1-6). Yamantaka, a deity from Tibetan Buddhism (Ghosh, 2013:110-114) known as the destroyer of death, appears in films, which reveal beliefs in China were influenced by Tibetan Buddhism as well.

Offerings of apples and oranges represent “safety” and “fortune” in Chinese culture (Newman, 1996:16). In Thailand the use of betel leaf rolls and betel nuts in worship is another tradition borrowed from Brahmanism (SCAhuja & Ahuja, 2011:13-35). Red beverages in Thai practices are often offered to spirits and gods, symbolizing blood (Winn, 2017:1-12). Hinduism also influences Thai beliefs, as seen in black offerings such as incense, candles, and food used to worship Rahu, the Hindu moon god (Runra & Sujachaya, 2019:222-253).

Flower offerings differ between Thailand and China. In Thailand, marigolds are common, reflecting Hindu and Brahmanistic influences on Thai deities (Thai PBS World, 2023:1-4). Jasmine, often known as the “mother’s

flower” (Buddhist Flowers: Symbolism and Significance in Thailand, 2024:1-8), is often given to mothers to express love and respect. The traditional craft of “Phuang malai” (Angi, 2023:1-15), or Handmade garlands in Thailand is culturally significant and used in festivals, gifts, and social interactions, each with unique meanings. Flowers like tuberose in Thailand symbolize sadness and remembrance (Siriphat, 2002:1-3), while chrysanthemums, especially white or yellow, express grief in Chinese funerals and are part of the “Four Gentlemen” (Zong, 2020:1-10). In Chinese culture, chrysanthemums, wintersweet, orchids, and bamboo symbolize noble qualities and are used in offerings for blessings.

The Zhongyuan Festival blends Confucian ancestor worship, Taoist beliefs in the “San Yuan Da Di”, and the Buddhist Ullambana tale of Mulian saving his mother (Liu, D., 2015:53-70). Shangyuan, Zhongyuan, and Xiayuan are Taoist festivals in Chinese tradition, each marking a different time of year with distinct religious significance (Lim, 2021:1-8). Lim explains that the Sanyuan festivals originate from Taoism: Shangyuan (15th of the first lunar month), Zhongyuan (15th of the seventh), and Xiayuan (15th of the tenth) honor the Three Officials, “San Guan Da Di.” During the Zhongyuan Ghost Festival, people pray to the Earth Official to absolve the sins of spirits, helping them in their process of reincarnation. The deities of Heaven, Earth, and Water grant blessings, forgive sins, and avert disasters.

Confucianism emphasizes ancestor worship on the 15th of the seventh lunar month, during the Autumnal sacrifice, when people offer crops to honor their ancestors. Li and Chen (2016, 1-6) explain that the Autumnal sacrifice, part of the Zhongyuan festival, is a time for families to honor ancestors, emphasizing the importance of ancestor veneration and cultural continuity.

In Buddhism, the festival is called “Ullambana” or the Ghost Festival, based on the story of Maudgalyayana, a Buddha disciple who sought to free his mother from suffering (Zhao, 2022:2-10). Ullambana, or the “Hungry Ghost Festival,” is a day to make offerings for all sentient beings, honoring ancestors and offering alms to lost souls for peace.

Additionally, numerous customs have evolved in folklore surrounding the seventh month. Shirin (2021, 1-12) explains that during the Zhongyuan Festival, people offer food, incense, and symbolic items such as gold ingots and paper

effigies to honor their ancestors. Lotus lanterns are released to guide wandering spirits, while Mulian opera, which tells the story of Mulian's efforts to save his mother, imparts important moral lessons. These rituals honor the deceased, offering comfort and blessings for their journey in the afterlife.

To summarize, diverse material expressions have emerged from religious practices and beliefs across various cultures. Ou (2012, 1-6) states that before Buddhism spread to China, Confucianism was the dominant religion, focusing on ethics, social harmony, and political order, which became central to state ideology after the Han Dynasty. Buddhism, with its emphasis on spiritual liberation and compassion, gained popularity through the Silk Road, aligning with Chinese values of compassionate rulership. Further discussed by Ding and Luo (2024, 1-6) about Taoism emphasizes the principle of “Daofa ziran” (道法自然) Taoism, meaning “the Way follows nature,” focuses on spiritual cultivation and longevity, appealing to rulers seeking immortality to extend their power. Qinshi huang (秦始皇), the first emperor of China, sought elixirs for eternal life, and Taoism's focus on longevity aligned with rulers' desires for long reigns, ensuring its influence throughout Chinese history. Thus, Ruhai et al. (2024, 93-104) conclude that Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism addressed social, personal, and spiritual needs, giving rise to the concept of the “Three Teachings as One” (三教合一), This synthesis shaped Chinese culture, influencing art, literature, customs, and festivals, and becoming integral to Chinese identity.

Meanwhile, belief systems in Thailand also have their own uniqueness, Kirsch, (1977, 241-266) argues that Thai beliefs are shaped by Brahmanism, Hinduism, and animism. While Brahmanism and Hinduism became central to the religious and political life of ancient Thai kingdoms, animism—which links nature with spirituality—fulfilled more practical, everyday needs. Over time, these traditions merged into a unique spiritual synthesis. Mooney (2010, 149-156) argues that Brahmanism and Hinduism have had a profound influenced on Thai Buddhism, especially in royal rituals such as the Royal Ploughing Ceremony. Thai Buddhism also blends animistic beliefs, including practices like astrology and the use of protective amulets. In this context, Brahmanism and Buddhism coexist harmoniously, with Brahmins viewing the Buddha as an incarnation of Vishnu.

In summary, Thailand's religious landscape blends Brahmanism, Hinduism, animism, and Buddhism. Mooney and Kirsch highlight Brahmanism's influence on royal rituals and social structures, adapting within a Buddhist framework. This integration enriches Thai Buddhism, fostering peaceful coexistence and addressing diverse spiritual needs.

This study emphasizes films as cultural tools that visualize ritual objects, gestures, and processes. Thai and Chinese horror films convey beliefs, cultural attitudes, and interpretations of fear and death, offering a powerful means for fostering cross-cultural understanding through a two-way communication channel. In this context, the diverse ritual items, offerings, flowers, and festivals in both Thailand and China reflect vibrant cultural traditions and a mutual acceptance of differing practices. Each object carries its own unique significance, highlighting the importance of cultural relativism and the need to understand beliefs within their specific contexts.

#### **4. Conclusion and Recommendation**

This article examined the symbolic meanings of ritual objects in Thailand and China, pointing out both similarities and differences. By examining how these ritual objects are represented in horror films, this study has demonstrated how cultural significance is reflected in each culture's unique rituals. It has emphasized the importance of cultural relativism, avoiding superiority judgments, and promoting a better comprehension of the belief systems in each culture's belief systems. As Wm. H. Dall and F. Boas (1887, 587–589) assert, “cultures cannot be ranked hierarchically and must be understood in their context,” a principle that has guided the study. The comparative analysis of Thai and Chinese rituals reveals shared symbols, such as incense, candles, offerings, and Buddha statues, which reflect common Buddhist influences and the desire for spiritual connection, safety, and harmony. These objects, used in both cultures, symbolize purification, guidance, and respect for deities and spirits. However, despite these similarities, significant distinctions in symbolic usage emerge due to the varying cultural and religious influences of Confucianism, Taoism, Brahmanism, and animism.

In conclusion, the films offer an insightful means for cross-cultural understanding, providing a unique perspective on how ritual objects and concepts of mortality are interpreted in both Thailand and China. By recognizing and respecting the different ways in which these cultures integrate their religious beliefs, this study highlights the importance of considering multiple perspectives in our globalized society.

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