WHITE TIGERS AND AZURE DRAGONS: OVERSEAS CHINESE BURIAL PRACTICES IN THE CANADIAN AND AMERICAN WEST (1850S TO 1910S)

by

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THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

In the
Department of Archaeology

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Spring 2005

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This thesis explores the archaeological signature at overseas Chinese burial grounds in the Canadian and American west. The primary objective is to trace Chinese death ritual practices from early Chinese dynasties through to the main diaspora from China in the late Qing Dynasty. It also examines the main influences in their new home that led to the adoption of new practices and eventual redefinition of traditional rites. A second objective was to examine material culture and landscape modifications visible at Wild Horse Creek Chinese Burial Ground in British Columbia. Patterns of distribution were established to determine the types of rituals practiced during its use. These patterns were compared to sites surveyed in contemporaneous Chinese burial grounds in British Columbia and the South Pacific. Research indicated that Chinese were maintaining internal traditional rites associated with placation of ancestors and adopted local symbols and cemetery styles for presentation to non Chinese communities.
DEDICATION

To my Gran, who still mails me newspaper clippings of new discoveries in archaeology.

And...

To Jason, for everything that this has become.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is a culmination of over four years of intensive research in five countries, countless hotel rooms and camping spots, and an eclectic bunch of folk whom I met through my research and who all contributed immensely to my research. First and foremost, I would like to extend a warm thank you to my senior supervisor, Phil Hobler. He provided with guidance and inspiration in my research and taught me that a good archaeologist is as much a scholar as he or she is a storyteller.

I would like to thank Dr. Dave Burley, my supervisor, who instilled in me a great love of the South Pacific. And fortunately for me, there was no lack of Chinese burial grounds there. I was also honoured to have Dr. Imogene Lim from Malaspina University College as my external.

Fort Steele Heritage Town and staff have been instrumental in my research, allowing me access to the superb Chinese cemetery at Wild Horse Creek and a valuable archives. I want to extend a special thank you to Derryll White, a gifted scholar whose years of research at Fort Steele and Wild Horse Creek has provided me with invaluable data. And I would like to thank Sandi Ratch for luring me into historic archaeology and for her support and advice throughout this whole process.

My research in the United States and the South Pacific would not have been possible without the help of my mentor and good friend, Dr. Dudley Gardner who has over 20 years experience in overseas Chinese archaeology. He has aided immensely in broadening the depth of my investigations and introduced me to historic archaeology in the American West.

My comparative research for this project benefited from many individuals. Foremost, I wish to thank my friend Trelle Morrow for his help in Barkerville and for providing me with endless photos, articles and contacts in the overseas Chinese community. I would also like to thank Barkerville Historic Town curator, Dr. Bill Quackenbush, Anita Olsen of the Kamloops Cemetery Heritage Society and Dr. Neville Ritchie for their contributions to my research.
Fieldwork at Wild Horse Creek was undertaken with the aid of Chelsea Dunk, Trelle Morrow, Noel Ratch and Dan Pasacreta. I wish to thank them all for volunteering their time and for tolerating the snow, rockslides, bears and a sometimes bossy Project Director.

Many others who contributed to this project include Golder Associates who helped with my magnetometer results, Dr. Priscilla Wegars, Dr. Terry Abraham, local East Kootenay historian Naomi Miller, Dr. Ying Ying Chen, the staff at BC Archives and Vancouver Archives, Robyn Banerjee, and author Lily Chow. I would also like to thank Bob Storey and his family, whose uncle was a Chinese miner at Wild Horse Creek, for sharing his family history.

To my extended family and friends, thank you for your patience, support and providing me with a place to stay during my fieldwork. And a special thank you to Jason’s parents.

To my mom, dad and brother, I thank you for being my biggest fans.

And finally, I want to express my gratitude to my husband Jason for sacrificing four years of his life while I was in school. He is my rock and will never understand how much of this thesis is because of his support and encouragement.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

When she was alive, Grandma had taught me that spirits and ghosts were everywhere because the Chinese were such an ancient people; so many Chinese people had died that their ten thousand million ghosts in Old China inhabited "the ways of the Han people." Whether one was a peasant or royalty, Grandmama said, Old China people took it for granted that these ghosts lived constantly alongside them.

They were mischievous spirits and frightening demons, these good and bad ghosts. They could upset, or bring into harmony, the yin and yang forces - the fung-suîh, the wind-water elements that helped to balance our "hot" and "cold" natures...

Grandma also had told me that in Vancouver only a small population of Chinatown ghosts could bother with us, really no more than a hundred or so, and most of these were somewhat confused by not being able to go with their bones back to Old China (Choy 1995:156-157).

The intent of this thesis is to explore the meaning and archaeological signature of overseas Chinese burial rituals in western Canadian and to a lesser extent, other frontier contexts from the 1850s to 1910s. This period culminated in the greatest influx of Chinese and the most pervasive use of secondary burial practices with human remains ultimately shipped to the homeland. Overseas Chinese burial grounds are numerous throughout western Canada and the United States and reflect the impermanent nature of the overseas Chinese. While some studies of overseas Chinese burial grounds exist, there is to date, little archaeological research that has looked at their context and meaning.

During the period of migration, thousands of Chinese, the majority of which were men, migrated from a small region in the coastal province of Guangdong, China to sites around the world. They were driven from their homes by political turmoil, environmental disasters, and food shortages. Virtually all migrated with the intention to eventually return home, having made their fortune overseas. Chinese sojourners left a distinct mark on the landscape that expresses
their Chinese heritage in the material culture and spatial arrangements; many aspects of overseas Chinese sites thus reflect social and religious ideologies of the Chinese homeland.

An overt expression of Chinese culture is manifest in overseas Chinese burial grounds around the world. Overseas Chinese who sojourned from southeastern China practiced secondary burial – a tradition which they implemented in their new home. After seven to ten years, the deceased in overseas Chinese communities were disinterred and the bones sent back to China for reburial in family plots. Chinese burial practices, from spatial layout of the cemetery to exhumation express a dichotomy of Chinese' adherence to cultural and ritual ideologies. It was a set of practices propagated by the Qing Dynasty (1644 to 1911) that was balanced within the aesthetic framework of ritual landscapes of the culture they sojourned to (see Abraham et al. 2003; Ebrey 1991; Watson 1988a).

The intertwining of old traditions and new adaptations visible in overseas Chinese burial grounds has only recently been historically and anthropologically investigated (Crowder 2002; Zhang 2001). Furthermore, only a small amount of research has addressed this phenomenon archaeologically (see Abraham et al. 2003; Chen 2001; Sauer 2001). Work that has been done illustrates that Chinese burial grounds express a fairly homogenous signature in both material culture and the manipulation of the landscape that is difficult to decode simply from archaeological procedures. Thus, I apply a multifaceted approach, blending ethnographic, anthropological, and historical records from both China and from overseas Chinese sites.

There are two main goals for the thesis. The first goal is to investigate Chinese burial practices in western Canadian and to a lesser extent, the American frontier, between the 1850s to 1910s. To accomplish this I examine archival, anthropological, and ethnographical accounts of death ritual in China and compare them to the often weak and superficial accounts at overseas Chinese sites.

The second goal is to establish patterns of death rituals from ethnographic and anthropological data on Chinese burial ritual and test them on an overseas Chinese burial ground. The burial ground selected is located in Wild Horse Creek Provincial Historic Site in southeastern British Columbia. Wild Horse Creek was the hub of the 1864 to 1865 East Kootenay Gold Rush, where over 5000 gold miners lived and mined. Shortly before the end of the gold rush, the Chinese trickled into the area and settled into the former habitation site of the 1864 to 1865 gold rush. The Chinese burial ground was initially set up in the mid 1860s and was actively
used until the 1910s. A primary aspect of the site today is the empty grave pits and other Chinese features. Archival data are scarce.

Finally, to determine if the patterns evident at Wild Horse Creek are representative of other overseas Chinese burial grounds, I also conducted a survey of overseas Chinese burial grounds in Victoria, Barkerville, and Kamloops in British Columbia; Papeete, Tahiti; Honolulu Hawaii; and various cemeteries in the South Island, New Zealand. Observations from these surveys provide a comparative context for Wild Horse Creek.

The thesis is split into three main sections. The first section deals with the research conducted on Chinese death ritual (Chapter 2 and Chapter 3). I trace the origin and development in China of key components in death ritual, such as filial piety, the parallel concept of society and geomancy or fengshui, up to the later Qing Dynasty (1644 to 1911) (Chapter 2). The propagation of these components lead to the establishment of orthodox death ritual practices then brought over to frontier towns in Canada and the United States in the mid nineteenth century. The widespread practice of Chinese death ritual is attributed to the homogeneous adherence to certain rites while allowing personal expression in others. The most significant variation in China lies between those who practice secondary burial (southern provinces) and those that do not (northern provinces). These two distinct styles of burial produced different signatures on the landscape. For instance, overseas Chinese burial grounds where all graves are intact have a high probability of bearing origins from northern provinces than those with few to no intact burials. Examples of each type are provided in this thesis.

Chapter 3 outlines the procedure of Chinese death ritual. I examine the rites propagated by ritual manuals and how they translated into the Chinese community. I then present the results of how these death rituals have been reinterpreted in the Canadian and American frontier, during the principle period of Chinese emigration from the 1850s to 1910s (Chapter 4). This chapter outlines the history and impetus of the Chinese sojourn to North America and then explores specific components of overseas Chinese burial practices, relating them to contemporaneous burial practices of Euro-Americans and Euro-Canadians in the same region.

The second section of my thesis (Chapters 5 - 7) presents my research at the Wild Horse Creek Chinese burial ground. Chapter 5 provides a context and history for Wild Horse Creek synthesized from the Fort Steele Heritage Town Archives and the British Columbia Provincial Archives. At the end of the chapter, I discuss the methods and techniques utilized to test the site.
The results of my research are presented in Chapter 6. Based on the results, interpretations of the array of death ritual practices occurring at Wild Horse Creek cemetery are presented in Chapter 7.

In the third section I compare the patterns observed at Wild Horse Creek to other Chinese burial grounds in different contexts during the same time period. In Chapter 8 I present the results of surveys at burial grounds in British Columbia, Tahiti, Hawaii and New Zealand. These sites provide a wide spectrum of data that were compared to material culture and landscape manipulation present at the Wild Horse Creek Chinese burial ground. In the final chapter (Chapter 9) I offer a synopsis of the influences and types of death rituals that typify the Chinese burial grounds surveyed through the course of my research.

It is anticipated that this thesis will generate a greater understanding of the traditional and recently acquired influences leading to a reinterpretation of death ritual in overseas Chinese communities and that the resulting material culture and landscape patterning of these rituals will be recognized, archaeologically in overseas Chinese cemeteries.
CHAPTER 2

History of Chinese Death Ritual

The basic form of funeral rites is similar throughout the empire... In general, all Chinese perform the same sequence of ritual acts as funerals... There can be no ambiguity; a funeral either is or is not performed according to Chinese ritual sequence (Watson 1988a:81 – 92).

Death ritual in China is a long-standing tradition that blends elements from Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and shamanistic beliefs. At the core of Chinese death ritual is Confucianism and more importantly, filial piety; concepts that originated as early as the Zhou Dynasty (1045 – 221 B.C.) (Appendix 1). Chinese death ritual since its inception has advocated the performance of a sequence of rites and ritual behaviours associated with the burial of kinsman. The very act of practicing a prescribed set of rites associated with burial is one of the defining features of Chinese culture and an individual’s ‘Chineseness’. Proper burial of a deceased is the primary mean to ensure contentment in the afterworld, thus securing blessings for the living. This reciprocal relationship between living and dead reflects the lack of dualism in Chinese death ritual through time. To the Chinese, body/soul and living/deceased are intricately intertwined. The transformation of the living into the underworld does not dissolve kinship relations nor does it separate body from soul. The relationship between the living and deceased is one of the fundamental unifying features of Chinese death ritual through time. By the time of the Chinese diaspora at the end of the Late Imperial Dynasty (1368 – 1911), all of China had adopted a standard style of burial and funerary rituals that have continued to thrive into modern times (Rawski 1988; Watson 1988a).

This chapter traces the religious and political influences on Chinese death ritual through Chinese history, from the vestiges of ancestor worship in the golden age of the Zhou Dynasty towards total centralization and unification in the Qing Dynasty (1644 – 1911). In this section I outline the standardized death rituals presented by influential scholars throughout Chinese history and discuss how at a local level unorthodox religious beliefs were incorporated into their ceremonies. Such heterodox variabilities, like fengshui or ostentatious funerals, often opposed
core ideologies of Confucian doctrine, yet remain ingrained in southern and overseas burial practices.

**History of Death Ritual in China**

**Confucianism**

McKeown (2001:103) defines ritual as “a practical method of both controlling and responding to a social world in flux”. Ritual (li) in Confucian doctrine includes both ritual and proper behaviour and is a central component of Chinese ideology. Early Confucians advocated that li referred to “all behavioural prescriptions involving rites, ceremony, manners, or general deportment, that bind human beings and the spirits together in networks of interacting roles within the family, within human society, and with the numinous realm beyond” (Schwartz 1985: 67). In the Confucian realm, chaos and confusion dominate and can only be controlled through li or ritual. The main proponent of Confucianism was Master Kong (551 – 479 B.C.), posthumously referred to as Confucius. Master Kong was born in the Zhou Dynasty (1122 – 221 B.C.) and was a member of the shii (public servant), the lowest of the three bureaucratic positions in the government. He became immortalized due to his virtuous propagation of proper behaviour and harmony in heaven and earth in the cultivation of human perfection. The overriding theme of ritual as a mean to control chaos did not flourish until the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. – A.D. 200) (Dawson 1993). During the short lived Qin Dynasty (221 – 206 B.C.) Emperor Shih Huang Ti, threatened by the influence of Confucianism, burned all Confucian books generated during the dynasty. The year 213 B.C. witnessed the loss of a number of China’s sacred texts. Scholars who denied the reformations of Shih Huang Ti were burned alive (ibid).

**Han Dynasty**

In the following Han Dynasty (206 B.C. – A.D. 220), Chinese scholars yearning for social
order recalled the works of Confucius to serve as the elemental model for the growing empire (Dawson 1993). It was swiftly adopted by the Imperials. Han scholars and officials reinterpreted the Confucian ideology, a theme that resurfaces throughout Chinese history, placing increased creed on the intermingling of concepts known as filial piety and ancestor worship and the parallel concept of society. These were not new concepts to the Han Chinese. Filial piety and ancestor worship was identified by archaeologist Chang Kwang Chih in the 1960s. He contends that late Neolithic Yangshao culture (5000 B.C. – 3000 B.C.) in Banshan, in eastern Gansu dating to approximately 3000 B.C., buried their deceased in high hills, similar to practices seen in modern times. He states:

The probable lineage arrangement in the village cemetery and the regularity of the individual burials within the cemetery in many cases make it highly probable that the cult of ancestors to symbolize lineage solidarity had already been initiated during the Yang-shao stage... (Chang 1968:103).

The idea of a parallel concept of society was initially seen as early as the Zhou Dynasty (Dawson 1993). The first modification of Confucianism in the Han Dynasty was the recognition of mourning or ancestor worship as the core component of filial piety. Filial piety is defined by Confucius as "the natural repayment for the care bestowed by the parents" and that the most honourable repayment is through ritual worship: "that parents, when alive, should be served according to li, that when dead, they should be buried according to li, and that offerings should be made according to li" (Analects XVII.xxi.1-6; XIV.xliii.1-2; II.v.3). Ancestor worship involves the placation of ancestors for numerous generations and is the ultimate act of filial piety. It transcends boundaries between living and deceased, perpetuating the continuity of the kinship line and is argued by Rawski (1988) to be the impetus for the embellishment and development of Chinese death ritual. The institution of this new order by the government brought increased status and reverence to the deceased, inadvertently transferring power from the state down to the core level of the family. To restore this power, rulers in the Han began exalting the value of the parallel concept of society (Watson 1988a).

The basic unit in Chinese society is the family, with the male as the head. Rank within the family conformed to a strict patrilineal descent (highest to lowest status): parents of husband,
husband, wife, and children. Reverence also followed a similar structure in that the degree of
mourning varied with rank. Under this guise, men worshipped parents, women worshipped
their husbands' parents, and children worshipped their father. The government was keenly
aware of the potency of kinship in China. Therefore, they did not attempt to demand loyalty
from the population. Instead the family unit was adopted as a metaphor for the state (Kutcher
1999) such that loyal officials' relationship to the Emperor mirrored filial sons' relationship to
their fathers. The internal matrix of the family became a familiar framework for commoners in
the Han Dynasty. Han Dynasty scholar Han Feizi (1982:702) further defines the differential rank
of relationships: "The official serves the ruler, the son serves the ruler, the son serves his father,
the wife serves her husband. If these three are done then all under heaven is ordered; if these
three are not done, then all under heaven is in chaos". This passage clearly
demonstrates the
interconnection of parallel concept of society, filial piety, and how it conforms to integral
components of Confucianism such as the dichotomy of ritual (in the form of filial piety)
controlling chaos.

How does death ritual fit within this scheme? The preeminent display of filial piety is
achieved through ancestor worship and mourning ritual. Hence, the Han state encouraged
government officials to properly and honourably venerate their deceased kin (Kutcher 1999).
Afterwards, these elaborate acts of mourning ritual were published and circulated to the
communities as an exemplary model of filial piety (Kutcher 1999). These publications were
accompanied by family ritual texts such as the I-li, which was reconstructed in the early Han
Dynasty and is the oldest surviving reconstructed Confucian text in Chinese history (Ebrey 1991).
The premise behind this movement links back to the parallel concept of society. State officials
were viewed as analogous to filial sons and the undertaking of mourning ritual conformed to the
Confucian principle of taming chaos through ritual. Through ritual, world and heavenly order
was created. The Emperor shared his role with the father of a family and while the father was the
center of the familial unit, the Emperor was the center of the earth. Thus the filial or ritual
obligations of an official to a deceased Emperor created order in the heavens akin to the filial son
fulfilling obligations to his deceased father to create order in the family (McKeown 2001). The
final goal of the state was to ingrain in Chinese society that this same order could be created
when a filial son pays tribute to an Emperor.
Wei and Jin Dynasties

Following the deterioration of the Han dynasty in the second century A.D., the successful dissemination of government officials' mourning ritual was absorbed into Chinese society. Filial piety and death ritual penetrated deeply into Chinese ideology at the familial level. Funerals were more elaborate, more structured and mourning lasted for longer periods of time (up to three years) (Kutcher 1999). Overall, family death rituals were closely in tune with Confucian ideals of proper ritual. Through the subsequent Wei (A.D. 220 – 265) and Jin (A.D. 265 – 420) dynasties it was believed that “no display of filial piety was generally considered extreme and no extent of grief considered unhealthy” (Kutcher 1999:19). At approximately the same time, a rift began to emerge between Imperials and commoners. Jin and Wei scholars become consumed with generating death ritual texts for the official and gentleman class (Rawski 1988). The lengthy rituals associated with mourning interfered with “bureaucratic efficiency” (McKeown 2001:16) in the state. Scholars argued incessantly about conflicting obligations of an official to the state and to a deceased family member. The state decided to instigate a practice known as *douqing* or cutting short of emotions. Under this policy, officials’ mourning periods were ‘cut short’ and they were required to return to their post before the completion of proper veneration (Kutcher 1999). Ostensibly, this course of action created increased tension within the upper class as the Emperor began demanding reverence above the basic unit of the family. In the meantime, Emperor’s tombs were highly embellished. Emperors were buried in mausoleums, reminiscent of the extravagance found in Shang Dynasty royal tomb burials (1766 B.C. – 1122 B.C.) (Rawski 1988). The hypocrisy that shrouded the elite class during the Jin and Wei Dynasties contributed to the beginnings of the breakdown of Confucianism; a trend that persisted for the next 500 years.

*Buddhism*

During the Jin and Wei Dynasties, commoners were denied access to ritual texts. They were also prohibited from venerating anyone other than their own ancestors (McKeown 2001). As a result, communities began to covet unorthodox religions such as Buddhism, Taoism, and highly variable local traditions, all of whose tenants opposed Confucian doctrine. These divergent influences permanently altered Chinese death ritual at the community level but
notably were never integrated into death ritual manuals even up to the present day. Buddhism made its first appearance in China through Central Asian missionaries during the first century A.D. in the middle Han Dynasty (Craig 2001). By the end of the Jin Dynasty (A.D. 420) Buddhism had infiltrated into most of lower class Chinese ideology. The basic premise behind Buddhism is that humans are predisposed to suffering and only through private and meditative rituals could personal salvation be achieved (Craig 2001). In a reoccurring theme of reinterpretation, Chinese society transformed basic principles of Buddhism into death ritual. Buddhist style masses were adopted and the practice of cremation gained in popularity persisting into the early Qing Dynasty (1368 – 1644) (Kutcher 1999). Conflicts ignited over those who were cremating and those that were not.

Taoism

Taoism schools of thought emerged in the Zhou Dynasty in the fourth century B.C. At the core of Taoist belief is the Tao which is described as: “...mysterious, ineffable, and cannot be named. It is the creator of the universe, the sustainer of the universe, and the process or flux of the universe” (Craig 2001:21). Through unlearning all that is known, one could acquire true or intuitive knowledge. One of the main constituents of Taoism is the concept of yin and yang. Yin and yang are balanced opposites responsible for control, chaos, and change in the universe and are main proponents in the practice of geomancy or fengshui. Fengshui advocates the proper placement of a site in tune with nature’s energy to ensure good luck to an individual or community. Taoism had a significant impact on death ritual practices, particularly in the south, spurring popular customs such as auspicious times and places, and the use of geomancers and shamans. These concepts will be discussed in detail in Chapters 3 and 4.

Local traditions that flourished during this breakdown in Confucianism were highly variable and were consumed with ideas of ‘hungry ghosts’ (unplacated ancestors) or lineage origins. Mortuary practices were also simplified at the local level. Veneration based on rank was abandoned, ancestors were worshipped in only a few select post burial ceremonies and filial obligations only extended back two to three generations, as opposed to the five generations proposed during the Han Dynasty (Ebrey 1991).
Song Dynasty

Beginning in the eleventh century A.D., Song Dynasty (A.D. 960 – 1279) scholars set out to reinstitute proper Confucian practices back into Chinese society. Both the segregation of elite and lower class burial practices and the introduction of a number of non-conforming Confucian influences lead to the decay of Confucian ideals (Ebrey 1991). As a result, a number of idealized Confucian family ritual texts were produced, based on the previous Han Dynasty revival. This movement stimulated new interpretations of Han Confucianism (now called Neo-Confucianism) based on elite trends of social acceptance developed during the Song Dynasty. One of the most influential scholars during this period was Chu Hsi (A.D. 1130 – 1200) who wrote *Chu Hsi’s Family Rituals*. Chu’s manual is essentially a guide for conducting proper everyday rituals in strict accordance with Confucianism. This step-by-step manual offers instruction on puberty rites, wedding and burial rituals, and sacrificial ceremonies. Other contemporaneous manuals detailed standards of behaviour “for the relations between husband and wife, father and son, and official and commoner; provide models for invitations, welcomes, good-byes ...and offered descriptions of the gifts appropriate to particular occasions” (McKeown 2001: 119). Chu’s main objectives were to simplify ritual and to homogenize its practice throughout China, while at the same time, eclipsing heterodox beliefs previously integrated into death ritual. He successfully reintroduced rank among family members for various mourning duties. For instance, the oldest son in a family held the highest rank and was responsible for higher prestige rituals. He also advocated the then ambitious act of refraining from sex, alcohol, and meat for three years after the death of a family member. During the Song Dynasty, innovations in the printing industry in the Yangtze River lead to the mass distribution of Chu’s manual and a number of other manuals to villages all over China. By the early Ming Dynasty, most families in China had appropriated Chu’s doctrine into daily practice (Ebrey 1991). Details of Chu’s rituals associated with death will be discussed in the next chapter. Watson (1988a) argues that a ritual campaign during the Song initiated the idea of orthopraxy (proper ritual) over orthodoxy (belief) - a condition that spread into Late Imperial dynasties. Well into the Qing dynasty, performance of death ritual was associated with high prestige in Chinese society while unfilial acts were punishable (Rawski 1988).
Late Imperial Dynasties

The Late Imperial Dynasties, which include the Ming (1368 – 1644) and Qing (1644 – 1911), were dominated by the seemingly impossible feat of centralization and unification of death ritual ideology in China. The core of this achievement, which had reached its fullest potential by early Qing, was the idea of variation within unity (Watson 1988a). Chinese communities were conditioned to perform a basic framework of rituals and were otherwise free to incorporate familial and community based variations into their rituals.

The Late Imperial bureaucracy was aware of the size and complexity of China at the beginning of the Ming. As put forth by Watson (1988a) three implementations facilitated by Late Imperial bureaucracy lead to the acceptance of this new death ritual practiced in the Qing Dynasty:

1) Control over the written word
2) Public lectures
3) Set criterion of ritual

In the Late Ming (1368 – 1644), more simplified versions of ritual texts, such as the I-li and Chu Hsi’s Family Rituals emerged making rituals associated with death more pragmatic. Regional officials were hired by the bureaucracy to promote the virtues of these elementary family rituals to local communities through periodic (usually monthly) lectures and county gazetteers. A single official ruled over a county of 200,000 – 250,000 people (McKeown 2001). The genius behind this movement is that Chinese officials propagated ritual not to abide to bureaucratic mandate but as the definitive act of being Chinese (Ebrey 1991; Rawski 1988; Watson 1988b). Thus, to be Chinese, one had to practice elements of proper ritual. Rawski (1988:31) views this procedure as an “indirect mode of local control”. Furthermore, during the late Imperial period, highest authority within the bureaucracy began to redistribute power to the local level. Officials then held increased jurisdiction over the local administrative districts, not only to purport unifying ideologies of ritual but also to “maintain local stability and order” (ibid).

A fourth condition indirectly influencing the establishment of a unified and centralized ritual practice was the political climate of the Ming-Qing transition (Hsu 2000; McKeown 2001; Rawski 1988). The end of the Ming Dynasty was marked by instability, social degradation, high
taxes, banditry, and famine. When the Ming fell, Manchurian groups, who had unified into one state and adopted Confucian style of rule in 1628, gained control over China, which lead to the death of thousands of Chinese. The capital was moved to Peking in 1644, which also marks the beginning of the Qing Dynasty. During this transition, China witnessed devastating outbreaks of smallpox; first in 1586, then again from 1639 – 1644, resulting in thousands of deaths (Kutcher 1999). Entire lineages were lost to these tragedies and as a result, even the most elementary death rituals were impossible (Craig 2001). Personal losses incurred during the Ming-Qing transition lead to increased nostalgia for proper mourning ritual instigated in the Ming (Kutcher 1999). Foreign Manchu rule also inspired new interpretations of death ritual which included greater diversity of burial practices and the reinstitution of cremation (ibid). Clearly defined regional variations started to emerge as well. In the province of Guangdong for example, geomantic principles and exaggerated ancestral worshiping dominated, while cremation and personal mourning were more popular in the north.

One of the more significant shifts in death ritual thought was proposed by China’s first Qing Emperor Kangxi (1662 – 1722). Emperor Kangxi was an influential and well-liked Emperor who like his fellow Manchurians, criticized the excessive opulence of funerary rituals. He strongly upheld that rituals should express not regulate emotions (Kutcher 1999). Kangxi declared in 1676:

In the way of humankind, nothing is more important than filial piety. And yet these days the Chinese banner men, [Han Chinese majority from the northeast who surrendered to the Manchu’s before Manchu’s takeover] when they are in mourning for a parent, invite friends and relatives to their house and drink and feast, gambling and playing cards, and amid all this celebration there is absolutely no semblance of a family in mourning. And when it comes to their mourning apparel, and the saddles and halters for their horses, though they are plain white they are decorated with flowers and pretty ornamentation. Funeral rituals are concerned with self-denial as a way of showing sincerity, and the clothes worn are to be coarse and unattractive. How then can it be proper to decorate them? (Kangxi in Kutcher 2000:92).

Clearly, death ritual had strayed from the simplicity of Confucius’ original intent. And Kangxi successfully abolished extravagance in favour of humility when honouring ancestors. Subsequent rulers such as Yon Zheng (1723 – 1735) Qian Long (1736 – 1795) and Jia Qing (1796 –
1820) continued to stress emotion over practice while still abiding to the strict ritual of the Confucian doctrine exonerated by county officials. The result of this influx of new ideas and reinterpretations of death ritual during the Qing allowed the tapestry of ethnic and regional differences to integrate into one belief system. It is this very system that provided the backbone for funerary practices translated into new communities overseas during the initial Chinese diaspora in the nineteenth and twentieth century.
CHAPTER 3

Chinese Death Ritual: Uniformity and Variation

Everything possible is done to propitiate the dead as, in China it may be said that the dead rule the living in thought and custom and by the fear and dread of calamity, if anything, which should be done, is omitted (J.G. Cormack in Habenstein et al. 1994:25).

Chinese death ritual is a complex and deep-rooted system that has incorporated ideologies from political, social, and religious sources for over 5000 years. At the core of this system is the Confucian concept of filial piety and ancestor worship. In essence, the family venerates the ancestor through ritual to create balance and order within their family or lineage. Without proper veneration, the deceased becomes a ghost and will cause great grievance to the family for many generations. Building on these concepts, this section is designed to expose rituals associated with the funeral, rites of disposal, and post burial ceremonies as put forth by Confucian ritual texts. To simplify, I have chosen Chu Hsi's Family Rituals, translated by Ebrey (1991) as my main source. Chu Hsi's Family Rituals written by Chu over the course of his lifetime (1130 - 1200) underwent a number of editions; however, the edition translated by Ebrey dates to 1305. Notably, the last reprint of the book occurred in 1891, after almost 700 years in circulation. Chu's and an array of other ritual texts were the superlative form for ritual in China albeit rarely followed verbatim. Following this summary, I discuss how these ritual texts have been interpreted in Chinese communities. To achieve this, I researched a number of anthropological and ethnographic studies of Chinese death ritual in southeastern China conducted over the last hundred years. According to Watson (1988a), China managed to create a unified and centralized death ritual system at the cusp of the Chinese diaspora in the Qing Dynasty. Hence, the remainder of the chapter focuses specifically on both the unifying then the variable rites translated from mortuary ritual manuals in southeastern China. Later in the thesis, I present how these modern burial rites have impacted overseas Chinese burial practices.
Chinese Death Ritual According to Ritual Manuals

For the purpose of this section, the summary of death ritual and post burial ceremonies proposed by Song Dynasty scholar Chu Hsi (1130 - 1200) has been simplified from its original, more detailed form. Chu Hsi’s Family Rituals had been resurrected from Han Dynasty Confucian rituals and became immersed into family ritual in the early Ming (fourteenth to fifteenth centuries) (Ebrey 1991). In the Qing Dynasty, simplified versions of the text were distributed and preached by county officials. Each of the ritual acts as presented will be followed by a brief synopsis on the rites associated with the funeral (funeral rites) as well as those rites associated with the deceased’s journey to become an ancestor (burial rites) (Watson 1988a).

Funerary Rites

Once the person has died, the deceased is surrounded by mourners who wail for the loss of the deceased. Shortly afterwards the mourners carry out a ceremony to call the deceased back to the living realm. At the same time, notifications of death are circulated to the community. The primary players in the burial rites are also chosen at this time and include the chief mourner (oldest son of deceased), the female mourner (wife or daughter of deceased), and the funeral organizers such as the priest, geomancer (fengshui expert), piper, and corpse handler. Proper ritual clothing, usually made of raw and unfinished sackcloth is adorned and those mourners chosen abstain from food, liquor and sexual relations.

The body is then ritually washed and dressed in high quality robes. This ritual is usually facilitated by the corpse handler – who is the only person allowed to touch the deceased. Proper burial clothes are described as:

...one head wrap; two ear plugs made of white silk floss the size of date pits to stop up the ears; a silk cloth for veering the eyes, one foot two inches square, which goes over the face; hand restrainers made of silk, one foot two inches long and five inches wide, with which the hands will be wrapped; a long garment; a large belt; a pair of shoes; and a robe. In addition, there are suitable quantities of undergarments, trousers, socks, ties,
stomach wraps, and so on (Ebrey 1991:74).

All mourners including the chief mourner are called into the main room of the house where the deceased lays to wail and make offerings of dried meat and wine set out on a table to the east of the deceased. A grain of rice is placed inside the mouth of the deceased, and then the corpse handler covers him or her with gauze. The soul seat and cloth, made of white silk as well as a red silk banner inscribed with the name and rank of the deceased are made and later utilized in the funeral procession.

The next morning following the death, proper attire chosen to bury the deceased is laid out. This ceremony is known as the Preliminary Laying Out. Two offerings are made on the libations table, which has now been moved southwest of the deceased. Chief and female mourners wail and hit their chests in anguish. The mourners bare their shoulders and tie their hair with woven hemp. Then the body is moved to the center of the room. On the following morning, the clothes are placed for the Final Laying Out. The coffin (usually heavy lacquered wood) is brought out into the main hall. The corpse handlers place the body into the coffin and cover it in a shroud. Another offering of food and wine is made to the deceased. Different ranks of mourners, depending on filial relation to the deceased, retreat to their mourning area. For three months, those closest to the deceased (sons) must wear untrimmed sackcloth and sleep on straw mats with mounds of dirt for pillows. They return to their houses after the allocated mourning period.

For the third day following death of a countryman, mourners dress in their rank appropriate mourning clothes, which they must wear for up to three years (Figure 1). There are five grades of mourning attire assigned to lineage members from highest to lowest rank (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Clothing type</th>
<th>Time Worn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Untrimmed sackcloth</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Even sackcloth</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Greater processed cloth</td>
<td>9 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Lesser processed cloth</td>
<td>5 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Fine hemp</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Clothing for rank of mourning (Derived from Ebrey 1991).
Rituals Prior to Burial

For the next three months until burial, the body remains in the coffin and mourners are required to do a number of duties to prepare for the funeral. No known preservation techniques were performed on the body prior to burial. Offerings of food and wine are made in the morning and evening at the libations table. A completely new offering of food is made on the new moon of each month. Gifts of incense, money, or silk can be made by any mourner at any time. Wailing can be carried out at any time as well. After the three-month mourning period a propitious site is chosen (usually by a geomancer) to bury the body. The site is usually located away from the village, on a hill and close to a water source (Lin 2000). Mourners dig a portion of the grave, pay their respects to the god of earth, then grave diggers excavate the grave. Grave goods for use in the funerary procession and subsequent veneration ceremonies are purchased or made. According to Chu (in Ebrey 1991), grave goods include burial markers, wooden carts, horses, and servants, furnishings, utilitarian ware jars, a catafalque (a device used to carry coffin), and burial tablets. The day before the funeral the coffin is moved, ritually presented to the ancestors, and moved to the reception hall. Afterwards, mourners wail and offer food and wine. The final preparations are organized for the ceremony the following day.

Funeral

On the morning of the funeral, the coffin is transferred to the catafalque. A sending-away offering is made before the deceased leaves the reception hall. The funeral procession involves moving the coffin from the reception hall to the burial site and is lead by “demon-quellers” (ibid: 67) who deter ghosts from the coffin. The mourners are arranged by decreasing rank following the coffin, wailing and guests line the path down to the gravesite and wail as the procession passes (Figure 2). Before the procession arrives, funeral attendants raise a soul tent with the opening facing south. Within the tent, the burial furnishings are arranged and guests and mourners order themselves according to rank around the coffin hole (Figure 3). The chief and female mourners proceed to their proper positions and wail on the arrival of the coffin. At this point, the guests are required to leave and upon exiting, must bow to the chief and female mourners. The remaining mourners offer gifts of fine cloth to the deceased while the coffin is lowered into the grave. Chu (in Ebrey 1991) warns against interring precious items such as jade and gold into the grave pit with the deceased as it is viewed as an onus to the deceased. At the
Figure 1: Mourning clothing (Ebrey 1991:87).
base, the coffin is secured into the ground floor of the grave pit with cement. Great care is taken to avoid tilting or rattling the coffin while it is being lowered and settled into the grave pit as it will potentially distress the deceased. Soil is gently piled atop of the coffin and pounded down by hand until it is compact. Again the god of the earth is worshipped, and then the grave goods, including the furniture, wooden cart, wooden attendants, and ceramic pots are interred. The inscription stone, stating the name and status of the deceased individual is interred on the south end of the burial pit. While the infilling continues, a calligrapher inscribes an ancestral tablet, which is to be placed in the village's ancestral hall. The tablet exhibits the name and title of the deceased and the name of the filial son or chief mourner. The grave pit is filled with soil until it extends up to 1.2m high. It is flanked with a stone stela also up to 1.2m tall, inscribed with the same information found on the inscription stone. Once this rite has been carried out, the procession reassembles in rank order and proceeds back to the village, wailing.

On arrival back at the village, the priest places the spirit tablet on a soul seat in the reception or ancestral hall. Mourners gather around the soul seat and wail in turn according to rank, commencing with the chief mourner. Third to fifth degree mourners are now permitted to eat meat and drink wine and may leave the post funeral rituals. Guests return to the reception hall to pay another tribute. After the guests have retired, the mourners leave to bathe. Meanwhile, burial attendants prepare a succulent feast consisting of rice and meat. The mourners, wailing, return to the hall and the food is presented to the deceased in a ceremony known as the Rite of Repose. Scholar Cheng Hsuan states the purpose of this offering: "the bones and flesh return to the earth; the material force of the hun soul goes everywhere. The filial son is agitated and uncertain because of this and so makes three sacrifices to calm the soul" (in Ebrey 1991:126). The mourners leave the room and allow the spirits of the ancestors to eat. Afterwards, the mourners return in ranked order, wailing as they enter the room. The priest then buries the soul cloth in an unpolluted area in the hall. Morning and evening offerings are ceased after this ritual is carried out.

This same series of rites are performed on two other occasions on propitious 'weak' and 'strong' energy days usually chosen by a geomancer. In the following ceremony, the Rite of End of Wailing mimics the Rites of Repose but signifies the terminus of wailing. The mourners re-enter the hall in rank order lead by the chief mourner on the ensuing auspicious 'strong' day selected by a geomancer. Three offerings of food are made to the spirits and the mourners exit.
Figure 2: Arrangement of the funeral procession (Ebrey 1991:119).
Figure 3: Grave site arrangement (Ebrey 1991:120).
the room to allow the spirits to eat. The mourners return into the room, but do not wail as they enter. They are not permitted to wail during the day but may still wail in the morning and evening. The next day, the previous food offerings are cleared and the attendants prepare a new feast for the Rites of the Associating of the Tablet.

The dishes are offered on the following day and mourners return to the soul seat and wail and move the spirit tablet to the soul seat. Other ancestral tablets are removed from the ancestral hall and placed on the soul seat with the new deceased's tablet. The ancestors are invoked and a feast is offered to them, in a procedure identical to the Rites of Repose. The tablets are then returned to the ancestral hall.

**Dispelling the Spirit from the Community**

After the funeral is complete, a series of three ceremonies are performed to ritually purge the deceased's spirit from the community. The first ritual, known as the First Rite of Good Fortune, is performed one year after the death of a family member. This ceremony marks the end of daily mourning and evening wailing and mourners may begin to eat fruit and vegetables. The day prior to the ceremony, the mourners bathe and a feast is prepared. At dawn of the next day, they offer the feast of raw vegetables, wine and traditional dishes to the deceased. The priest collects the ancestral tablets and the mourners enter the hall wailing, in descending rank order. The priest calls forth the spirits and presents them with three offerings of food. Everyone leaves the room in rank order and allows the spirits to partake in the feast. Thereafter, they return to the room to pay their final respects. In the second year after death, the Second Rite of Good Fortune is accomplished. Mourners are now allowed to drink alcohol and eat meat and are able to return to their houses. The ceremony mimics the previous First Rite of Good Fortune permitting the removal of the spirit tablets into the ancestral hall. The funerary paraphernalia such as the soul seat and staffs are removed from the hall they occupied. Two months after the last rite of good fortune, the final ceremony is undertaken on an auspicious day selected by a geomancer. The ceremony, called the Peace Sacrifice, is performed in the same manner as the previous two ceremonies. This sacrifice completes the rites associated with the initial mourning period of the deceased.
Grave Rites

When the deceased has been ritually purged from the living world and accepted as an ancestor a series of post burial rites are conducted. R. Watson (1988) classifies these as grave rites. Ranked mourning continues to play a critical role in how a deceased kinsman is honoured on its journey to become an ancestor. However, all lineage members are encouraged to propitiate at these ceremonies. Each ceremony involves purification by bathing three days prior and the preparation of an offered feast the day before the ceremony. On the day of the rite, mourners awake at dawn and offer fruits and vegetables, wine, and prepared dishes to their ancestors at the grave. The mourners then dress in proper mourning attire (raw and undecorated cloth) and gather to invoke the spirits. The spirits are presented three offerings of prepared dishes then the mourners leave to allow the spirits to enjoy the food. The dishes are usually arranged according to the diagram shown in Figure 4.

The mourners return and in ranked filial order, sample the food and bow to the ancestors. Afterwards, the food and wine are cleared and the food is served in a feast to lineage members the following day. The wine, which is considered fortunate, is not served but is bottled and sealed. The ceremonies associated with perennial mortuary rites include the following (Table 2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ceremony</th>
<th>Date of Ceremony</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rites to the Earliest Ancestor</td>
<td>Winter solstice</td>
<td>Earliest ancestor tablets are brought to the ceremony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacrifices to the Early Ancestors</td>
<td>First day of Spring</td>
<td>Early ancestor tablets are brought to the ceremony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacrifices to Fathers</td>
<td>Last month of Autumn –</td>
<td>Father's tablets are brought to the ceremony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(selected by diviner)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacrifices at Graves (Tomb Sweeping Day)</td>
<td>First 10 day period of third month</td>
<td>Occurs at gravesite. The grave is first cleared of debris and then the ceremony takes place. Sacrifice is also made to the god of the earth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Perennial post burial rights (Derived from Ebrey 1991:161).

Tomb Sweeping Day is one of the more notable death ritual ceremonies practiced by the Chinese and is one of the only ceremony that has been found in archival records on the overseas Chinese.
Here the food is placed on an unpolluted mat by the grave in the same arrangement as in Figure 4. Uncooked and unprocessed foods are also included as offerings to the gods.

Application of Ritual Texts in Chinese Communities

Chinese death ritual disseminated in Chinese ritual manuals is a complex process that combines ritual, repetition, and rank to properly expel the deceased from the living world. While these ritual manuals were utilized well into the twentieth century, their true value is not in what the texts admonished, rather in how society interpreted these rites in their own, more personal rituals. The following section will explore how idealized burial rituals have been reinterpreted in Chinese communities. Using ethnographical and anthropological data from the nineteenth and twentieth century, I focus on those ideologies and rituals that were accepted universally and secondly look at variations that dominated the southeastern provinces of China focusing on those areas at the epicenter of the Chinese diaspora.

Unifying Features of Chinese Death Ritual

Unified rituals in China are those that were circulated by county officers in the Qing Dynasty. If this basic set of rituals was carried out, Chinese were free to incorporate a wide variety of heterodox liturgies into their death ritual practices. Watson (1988a) has defined these unified rites based on a compilation of anthropological research in rural Hong Kong (Freedman 1958; Watson 1988a; 1988b), Fukien (DeGroot 1903), Guangdong (Freedman 1974), and Taiwan (Cohen; Thompson 1988). These rites conform to funerary rites and are concerned with taming the volatile and disoriented soul of the deceased prior to their conversion to an ancestor (Table 3). A number of key concepts inherent in these unifying features are rooted in preexisting Chinese ideologies and aid in deciphering why these rituals were universally adopted, despite their promotion by officials. While defining all themes is beyond the scope of
Figure 4: Arrangement of food at a grave or altar (Ebrey 1991:161).
this thesis, I expound on the major ones that later play an integral role in overseas Chinese burial practices. The adoption of these rituals is governed by the Chinese concept of death, which is in essence based on an underworld version of the living world. Prominent themes include defining the Chinese concept of death, types and honouring of spirits and the role of the living in the treatment of the deceased.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unified Rites</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Announcement of death to community</td>
<td>Community notified through written announcements, wailing, and hanging white banners or blue lanterns outside the home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adornment of proper mourning attire</td>
<td>Mourners required to wear sackcloth or hemp white clothing, depending on the rank of the mourner (3 years).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purification of the deceased through ritual bathing</td>
<td>Corpse washed by a corpse handler and dressed in the deceased’s finest clothing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transmission of goods from the living world into the afterworld</td>
<td>Food and paper representations of wealth transferred to the deceased via essences or burning for use in journey to the afterworld. Paper representations include money, houses, and clothing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation of a ‘soul tablet’</td>
<td>Tablet inscribed with name, educational level, and title of deceased and placed in the ancestral hall or altar in the deceased’s house. Brought out for various veneration ceremonies throughout the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The use of professional funerary attendants</td>
<td>Regularly hired and paid to organize funeral and handle tasks involving contact with deceased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calming of the spirit before interment</td>
<td>Piper is usually hired to soothe spirit and distract from wandering away from funeral.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sealing the coffin</td>
<td>Coffin secured so deceased are not disturbed or polluted by outside forces before buried in grave pit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal of deceased from the village</td>
<td>Transfer of deceased from community into the underworld. Once deceased passed beyond the boundaries of the community and into the burial site, it has officially been expelled from the community. All ensuing rituals now honour the deceased as an ancestor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Unified rites of Chinese death ritual in late Qing Dynasty and modern China (Watson 1988a).
**Chinese Concept of Death**

Death and the afterworld embody the Taoist concept of *yin*. The living are, on the other hand, imbued with *yang*. The *yin* world is perceived to be a dark version of the living world by the Chinese (Bruun 2003). The Chinese perception of death mirrors both the living world and revisits the idea of the parallel conception of society. The ancestor is viewed as the nucleus of the underworld, serving the same function as the family in Chinese society (Cohen 1988). The underworld houses three powerful types of spirits; gods, ancestors and ghosts, all of which impact the lives of the living.

Expanding on this parallel conception of society, gods are analogous to the bureaucracy in China. The emperor of the underworld is the Jade emperor, who rules the court of the dead and whose origins are based in Buddhist ideology (Cohen 1988). A decreasing rank of gods is housed within this bureaucracy down to the county god, which is akin to the county official in Chinese society. This county god is the primary god that is worshipped by the communities within this county and again draws similarities to the high status role of the county official during the Qing Dynasty (McKeown 2001).

Ancestors are viewed as an extension of the family. And as the underworld parallels the living world, they have the same needs as their kin. They require food, housing, money, and land. As the underworld is empty, it is the responsibility of their kin to provide these necessities (Cohen 1988; Wolf 1974). Offerings are transmitted to the deceased through essences of food offered or the burning of paper representations of wealth such as houses or clothing.

At the lowest spiritual rank, ghosts assume the role of beggars and vagabonds in the living world. They are both feared and can bring ill fortune to the living. Before reaching this underworld, the deceased must first embark on a dangerous journey and rites associated with the funeral include items that are important on this journey. This stage is highly unpredictable and volatile and parallels the rituals associated up to the end of the funerary rites and expulsion from the community (Watson 1988b). The deceased have not yet received the amount of veneration required for ancestors so are at this point ghosts. Thus, the primary goal of rites associated with the funeral is to keep the ghost from wandering from its path to the underworld. If the rituals are not performed properly or the deceased are not provided with enough provisions to succeed on this journey they will remain a ghost. Ghosts are able to inflict calamity and misfortune to a community for up to three generations (Wolf 1974). At the end of the journey, the deceased must
face ten courts of official gods. These gods judge the deceased on the basis of achievements and
benevolence during their lives and may either punish or honour them based on individual merits
(Wolf 1974). To ensure that they are judged as a benevolent citizen, kinsmen incongruously burn
spirit money from the Bank of Hell to bribe officials (ibid). Once the deceased have been judged,
they are accepted into their role in the underworld as either ancestor or ghost, paralleling the
literal expelling of the deceased from the living world.

**Worshipping Spirits**

The three ranks of spirits in the underworld are honoured by the living at different
levels. Gods are revered as state bureaucrats. In Chinese society, a bureaucrat would not be
invited into the home of a commoner; their interaction is in fact viewed as improper (Wolf 1974).
Typically a god is venerated in a temple and offered cooked food, which is not seasoned, and
gold money. An odd number of sweet smelling wood incense known as joss sticks are lit and
burned in their honour. Gods are worshipped as a means to provide services to the living.
Ultimately, gods hold more power than ancestors, but in accordance to the living commoner-elite
relationship, gods are not as responsive to living requests (Cohen 1988).

Ancestors are an omnipresent presence in the familial unit. If they are not properly
propitiated, misfortune will ensue. Thus, veneration rites are associated with this level of the
spirit world and an undercurrent of reciprocity between the living and their ancestors is ever
present. Similar to gods, ancestors are worshipped to aid family members and in return are
offered cooked and prepared dishes, silver money, paper representations of wealth and an odd
number of joss sticks. They are worshipped both inside an ancestral hall or ancestral altar, or at
the burial ground (Wolf 1974).

Ghosts are the derelicts of the deceased world who have been wholly neglected by the
living. Wolf (1974) argues they are a result of three conditions:

1) Deceased with no next of kin (in particular those with no male children)
2) Children who die early
3) Deceased who die away from home (sojourners are part of this category)

Death during childhood is particularly intriguing. The Chinese believe that the soul of a child is
not securely attached to the body and can easily leave the body, resulting in the death of a child (Potter 1974). Children are usually buried swiftly and shallowly, without a coffin. It is believed that stray dogs will likely dig up the child and eat their spirit, relieving the family of their duty to the ghost (Wolf 1974). Rites associated with the death of a child mimic those associated with a malevolent ghost. Ghosts are not honoured but appeased. It is believed that ghosts wander freely around the living world so offerings are made outside the backdoor of a home as well in formal rituals associated with ancestral and deity worship. Moreover, they are quelled during the Hungry Ghost Festival in the eighth month of the lunar year when ghosts are set free from the underworld. Food and paper money are given as insurance against any wandering spirit that may be lurking in the community (ibid). Typical offerings to a ghost include uncooked rice with no utensils, alcohol and cigarettes, an even number of lit joss sticks and silver money (Thompson 1988). Ghosts are only menacing for up to 60 years (three generations) after which they lose their potency.

**Spirits of the Ancestor**

The spirit of an ancestor must be expanded upon further. The ancestral spirit is comprised of three souls which reside in different physical locales in the living world (Watson 1988a). The three ranks of the soul associated with an ancestral spirit are the ancestor, grave and ghost spirits. All three aspects of the soul exist at one time but are separated at death.

The ancestral soul resides in the ancestral tablet ritually created during the funeral. The ancestral tablet is stored in an ancestral hall or on the left hand side of a family altar (Ebrey 1991). Essentially, this soul is the embodiment of Confucianism and serves the role as the kinsman or principal soul of the ancestor and kinsman. The ancestral spirit is propitiated to bring good fortune to the family.

The soul of the grave is manifested in the bones of the deceased. The grave soul stems from Taoist beliefs of *yin* and *yang*. As discussed in detail in the following chapter, the bones of deceased are believed to conduct a positive energy called *qi* that when harnessed, brings good fortune to a community. Unlike the ancestral spirit that is personal and private to the family, the fortune gained from the soul of the bones can benefit and more importantly be manipulated by everyone in the community (Lin 2000). The grave soul serves the role as community member in a village.
The ghost soul's role is to journey to the underworld where it meets judgment by the gods. If the ancestral soul is not venerated properly, it is possible for the ghost soul to reemerge in the living world and bring misfortune to a community. Hence, the soul of a ghost is perceived to be a citizen of the bureaucracy who is unknown at the community level and can potentially pose a threat to the community if not treated with respect. Wolf states that: "one man's ancestor is another man's ghost" (1974:146). The rites associated with the ghost soul are the funerary rites before it becomes an ancestor.

**Spirit Domains**

Most ancestors were worshipped on an ancestral altar in the home of the deceased. The altar is basically a table that faces west and holds the ancestral tablet and offerings made to the ancestor by the filial son (Habenstein et al. 1994; Reid 1996). At the familial level, the altar commemorated direct ancestors such as a grandparent or great grandparent. Wealthier communities, usually made up of one lineage, were able to build ancestral temples, which housed all of the ancestors within the community as far back as the first ancestors. These were high status buildings that were inevitably sought out as the highest form of ancestor worship in a community (Reid 1996). The temples were often funded by Chinese associations which were comprised entirely of the same lineage and who paid dues to aid kinsman in funeral costs, maintenance of cemeteries and ritual ceremonies. Many wealthy overseas Chinese men who returned to their families were able to build ancestral temples in their home villages.

A smaller, less ostentatious version of the ancestral temple is the ancestral hall. The hall was again managed through Chinese associations or lineage members and displayed all of the ancestors belonging to a particular lineage (Hsu 2000). Potter (1974:230) has suggested that:

> Village society is dominated by rich and successful males, the heads of successful families and sub lineages... Only the rich and successful are immortal in China because it is only their descendants who can afford to build tombs and ancestral halls to house tablets and remains and to carry out the yearly ancestral rites.
Role of the Living

Through unrelenting devotion and placation, a spirit becomes an ancestor. However, this condition is also dependant on the rank of mourners. The oldest surviving filial son is the most credible family member to placate an ancestor. As expounded in *Chu Hsi’s Family Rituals*, he holds the majority of the burden to the deceased, particularly in terms of his role as chief mourner at the funeral. He must sacrifice the most, but in the end receives the majority of the benefits in the family. This rank filters down to other male members of the family, from oldest to youngest.

Conversely, while women are prohibited from invoking their ancestors, their role is as critical as a man’s (Ebrey 1991). A woman, specifically the daughter-in-law of the deceased is responsible for the morning and evening offerings made to the deceased before he is expelled from the community. She is expected to serve as a representative for the family at other family funerals as males are at higher risk to be affected by death pollution. Women further hold primary access to knowledge of death ritual practices (Watson 1988b). They are also responsible for coordinating the funeral and grave rites - information that men do not have access to. I will revisit this issue of gender relations in Chinese death ritual practice later in this thesis as these rites formally conducted by females inevitably shifted due to the absence of women in overseas Chinese communities.

Death Pollution

Gender roles denote different levels of access to the deceased and are based in the patriarchal system of family organization, concepts of *yin* and *yang* as well as the idea of death pollution. Death pollution draws from Taoist beliefs in auspicious versus inauspicious energies (Watson 1988b). Chinese believe that the deceased release an inauspicious ‘killing air’ that befoils the village, causing sickness such as leprosy or syphilis and ill fortune (ibid). In Taoist religion, women are considered *yin* and men *yang*. Since death is a *yin* characteristic, women have more affinity to death than men and take on tasks associated with death ritual that are otherwise deemed polluting to a man (Watson 1988b). Women are able to touch the deceased because their *yin* energies are the same. Men on the other hand suffer ill consequences such as sickness or calamity if they come into contact with the deceased. Males are particularly adverse to this pollution because it permanently damages their *yang* qualities. A local Cantonese priest
interviewed by Watson (1988b:113) states that: “after a man touches seven corpses – he can no longer be made clean again”.

To expand further, these killing airs emanate from the flesh of the deceased. The bones on the other hand, are considered *yin*, and as such, males are responsible for secondary burial procedures if required. It is thus the responsibility of the male to disinter and clean the bones (Watson 1988b).

**Specialists**

Because females are denied access to invoke spirits of the ancestors and males cannot risk touching the deceased, a variety of paid specialists are hired to coordinate the ceremonies and take on a variety of positions that are deemed highly pollutive to a community. Specialists that are usually present at a funeral include: geomancer, priest, piper, corpse handler, and a wide array of others (Table 4). The chief mourner is responsible for payment to these specialists. The transaction and reciprocal exchange of money for services mirrors the transformation of the deceased’s soul from ghost to ancestor (Watson 1988b). The following specialists described in Table 4 are presented in decreasing status of their position, and increasing exposure to death pollution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Exposure to Deceased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Fengshui</em> or Geomancer expert</td>
<td>Highest</td>
<td>Selects most auspicious site for a burial and dates for funeral (Lin 2000).</td>
<td>Never touches deceased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piper</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Placates and lures spirit of deceased from the village to the burial ground with brass pipe (Watson 1988a).</td>
<td>No contact to very little contact with deceased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist Nuns</td>
<td>Same as Piper</td>
<td>Chant Buddhist text to calm spirit of deceased (Lin 2000).</td>
<td>Some contact with deceased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acrobats/Comedians</td>
<td>Same as Piper</td>
<td>Entertain and distract deceased on the way to the grave (Lin 2000).</td>
<td>No contact with deceased.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corpse Handler</td>
<td>Lowest</td>
<td>Digs the burial site, ritually bathes and dresses the corpse, arranges securely in coffin (Watson 1988b).</td>
<td>Exposure to death pollution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Settlers</td>
<td>Lowest</td>
<td>Ensure coffin is settled in the grave (Lin 2000).</td>
<td>Exposure to death pollution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Death specialists involved in Chinese funerals (Ebrey 1991)
Paraphernalia

Specialists are usually hired from a single coffin shop, which deals in all matters to do with death ritual. These shops house and build coffins and supply a wide variety of burial related paraphernalia. Common paraphernalia includes paper houses, clothing, and money; funeral paper, used to pack the coffin to prevent movement of the corpse; as well as incense, joss sticks, and gold paper (Watson 1988b). Typically, the coffins are made of dense white pine and are generally lacquered black. Lacquered coffins originated in the Xia Dynasty (2206 B.C. – 1766 B.C.) and have maintained their popularity and status for over 3500 years up to the present (Habenstein et al 1994).

The Role of Food

The final omnipresent theme unifying Chinese death ritual is the use of food as offerings to the deceased. Food is coded to denote status in Chinese society and this same status extends to the afterworld (Wolf 1974). In Chinese society, different types of food represent different status and the same holds true for the afterworld. The types of food offered aid in invoking or placating a particular spirit during the course of the burial rites. Food offered to the deceased is absorbed as essences (Thompson 1988). The essential dish consists of rice (fan) and meat and/or vegetables (ts’ai) (Thompson 1988). Ancestors, an extension of the family receive cooked and prepared meals called ts’ai-fan, which are composed of a serving of rice and five servings of meat and/or vegetables. This meal is typically served with utensils and chopsticks are usually placed sticking out of the middle of the rice dish. Gods are served a meal known as sheng-li, which is simply meat and a glass of wine. Many funerals, including overseas Chinese funerals offer pig’s heads to the gods, which is a high status item to offer (Thompson 1988) (Figure 5). Gods also receive packaged and bulk items such as crackers, cakes, and fruits. Ghosts are always served uncooked rice or millet with no utensils. Hence, food offerings clarify which type of spirit is being honoured at a particular time during the funeral rites – a tool which is extremely useful in decoding Chinese death ritual in overseas Chinese communities.
Varying Features of Chinese Death Ritual

Watson (1988a) has suggested that underlying the success of Chinese death ritual in the Qing Dynasty is the concept of variation within unity. Unity is found mainly in those rites associated with the funeral. It is believed that if the particular structure is maintained, then Chinese are free to express their grief in any way they see fit. This concept was popularized by Emperor Kangxi in the early Qing Dynasty. It is this personalized expression of grief that has lead to tremendous variation of local and regional burial customs that dominate China today. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to cover even a fraction of these variations, this thesis focuses on a single system adopted in the Song Dynasty and elaborated in the Late Imperial in southeastern China (Taiwan, Hong Kong, Fukien, Guangdong, Jiangxi) – the three stage secondary burial practice. Discussed in detail in the next chapter, this practice is of critical importance because of connections that can be drawn between southeastern China and overseas Chinese sites.

Secondary burial practices in Southeast China are heavily influenced by Taoism and Buddhism and involve: 1) initial burial in a temporary tomb selected through fengshui; 2) exhumation and storage after 7 to 10 years; 3) and interment into a permanent ancestral tomb (Watson 1988a). Northern Chinese peoples, as noted, do not practice secondary burial but cremate their deceased (Watson 1988a). The ingenious practice of allowing variation within unification lead to the incorporation of Buddhism and Taoism – the latter of which plays an integral role in peoples from the Pearl River Delta, the source of the Chinese diaspora. The distinct practice of secondary interment associated with sojourners from southeastern Guangdong is visible in sites throughout the world. In the next chapter, I explore how these same rituals are reinterpreted in North America.
CHAPTER 4

Overseas Chinese Burial Practices

Traditional Chinese believe that after death their bones must rest in Chinese soil, and that they must have sons to carry on the family name and care for their spirit by placing 'spirit' money and food on their graves. Otherwise, they will be doomed to wander homeless and uncared for in the spirit world and cannot intercede on behalf of their living descendants (Ling 2002:285).

In this chapter, I discuss how traditional southeastern Chinese death ritual has influenced those who sojourned from the Pearl River Delta in southeastern China. The chapter provides a synthesis of overseas Chinese burial practices in the Canadian and American western frontier from the gold rush period (1850s to the 1870s), the railway period (1860s to the 1890s), and subsequent years up to the 1910s through data acquired from historical, archival, and anthropological records. In order to comprehend the significance of overseas Chinese burial practices, it is imperative to understand the repercussions of western society that served to elaborate or de-emphasize traditional ideologies, directly impacting the reinterpretation of Chinese death rituals in overseas Chinese communities. The following section discusses overseas Chinese origins and their motivation for sojourning to North America. This body of work builds on research conducted by Chen (2001). In the final section, I outline the particular cultural ideologies that were affected by the adaptation to their new home and how these ideologies were reinterpreted to create new Chinese death rituals.

History of the Overseas Chinese in the West

A majority of the overseas Chinese in North America originated from the Pearl River Delta, a small region in the coastal province of Guangdong, China – an area defined by small villages and wet rice agriculture (Figure 6). Seven counties or xian make up the Pearl River Delta, it having only a 50km radius outward from its center in Canton. The residents speak a variety of
Cantonese dialects, and call themselves the “people of Tang” (Wickberg 1982:7). The Pearl River Delta is renowned for its distinct artistic and literary style, delectable cuisine, and in particular, its complex kinship organizations. Localized kinship groups are made up of lineages or clans and are composed of groups of men and their families who can trace back to a common ancestor. Most villages in the Canton area were made up of only a few surnames, and groups within the same lineage or clan often sojourned to the same area, thus aiding to preserve bonds to their homeland and recreate a sense of native place in their new home. The Pearl River Delta is also known for its extensive emigration and trading systems, initiated by trade to the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf as early as the fifth century B.C. (Gardner 2000). Until the First Opium War with Europe in 1839, the city of Canton was the epicenter of trade with European merchants. However, beginning in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), a law was created that forbade emigration and trade from China - an act punishable by beheading. While the law was abolished only in 1860, between the 1840s and 1930s, eight million Chinese emigrated from China to seek their fortune overseas (Zhu 1997:21).

Reasons for Sojourn

The throng of emigration from the Pearl River Delta arose as both a reaction to the decaying feudal system present in China during the Qing Dynasty (Dawson 1991:15) and the collapse of traditional ideologies as a result of industrialization (Gardner 2001). Landlords rented land to peasant farmers at an exorbitant rate, which was persistently raised. Furthermore, less than 10% of the land was arable and of this land, the majority was occupied by export crops such as tobacco and sugar cane. Pressures on the land were compounded by a doubling in the population between 1787 and 1850. Thus by 1850 there were 430 million people in China with 31 million alone residing in the Pearl River Delta providing a population density figure equivalent to approximately 600 persons per square kilometer (Dawson 1991). The desire to emigrate was also impacted by industrialization in the Pearl River region. In the early Qing Dynasty, trade was restricted to a localized port in Guangzhou, Guangdong. Chinese cottage industries dominated the area, supplying tea, porcelains, and clothing to the European market and a population explosion ensued. After losing to the Europeans in the Opium War (1839 – 1842), China was
Figure 6: Guangdong, China (Craig 2001:157).
required to open new ports for trade – and as a result, cottage industries from all coastal areas in China flooded the European export market (Waley 1991).

At the same time, Britain increased production of machine-made cloth, eventually dominating the market and collapsing the cloth production cottage industry in China (ibid). Thousands of Chinese industries were shut down as a result of these events, leaving thousands without work. Continued population and land pressure in the 1850s lead to endemic uprisings and banditry against the Qing Dynasty. The most renowned of these peasant revolts was the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864), where over 20 million Chinese perished. These events were further strained through foreign interventions by Christian missionaries and the forced opium trade, as well as a through a series of floods and droughts, which lead to rice shortages. A letter sent to the Qing Dynasty emperor in 1847 regarding the flooding states:

The rains here have been falling for forty days until the rivers, and the sea, and the lakes and the streams have joined in one sheet over the land for several hundred li [1/2 a kilometer] and there is no outlet by which the waters may retire (Hibbert 1988:30).

By the late 1840s, Chinese emigration became a favourable option; particularly in the Pearl River Delta where population pressure, low land availability and access to seaports were prevalent. Most early immigrants to Canada and the United States emigrated from Si Yi xian, composed of four counties (Xinhui, Taishan, Enping and Kaiping) and Sanyi xian, composed of three counties (Shunde, Nanhi, Panyu) in the Pearl River Delta (Gardner 2001; Tan et al. 1985).

Unlike many emigration movements throughout the world, the Pearl River Delta Chinese had every intention of returning home. This amendment was due both to their sense of native place and filial obligations to their families and religion. Their quest was simply to acquire enough money overseas to be able to return to their families a few years later and live comfortably for the rest of their lives. Consequently, they were selective as to where they sojourned. Their primary destinations included the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and Southeast Asia, settling in either urban centers (Chinatowns), or rural camps (mines, canneries, and railroad sites) (Wegars 1993). They also journeyed in smaller numbers to Mexico, Peru, Chile, the South Pacific, and the Caribbean.
North America was particularly appealing due to both a series of gold rushes that occurred between the 1850s to 1860s and construction of the American and Canadian railroads between the 1860s to 1880s. The Americas, as a whole, were resource rich and labour poor. Accordingly, between the 1860s and 1870s, substantial Chinese settlements were established in California, Idaho, Washington, Nevada, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Oregon, and British Columbia (Rohe 2001).

Sojourn to Gold Mountain

On January 24th, 1848, James Marshall, a millwright in California, discovered five gold nuggets that initiated the two-decade gold rush period on the west coast of United States and Canada (Zhu 1997:14). The Chinese in the Pearl River Delta were enticed to North America by its potential wealth, renaming the land Gold Mountain. The first Chinese (two men and a woman) arrived in the Colony of San Francisco in 1848 (Lee Sung 1967:21). Upon arrival in San Francisco the two men immediately departed to work in the mines while the woman worked at a mission. The journey from the Hong Kong port to San Francisco took between 45 and 60 days (Rohe 1982). Conditions were often deplorable, plagued with unsanitary, cramped living quarters and meager food rations.

By 1851, there were over 25,000 Chinese in California - the majority of which were involved in mining. Almost immediately, the Chinese were outcast by western miners, owing in part to their cultural practices, but ultimately because they worked harder and more efficiently than the western miners (Gardner 2000; Rohe 1982). For this reason, the Chinese were resigned to follow behind western miners, often purchasing used claims for more than twice what they were worth ($2,000-$7,000 per claim) (Wickberg 1982:19). Typically the Chinese established temporary camps close to mining claims and either occupied buildings abandoned by previous miners or constructed hastily built shelters against the sides of hills or in rock shelters (Ritchie 1986).

In April 1858, gold was discovered on the Fraser River in British Columbia, kindling a rush to the Canada. Ah Hong, a Chinese resident of California, brought news of the gold rush to San Francisco and the Chinese arrived by boat to Victoria in June 1858 (Lai 1973:1). After 1859, Chinese were arriving directly from the Pearl River Delta. With the discovery of gold in
Barkerville in August 1862, Chinese journeyed into the Cariboo where some of the largest Chinese sites in Canada were established (Chen 2001). Enticed by the pure yellow gold of the Kootenay region, the Chinese ventured to Wild Horse Creek in 1866.

The primary obstacle in sojourning to Gold Mountain was raising enough money to pay for the journey. In the mid nineteenth century, a fare from China to San Francisco was approximately $40. The average yearly wage of a Chinese peasant was between $20 and $30. Various options nevertheless existed to acquire the fare: they could hire themselves out to companies who paid their fare, a condition known as bound labour; or they could raise or pay for the fare themselves (Zhu 1997). Bound labourers were comprised of three types - indentured, contractors, and coolies. Indentured labourers acquired their fare through a credit-ticket system, whereby Chinese were sponsored by merchants or volunteer associations in China, and thus remained bound to that institution until their debts had been repaid. Alternatively, contract workers were sponsored by foreign companies and had similar indebted responsibilities as indentured labourers. A report to the Department of Immigration and Colonization in Ottawa on April 29, 1907 states that indentured and contract labourers were required to pay interest rates of 12 – 24% on money borrowed from merchants or volunteer associations (B.C. Archives GR 868).

The final and most widely known form of bound labour was the coolies. Coolies were hired by foreign companies, known as coolie brokers, and were sold like slaves to companies requiring cheap labour, such as large scale railway or mining operations. Companies paid these brokers a lump sum and the wages were distributed amongst the Chinese workers, often at a price considerably lower than other bound labourers (Zhu 1997:22). The majority of sojourners though were free men, who ranged from wealthy merchants, individuals whose families raised the funds, to bound labourers who had evaded their contracts.

**Nature of the Overseas Chinese**

Overseas Chinese who settled in western communities faced innumerable challenges apart from racism and exclusion. These conditions lead to the elaboration or repression of traditional Chinese ideologies as both an adaptation and assimilation to their new home. Previous research by Chen (2001); Wickberg (1982); and Willmott (1970) lead to similar
conclusions that four main constructs of Chinese culture dominate at all overseas Chinese sites. The framework includes the presence of kinship ties, which link traditional Chinese practices of filial piety and volunteer associations; adherence to religion, namely Taoist and Confucian principles; preservation of market systems; and increased isolation and belief of superiority. These factors directly influenced the shift in overseas Chinese death ritual that took place during the late nineteenth, early twentieth centuries.

**Kinship**

Kinship is closely connected to filial piety, a concept discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, and remains a central aspect of overseas Chinese lives. The Chinese in North America originated from one of the most complex kinship systems in China such that “economic organization, political power, sources of prestige and religion, all oriented toward kinship groups” (Wickberg 1982:10). Groups of related individuals or lineages that traced back to a common male ancestor often made up entire villages in the Pearl River Delta. Thus, it was not uncommon for an entire village to have only one surname. In their new home, Chinese towns and cities preserved the same structure; however, expanded the boundaries of family to include individuals not related by blood. This ensured that all members of the Chinese ethnicity were cared for in their new country. A phenomenon known as chain migration occurred when groups of Chinese sojourners were later followed by groups from the same area, resulting in a small region populating sites throughout the world (Wickberg 1982:5). Kinship ties further aided sojourning Chinese, as they were able to leave their wives and children for long periods, confident that they would be taken care of by their extended family in China.

**Filial Piety**

The practice of filial piety rooted in the Latter Han Dynasty (A.D. 25 - 220) has been discussed in detail in Chapter 2. For the Chinese, part of the obligation to their country was an adherence to Confucianism, the main religion in the Pearl River Delta. Confucianism is based on the filial piety of lineage groups, ancestors, and their homeland, providing connections to various gods. The modesty of their religion is reflected in the practice of invoking gods through their
ancestors—not directly themselves. In traditional China, the filial relationship was gauged by a hierarchy of filial obligations. In order of descending value, these relationships include sovereign and subject, parents and children, husbands and wives, older members and younger family members, and finally friends and associates (Low 1993:63). Proper veneration of these associations ensured good fortune to the Chinese. Consequently, the overseas Chinese continued to celebrate ceremonies such as Chinese New Year and Qing Ming that propitiated these relationships in their new but temporary homes. Joss houses, a type of temple, were constructed as a modification of ancestral temples in China. Many communities in China did not have access to funds to allow them to build ancestral temples; in North America, however, joss houses were quite common because the Chinese generally had more money (Gardner 2001).

Volunteer Associations

Despite influences of traditional Chinese culture, new experiences elicited adaptation and reinterpretation of old values. One of the most significant of these reinterpretations was the introduction of volunteer associations into overseas Chinese communities. Volunteer associations were established as protection against the intolerance and prejudices projected by western communities. In the 1850s, analogous associations existed in the Pearl River Delta. These associations were secret society based political groups, who opposed the corrupt rule of the later Qing Dynasty. These same associations emerged in Canada and the United States as early as the 1850s and were a means to express freedom and choices in their lives that were otherwise repressed under the Qing regime in China.

Three types of volunteer associations existed in overseas Chinese sites: groups united by common economic endeavors or street associations; secret societies or clan associations; and more universal organizations instrumental in providing for and protecting their fellow countryman (Willmott 1970:47). The Chih Kung Tang is an example of a secret society, deemed as such because it opposed Qing Dynasty rule. It was the first Chinese volunteer association in Canada, established in Barkerville in 1863 (Chen 2001). Fundamentally, the Chih Kung Tang served to maintain relationships between businesses and the Chinese, as well as organize gambling in
town. In accordance with most volunteer associations, the *Chih Kung T'ang* was funded entirely by membership dues, and gambling and exiting fees (Chen 2001).

The Chinese Benevolent Association (CBA) and Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA), established in Vancouver and Victoria respectively, are examples of large-scale volunteer organizations that arose to help sojourners cope with the oppression and isolation facilitated in their new environment. The main stimulus for the implementation of these associations was the completion of the railways. From the 1860s to the 1880s, thousands of Chinese were unemployed and could no longer support themselves.

The CCBA was founded in June 1884, assisted by the Chinese consulate in San Francisco and over 5000 Chinese men paid $2 to become members in the following years. Unlike the *Chih Kung T'ang*, CBA and CCBA supported the Qing Dynasty. These associations were involved in the maintenance of relationships, payment of debt to contractors, legal protection of all members, care for elderly and sick, funding members over 60 to return home to China, and burial costs. Burial provisions included price of coffins, cost of bone collectors, and payment for the funeral and shipment of bones back to China (Chen 2001).

**Adherence to Religion**

Overseas Chinese communities did adhere to principles of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. However, an intriguing reversal of emphasis emerged in overseas Chinese communities in the nineteenth century. As has been examined, the Chinese in southeastern China conformed to Confucianism, then Taoism, and Buddhism. Unlike northern provinces, the south practiced secondary burial. Overseas Chinese communities continued to practice disinterment and secondary burial, but tended to emphasize Taoist beliefs over Confucianism. There are a number of theories for this shift. It is possible that overseas Chinese groups de-emphasized the importance of Confucianism in the form of rituals and filial piety because they were not in close proximity to their parents or ancestors in China (McKeown 2001; Watson 1988a). Ties to other community members and volunteer associations did provide an outlet for filial actions but were not always members from their immediate families. It is also possible that women held the rights to many of the Confucian rituals which men did not have access to in their

45
new home (Watson 1988a). And since the majority of sojourners were men, it is possible that overseas Chinese religion was simply a piecemeal of reinterpretations based on only a superficial knowledge of the rites usually performed by women.

In terms of the elaboration of Taoism, it is likely that Chinese groups feared their new homes and feared the ghosts (strangers) that lived in close proximity. Taoism provided them with the explanations for their fears and the rituals to help tame them. The overseas Chinese believed that the deceased remained as ghosts until they returned to their homeland. McKeown (2001) noted that Chinese often touted foreigners as ghosts and had a number of colourful labels for their neighbours:

> Americans were known as ‘Flowery Flag ghosts’ – the Flowery Flag being a Chinese name for America – postmen as ‘letter delivery ghosts’, bartenders as ‘bar ghosts’, farmers as ‘potato ghosts’ and bank tellers as ‘bank room ghosts’ (McKeown 2001:126).

Through the Taoist practice of *fengshui* there were a number of methods to appease these spirits (Bruun 2003).

**Fengshui**

*Fengshui* is a practice applied to the arrangement of towns, cities, houses, and furniture within the most propitious dichotomy of nature’s energy. The idea being that if a site is in an area with good *fengshui*, good fortune will befall the inhabitants. Anthropologist Yih-yuan Li contends, “geomancy may properly be said to lie at the core of popular beliefs concerning spatial harmony, particularly as regards to the sitting of ancestral graves” (Li 1999:388-389). *Fengshui* translates literally to ‘wind and water’ and is aptly described as the “art of adapting the residences of the living and the dead so as to operate and harmonize with local currents of the cosmic breath” (Chatley 1969:22). *Fengshui* presupposes that the universe is made up of undertones of invisible currents of energy called *qi*, which is represented allegorically as the dragon’s breath. The earth (or dragon) is viewed as living and thus when it breathes it creates a positive energy known as *yang qì*. While the dragon is resting, a stagnant or straight flowing energy known as *yin qì* is formed. The interaction of these energies and the placement of a site in the flow of the dragon's breath provide the very essence for the practice of *fengshui* (Mueller
Two types of yin and yang qi occur in an area: sheng and sha. Sheng qi is healthy, nourishing qi. It carries auspicious currents that improve life and well being. Sheng qi manifests itself as a meandering, spiraling current and is the most desirable type of qi to have at a burial ground. Sha qi is negative qi. It carries unfavourable currents that create negative influences on the body. Sha qi travels along straight pathways, disturbing the positive flow of sheng qi. It lurks in dark corners and along straight away and even hides itself in stagnant corners or poorly ventilated rooms.

In China there are two schools of thought in the practice of traditional fengshui: the Compass or Liqi Pai, Patterns of Qi School and the Form or Hsing School (Bruun 2003). The Compass School, with its roots in Northern China, calculates fengshui placement by way of a complex magnetic compass, known as a Luopan. The information generated from the compass can be utilized to remedy and harness qi. Up until the twentieth century, Luopan school training was a sacred and elitist foundation, which benefited only wealthy patrons. Form School on the other hand, dominates Southern China, where the terrain is diverse and mountainous. Form school advocates utilize a fengshui model to locate the most favourable location for a site. Most of the lower and middle class Chinese before the twentieth century practiced this secular art.

Whether or not this practice was continued in their new homes resides in the fact that the Chinese sojourned to increase their families' good fortune. Consequentially, they would not jeopardize all of their hard work by failing to arrange their sites within the natural cosmos of the universe. Rohe (2002:38) adheres to the probability of fengshui in overseas Chinese sites stating further that: "...some feng-shui principles represent practical considerations that most miners, regardless of ethnicity, would consider in locating their camps". No archival documentation has arisen to support the use of fengshui on sites; however, a number of archaeologists have alluded to its use in the set up of town sites and orientation of houses according to laws of fengshui (see Couch 1996; Gardner 2000; Mead 1994; Mueller 1987; Peters 1997; Rohe 2002; Sauer 2001). Lai (1974; 1987) has put forth some of the pioneer studies on the use of fengshui at overseas Chinese sites in North America. He developed a location model of fengshui based on tenants in Guo Pu's Book of Burial (Lai 1987:276-324), an influential book which first introduced the practice of fengshui. These parameters aid in identifying sites that have been accordingly arranged. The principles of this practice dictate that sites must have:
1. A smooth, rolling terrain to encourage good qi energy. A road or waterway should not point directly at the site, as sha, which travels in straight lines, will carry the good energy away.


3. A proper positioning of the omega, or armchair formation. An omega form is one with high terrain on three sides, opening up at the base. It is representative of yet another symbol of wealth and power in Chinese society, conceived in the North Song Dynasty (A.D. 960-1127). A typical omega-shaped site, as viewed from the top of a site looking down, has high terrain behind the site represented allegorically as the black turtle, high mountains to the left (depicted allegorically as the Azure Dragon), lower mountains (White Tiger), to the right, and open to a waterway below (Crimson Phoenix) (Figure 7).


A site that is located in this arrangement of landforms and energy is known as a dragon's lair and is the most desirable arrangement for any type of settlement (Mueller 1987). If all of these factors are present at a site, good fortune will befall both the inhabitants at the site and their families back in China.

### Market Systems

In addition to kinship and religious ties, a commercial mentality permeated overseas Chinese' life. In traditional Chinese culture “land is the only real wealth and commerce is merely the means to the wealth” (Willmott 1970:40). Crops and goods were grown and procured in the home and brought to a centralized trading market. The Chinese were ingrained with a business mentality that assisted in establishing businesses in their sojourned land. Shortly after arriving in North America, the Chinese founded a network of businesses catering to the sojourners. Chinese stores imported goods such as preserved foods, medicinal herbs (including opium), vessels, and
clothing. Restaurants and teahouses serving traditional Cantonese cuisine were popular with both the Chinese and non-Chinese population. This system helped to preserve traditional culture and ease the tension of migrating to a foreign land. For instance, the businesses that developed to disinter and ship bones back to China became an active endeavour in the late nineteenth, early twentieth century (Willmott 1970).

Superiority and Isolation

The overseas Chinese isolated themselves from the rest of society. This phenomenon is clearly seen in both the emergence of separate Chinese sections in non-Chinese towns and low interaction with non-Chinese residents. Chinese communities forfeited bonds with non-Chinese residents in an effort to preserve their traditional culture and remain filial and loyal to their culture (Chen 2001:79). The desire for isolation was also founded in the fact that they felt superior to other cultures. The non-Chinese communities were viewed as barbaric, as China was the “cultural center of the world... for many thousands of years” (Chen 2001:80). Ironically, the Chinese were viewed by the white community as uncivilized and inferior, further isolating them from the rest of society. Chinese exclusion played an equally important role in not only the isolation of Chinese communities but also the development of the Chinese culture who remained in British Columbia. A head tax for immigrating Chinese was inaugurated as early as 1887 and increased to $500 in 1904 (Chinese Board of Trade Guild in Victoria, Canada. National Archives of Canada, RG 76: Immigration Branch, Vol. 121, File 23635, Part 3, 1913). The Chinese were completely excluded from Canada from 1923 to 1947. During this period of exclusion, only 12 Chinese immigrants were permitted into Canada; however, over 60,000 emigrated home to China (Wickberg 1982).
Overseas Chinese Burial Practices

The driving force behind overseas Chinese burial practice is the belief that after death, the soul of the deceased hovered over the grave. Lai (1987:32) states: “If a Chinese man died in a foreign country his soul would be homeless and therefore unable to rest until his body was shipped back to China and buried in its home village”. In China, after the allotted period of reverence, the deceased spirit would become an ancestor. Overseas, this was not a possibility - the spirit remained an unsettled ghost until its bones were back in China. Thus the primary goal of the burial process was the continuous appeasement and veneration of the deceased, which in turn lead to good fortune for the inhabitants. Another goal was to ensure that the deceased were shipped back to China for reburial in family plots. To facilitate these concerns, overseas Chinese developed three burial ground processes based in both traditional Chinese culture and as an adaptation to the impermanence of their new home. The three processes involved 1) appropriate site selection, 2) funeral and burial related ceremonies, and 3) disinterment.

The fundamental difference between burial customs in China and overseas Chinese sites was through the elaboration of funerary rites in the latter; rites undertaken up to the burial of the deceased. Zhang (2001) devised a similar classification of overseas Chinese burial practices in United States based on a four tiered system. The system closely resembles burial rites propagated by Chu and later Qing Dynasty county officials (Ebrey 1991; Watson 1988a).

Site Selection

Site selection is the first process in overseas Chinese burial practices and it is vital to establish good fengshui for the deceased. Very few Chinese groups were awarded this privilege, as it was dependent on both the presence and relationship to western communities. What is proposed is that given the opportunity, overseas Chinese would choose to practice fengshui at a burial ground. If fengshui does not exist at a burial ground then presumably western communities were involved in the process of site selection, often by allotting them an area (often an inhospitable plot of land) for their burial ground. According to the parameters of fengshui set up by Lai (1987), a burial ground with good fengshui when viewed from above should have high
mountains to the right, higher mountains to the left, high mountains behind, and open to a waterway below. Those communities that did not have access to natural landscapes in tune with nature's energies, would often modify landscapes by building artificial mounds, waterways and by planting trees that would encourage sheng and disrupt sha (Bruun 2003).

**Burial Related Ceremonies**

The second process involves the funeral and burial related ceremonies practiced throughout the Chinese lunar year. Crowder's (2002) recent PhD analysis of modern Chinese funerals in San Francisco illustrates that overseas Chinese funerals "...offer a family the opportunity to demonstrate duty, devotion, and honor to the deceased and to enhance the status of the family" (Crowder 2001:453). Conversely, traditional Chinese funerals are designed to deter evil spirits from the deceased until they are buried. Funerals in China are arranged on auspicious days in accordance with the Chinese calendar (Sulentic 2001:444). While traditional belief systems of deterring evil spirits remained a key component of the overseas Chinese funeral, what is more apparent is the elaboration of the ceremony. This elaboration served a dual function by appeasing the spirit of the deceased and displaying the status and wealth of an individual or family in the new community.

Overseas Chinese funerals mirrored practices in China, although very little evidence exists on the entire procedure. Foremost, a proper day for the funeral was usually selected by a geomancer. The Chinese would sometimes wait weeks after the death of a countryman for the right day and in the interim, large fires were built outside the house of the deceased to deter evil spirits. Next, the Chinese would wash and dress the corpse in fineries for presentation to the community. Donning proper attire was important to the overseas Chinese as an explicit display of the wealth of a deceased individual. For many overseas Chinese, these death robes varied from extravagant fineries imbued with symbols of longevity and good fortune to simply laundered clothing (Zhang 2001). Zhang (2001) further observed Chinese placing a dollar or quarter in the mouth of the deceased in Philadelphia funerals. The insertion of jade, rice or coins has been a long standing practice in China for over 2000 years and followed ideologies of the underworld that the deceased continued to live a similar life to the living. Therefore, they would
need food for sustenance (rice), money to purchase goods and jade as a display of their wealth.

In the 1867 funeral of legendary miner, China Mary in Helena, Montana, coins were placed near her body to supposedly prevent the bones from rotting or breaking (*Helena Weekly Herald*, September 19, 1867). Zhang (2001) also observed many instances of overseas Chinese in Philadelphia erecting soul tablets for the deceased.

Funerals were both mournful performances and ostentatious displays of wealth. On the day of the funeral, the coffin was moved onto the street and a parade of actors, mourners, hired specialists and the chief mourner arranged themselves in their proper rank with the chief mourner at the head of the procession. The procession of mourners would usually dress in white gowns, adorned with red and yellow sashes (Feichter 2001). Soul banners, displaying the name of the deceased were held by members of the procession on their way to the cemetery.

These items and all other burial paraphernalia were burned at the end of the funeral (Zhang 2001). Drums and cymbals were played and thousands of firecrackers were lit as the deceased was carried by wagon down the main road of town to the cemetery (Figure 8).

Professional mourners, a priest, and corpse handlers were regular figureheads in many overseas Chinese funerals. Wailing, a crucial component of Chinese funerals was rare in overseas Chinese funerals, because the task was traditionally undertaken by women. Zhang (2001) has speculated that the lack of wailing in overseas Chinese funerals was an adaptation to western standards. Macintyre’s (1895:5) observation of a Chinese funeral in New Westminster also referred to a “solitary Chinaman who emitted a fanfare from an ox horn, turning his head from right to left... while he grinned at the amazed onlookers who lined the road”. This individual was probably the hired piper, whose job entailed placating the confused spirit of the deceased.

At the end of the procession individuals scattered paper punched with holes along the road, so evil spirits would be delayed while “...perform[ing] the acrobatic feat of tumbling in and out of each puncture in the fragments of paper which were cast into the winds” (Macintyre 1895:6). Usually, those who attended the funeral were often rewarded with gifts. For Chinese funerals in Idaho City, a town with "about as many Chinese as whites" (*Capital Chronicle*, October 27, August 4, 1869), all who attended the funeral received a small pouch of gold dust from the host to buy something to remember the deceased (Zhu 1997). Inevitably, these funerals became popular events for both the Chinese and non-Chinese inhabitants.
Figure 8: Funeral procession in Vancouver (Mount Pleasant) (Photo courtesy of the City of Vancouver Archives SGN 1451).
The deceased were buried in coffins in shallow graves to allow for a maximum rate of decomposition. Joss sticks were burned near the grave and paper representations of worthy items to the living such as money and houses, were burned in a nearby wooden or stone altar. The smoke from the paper money was thought to follow the souls to the afterworld (Sulentic 2001:444). Grave markers were usually placed at the head of the burial. They ranged from simple wooden stakes to more permanent markers composed of metal, stone, or brick. Permanent markers often adopted a more traditional Chinese design (Figure 9). Such is the case in the Yee King Tong Cemetery in Honolulu, Hawaii and the Arue Cimitere Chinois in Papeete, Tahiti, where a traditional omega shaped grave is the dominating grave marker at the sites (Gardner et al. 2003). The funeral was completed by offering the deceased a fine feast of roast pork, chicken, apples, oranges, cakes, and sweets; which was placed at the head or foot of the grave or on a nearby cemetery altar. Macintyre (1895:5) alluded to six bowls of rice and six bowls with dishes of chicken accompanied by six bowls of wine adorning the table near the coffin. Presumably, this table resembles the libations table outlined in Chu Hsi’s Family Rituals. Likewise, the dishes are representative of typical ts’ai-fan dishes offered to ancestors. Macintyre (1895:5) observed the following rite at a funeral in New Westminster: “the nearest relatives of the defunct, to the number of six, at one period enter the room and partake slightly of the dishes”. This procedure resembles rites associated with the presentation of the deceased to the ancestors, prior to the burial of the deceased individual.

The Chinese believed that the feast was necessary for their three day “dragon trip” to “the land of total bliss” (Sulentic 2001: 444) and resembles the same journey taken in China. When asked how the deceased consume food, Gee, a nineteenth century Chinese servant stated:

You see that? [he put up a cup by the light to get a shadow] Dead men all the same that, he eat all the same that [shadow] of food and wine. I this [he flicked the mp] If I no get all the same this food and wine, me pretty soon die quick (in Morton 1974:34).

In terms of how the Chinese were buried, the unearthing of Chinese burials in the 1980s in Evanston, Wyoming provides superb insight into the nature of Chinese burials in the late nineteenth century. In Evanston, the Chinese burial ground was located on the side of Red Hill, northeast of the Chinatown. Stone (1924) states that the Chinese cemetery was located “where yellow men were buried near their white neighbors” (1924:119). Very little is known about the
Figure 9: Permanent Chinese grave at Arue Cemetery, Tahiti (Photo by L. Pascerelia 2003).
Chinese cemetery although it has been determined that after the town was abandoned in 1922, the Chinese were thereafter buried in the Evanston City Cemetery (Wyoming Times, August 4, 1928).

The original cemetery remained 'undiscovered' until 1982 when construction crews unearthed six burials in an area slated for a housing development. The burials were later determined morphologically to be of Chinese ancestry. The burials all date to the turn of the century and provide a rare look at how the overseas Chinese were buried. It further raises questions as to why they remained interred. The individuals ranged from 23 to 48 in age and each of the individuals was interred in a coffin. Five of the individuals were wearing clothing. Each had a black cotton tunic, typical of Chinese dress at the turn of the century and three donned black bowties. One of the individuals was dressed in striped cotton pants with suspenders (Human Remains Files, University of Wyoming).

The dates of the burials were derived from excavated coffin hardware, which includes gilded pewter handles, lid fasteners, coffin nails, and two copper plates embossed with "At Rest" (Human Remains Files, University of Wyoming). Other items interred with the burials include blue glass beads and shards of flat, colourless glass. In this context, the glass fragments could be remnants from mirrors as mirrors were commonly used to ward off evil spirits from the deceased (Bruun 2003). Because belief systems were heightened during the initial sojourn, it would not be uncommon to bury individuals with extra protection from evil ghosts and spirits. Another individual was buried with a metal lard bucket. Presumably, this bucket was utilized as an inscription stone. The bones recovered were reinterred in a cemetery in Wyoming (J.R. Dean, pers. comm. 2002).

Generally, first immigrant Chinese feared cemeteries as havens for ghosts. Thus, after the burial of their ancestors, the Chinese tended to the grave only on special occasions marked by three annual ceremonies during the lunar year. Qing Ming, also known as Pure Brightness Festival or Tomb Sweeping Day, occurred on the fifth day of the fourth lunar month (April 5 or 6), Yu Lan occurred on the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month (July 15 or 16) and Chong Yang was celebrated during the ninth lunar month (October) (Chen 2001:313). All three ceremonies were designed to placate the grave spirits through cleaning the grave, lighting joss sticks, and offering feasts, flowers, and paper money. In an article entitled "Feeding the Dead" in the October 18th, 1879 edition of Miner, a miner speaks of R.J. Rutherford, a pioneer express man,
who accompanied two Chinese men during Chong Yang to pay respects to a fellow countryman who had been murdered the year before:

R.J. Rutherford...performed the pious duty of taking two of the followers of Confucius, with a lot of roast pig, peaches, grapes and a bottle of brandy to Lynx Creek to feed a dead countryman... without a morsel of food or a drop of anything to cheer him on his journey to that flowery kingdom where all good Chinamen at last bring up. Rutherford says there was no throw off about the food: they left plenty of it and that which was good, on the grave, and as the two live celestials returned to town with him, there is no probability of their returning to bring away what their defunct friend may leave after satisfying his appetite (in Fong 2001:51).

In China offerings by family or lineage members were made in the home at a family altar. Traditionally, these rites were associated with honouring the spirit of the ancestor, whilst those associated with the cemetery honoured the ancestral spirit tied to the grave. In the overseas Chinese burial ground context, the deceased's spirit did not attain full ancestral status until it was home in China. Thus, altars and burners were typically found in cemeteries as opposed to in the home.

Most altars are located in the burial ground itself. As belief systems of ghosts were heightened in overseas Chinese communities, features and material culture associated with death ritual became bound in sacred space. Altars are essentially tables composed of wood or stone and are sometimes but not always accompanied by a stone burner. Abraham et al. (2003; also Abraham 2005) provides a comprehensive account of altar burners recorded in Chinese cemeteries around the world. Food offered in these post burial ceremonies was bound by less stringent rules than in the funeral and generally appealed to personal favourites of the deceased (Zhang 2001). Typical offerings included prepared chicken (with head still attached), a variety of raw fruits, cooked seasoned pork, rice, and wine or whiskey. The food was often laid out on a cemetery altar or at the gravesite itself depending on the rite. The eldest living male relative would then bow three times to the spirit of the grave, then pour wine on the grave. This procedure was repeated three times. After the completion of these rites, the family would partake in the food offered to the deceased. Many times, the feast was enjoyed by others as explained by Eva L. Miles of her father's memories of a Chinese funeral in Silver Reef, Utah in the
late nineteenth century:

When a Chinese man or woman died they were buried in a grave yard east and a little south of Bonanza Flat... They thought that if the man or woman who was buried was going to heaven, they’d need to have time to eat or drink while they went. So they’d have a lot of nice aromatic roast pork and other delicacies to take down for this person to eat and a bottle of liquor... Well, they’d put it on the grave and go away. When evening came, the Indians would come and eat the pork and drink the liquor (in Conley 2001:303).

Returning Bones to the Homeland

The final process involved the disinterment and shipping of bones back to China for reburial in family plots. The deceased were buried for seven years, during which time decomposition of the body occurred, leaving only skeletal remains. Forensic archaeologist Pollard (1996) has estimated that six to seven years is required for the flesh to adequately decompose. The burials were then dug up and the bones cleaned, dried, and packed in various containers. Examples of the containers include stoneware barrel jars or metal storage containers (cylindrical tins, metal boxes) (Anderson 2001; Feichter 2001; Morrow, pers. comm. 2000). Abraham et al., (2003) also recorded the use of suitcases in the ‘bone house’ at Manoa Chinese Cemetery in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Great care was taken to ensure that every bone was accounted for, as the spirit was not complete or settled if bones were missing. Approximately every ten years, bones were picked up by volunteer associations and brought to a centralized bone house, where they were stored until enough had been collected to warrant shipment home to China (Lai 1987:33). The Spokesman Review interviewed a bone collector named Fang Chung in 1896. He was hired by the Chinese Six Companies to collect bones from 500 graves in San Francisco, north to Washington and was then expected to escort the bones safely back to China (Nelson 1993). A later article describes the disinterring procedure:
The bones are carefully gathered, placed on a clean cloth and left to dry for a few hours, when they are taken up and the particles of earth are removed with a stiff wire brush, which is followed by another rubbing with a clean dry cloth. Although, they are by this time well cleaned, custom rules that they shall be gone over a second time with a cloth, when they are ready to be deposited in a zinc box 18 inches long by 10 inches in depth and height. They are then disinfected, sealed hermetically and are ready for shipment to China (Spokesman-Review, September 4, 1905).

Upon arrival in China, the bones were then transferred into a kam taa p jar and a ceremony ensued:

...there is a big feast, at which prominent Chinamen are called upon to make appropriate addresses. A list of the names of the departed ones whose remains have been thus disposed of, is read off and each is bidden farewell in turn as if he were alive (Statesman-Review, September 24, 1905 as cited in Nelson 1993).

**Bone Houses and Volunteer Associations in the United States**

According to the literature, bone houses were always centralized within a country and were always close to a major port. The centralized bone houses in the United States were in San Francisco, although to date, their locations have not been identified. Smaller bone houses were located in Hawaii (Abraham et al. 2003). At the Manoa Chinese Cemetery, there is a large bone house, complete with compartments for storing the bones and an area to clean and dry them (ibid) (Figure 10). Part of the obligation of a company to their bound labourer was to ensure that the remains were sent back to China at the expense of the company. Twain (1913) explains:

...if a [Chinese man] visits a foreign country, he makes arrangements to have his bones returned to China in case he dies; if he hires to go to a foreign country on a labour contract, there is always a stipulation that his body shall be taken back to China if he dies; if the government sells a gang of coolies to a foreigner for the usual five-year term, it is specified in the
contract that their bodies shall be restored to China in case of death.

The fee, to be paid back by the labourer, also included their boat fare and head tax, with payments deducted from their wages. Alternatively, if the deceased was a free labourer, volunteer associations or fellow countrymen accepted the responsibility. Twain (1913) further states: "...on the Pacific Coast, the Chinamen all belong to one or another of several great companies or organizations, and these companies keep track of their members, register their names and ship their bodies home when they die". The responsibility of the associations extended to collecting the remains and recording the name, birthplace and where they died. A permanent record was stored either at the bone house or at the volunteer association. The "Six Companies", headquartered in San Francisco with branches throughout the western United States, was the main association involved in the shipping of bones back to China. Other subsidiary companies or clan associations involved included the Sam Yup or 3 Districts (1851), Sze Yup or 4 Districts (1851), Yeong Wo or Masculine Harmony Company (1852), Ning Yung Company of Association of Masculine Tranquility (1854) and Hop Wo Company or Company of the United Harmony (1862) (Crowder 2002). The most prolific of these companies was the Sze Yup followed by the Ning Yung Company. Chinese often paid up to 2.5% of their earnings to associations and companies to ensure their bones were returned to Chinese soil (Feichter 2001:203). The entire process cost approximately $35: $15 to ship the deceased to the bone house and $20 to ship them home by boat (Li 2000:123). At the turn of the century, this venture would have cost a lot of money. Similarly, Nelson (1993) cites disinterment fees at the turn of the century to include a $10 public health fee, $5 for shipping and $7 for reburial.

The earliest shipment of bones from the United States occurred in 1858 when 521 individuals were shipped on a French vessel to China with a subsequent shipment in 1863 of 258 bodies (Nelson 1993). By 1875 the Kong Chow Company had exclusive shipping rights, and returned bones of deceased Chinese to their homeland on a regular basis.

**Bone Houses and Volunteer Associations in Canada**

Bone collectors in British Columbia and the rest of Canada brought skeletal remains to a
Figure 10: Bone house Manoa Chinese Cemetery, Honolulu, Hawai‘i (Photos courtesy of P. Wegers 1998).
centralized bone house in Victoria. The collection of bones heightened during the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway (1880-1885) where over 18,000 Chinese were hired (Wickberg 1982). Railway work was dangerous and transient. Thousands of Chinese workers died along the railroad and there is virtually no record of where they were buried. In 1891, the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) arranged for the collection of 387 unidentified deceased Chinese from the Fraser and Thompson region. The bones were picked up by bone collectors who were hired through the CCBA. The bone collectors used simple ox and cart to trek through British Columbia to pick up the bones, which were then stored in peanut oil cans (Olsen, pers. comm. 2003). They were then returned to China and buried in a public grave in Xinhui, Guangdong (Wickberg 1982:20).

The main bone house for Canada was always in Victoria, although the location changed numerous times within the city. The original location of the bone house was on Store Street, in downtown Victoria. The building was burned by a fire on October 1871, although it continued to be utilized after the fire (The Colonist, December 13, 1871). At the time of the fire, the bone house contained approximately 50 deceased Chinese (The Colonist, October 4, 1871):

Dead or alive, the Chinaman must put in an appearance in his native country or the company suffers a heavy pecuniary consequence. Women are considered mere chattel and may lie where they die. There is only one excuse that will be accepted as valid for the non-production of a man. Should his remains be destroyed by fire, the responsibility of the company ceases. Therefore, if the building set on fire yesterday morning had been burned down, fifty dead bodies would have been consumed with it, and the company would have been spared the expense of shipping the ghostly remains to the Flowery Kingdom... There is abundant evidence lying about to prove that the fire was caused designedly.

According to Lai (1991), the Qing Government passed a law in China in the mid nineteenth century that placed the responsibility of ensuring overseas Chinese workers were returned to China (either living or dead), onto coolie brokers and indentured labour merchants. This responsibility was null and void if the bones were burned in a fire.

The specific location of the bone house is enigmatic, as no references existed in the British Columbia Archives, nor in any of the Victoria or British Columbia Directories between 1868 to
1880. Figure 11 shows a map of the Victoria Chinatown in 1872, one year after the fire.

According to *The Colonist*, December 14, 1871 the bone house was located “not far from the Spratt and Irving Foundry”. The foundry is located at lot 487 on Chatham Street. We can deduce from the information that the bone house was located on the ocean side of the street (as only ocean side lots have addresses on Store Street) in one of the lots 109 to 116. These areas have been marked on the 1871 map (Figure 11). After the fire, the bone house continued to be used for bone storage. *The Colonist*, December 14, 1871 edition reports:

> The mayor and Counselor Lewis yesterday visited the Chinese Dead-house on Store Street and examined several of the coffins containing bodies of dead Chinamen. They ascertained that the bones had been washed and cleansed at Yale for several years...

(December 14, 1871).

In 1907, a new brick bone house was built at the Chinese burial ground in Harling Point. Throughout the bone houses' use, the deceased were sent back to the Tung Wah Hospital in Hong Kong, which was the main hub for redistribution (Wickberg 1982:66).

Associations and companies that were involved in shipping the bones were prevalent in British Columbia. Prior to the establishment of the CCBA and CBA, pick-ups were accomplished by *jiefangs* or street organizations. These types of organizations were established to protect businesses in Victoria and Vancouver and remained popular even after the establishment of the benevolent associations. The *jiefang* were responsible for setting up Victoria’s first bone house on Store Street (Wickberg 1982:35). Chinese who originated from the Toi-san xian in Guangdong, formed a *jiefang* known as the Toi-san Nig Yung Yu Hing Tong. Chapters were set up in Victoria in 1893 and Vancouver in 1912. This association was involved in shipping remains of the Toi-san county back to their homeland (Wickberg 1982:100). Benevolent halls, precluding the formation of benevolent associations such as the CBA and CCBA, were formed by cooperative boarding houses known as *Fangkou*. A particular benevolent hall known as *Shantang*, which originated in San Francisco, arranged for the transportation of the deceased back to China in the 1880s (Wickberg 1982:36). In Quesnel Forks, the Freemason Society regularly recorded donations for Chinese funerals. Lai (1989) and Chen (2001) translated some of these account books from the *Chih Kung T’ang*.
Lo Lin Chang died of an accident during gold panning. Other members of the Chih Kung T'ang in Forks Quesnel appealed to the local Chinese to make donations for shipping their bodies back to Forks Quesnel, 7th lunar month, 1894, Forks Quesnel (Lai 1989).

The bones were shipped from Victoria on the Empress and Enterprise Fleets. The Empress fleet shipped Chinese goods and people from New Westminster to Victoria while the Enterprise fleet was the primary vessel used to ship bones back to China from Victoria. The Colonist, December 13, 1871, report states:

To call their favourite Gulf Steamer Enterprise a floating coffin would be to cause a cry of indignation to arise from ten thousand willing witnesses to her staunchness and reliability; but to say that she floated to Victoria yesterday 98 coffins containing the mortal remains of as many dead Chinamen would be to keep strictly within the line of truth and duty. These remains were fired from all parts of the Colony at Yale, where the bones were scraped, cleaned, and packed each in separate coffins...

A shipping record from the SS Enterprise Freight book trip from New Westminster to Victoria dated March 31, 1883 notes the inclusion of “1 coffin”, for a total of $7.00 (BC Archives (BCA), MS 1033, 514 SS Enterprise Freight Book). Presumably, this coffin was being shipped for storage in the Victoria bone house.

At the turn of the century, the CCBA decided to centralize and regulate the shipping of the deceased back to China, in order to reduce shipping costs. Beginning in 1909, shipments were made every seven years. The CCBA hired the Taishan Association who became solely responsible for collecting bones from across Canada, and bringing them to the bone house at Harling Point for storage (Lai 1987:33). Around the same time, the Chinese Benevolent Association organized shipment of bones back to China every ten years. If bones were not marked with the name and place of origin, the bones were shipped to the Canton Charity Station for identification (Ng 1986).

Mah Chan was hired as a bone collector by the CCBA in 1917. He carried a permit from the British Columbia Provincial Government allowing him to disinter deceased from areas where a Board of Health had not been established. The letter states:
...PERMISSION IS HEREBY GRANTED to MAH CHAN to exhume and remove such remains within the areas aforesaid other than municipalities, provided that the exhumation and removal shall be performed in an orderly decent manner, and (if in a cemetery) the graves filled up and the ground left in the proper condition (BCA, GR527, BC Provincial Secretary Letter 5/2, April 13, 1918).

During the course of 1917, Mah acquired bones from Quesnel Forks, Harpers Camp, Van Winkle, Lilooet, Clinton, Ashcroft, North Bend, Yale, Cumberland, and others with no place names (ibid).

In March 1919, the Hoysan Association, who worked for the CBA, hired Fung Wing and Lee Bing Sun as bone collectors to collect bones from across Vancouver. Over 50 boxes of bones were collected and shipped back to China (Ng 1986).

Another company involved in the reburial process was the Canada Overseas Chinese Amalgamated Exhumation Board, which operated in the 1930s. This company dealt with the legalities of exhuming Chinese burials in quartered Chinese cemeteries (Hardwick 1975:64).

Due to the Sino-Japanese war beginning in the late 1930s, the last shipment of bones from the bone house occurred in 1939. A previous 1937 shipment was cancelled by the CCBA due to the Sino-Japanese conflict. Shortly thereafter, the Chinese discontinued disinterring their deceased (Victoria Colonist, October 17, 1961), partly because the bone house was overflowing with unshipped bones (Lai 1991). In 1960, the CCBA raised $18,000 to repatriate the remaining bones left in the bone house. Eight hundred and forty-nine burials remained unclaimed and were thus, buried in a mass grave at Harling Point (Victoria Colonist, October 17, 1961). A typical Chinese funeral complete with a ceremonial procession, burning joss sticks and paper money and a feast accompanied the ceremony on October 15, 1961.

One final note regarding overseas Chinese burial practices concerns women and burial practices. Traditionally, women did not receive the same burial treatment as men. This stems from a belief that women cannot transcend into ancestral spirits after death (Watson 1982:178). Chinese women were limited in number on the Canadian and American frontiers but the treatment remained constant. Typically, Chinese women’s burials were not disinterred, but left intact (McKeown 2001). Furthermore, many of the burials were interred unmarked, particularly if the deceased was not married (Blake 1993:72). This being the case, we must expect to find interments in Chinese burial grounds that are currently not known.
CHAPTER 5

The Wild Horse Creek Study

The camp, or settlement, at Wild Horse consists of a few Government buildings, a large general store, and a number of log cabins with small gardens attached, occupied and cultivated entirely by the ubiquitous Celestials, upwards of one hundred of whom now populate this scene of departed glory (Spragge 1887:143-144).

The preceding chapters set the stage for the observation of general patterns in overseas Chinese death rituals. We must recognize that archival data often come from historic newspaper accounts or from ritual manuals on burial practices. The former emphasizes the sensational and the latter the ideal. In contrast, my study aims to understand the norms, particularly the norms at remote and often poor Chinese settlements in the far frontiers. By this I ask how pervasive were the more elaborate Chinese death rituals in remote overseas Chinese sites and what evidence supports adherence to these ritual practices?

To pursue this goal I surveyed a remote Chinese burial ground in Wild Horse Creek Historic Park, applying data drawn from practices in both China and overseas Chinese sites. The research was guided by establishing a set of specific questions that ask what the Chinese death and burial practices on the frontier were like and how they compare with those from the homeland. The questions take the view of the archaeologist in that they ask how activities related to the processes of Chinese death rituals translate into the archaeological record at overseas Chinese burial grounds. Archival documentation for this site is slim but adequate ground surface preservation suggests the appropriateness of an archaeological approach.

In this chapter, I present background information on the Wild Horse Creek site and Chinese burial ground. The data is drawn from historical documentation, archival research, and interviews. Next I present the research questions that structured the investigation at the site. Finally, I discuss the methods and techniques I used to test the questions. The results of these testings are presented in Chapter 6.
Study Area

Wild Horse Creek is a provincial historic site, situated 5.5km northeast of Fort Steele in the East Kootenay area (Figure 12). The site was the scene of the 1864-65 gold rush settlement and subsequent Chinese settlement, and now features an interpretive trail that tours the site. Major features of the area include remains of the original gold rush town known as Fisherville, a later Chinese occupation in the same location, the habitation site and apple orchard of pioneer David Griffith, a turn of the century mining settlement known as Invicta, a Euro Canadian cemetery, the Chinese burial ground as well as countless landscape scars resulting from hydraulic and placer mining (Figure 13). The site is also home to the last leg of the Dewdney Trail, a packhorse trail that originated in the Fraser Valley and was completed by Edward Dewdney in 1865. Dirt roadways and paths following the original roads from the nineteenth century link these areas together. The area today has become a popular day hike for locals and tourists.

Environmental Background - Physiography and Drainage

The source of Wild Horse Creek originates from the western side of the Rocky Mountains. The river cuts through a gorge with a 30-100% sloped side between Lakit Mountain to the south and east, and north and west of Vertical Mountain and Lone Peak. Wild Horse Creek empties into the Kootenay River. The Chinese burial ground is located on the north side of the river, north of Lone Creek. Because of the burial ground's location on a steep slope, erosion is a constant threat to the preservation of the site.

The overall landscape has been significantly altered by human presence in the Wild Horse Creek area over the last 150 years. Photographs from the turn of the twentieth century reveal an open grassy landscape sparsely vegetated with Douglas fir and Ponderosa pine. Fire suppression has been actively practiced in the East Kootenay region since the 1930s, causing a shift to closed canopy forests and thin, densely spaced Douglas firs.
East Kootenay Region
Figure 12
(Map by Sauer and Pasacreta 2001)
Conroy (1995:10) states:

Prior to effective large-scale fire fighting techniques, much of the Rocky Mountain Trench region was burned in large, intense stand-replacing fires. As a result, the forest cover in these areas is predominated by Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and Western Larch (*Larix occidentalis*), two species that benefit from the presence of fire and have now formed relatively dense, closed canopy stands throughout most of this region.

Another active human force at Wild Horse Creek is mining. Localized placer mining during the initial gold rush did little to alter the landscape. However, in the 1880s, with the introduction of hydraulic mining, followed by a substantial boom in both Chinese and non-Chinese populations, a large portion of the area was destroyed. The Chinese burial ground displays no visible damage by hydraulic mining. The most visible impact to the burial ground is from collectors who, according to local residents, were most active in the 1960s and 1970s. Two projects undertaken in 2000 by myself and Sauer (2001) were designed to establish the extent of damage to sites in Wild Horse Creek. The first project tested disturbed areas in Chinatown and Griffith's cabin to assess the damage to the deposits and stratigraphy. We concluded that Chinatown had suffered the most pronounced pot hunting damage.

An appeal to East Kootenay residents to allow us to record pot hunted collections and gather information on previous features was made. Where materials were brought forward, they included Chinese utilitarian vessels, opium paraphernalia, Chinese gaming pieces, and a wide array of bottles, glass jars, tin cans, household items (cutlery, teapots, pots and pans, irons) and mining equipment (Sauer 2001). There were no reports of collecting at the Chinese burial ground. Furthermore, the landscape of the Chinese burial ground appears intact in contrast to the badly scarred landscape in Chinatown.

**Previous Archaeological and Historic Research**

In 1986 the East Kootenay Historical Society converted Wild Horse Creek into an interpretive site by conducting research, clearing trails, and setting up interpretive signage. At the Chinese burial ground, a 40cm wide path was cleared which meanders through a series of 20 graves on the west side of the cemetery. In 2000, an historical archaeology project on the Fort
Steele Heritage Town began its second season of archaeological research. This project also included the first recorded excavations at Wild Horse Creek. The project goals at the Chinese cemetery in 2000 were 1) to determine the extent of damage caused by pothunters, 2) to map the site in its entirety with a more detailed map made of Griffith’s cabin and Chinatown, and 3) to conduct test excavations in the latter areas. The site map is now used as an interpretive map for the site. All other areas of the site were surveyed including the Chinese burial ground. The 2000 survey of the burial ground revealed an additional 18 exhumed pits east of the path over the previously known 20 pits. It was also determined that an altar pictured in the archival photographs was located on a terrace in the northwest corner of the site. Initial research in 2000 on the burial ground serves as the basis for this thesis.

Wild Horse Creek Chinese

Prior to Chinese occupation, the Wild Horse Creek area had been occupied for over 7000 years by the Ktunaxa or Kootenay First Nations. Early exploration of the East Kootenay Region by David Thompson (1807 and 1811) and the Palliser Expedition (1858) opened the area up to European fur traders and settlers (Christian 1967).

The major catalyst to European presence in the Wild Horse Creek area was the discovery of gold in 1857 (Christian 1967). The gold rush, however, did not begin until the spring of 1864, when Wild Horse Creek was flooded with thousands of miners. During the gold rush, goods were shipped daily by way of pack trains from Tobacco Plains, Montana; Lewiston and Boise, Idaho; Walla Walla, Washington and from as far as Salt Lake City, Utah. By the summer of 1864, a substantial mining town known as Fisherville was established. Servicing 5000 or so miners, the town boomed with dance halls, saloons, brothels, stores, a Hudson’s Bay Company store, and a brewery.

By the summer of 1865, the shallow diggings of Wild Horse Creek had been depleted and the majority of the miners abandoned the site. Only 11 white miners remained in the East Kootenay region by the end of 1865 and most were concentrated around Wild Horse Creek (Christian 1967). The majority of miners fled to another boom in Alder’s Gulch, Montana. It is estimated that between $15,000,000 to $20,000,000 was taken out of Wild Horse Creek during the rush (Cranbrook Herald, Christmas Edition, 1904).
Arrival of the Chinese at Wild Horse Creek

The first mention of Chinese in the Kootenay region was quoted in the *Daily British Colonist*, October 8, 1864: "A number of Chinamen, attracted by the favourable reports received from the Kootenai mines, left yesterday morning by the Enterprise [a ship that traveled between Victoria and New Westminster] en route for this El-dorado". The first reported Chinese man arrived at Wild Horse Creek in 1865 and set up a lodging house in Fisherville (*Cranbrook Herald*, January 16, 1902). *The Walla Walla Statesman* reported on June 1, 1866 that two other Chinese individuals who settled in Wild Horse Creek arrived from Walla Walla, Washington via the Fort Steele Trail. Their names were See Yung and Doo Tne. Evidently, See and Doo delivered a positive report of the diggings and groups of Chinese departed Walla Walla for Wild Horse Creek. By the end of the month, 20 Chinese inhabited the region.

The influx of Chinese from other sites in British Columbia in 1865 is speculated by local East Kootenay historians, MacDonald and Kay to have resulted from their employment on the Dewdney Trail, a road that linked the coast to Wild Horse Creek in 1865 (*Daily Townsman*, September 4, 1975). The post rush trail cost $75,000 to construct and was funded by custom duties collected from Wild Horse Creek miners (*Daily Townsman*, June 4, 1981). The Chinese were also employed to dig an intricate system of ditches used to hold water that could be leased per inch by the miners. The largest of these ditches was the Victoria Ditch, which held 2,000 inches of water and was fed from Victoria Creek to the northeast of Wild Horse Creek. The ditch was built by local entrepreneur Bob Dore and a team of Chinese labourers for $25,000 (*Cranbrook Herald*, February 14, 1901). Eventually, the Chinese infiltrated all areas of the former rush. *The Columbian* (November 14, 1866) quotes: "...the Chinese are not only monopolizing the mines, but trade and commerce also. A short time ago they paid down $6,000 for a drove of cattle, and they are buying out merchants, butchers, bakers etc".

In July of 1866, Gold Commissioner Peter O’Reilly made a three week visit to the camp in order to settle disputes between the Chinese and white residents as "...there [was] a good deal of litigation arising from attempts to take advantage of the Chinese" *(BCA, Letter O’Reilly to Birch GR 318, August 18, 1866)*. He further reported, "parties coming from Kootenay inform us that Chinese have taken almost entire possession of that mining camp..." (in Morton 1974:18). In 1868, 200 more Chinese were expected to arrive in Wild Horse Creek the following month (*Walla
Gold Commissioner J.C. Haynes visited the settlement again in 1869 and reported that only 50 white settlers remained and the rest were Chinese (Daily Townsmen, August 9, 1972). In the same year, the Walla Walla Statesman reported that “For the past two weeks there has been a steady stream of Chinamen pouring through this valley on their way to [Wild Horse Creek]” (April 17, 1869). It is not known how well the Chinese fared at Wild Horse Creek, but according to one observer: “from the amount of goods and liquors purchased by them it is generally admitted they are doing well (Daily British Colonist, August 7, 1869).

Shortly after the Chinese arrived at Wild Horse Creek, they settled in the abandoned town of Fisherville (Figure 14). Presumably, the Chinese burial ground was cleared at approximately the same time. The hastily built houses lined a single main road running east-west through the town. In 1887, H. E. Rylatt documented the state of their dwellings as simple log cabins, chinked with mud. Most of the buildings contained stone, mud or clay fireplaces and the windows consisted of burlap flour sacks (BCA MS 506, H. E. Rylatt, Two Years with the Canadian Pacific Railway, Unpublished Manuscript, MS 506, Box 6, Subgroup 2, Series 1, September 14, 1871). Based on archival records and the excavations (Sauer 2001), Chinatown was made up of numerous one and two story houses, a butcher shop and gambling establishments; the latter being documented after an 1867 raid for illegal gambling (Christian 1967:130). Sections of houses and the butcher shop were excavated in the 2000 season (Sauer 2001). The majority of the Chinese were miners, but there were also gardeners, blacksmiths and merchants. Many Chinese cultivated gardens near their homes and because of the slope of the site, several of the gardens were terraced. In 2000, terraced gardens west of David Griffith’s house were located and recorded (Sauer 2001). Despite the mountainous terrain, the Chinese’ gardens were successful. Many of the local businesses were owned and run by the Chinese. In 1885, Wild Horse Creek was the only place where residents of the East Kootenay region could purchase produce, all of which was grown exclusively by the Chinese (The Cranbrook Herald, December 21, 1899). The local blacksmith shop operated by a Chinese individual was located in a small bermed enclosure west of Griffith’s cabin (Sauer 2001). Ah Wye ran a store in Chinatown that catered to the Chinese. His supplies came by way of pack train from Sandpoint, Idaho. He was known to the traders as “scrupulously honest” (Fort Steele Archives (FSA), Letter from old timer Arthur Fenwick, MSS 30 1940).

As was the case at most overseas Chinese sites, women were absent at Wild Horse Creek until the late 1890s. Most overseas Chinese men were married, but left their wives in China to
care for the family. Most women that immigrated to Canada and the United States were recorded in immigration and census records as prostitutes, but were more likely concubines (Gardner 2001). The first recorded Chinese woman at Wild Horse Creek was Lillian Lum, wife of Ban Quan. Ban Quan owned and operated the prosperous Invicta Mine. They were married in a civil ceremony in April of 1896. The Prospector (April 25, 1896) quoted that "...the groom is a prosperous miner at Wild Horse Creek... and the bride is from the Flowery Kingdom".

Despite Wild Horse Creek's seclusion from other Chinese communities in British Columbia, the Chinese at Wild Horse Creek continued to celebrate a number of traditional rituals such as Chinese New Year and post burial rituals. Chinese New Year was a popular event attended by both the Chinese and European settlers (The Prospector, June 22, 1897). The following account offers a rare glimpse into the lives of the Chinese at Wild Horse Creek:

The evening on which the new moon, in February appears, is New Year's Eve in China. It is the greatest holiday of the year, it is also the only Sunday in the entire Chinese year and the people stop all work, put on their best clothes... and rejoice and celebrate in their own peculiar way. Shoot fireworks, firecrackers, Chinese bombs, in fact make all the noise possible, and drink Sam Suie “whisky”. Give presents wrapped in red paper, call on their friends, pay all their debts, take a bath... and enjoy themselves in the greatest possible degree. They are compelled to pay their debts on this day or go into bankruptcy. It is a bad day for the debtor in China, for the creditor can enter the house and help himself to anything he wants. Red the most brilliant and gorgeous red possible is over everything - little signs, figures and symbols are on, and over their doors, red wrapping paper about their presents, even eggs are painted red, and offered to their Gods. At night, the air is red with fire from burning crackers, used to scare away the devils of misfortune, and bad luck for the coming year. They sit up all night, for there is a superstition that the one who for ten successive years sees the sunrise on New Year’s morning will have a long life... The grand finale is tremendous, with a sudden burst of fireworks and large decoction of Sam Suie, and a prolonged sitting at Fan Tan gambling (The Prospector, February 15, 1896).
Figure 14: Chinatown in 1888 (Photo courtesy of Fort Steele Archives FS 8.526).
Reports of Chinese New Year celebrations were well documented in local newspapers well into the early 1900s. The following account of Chinese New Year in 1904 is intriguing as it offers an otherwise undocumented look into the success of the Chinese at Wild Horse Creek:

...members of the Wild Horse Colony have been preparing for Chinese New Year for days. Stores have been decorated, and the utensils and store fixtures have been laid away, to be replaced with ornate chairs, fancy screen, tables covered with potted plants and gaudy canopies and hangings. Fluttering from the door tops and balconies are bright red streamers bearing the inscription “Dong Hi Sang Toy” which in English means “A Happy New Year” (The Prospector, February 20, 1904).

As evidenced above, the Chinese were faring well in Wild Horse Creek.

Subsequent Mining Booms

After the initial 1864 – 1865 rush, a second mining boom occurred between 1871 and 1884 and was stimulated through the influx of Chinese miners to the area and to a lesser extent, through new gold discoveries (Christian 1967). By 1872, the Chinese at Wild Horse Creek held most of the gold claims. For the most part, the Chinese were “exclusively employed in working over the dirt that has been worked by white men” (Walla Walla Statesman, December 7, 1866). Most claims were sold to the Chinese at a hefty price. But according to the Daily British Colonist, November 20, 1866, the Chinese were bidding high to start. The Chinese mined for gold utilizing simple rocker boxes, pitchforks, crowbars, and metal pails “...with rough handles. One of the latter bore the legend ‘Armour & Co., Silver Leaf. Pure Lard’ “ (Cranbrook Herald, Christmas Edition, 1904). They adopted a meticulous technique of clearing each bench previously worked by western miners to bedrock, then sweeping the area with a broom. The tailings were stacked in conical piles to mark where they had mined, leaving an undeniably Chinese signature on the landscape. An anonymous writer for the Cranbrook Herald, Christmas Edition, 1904, adequately captures the nature of the procedure:

The writer might as well not have been present for all the notice those [Chinese] men took of him. But the work went on slowly, very slowly, but how absolutely certain it was to reach the end, no matter how remote! How utterly inevitable it was! Patience, Patience, and yet again Patience. That is the secret of it all.
The Chinese formed a number of small mining companies consisting of one to four partners and two large mining companies during the second boom (ibid). Most of the companies prior to hydraulic mining were comprised of only a few individuals. One of the most successful companies was the Ban Quan Company, owned and operated by Ban Quan. In the 1900s he managed a large mining claim known as Invicta, 1km north of Griffith’s old cabin. The mining site was home to a small settlement and remains of several habitations, dumpsites, a root cellar, and a saloon, are all visible on the landscape today.

At the height of the boom in 1883, there were over 500 Chinese residing in Wild Horse Creek (Christian 1967). Figure 15 summarizes the population of the Chinese at Wild Horse Creek. Only the years with population data have been entered. By the late 1880s, these numbers had significantly declined. In 1887, superintendent Sam Steele of the North West Mounted Police, appointed to cease land claim tensions between residents of the region and the Kutenai Natives, made a cordial visit to Wild Horse Creek. He observed that only two whites (Dave Griffith and a constable) and 75 Chinese remained in the area. The Chinese, Steele noted were “busy in the summer ‘sniping’ up the gold which the careless Whites had left behind when they made their stampede to Last Chance Gulch in Montana” (FSA, Samuel B. Steele, Origins and Early Days, MSS 8). In the late 1800s to early 1900s, another mining boom occurred at Wild Horse Creek with the introduction of hydraulic mining. This boom coincided with another boom in Chinese population to 462 in 1891 (The Prospector, March 5, 1904). Hydraulic mining involves the use of large volumes of water drawn from the system of ditches in Wild Horse Creek. This water is filtered through a pressurized hose known as a monitor or ‘giant’ which is then aimed at the bank of the creek. The water pressure removes large volumes of subsoil, which washes down roadways or flumes. The adoption of hydraulic mining promoted a boom not only in miners but also in labourers contracted to build and haul up the machinery required for this type of mining.

In the March 5, 1904 issue of The Prospector, an article announced that 9,750 meters of lumber was required to repair old flumes and build new ones for the Invicta mining company. The report further alleged that this wood would be cut down from the Wild Horse Creek area. Presumably, Chinese were hired to undertake this task. A number of companies were involved in hydraulic mining, including various Chinese companies – further attesting to the success of many of the Chinese at Wild Horse Creek. A majority of these companies were generically described in archival newspapers as ‘Chinese companies’. A typical account of their mining activities in an
1896 report by *The Prospector* is as follows: “Several Chinese companies are at work in the bed of Wild Horse Creek. Some of them having wing dams. One company of Chinese having flumed the creek near the mouth of brewery Creek at a cost of $1,500...” (August 22, 1896).

During this third mining boom, Chinese miners were often recognized for their diligence and hard work. In fact, Chinese were actively encouraged into the area. A report from *The Prospector*, October 31, 1896 edition states: “The stage from Kalispell had four Chinamen as passengers, they will help to swell the population of Chinatown, and work the placer ground of Wild Horse Creek”. This positive promotion of the Chinese at Wild Horse Creek in the 1890s stemmed from a campaign to entice settlers to Fort Steele. Mining activities at Wild Horse Creek were detailed in nearly every issue of the Fort Steele paper, *The Prospector*. Reports described the companies at work, where they were mining, what equipment was being utilized and constructed and how well the companies were faring; all in an effort to promote Fort Steele as a prosperous and advantageous place to live.

**Decline and Abandonment**

According to local East Kootenay historian Naomi Miller, the Chinese remained at Wild Horse Creek until shortly after World War I (Miller, pers. comm. 2000). The effects of the decline commenced in the early 1900s and are reflected in the lack of Chinese buying claims after 1911. In fact, only 23 of the 342 (6.7%) claims purchased between 1900 and 1911 were bought by Chinese miners (BCA, BC Gold Commission, Kootenay, GR032, B07893[3]). In 1905, David Griffith reported to the Cranbrook Herald that there was up to 250 Chinese men in the camp at its peak and at the present time, only 100 remained (September 7, 1905). This decline is due to Chinese returning home to China, the depletion of gold resources and the centralization of communities near railways. In 1902, nine Chinese were reported to have gone back to China. It was rumoured that each took no less than $15,000 back to their families (Cranbrook Courier, March 5, 1971).

As the gold concentrations started to dissipate beginning at the turn of the century, many Chinese moved to Fort Steele and Cranbrook. No definitive Chinatown developed in Fort Steele but a substantial Chinese section emerged in Cranbrook on the west side of town. Here, the Chinese became gardeners, laundry men, house servants, cooks, and general labourers (*Daily Townsman*, November 18, 1976). In 1900, *The Cranbrook Herald* (July 12, 1900) reported that
Figure 15: Chinese Population at Wild Horse Creek

(Compiled from Crowfoot Herald, Christmas Edition, 1904; September 7, 1905; Crowfoot Courier 1971; Christian 1967; The Prospector, May 10, 1910; Sauer 2001; Sprague 1887.)
the town consisted of numerous stores and laundries, a restaurant, and a jewelry shop. The Chinese citizens in Cranbrook appear to have maintained good relationships with the rest of the community. In 1914, for example, $54 was donated by Chinese merchants to the Sunshine Society – a group that was involved in collecting relief money for World War I (The Prospector, October 10, 1914).

As late as 1910, The Prospector (May 7, 1910) recorded over 50 Chinese working mining claims up at Wild Horse Creek. No records indicated how many of those Chinese were living there. Archival records indicate that despite movement from Wild Horse Creek, the burial ground and Chinatown continued to be utilized as a ceremonial center for various rituals throughout the year. Deceased Chinese from Fort Steele and Cranbrook were buried at the Wild Horse Creek burial ground until 1914 (Miller, pers. comm. 2000). Furthermore, the Chinese from the East Kootenay region congregated to celebrate Chinese New Year at Wild Horse Creek until as late as 1904 (The Prospector, February 11, 1904).

**Euro Canadian Relations to Chinese**

In general, the Chinese community at Wild Horse Creek was tolerated, known mainly for their role in sustaining the mining industry in the area. In other East Kootenay communities, the Chinese did not fare as well. In 1901, an exclusionary law was instated in the town of Moyie forbidding Chinese from entering or living in the town (Cranbrook Herald, January 23, 1902). Similarly, an anti-Chinese protest in Field in July 1900 resulted in the complete destruction of the Chinatown (The Golden Era, July 27, 1900) while in August 1900, in the northeastern East Kootenay town of Althamer, a Chinese laundry was blown up (BCA, GR 429, Box 6, File 1, 2821/00). Similar accounts of prejudices abound in Fort Steele, Cranbrook, Fernie, Marysville, and Kimberley. Unofficial records exist of Chinese miners in the region who mysteriously disappeared, along with their earnings (The Western News, December 16, 1965).

In the early 1900s, strong currents of prejudice surfaced against the Chinese from the residents in East Kootenay. This intolerance arose from both prejudices propagated against the Chinese in Victoria and Vancouver newspapers and as a displacement of anger towards Colonel Baker. Baker was an influential resident of Fort Steele who was responsible for the downfall and eventual abandonment of Fort Steele when he surreptitiously made deals with Canadian Pacific Railway to bypass Fort Steele for Cranbrook. At the same time, Fort Steele was promoted as the
next major center in southeastern British Columbia because of its proximity to the railway. Colonel Baker openly advocated Chinese labour in the province as many of his supporters were involved in large scale construction projects requiring cheap labour. Thus, Baker supported taxation of Chinese immigrants over their exclusion (*The Golden Era*, July 21, 1894). Fort Steele residents, angry at Baker’s deception, began ousting their Chinese neighbours petitioning for full exclusion. Many accounts attest to the overall disgust with the Chinese. An example from the June 11, 1898 article from *The Prospector* states:

> ... The Chinamen do not mind their dismal surroundings. Their shacks make it even more dismal in fact. Like the ghost of days gone by the remains of the once famous camp present anything but a cheerful sight to the traveler on Wild Horse.

This intolerance continued unabated throughout their stay in the East Kootenay region and was further fueled by prejudices circulated by the British Columbia and Canadian Government. In 1887, the first Head Tax of $50 per Chinese immigrant was instated by the government of Canada. However, from September 1887 to December 1900, 16,070 Chinese immigrants were admitted into Canada (Willmott 1970). The tax was then raised to $100 from January 1, 1902 to December 31, 1903. During this time 9,148 Chinese entered the country. In January 1904, the tax catapulted to $500, where it remained until complete exclusion in 1923 (Willmott 1970). For a full discussion of Chinese exclusion in British Columbia see Bauriess 1987; Chen 2001; and Willmott 1970.

Relations between the Natives and Chinese appeared to be business orientated as the natives supplied the Chinese with beef and potatoes. Old Fort Steele resident Arthur Fenwick stated in an interview: “The China market was [the native’s] chief source of money to buy blankets etc, as the Kootenays in those days lived almost entirely by hunting and trapping” (Fort Steele Archives (FSA), Letter from old timer Arthur Fenwick, MSS 30, 1940). At a local level, the Chinese developed friendships with non Chinese Wild Horse Creek residents. Historic records indicate that long time Wild Horse Creek resident, David Griffith had amicable relationships with at least one Chinese individual:

> As I approached [the house of David Griffith] I was assailed by savage dogs. A Chinaman appears, who stills the clamoring curs with a lusty kick from a gum-booted leg. We converse. Our
Chinaman is fluent in English. Ban Quong is he, foreman of the Chinese miners and honest, so Dave Griffith vouches, as the North Star (Cranbrook Herald, Christmas Edition 1904).

The Chinese Burial Ground

According to long time Wild Horse Creek Chinese resident Pete Lum, interviewed by the Cranbrook Herald on October 17, 1901, the Chinese were buried in a typical overseas Chinese fashion. His observations, while broad and unspecified, offer some information on how Chinese conducted their death rituals in Wild Horse Creek. Lum states that the deceased were venerated in elaborate funerals and buried 30 to 45 cm below the surface in extended coffins. After the burial mourners would bring offerings of large feasts to a wooden altar located in the burial ground (Figure 16). The altar was rediscovered by Verdun Casselman in 1985 based on information first provided by long time Fort Steele resident Mr. Dempsey (Miller, pers. comm. 2003). Casselman found milled boards representative of those in archival pictures of the altar. These boards had been removed by his next visit. Unfortunately, Casselman passed away in 1997 prior to recording of the site. The Fort Steele Archives holds three photographs of this altar. Lum ascertained that this altar functioned as the table for serving the meal of the dead. He explained further that according to Chinese tradition, the deceased were shallowly buried for seven years, after which the bones were disinterred, left to dry and sent back to China for reburial in family plots. Many conclusions can be drawn from Lum's account. Most importantly, the Chinese at Wild Horse Creek adhered to traditional Chinese death rituals associated with southeastern Chinese secondary burial practices. They honoured the deceased with an elaborate funeral. The feast offered to the deceased immediately after the burial mimics the Rites of Repose proposed by Chu (in Ebrey 1991) and as well indicates that the Wild Horse Creek Chinese continued to believe that the deceased required sustenance for their three day journey to the underworlds. Another significant observation by Lum was the use of wooden coffins. No other account of coffin use was found in local newspapers.

Another report of the Chinese burial ground is from a 1905 diary entry by Nipissing, Ontario resident Sam Jones. He recounts:
Figure 16: Historic photo of altar at Wild Horse Creek (Photo courtesy of Fort Steele Archives FS 138.6).
I remember going up Wild Horse to visit old Dave Griffith, and while there viewing the old Chinese burying grounds on a hillside. After a burial, food was placed on the grave for several days to keep the departed going until he reached his destination. It was a common occurrence to have the graves looted by white men. There were also colored papers strewn from the church to the burying grounds, with seven holes in each. The belief was that the devil had to go through all these before he could catch his spirit... The bones eventually ended up in China, as no Chinese bones rest outside China, at that time anyway (FSA, Sam Jones Diary, MSS 341, File 17).

Notably, Jones' cites the use of paper punched with holes to distract ghosts from the deceased - a practice that is common in many overseas Chinese sites. His mention of a church is intriguing as well. No other documentation of a church exists in the Wild Horse Creek area.

According to Pete Lum's nephew Bob Storey, Lum's brother George was involved in the last burial disinterred at Wild Horse Creek in 1914. The bones were placed in a wooden box and picked up by the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (Storey, pers. comm. 2002). Archival records indicate that it was actually Pete Lum who was involved but Storey attests that Pete feared the dead and refused to partake in the process.

The Chinese venerate their deceased in a number of ceremonies throughout the year. The primary ceremony, Qing Ming or Tomb Sweeping Day, occurs after the first full moon after the spring equinox. Typically, family or lineage members would gather at the burial ground to clean their ancestor's graves and offer them a feast, which was usually placed on an altar. Historic documentation of this practice at Wild Horse Creek is limited to a single comment: "Friday last was observed as a holiday by the Chinese when the time honoured custom of feeding the dead was observed" (The Prospector, April 11, 1896). This statement indicates that the Chinese were practicing post-burial ceremonies and as the article is dated to April, the ceremony must have been Qing Ming. This statement is strengthened through the archaeological analysis of the site.

**Chinese Buried at Chinese Burial Ground**

Only a small number of testimonies divulge details of who was buried at the Chinese burial ground. Presumably, all Chinese who died in the immediate area of Wild Horse Creek...
including Cranbrook, Fort Steele, Moyie, Marysville and Kimberley were buried in the Wild Horse Creek burial ground as it was located centrally in the East Kootenay region and would ease the task for bone collectors. Table 5 presents a summary of the Chinese known through archival documentation to have been buried in the burial ground. Accounts of Chinese death were often unsympathetic and emotionally detached. For example, in the May 22, 1897 issue of The Prospector a single quote mentions the death of “several Chinamen [who] were blown up by giant powder on Wild Horse Creek last week”. No further details were offered and only one of the three deceased Chinese was recorded in the British Columbia Genealogical files. Other better-known Chinese residents were more appropriately honoured. The Captain, an early resident of Wild Horse Creek, was once a miner at Wild Horse Creek, and then ran the Palace Hotel at Fort Steele in the 1880s. He was described by residents as having a “whimsical, wizened old caricature of a face and was known as 'The Captain', a rank which he was reputed to have obtained on a pirate junk in his giddy youth” (Daily Townsman, February 27, 1972). He was rumored to have served as a Lord High Executioner back in China. He died in 1898 and was buried in the Chinese burial ground. His obituary states:

A Chinaman known about town as “Captain”, and who has lived in these parts for many years died in his shack here last Sunday. He was buried by his countrymen in the Chinese graveyard on the Wild Horse, where his bones will likely remain till removed to their final resting place in the Flowery Kingdom (The Prospector, May 21, 1898).

Legendary miner Lee Jack, who according to numerous accounts in The Prospector and The Cranbrook Herald was a scruffy and jovial character who lived at Wild Horse Creek for over 40 years and was reputedly accepted by the non Chinese population (Figure 17). Lee Jack’s father sojourned to Wild Horse Creek during the initial rush in the 1860s (The Prospector, October 29, 1912). Lee Jack was the last Chinese resident at Wild Horse Creek. He died in the Cranbrook hospital on May 29, 1929 and was buried in the Cranbrook Cemetery (The Cranbrook Herald, October 29, 1940). The Cranbrook Courier (May 2, 1929) stated the following in his obituary:

...Lee Jack remained cheerful in a time of plenty or famine. His wants were few. He never complained. He accepted the gifts his gods sent and was content. Given a lot of rum and he would have exchanged places with no man. Such was the nature of the old Chinese who was brought into the hospital here at the end of February with a frozen foot. His death is deeply regretted by
many who knew and like the old fellow, who was almost as much of a landmark of Wild Horse gulch as the mountains above his lonely cabin.

Numerous Chinese who later moved to Cranbrook were buried in the Chinese burial ground. The following account describes the first Chinese man to die in Cranbrook (who remained unnamed):

One of the many Chinamen of Cranbrook died Monday at St. Eugene hospital of tuberculosis. The funeral is being held this afternoon, and as it is the first Chinaman who has died in Cranbrook, the event is an importance to the local Celestials (The Marysville Tribune, March 1, 1902).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Death</th>
<th>Age at Death</th>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pong Guey</td>
<td>April 14, 1896</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Suicide</td>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>Wild Horse</td>
<td>BCA GR 2951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Kong</td>
<td>May 7, 1897</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Explosion</td>
<td>Miner</td>
<td>Wild Horse</td>
<td>BCA GR 2951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chee Our</td>
<td>May 16, 1898</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Restaurant Keeper</td>
<td>Fort Steele</td>
<td>BCA GR 2951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Captain</td>
<td>May 1898</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Old age</td>
<td>Miner/hotel keeper</td>
<td>Wild Horse/Fort Steele</td>
<td>The Prospector, May 21, 1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ah Jack</td>
<td>February 2, 1901</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Paralysis</td>
<td>Miner</td>
<td>Fort Steele</td>
<td>BCA GR 2951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ah Wye</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Store owner</td>
<td>Wild Horse</td>
<td>BCA GR 2951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>February 1902</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Tuberculosis</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Cranbrook</td>
<td>The Marysville Tribune, March 1, 1902</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Chinese buried at Wild Horse Creek

Decline and Abandonment

The Wild Horse Creek Chinese burial ground fell into disuse in the 1910s. Many conditions spurred the movement of the Chinese from Wild Horse Creek. Firstly, the Chinese' move back to China or to more centralized areas in Cranbrook or Fort Steele led to increased
Figure 17. Wild Horse Creek resident Lee Jack (Photo courtesy of Fort Steele Archives, FS 31.196).
isolation and difficulties associated with transporting the deceased 5.5km uphill to the burial ground. In the early 1910s, the Chinese were allotted a quarter within the Cranbrook Cemetery and the Chinese began regularly burying their deceased closer to home. Bones were not disinterred at this cemetery. Those Chinese who decided to remain in the East Kootenay region began to adapt to life in their new home and as a result, tensions eased and fear of ghosts subsided. Thus, the Chinese were less concerned with returning the bones of their ancestors to China. The first deceased Chinese to be buried in the Cranbrook Cemetery was Tom Mouth, buried in the Old General Cemetery on May 26, 1913 (FSA, Cranbrook Burial Records, 1907-1953, MSS 351, File 5).

Finally and most importantly, limitations were placed on shipments between Canada and China during World War I, which directly impacted the shipment of human remains back to China (Daily Colonist, August 7, 1914; Daily Colonist, August 18, 1914). The vessels responsible for shipping Chinese individuals and later bones back to China was the Empress fleet. The fleet consisted of the Empress of Russia, the Empress of Asia, the Empress of Monteagle and India and the Empress of Japan. The Daily Colonist (August 18, 1914) states: “Until the [Canadian Pacific company] gets some definite information concerning the movements of belligerent warships, the [ships] will not be allowed to depart”. The Empress of Russia, Asia, and Japan were under Admiralty orders to sail to Hong Kong where they were then “fitted with guns and utilized as auxiliary cruisers” (The Daily Colonist, August 5, 1914). The Canadian Pacific Railway also halted passages to China on the Big Blue Funnel Liner, which was the main vessel used to transport Chinese back to China for their annual Chinese New Year pilgrimage (The Daily Colonist, September 10, 1914). This limited transport between Canada and Asia to two vessels and as a result, many bones remained unshipped from the Victoria bone house until after the war (ibid). The burial ground fell into disuse shortly thereafter.

In the 1940s, Cranbrook old-timer Mrs. Marie Grant compiled her experiences of the Chinese in Cranbrook in an article for the Fort Steele Foundation (FSA, DA MacDonald and D. Kay, Early Chinese in Cranbrook, MS 503, Series 1, File 57). In the article she discussed the death of Sam Yick, a merchant in Cranbrook Chinatown who died of throat cancer. According to her testimony, Yick was buried in the Chinese burial ground at Wild Horse Creek, twenty years after the burial ground was supposedly abandoned. Grant attended the funeral, which was presided over by an elder Chinese from the community. She noted that bowls of rice and chicken dishes,
typically of ts'ai-fan were offered on the grave and that chopsticks accompanied the meal. Utensils are often placed projecting out of the meal. If this account is correct, then an intact burial remains at Wild Horse Creek Chinese burial ground. We examine this instance, as well as other questions about the Chinese burial ground in the following chapter. In the final section, I present the research questions and methods and techniques used to address these and other questions arising from gaps in archival research.

**Overseas Chinese Burial Grounds: Research Questions**

The questions generated through research at Chinese and overseas Chinese sites served as guidelines for research at Wild Horse Creek. They relate to the sequence of Chinese burial practices and include those rites associated with site selection, post burial rituals, and disinterment. The questions also address variable features observed in overseas Chinese burial grounds such as the presence of intact graves and the design of the cemetery. By gaining an understanding of how burial rituals leave an impact on the landscape, we can understand the delineations of sacred from secular space, achieved through decoding visual clues found in the landscape in the form of artifacts, features, and site orientation.

**Site Selection**

1. Are the fengshui characteristics of this graveyard sufficiently definitive that we must conclude that fengshui as outlined by Lai (1974:508) was the main consideration in choosing it?

2. If the natural landscape at the site has poor fengshui is there evidence of intentional alteration of the ground surface to increase the quality of the fengshui at the site?

**Funeral and Grave Rites**

3. Is there archaeological evidence of burners or altars in or associated with the burial ground?

4. Is there evidence of specific ritual activities associated with the funeral or grave rites?
5. Does material culture in the burial ground reflect status differentiation in the burial rituals? Is there other evidence of status?

6. Is there evidence of coffin use?

**Disinterment**

7. If the burial ground dates before 1940 is there evidence of disinterment?

8. Are there recognizable patterns in the disinterment process? For example, can simultaneous disinterment be recognized? Are burials clustered for ease in disinterment?

**Interment**

9. What is the proportion of undisturbed Chinese graves? How may this be interpreted?

**Cemetery Design**

10. To what extent does the cemetery reflect the style of the non-Chinese cemeteries in the same region?

**Methods and Techniques**

The methods and techniques I used to test the questions at Wild Horse Creek include background, archival research, field investigations, and a lab component. The field work involved intensive survey and mapping of the site, the profiling of one grave, tree coring in or around empty graves, and sub surface, non intrusive testing using a metal detector and magnetometer. As the site is just over 1km in length, I attempted as intensive a survey coverage as resources would allow. Feature distribution was determined by comparison to previous research on other overseas Chinese burial grounds and as a result, I concentrated the surveys on areas immediately surrounding the empty burial plots. For ease of reference, the site orientation is based on grid oriented 45° east of magnetic north. All fieldwork was recorded in daily notes and a copy has been submitted to Fort Steele Heritage Town. The lab and field schedule is
summarized in Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Research</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archival Research</td>
<td>September 2002 and March 2003</td>
<td>5 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Work</td>
<td>May, August and September 2002</td>
<td>5.5 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab Work</td>
<td>October 2002 to January 2003</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant Interviews</td>
<td>September 2002 to August 2003</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Research schedule

**Literature Review and Archival Research**

The literature review and archival research was an ongoing process, which began with my initial research on the Chinese burial ground while working on a project based out of Fort Steele Heritage Town in 2000 - 2001. I conducted further research at the Fort Steele archives in August and September 2002. The informant interviews undertaken in September 2002 also add depth to the project and include interviews with relatives of former Chinese inhabitants at Wild Horse Creek and knowledgeable scholars of overseas Chinese history in British Columbia. The interview process was first approved by Simon Fraser University Research Ethics Board in April 2002. The details of these interviews are used throughout my thesis. In March 2003, I undertook additional research at the British Columbia Provincial Archives, in Victoria.

**Fieldwork**

Because of the public nature of the site it was decided to conduct fieldwork after the tourist season. Fieldwork during the five and a half weeks includes survey, mapping, grave profiling, tree coring, and work with a metal detector and magnetometer.

**Survey**

The survey was conducted over a number of days throughout the field season and involved four main goals:
1) Determine the boundary of the site
2) Document surface artifacts and features
3) Pinpoint the location of the altar and fence
4) Locate possible intact graves

The survey strategy was to walk systematic transects 3m apart from west to east across the site. Major features were noted in the initial survey and mapped in later with the transit. The preliminary survey was conducted at the beginning of the season by myself and one field assistant. Based on survey results, the boundary of the upslope portion of the cemetery and the east and west perimeters are based on the disappearance of surface artifacts. The burial ground is bound down slope or south by an in-site road designated as the Upper Main Road (See Figure 19). A second survey was undertaken to document and collect surface artifacts. Only diagnostic artifacts were collected and brought back to the lab for analysis. All artifacts were recorded, mapped, and photographed. Those that were not collected were photographed in situ. Artifact scatters, consisting of over five fragments were photographed and numbered. All artifacts collected are reposited in the Fort Steele Historic Town museum. A third survey occurred for one day in September 2002 and concentrated on locating the altar and fence depicted in archival pictures of the site. Using the historic photographs as a guide, the slope of the landscape in the photograph was matched up with the slope of three possible locations for the altar determined previously. Trees in the background of the picture were also used as a guide and were matched up with large trees to the north of the possible altar locations. The size of the altar in the picture was approximated and applied to the three platforms attributed to possible altar locations.

Locating the fence line pictured in the archival photographs involved working upslope to approximately 5m north of the line of empty graves. The area below the graves to the Upper Main Road was surveyed as well. Remnants of wood planks, posts, and fence hardware were assessed as clear indication of fencing. Because of the public nature and steep slope of the site, it is not likely that the planks would be in situ. However, high concentrations of fencing material in a particular locale would denote its general range.
The final survey was set up to determine areas where intact graves could exist. These areas would later be tested with a metal detector and magnetometer. Significant gaps occur between a number of the empty graves across the site. These gaps were assessed based on a number of criteria: proximity to empty graves, slope of the landscape (assuming that steeper sloped areas are vulnerable to higher levels of erosion possibly filling in empty plots), and nature of landscape. The final criterion takes into account the geological conditions of an area (bedrock versus areas with soil development) and the presence of large trees (which may be older than the use of the site).

Mapping

The purpose of producing an accurate map of the site was to document material culture in situ to detect patterns of artifact distribution and accurately assess the presence or absence of fengshui at the site as a guiding principle for organization and site selection. The burial ground was mapped using a Zeiss Jena Theodolite 020 A transit, a surveyor’s chain, and a 7m stadia rod. The site datum, an iron rebar, was established in the northwest corner of the cemetery, in an exposure of bedrock approximately 1m above one of the possible altar platforms (See Figure 19). Taken as 0N 0E on the site grid, all horizontal measurements were calculated in relation to it. Its position by GPS is 49°N 39’ 41.0” and 115°35’ 06.1”. The vertical datum was set at a higher point on the site at Station 1, approximately 3m from the site datum. The declination of the site was 17°16’ in 1999, according to National Resources Canada map 82 G/12 (1:50,000).

Features mapped include boundaries of the site, major rock outcrops (more than 5m in length), depressions and berm features, possible altar platforms (three in total), the path running though the west side of the site, interpretive singage, the lower road or south boundary, trees that were cored, planks attributed to fencing or graveposts, all surface artifacts, the testing area for the magnetometer and metal detector and empty grave plots. Burial features were mapped more thoroughly such that a cross section profile could be acquired. Graves were numbered 1 - 38, east to west from south to north. A profile of one of the empty graves was also taken to determine if fengshui was evident in the landscape surrounding the exhumed burial pits.
Tree Coring

Tree coring was initially intended to test the minimum date when the burials were disinterred by dating trees found in empty pits. Cores were also taken from two apple trees found at the head and foot of Grave 31 and 38 respectively to find out if they were contemporaneous with the burials and reflect the practice of placing food on graves. It was hypothesized that the apple trees grew from offerings that were made to the deceased possibly at the initial burial or in any of the three ancestor placating ceremonies throughout the lunar year (Qing Ming, Yu Lan, and Chong Yang). Thus, presumably, the trees predate the disinterment of the deceased. Tree corings were also taken to match archival photographs of the altar to locate the altar platform. Small trees visible in the background of archival photograph appeared to correspond to trees behind possible altar terraces 1, 2, and 3. One tree from each of these areas was cored to detect a possible coexistence with the burial ground. This information can in turn be used to determine the final location of the altar. Since the dates of the archival photographs are known, ring counts from trees located behind possible altar terraces matching to trees found in the photographs may help to identify the correct location of the original altar. The coring program was undertaken over a two day period employing a 6” increment borer.

Metal Detector

Few artifacts were visible on the surface of the cemetery and, as such, metal detecting is a beneficial tool to detect sub-surface artifacts without impacting the burial ground. A metal detector was utilized at the site for three reasons: 1) to pinpoint the location of the altar by locating the fence pictured in the background of all three historic photos of the altar; 2) to test gaps between empty burials for the possibility of sub-surface hardware related to intact burials such as coffin nails or metal offerings; and 3) and to conduct general surveys in areas deemed to have high potential for interred burials. High potential areas were those areas within 5m north of a line of empty grave pits and south to the southern boundary of the site (See Figure 19). A selective survey occurred on areas not anticipated to have any cultural material, such as over 5m north of the line of empty burials mainly to assess the accuracy of the site boundaries.

The metal detector was a Garrett GTAx 750 8.5” Crossfire Coil, which registered metal items with different signal durations up to 50cm below the surface. Before commencing the
survey, the metal detector was tuned to the magnetic level of metal in the soil and moisture on
the surface of the site. As different metals vary in magnetic conductivity, the signature of
different material culture was tested based on the availability of surface artifacts at the site; these
signatures were recorded. For example, nails were always short signals regardless of their
concentration.

Metal detector testing focused on finding the location of the altar by locating adjacent
funerary remains identified in historic photographs. By comparing historic photos to the existing
landscape the maximum distance from the fence to possible altars 1, 2, and 3 was estimated at
10m. This area was tested from west to east along the line of empty graves, in a looping type
pattern. If a short sound was heard, the area surrounding the beep was tested (usually within a
2m radius from the epicenter) to pinpoint a line where the fence may have existed. The three
possible altar platforms were also tested to detect for nails associated with a wood plank floor
visible in the archival photographs.

The metal detector was also employed to test for intact remains at the site. High
potential areas for intact burials include gaps between Graves 19-20, 21-22, 25-26, 26-27 and west
of Grave 38. Particular areas of interest within these gaps were areas with variations in
vegetation cover or concentrations of vegetation compared to the rest of the site. Presumably
these variations are indicative of different soil compositions resulting from the decomposition of
intact burials. If interred burials are present, the metal detector signal will be weak and short as
the Chinese buried their deceased in coffins at least 30cm below the surface. Coffin nails would
produce a signal similar to the nail signature established. The third metal detector survey
scanned the areas reasoned to be high potential to assess artifact concentrations. The areas tested
were within 5m north of the line of empty graves and south to the Upper Main Road within the
east-west boundaries of the site. The metal detector also served to detect modern metal
anomalies that would create unwanted noise when using the magnetometer. These anomalies
were temporarily removed from the area. All areas tested with the metal detector were mapped
with the results presented in the next chapter.
Magnetometer

Magnetometer testing is one of the more efficient geophysical tools for detecting historic burials. The magnetometer measures changes in the magnetic field of a landscape through the presence of metallic or burned soil and rock and changes in the polarity of sediments present in fill deposits. The magnetic field is measured in nanoTeslas (nT) and varies around the world through changes in its orientation and amplitude. These individual designations are known as vectors. The particular vector for the Wild Horse Creek area is approximately 56,000 nT. Localized magnetic items emit a magnetic field that together with the earth's vector produces a total-field vector. Local anomalies each have a distinct signature, which can be decoded with multiple surveys of the same area. The magnetometer also measures the vertical gradient of an area, which is the "rate of change of the total field with vertical distance" (Scintrex 1994:B1-2). This task is accomplished by averaging the total magnetic field between two sensors set at different elevations on a rod.

Due to the short field season, and because no work of this nature has been done in the region, it was decided to concentrate the survey in one area and conduct a multitude of tests. A 9m by 9m magnetometer test area was laid out and tied to the main site map through reference to one of the transit mapping stations (See Figure 19). The area includes a section deemed high potential for intact burials between empty graves 25 and 26 and possible altar 2. My reason for selecting this area is that it includes both a zone where general appearance, metal detector tests, surface artifacts, and vegetation suggest the presence of intact graves. It also includes, for comparative purposes, a 3m zone where there are no such indications.

The magnetometer survey employed a 1m by 1m grid with readings taken at intersecting intervals. The magnetometer was a Scintrex Ltd. Envimag gradiometer, which has a sensitivity of 1.0nT. Two types of surveys were conducted: WALKMAG and Stop and Go (Scintrex 1994). WALKMAG is a basic magnetometer survey that allows the surveyor to take continuous readings every .5 seconds while traversing lines in a fixed survey area. WALKMAG surveys are ideal for time conscious surveyors whose targets are shallow and survey area small. This type of survey seemed well suited for the type of information that was being sought. However, the resulting output produced what is known as 'herring-bone lag', resulting in data values being dragged along the survey line. This type of error occurred due to the changes in slope across the
survey area. Because the survey time is fixed at .5 seconds and the traveling time is affected by the slope, this type of error was expected.

As a result, for the next three surveys, a Stop and Go method was adopted. Stop and Go is a more complex survey procedure that allows for total control over parameters on the console. This procedure is generally utilized for deep targets below 30m but because it offers full control over the settings, it was opted as the best method. To override sensors detecting deeper depths, the sensors were situated close to the ground. The lower sensor was located 60cm from the ground with a 50cm separation between sensors. This alignment was confirmed by Weymouth (1986:349) who recommends this height for detecting anomalies down to 30cm below ground. Stop and Go surveying consists of taking durational readings at 1m intervals along each transect running north. A 2 second duration, which assures maximum precision, was utilized for each measurement. All three surveys were conducted with the same parameters on the console.

Information collected during the surveys was downloaded onto a computer and read into a magnetic contouring software program called Envimap. The resulting maps and interpretations are presented in the next section.

Lab Work

A majority of the lab time was spent plotting the map coordinates onto velum with a drafting machine at a 1:100 scale. Contour intervals on the map were set at 1m and all site elevations were plotted with reference to the site elevation datum. The completed topographic map was reduced to a publishable size. A digital version in CorelDraw is included in the next chapter (See Figure 19). Artifacts collected were cleaned, reconstructed, and given an artifact number in the Fort Steele Heritage Town system. Fragments from the same vessel were given alphabetical designations within the same catalogue number while single artifacts were given their own number. All collected artifacts were digitally photographed. Tree cores were individually placed in a routed out section on a small plank of wood (Figure 18). The routed area was carved out to a depth of a little less than half the radius of the cores. The cores were glued in place and sanded down to a smooth, flat surface, easy for reading the rings. The rings were then counted. The field research at Wild Horse Creek was designed to identify burial rituals practiced during the gold rush at Wild Horse Creek. In the next chapter I discuss the results of this research.
CHAPTER 6

Results

Six miles above Fort Steele on Wild Horse Creek is one of the most dismal and forlorn spots in British Columbia, it is the Chinese cemetery. Here lie the bones of the early residents, few of whom died from natural causes. Old headstones crudely cut and carved are to be seen in all stages of dilapidation (Cranbrook Herald, June 11, 1898).

This chapter presents results of the survey, metal detecting, tree coring, and magnetometer testing at the Wild Horse Creek Chinese Burial Ground. Interpretations of the results, in particular, the types of Chinese death rituals practiced at the burial ground are presented in Chapter 7.

The Chinese burial ground is an isolated site located on the northwest slope of the Wild Horse Creek Provincial Historic Site. At approximately 201m long and 39m wide, the cemetery is comparatively large in relation to other Chinese burial grounds surveyed. The site is situated on a 30% grade, roughly 120m northeast of the Chinese occupation site known as Chinatown and contains 38 evenly spaced exhumed burial pits (Figure 19). The burial pits are arranged northwest along an east-west axis, paralleling a path descending the site. Seventeen of the graves are north of a path that cuts through the southeast portion of the cemetery and the remaining 21 are south of this path. The grave pits average 1.5m wide, 2.5m long and 0.5m deep. Significant gaps exist between a number of the evenly spaced empty graves, leading to speculation that burials exist at the site. There are also two apple trees situated at the head and foot of two empty graves on the east side of the site which led to a hypothesis that these may have originated as grave offerings. The site also contains numerous axe cut tree stumps. A stylized wooden box that served as an altar for grave rituals formally resided in the cemetery. The altar, pictured in three archival photographs from Fort Steele archives was located on a terrace, cut into the hillside. It rested on a wooden platform and was flanked in back by a picket fence (Figure 20). The location of the altar was not known prior to archaeological surveys.
Artifacts

A total of 138 artifacts were found throughout the site and almost all were concentrated between 2m north of the line of disturbed graves and south to the Upper Main Road and bound by the east-west extent of the burials. No artifacts were found 2m north of the disturbed plots. The types of artifacts found include liquor bottle fragments, Chinese ceramics, dinnerware fragments, tin cans, flat metal plates, metal pails, nails, and a modern .22 cartridge. Only five artifacts were collected based on their diagnostic qualities or as representations of artifacts with high frequencies. The rest were recorded on the map and photographed. A summary of the artifacts collected and recorded is displayed in Table 7.

Bottles

A majority of the artifacts (n=138) found at the burial ground were liquor bottle fragments, representing a minimum of 14 bottles. All of the bottle fragments with visible seams were mould blown bottles, a technology that dates roughly from the 1800s to 1920s (Jones et al. 1989). The glass fragments ranged in colour from amber, black, and green, to aqua. In general, black and amber glass bottles manufactured after 1860 were used for alcoholic beverages such as beer, whiskey, and wine (Fike 1987:13). All other coloured bottles had more generic uses. Only one diagnostic bottle was found; a three-piece mould blown, aqua liquor bottle embossed with 'CS & Co'. on the base (Figure 21). Cannington, Shaw & Company from St. Helens, Lancashire, England, manufactured these bottles from 1875-1913 and were a type of bottle found in gold rush sites across North America (Toulouse 1971). This particular bottle has a two-part finish with broken deep ring lip, a bulged neck, rounded shoulders, cylindrical body and a dome shaped base (Jones et al. 1989). Based on the shape, it is assumed that the bottle held liquor, possibly whiskey.
Figure 20: Archive photo of altar circa 1900s (Photo courtesy of Fort Steele Archives FS 8.233).
Chinese Ceramics

A minimum of six Chinese ceramic vessels were found, represented by 27 fragments or 20% of the total assemblage. Twelve fragments from a celadon bowl and ten fragments from a hand painted gray celadon rice bowl were found in association with Depression 2, discussed in the next section. Celadon ware was a popular nineteenth century imported item that is ubiquitous in overseas Chinese sites throughout North America (Ritchie 1986:207). Typical types include bowls, teacups, wine cups, spoons, and dishes. Celadon ware is composed of white porcelain decorated with a mint green glaze and is either left plain or overpainted with floral motifs. All celadon ware have hand painted blue marks of variable and often indecipherable symbols on the base. One of these hand painted celadon fragments was found to the east of Platform 1. Just south of Grave 12, two rim fragments from a celadon cup were found. These artifacts were associated with a Chinese wide mouthed jar base fragment and one Chinese stoneware lid fragment (Artifact scatter 2 in Table 7). Chinese stoneware is the European equivalent of food storage containers such as tin cans. These vessels were imported from Canton, China and contained items like soy sauce, ginger, 100 year old goose eggs, and a special type of ‘medicinal’ liquor known as Ng Ka Py or Tiger Whiskey (Figure 22). This liquor was imported into Canada under the guise of ‘medicine’ due to its high alcohol content, but was usually consumed as a social drink (Yang et al. 1996).

The shape of the vessel varied with product. The shouldered jar in particular held “pressed tofu... sweet bean paste, black, brown, and white beans, pickled turnips, cabbage, and shrimp paste” (Yang et al. 1996:6). Chinese stoneware is relatively plain, usually decorated with a single coat of low luster brown glaze; Ng Ka Py bottles are typically finished with a higher quality glaze.

As a whole, these vessels are hard to date as they have changed little in the last 200 years, and have a high rate of re-use at overseas Chinese sites. For instance, large barrel jars were shipped in from China to store bulk items such as rice or peanut oil but were reused as collectors for rainwater or to store bones in bone houses (Yang et al. 1996).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Artifact</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>Colour</th>
<th># Frags</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Ft Steele Ref.</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bottle</td>
<td>Liquor</td>
<td>glass</td>
<td>mould blown</td>
<td>Amber, dark</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>base</td>
<td>N of G1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bottle</td>
<td>Liquor</td>
<td>glass</td>
<td>mould blown</td>
<td>Amber</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>base</td>
<td>S of G1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bottle</td>
<td>Liquor</td>
<td>glass</td>
<td>mould blown</td>
<td>Amber, black</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4-6 brown, 2-3 black, Min. 2 bottles</td>
<td>S of G1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Artifact scatter #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bottle</td>
<td>Liquor</td>
<td>glass</td>
<td>mould blown</td>
<td>Amber, black, olive, light olive</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2-umber 4-black 2-olive 2-light olive: Min 4 bottles</td>
<td>Platform #1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Artifact scatter #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bottle</td>
<td>Liquor</td>
<td>glass</td>
<td>mould blown</td>
<td>Aqua</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>base, body, finish</td>
<td>S of G20</td>
<td>F.S. 2002.40.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bottle</td>
<td>Liquor</td>
<td>glass</td>
<td>mould blown</td>
<td>Aqua</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>finish</td>
<td>S of G1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bottle</td>
<td>Liquor</td>
<td>glass</td>
<td>mould blown</td>
<td>Green, dark</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>base, body</td>
<td>S of G3</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bottle</td>
<td>Liquor</td>
<td>glass</td>
<td>mould blown</td>
<td>Green, light</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>base, body</td>
<td>S of G2</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bottle</td>
<td>Liquor</td>
<td>glass</td>
<td>mould blown</td>
<td>Green, olive</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>body</td>
<td>S of G24</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Bottle</td>
<td>Liquor</td>
<td>glass</td>
<td>mould blown</td>
<td>Green, olive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>base</td>
<td>N of G1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Cartridge</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>copper</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Tin on base</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tin on base</td>
<td>S of G1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>Celadon bowl</td>
<td>porcelain</td>
<td>glass only</td>
<td>Green, blue</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Chinese maker's mark on base</td>
<td>E of Depression #2</td>
<td>F.S. 2002.40.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>Celadon bowl</td>
<td>porcelain</td>
<td>hand painted</td>
<td>Gray, blue</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Three friends</td>
<td>E of Depression #2</td>
<td>F.S. 2002.40.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>Celadon teacup</td>
<td>porcelain</td>
<td>glass only</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ash</td>
<td>S of G12</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Artifact scatter #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>Celadon teacup</td>
<td>porcelain</td>
<td>hand painted</td>
<td>Green, rust</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Floral overpaint</td>
<td>E of Platform #1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>Chinese shouldered jar</td>
<td>stoneware</td>
<td>moulded</td>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Base</td>
<td>S of G12</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Artifact scatter #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>Chinese stoneware lid</td>
<td>stoneware</td>
<td>moulded</td>
<td>Unglazed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unglazed</td>
<td>S of G12</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Artifact scatter #2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Ceramic</td>
<td>Plate</td>
<td>porcelain</td>
<td>vitrified</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Floral relief on 2 frags</td>
<td>S of G2</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Canister</td>
<td>tin</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Lid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lid</td>
<td>S of G1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Artifact scatter #4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Tin Billy</td>
<td>tin</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>With handle, no lid</td>
<td>W of Platform #1</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Tin Billy</td>
<td>tin</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>With handle, no lid</td>
<td>S of G12</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Tin Billy</td>
<td>tin</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>With handle, no lid</td>
<td>S of G12</td>
<td>F.S. 2002.40.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Roofing</td>
<td>tin</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Roofing tiles</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Roofing tiles</td>
<td>G29</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Tin Can</td>
<td>tin</td>
<td>Smithery</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Solder outside seam</td>
<td>S of G29</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Nails</td>
<td>Machine Cut</td>
<td>metal</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N of G32</td>
<td>F.S. 2002.40.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Artifacts at the Wild Horse Creek Chinese Burial Ground
Figure 21: Mould blown bottle manufactured by 'CS & Co' (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2002).

Figure 22: Chinese Ng Ka Py Bottles (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2002).
Other Ceramics

Below Grave 4, 16 fragments from a minimum two vitrified white earthenware plates were found. Two of the rim fragments are decorated with floral relief (Figure 23).

Tin Cans

One cylindrical No. 2 ½, stamped can with a machine made, soldered outside rim was found below Grave 29. This particular type postdates the 1870s (Rock 2000). A circular flanged metal canister lid was discovered south of Grave 1, found in association with one amber liquor bottle base (Artifact scatter 4 in Figure 19 and Table 7). No embossing was noted on the outside.

Metal Pails

Found at the site were three metal pails (Figure 24). The pails are all composed of tin plated steel and have riveted handle lugs; all are missing their lids. Metal pails were found south of Depression 2, east of Platform 1 and south of Grave 10 (Figure 19).

Flat Metal Plates

Two flat metal plates were found in Grave 29. Similar flat metal plates were found at Griffith's cabin site in the 2000 season. Sauer (2001:79) states:

A large amount of flat metal with nails through indicated that kerosene cans and other metal sources were used to provide better weatherproofing on wooden roofs and walls.

It is not known if these metal plates were originally utilized at the burial ground.
Figure 23: Vitrified white earthenware plate fragments (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2002).

Figure 24: Metal pail (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2002).
Cartridge

One .22 rifle cartridge with 'Sn' imprinted on the base, was found on the west edge of Platform 2. This is of recent origin.

Grave Markers

South of Grave 23, evidence for two grave markers was found. The markers were simple wooden stakes tapered to a point at each end. This type of marker typifies the cemetery design of the overseas Chinese and the simplistic style evident in many contemporaneous Eurocanadian pioneer cemeteries (Oliver 1993; Trinkley 1984). One of the grave markers is tapered at one end complete with two round nail holes, while the other piece is tapered at both ends (Table 8). It is suspected that they were composite pieces of the same grave marker, designed to emulate the Christian cross. No other evidence of burial marking was found at the site. A single historic reference by the June 11, 1898 edition of the Cranbrook Herald: “old headstones crudely cut and carved are to be seen in all stages of dilapidation...”.

Fence

In archival photographs of the altar, a fence is visible in the background and is presumably a site boundary for the burial ground. It is not known if the fence ran the entire length of the burial ground. Analysis of the photos reveals that the fence was made up of posts (Figure 25), pales, (Figure 26) and rails (Figure 26). Testing for the fence location commenced with an examination of the area that paralleled up to 5m north of the line of disturbed graves. The survey revealed a high concentration of wood fencing to the north of Graves 16 to 18 (Figure 29). The survey continued east to the end of the site and no other fencing was visible up to 5m north of the disturbed graves. The fencing recovered is summarized in Table 8. This area was then tested with a metal detector. The testing commenced on the fencing materials to establish a solid signature for the fencing hardware then extended both west and east from the known area...
of fencing. On the west side of the site, a line of short signals emerged from Grave 4 to Grave 21, approximately 2m north of the line of disturbed graves (Figure 19). The metal detector identified continuous short signals up to 1.5m west of Grave 3. The signals continued south from this point, ending approximately 5m north of the southern perimeter of the site suggesting a north-south extension of the fence. An eastern boundary to the fence was not detected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map Ref</th>
<th>Fencing Type</th>
<th>Hardware</th>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>2 WP nails</td>
<td>4.9m long</td>
<td>N of G 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>N of G 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>N of G 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>3 MC nails</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>N of G 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>2 nail holes</td>
<td>N of G 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>N of G 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>g</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>N of G 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h</td>
<td>R/P</td>
<td>2 MC nails, 1 WP nail</td>
<td>joined together</td>
<td>N of G 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>PO</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>N of G 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>N of G 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>N of G 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>PO</td>
<td>4 WP nails</td>
<td>1 nail hole</td>
<td>N of G 17, 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>NE of G 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>GM</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>nail hole, tapered at one end</td>
<td>S of G 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii</td>
<td>GM</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>tapered at both sides</td>
<td>S of G 23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Fencing at Chinese Burial Ground

P: Pale
PO: Post
R: Rail
GM: Grave Markers
WP: Wire pulled
MC: Machine cut
Tree Coring

The tree coring program was instigated to test for the approximate age of disinterment based on trees located within empty plots. All dates acquired from coring post dated the abandonment of the burial ground thus the data was not utilized. Table 9 summarizes the trees cored and the age of the trees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tree Core #</th>
<th>Tree Type</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Height of Bore (cm)</th>
<th>Radius of Tree (cm)</th>
<th>Core Complete</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>DF</td>
<td>S of G 7</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>DF</td>
<td>In G 22 (E)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>1928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>DF</td>
<td>In G 22 (W)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>AT</td>
<td>S of G 38</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>AT</td>
<td>N of G 31</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>S of G 5</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>no</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>DF</td>
<td>In G 17</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>DF</td>
<td>In G 19</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1932</td>
</tr>
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<td>9</td>
<td>PP</td>
<td>N of Altar #2</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>DF</td>
<td>N of Altar #1</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>1928</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>DF</td>
<td>In G 30</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>1937</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Trees cored at Wild Horse Creek

DF: Douglas Fir
PP: Ponderosa Pine
AT: Apple Tree

Features

Visual and metal detector surveys resulted in the discovery of a number of features at the burial ground. Those associated with Chinese death ritual practices include a berm, two depressions, three terraces presumed to be platforms for the altar and the empty pits from disinterred remains.
Berm

Surveys of the site revealed a raised berm with a central depression on the northeast perimeter of the site. The bermed feature spans 8m wide and 10m in length; the height of the berm is approximately 1m. The berm is omega shaped, opening down slope and south. No material culture was found on the surface. The feature resembles root cellars found at Invicta northeast of the site and is also similar in form to a Chinese blacksmith shop excavated at Griffith's orchard in 2000 (Sauer 2001). Chinese often built shelters in small quarters and it is not uncommon to find Chinese habitations in mine shafts and root cellars in overseas Chinese sites (Ritchie 1986:345). The berm was tested with the metal detector and the testing resulted in a low concentration of metallic anomalies evenly distributed on the top of the berm. No metal anomalies were found in the depression within the berm. With its close proximity to empty graves, this increases the opportunity for introduced cultural material from the empty plots (approximately 4m northeast).

Depressions

Two depressions are present at the Chinese burial ground. One large depression labeled Depression 1 and north of Grave 26 was first recorded in the 2000 survey (Sauer 2001). The depression is approximately 7m wide, 7m in length and 1m deep. The area was tested with the metal detector and no anomalies were detected. Upon closer examination of the surface, decaying wood resembling a tree trunk was discovered. Hence, it is concluded that the depression is probably a tree throw.

The second depression is located approximately 30cm north of a small 1.5m wide terrace near Grave 22 and is labeled Depression 2 on the site map (See Figure 19). The depression is 2.5m wide, 3m long and 20cm at its greatest depth. The depression resembles a tree throw but when tested with the metal detector, the well and the small platform were littered with anomalies (23 in total). Twenty of the anomalies recovered were 3" machine cut nails, and the other three were unknown as they were not visible on the surface. Three other artifacts were recorded in the area; 12 fragments from a green celadon bowl (Figure 28), one gray celadon rice bowl composed of ten
Figure 28: Winter green celadon bowl found in association with Depression 2 (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2002).

Figure 29: Grey celadon bowl found in association with Depression 2 (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2002).
fragments (Figure 29); and one of three metal pails found at the site (Figure 24). The green celadon bowl was found approximately 1m east of Grave 22, along the same elevation as the platform while the gray celadon bowl was found eroding out of the bank below the platform. The latter is hand painted with a blue underglaze motif known as ‘Three friends’ — a popular Chinese motif for bowls of this type and one which is commonly found in overseas Chinese burial ground (Abraham et al. 2003). The motif is usually composed of a dragonfly or butterfly (both symbols of longevity), and three circles representative of the flight path of the insect. It has been similarly interpreted as a tree or bamboo (Mueller 1987:272). The metal pail was found approximately 3m south of the platform. The closest disturbed burial is 2m east of this feature (Grave 22).

Platforms

It is certain from archival photos of the Chinese burial ground that a wooden altar was located at the site; however, its location is not known. The altar was stationed on a wood platform and situated on a terrace somewhere within the burial ground. I hypothesized that well built items such as the altar, requiring a substantial investment, would have been removed intact many years ago. Thus, I expected to find archaeological evidence for a prepared earthen platform and remnants of the wood and hardware used for the platform of the altar pictured in the archival photos. A total of three terraces were located during archaeological surveys of the cemetery. All three platforms were tested with a metal detector, and the landscape (slope and vegetation) was compared to the archival photos. Trees behind the altars that matched up to trees visible in the archival photos of the altar were cored.

The first location (designated as Platform 1) includes two stacked platforms located south of Graves 12 and 13 (Figure 30). The upper platform is approximately 2m long and 1m wide while the lower platform is 3m long and 2m wide. It is possible that this area was a single platform that has eroded and slumped over the years. The upper platform has no visible surface artifacts while the lower platform has a high concentration of artifacts; the majority of which are mould blown glass bottle fragments. An estimated minimum of four mould blown bottles are represented by two amber fragments, four black fragments, two olive fragments, and eight light
olive fragments. The glass sherds were found on the west side of the platform (Figure 30). Three fragments, possible from the same bottle consisted of a black bottle finish with a down-tooled lip, a round body fragment, and a flat, indented base fragment (Jones et al. 1989:92). This vessel likely held wine (Jones et al. 1989). A metal pail was found approximately 1m east of the lower platform; the pail was identical to the other two found at the site. One fragment of Chinese celadon with rust and green hand painted floral overpaint, possibly from a teacup was also found. The metal detector test revealed a high concentration of unknown metal anomalies across both platforms. The survey also uncovered a wooden plank with two machine cut nails .3m west of the lower platform. The plank was photographed and mapped.

The second location is a smaller platform approximately 1m south of Graves 25 and 26 (Figure 31). This terrace is approximately 2.5m long and 1.5m wide. The area surrounding the altar is located in a clearing surrounded by dense Douglas fir and resembles the open grassy area pictured in the archival photographs. There are no empty graves directly north of the terraced area. The platform was first compared to the historic photos and it was found that the terrain and slope were similar. Like Platform 1, metal anomalies were detected on the surface of the platform. In total, 18 3” machine cut nails were identified. Also found in association with the platform was a wooden plank, located 7m south of the platform. One of the surfaces was covered in black roofing paper.

The third possible altar location, (Platform 3), was discovered in the 2000 field season (Sauer 2001). Miller, a local East Kootenay historian, stated that long time Fort Steele resident Mr. Dempsey insisted that the altar was located uphill from the burials (Miller, pers. comm. 2000). The platform is a large 5m by 3m exposed bedrock platform located in the northwest portion of the site, in the same location as the 2002 site datum. The main advantage of this location is in its size as it is the only platform capable of potentially supporting the large wooden altar. The area is similar to the topography visible in archival photos; however, no material culture was detected on the surface. A 10m area was tested around the platform to see if any metal had eroded or been transported from the platform. Again, the tests were negative.
Disinterred Plots

The burial ground was intensely surveyed to identify the presence of empty graves. The survey revealed 38 grave pits running along two lines from east to west (Figure 32). Pits were variable in size but averaged approximately 1.5 m wide, 2.5 m long and 0.5 m deep. A profile of Grave 9 (Figures 33 and 34) demonstrates the slope and condition of a typical empty grave. The west side of the site contains burial pits that are smaller and shallower than those found on the east side. Those on the western portion are included in the original historic trail established in 1986 and those east of the path were discovered in the 2000 season (Sauer 2001). It is possible that this size variation is due to differential erosion of the exhumed pits through time.

Metal detecting tests over the site revealed a high concentration of 3” (7.6 cm) machine cut nails in and around the exhumed pits. This type of nail was pervasive in sites in North America from the 1860s to 1900s and was frequently employed for boxes or flooring (Trinkley 1984). Wire pulled nails were introduced in the 1880s and dominated the market by the turn of the century. The highest density of machine cut nails was concentrated around the top of disturbed graves, Platform 1, and 2 and Depression 2. Seven 3 ½” (8.9 cm) wire pulled nails were found in fencing located north of Graves 16 to 18. They were not recorded in the total artifact count but are summarized in Table 7. Because of the uneven ratio of machine cut to wire pulled nails, it is proposed that they can be loosely dated from the 1880s to 1910s, fitting in favourably with the established chronology of the site. The presence of these nails in the vicinity of empty graves suggests coffin use in the burial ground. Oliver (1993) has identified a distinct smaller finishing nail that typified pioneer coffins from the 1860s to the 1910s excavated at the Golden Pioneer Cemetery in the East Kootenay Region. No similar types of coffin hardware were found in or around the depressions.

A final step was to establish a metal detector pattern for the areas around open burial pits to distinguish exhumed pits from possible intact burials. Every open burial pit was tested and each plot contained metal anomalies. The highest density of anomalies registered as a short signal and was concentrated around the north or upslope area of the grave. This patterning likely originated from back dirt being piled on the upslope of the grave during disinterment. It differs from soil that was piled up deliberately to enhance fengshui based on the sheer size and shape of the berm. Landscape modifications would be larger and built up in the shape of an
Figure 31: Possible altar platform 2 (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2002).

Figure 32: Empty grave pits (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2000).
PROFILE OF GRAVE 9

Longitudinal View

Figure 33
PROFILE AT SECTION A-A

PROFILE OF GRAVE 9
CROSS SECTIONAL VIEW
Figure 34
omega, surrounding the grave on the top and sides of the grave. Metal anomalies would not likely be interred in these modifications.

**Interred Plots**

Areas with no surface evidence of a depression in gaps between empty plots were tested to determine if a metal signature existed suggesting the presence of a coffin. If metal anomalies were located, the patterning of metal artifacts generated with the metal detector was tested against the patterning established with empty plots. The goal of this task was to distinguish empty grave pits filled in by natural or human processes from undisturbed burials. A different pattern emerged in areas with no depressions between Graves 25-26 and Graves 26-27. The presence of a metal signature dissimilar to that identified in empty pits lead to suppositions that intact burials do remain at the Chinese burial ground. One of the three areas located was further tested with a magnetometer.

The survey for intact remains was directed at a 9m by 9m area between Graves 25 and 26. This area was chosen because it displays a substantial area of no empty graves as well as the presence of two unusual concentrations of vegetation. These 2m by 1m concentrations contain dense moss and common juniper. Elsewhere the foliage is dominated by xeric grasses. The area, when tested with a metal detector resulted in high concentrations of low, short signals. The signal pattern differed from the zone around open graves pits as the former signals were distributed evenly across the area. Conceivably, the low signals resulted from ferrous material buried at a deeper depth. To confirm that this patterning was not random, other gaps were tested. The gap between Graves 26 and 27 was another high potential area for undisturbed burials. While no changes in vegetation exist in the area, the same low, short signals were concentrated in a single 1m by 2m area. Tests on gaps between Graves 19 and 20, 21 and 22, and west of Grave 38 produced no signals.

A 9m by 9m grid was set up between Graves 25 and 26. The grid was metal detected to determine areas with anomalies. The resulting signatures were then utilized as a key for the magnetometer testing to ensure accurate identification on the resulting magnetometer map (See
Figures 35 and 36). Metal detecting prior to magnetometer testing also guaranteed that the
magnetometer was reading at the right depth. No anomalies were expected to exist below 60cm
as the Chinese buried their deceased in shallow graves to ensure rapid decomposition. Two of
the four magnetometer testings were successful and produced the desired contour map that
could be further interpreted (Figures 35 and 36). Both the Total Field and the gradiometer views
for each survey are displayed. The surveys occurred on two successive days in October 2002
where the magnetic forecasts were both quiet (0-30nT). The resulting anomalies were divided
into three grades (Grade A to C) based on Silliman et al.’s (2000) magnetometer research at the
nineteenth century Rancho site in California. Those anomalies categorized as Grade A have the
highest magnetic variation from the magnetic vector for Wild Horse Creek. Grade B and C
anomalies have progressively lower magnetic strengths. The higher the magnetic variation from
the magnetic vector, the higher the possibility of introduced anomalies. The magnetic vector for
the Wild Horse Creek area fluctuates from approximately 56,500 to 56,900nT. Survey 1 varied
from 56,909 to 56,926nT — a 17nT deviation between anomalies. In the second survey, a
divergence of 22nT distinguished anomalies, fluctuating from 56,779 to 56,801nT. The maximum
147nT variation between the two surveys likely differs due to changes in diurnal variation. The
small total field vector for the site confirms that previous metal detector signature identifications
are indeed correct.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Detected by Metal Detector?</th>
<th>Associated Feature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>50N-30 W to 10N-70W</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Platform 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>100W-10N to 80W-40N</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Grave 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>50N-90W to 60N-80W and 55N-60W to 65N-50W</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Interred Grave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>70N-40W and 100N-10W</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Interred Grave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>90N-90W and 100N-80W</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Anomalies detected with magnetometer
Grade A

Grade A anomalies are those we can positively identify as metal anomalies because of both the strong magnetic strengths and consistency between surveys. These anomalies are present in both the surveys and are associated with known anomalies previously located with the metal detector (Table 10 and Figures 35 and 36). This anomaly type includes nT variation from 56,921 to 56,926nT in survey 1 and 56,794 to 56,801nT in survey 2 and are denoted as a solid line on the magnetometer maps. The only Grade A anomaly explicitly visible in each of the magnetometer surveys was found on Platform 2. Previous testing with a metal detector confirmed the presence of 3” machine cut nails on or close to the surface of Platform 2. Not surprisingly, this locality produced the highest quality and most consistent signal with the magnetometer in both surveys.

Grade B

Grade B anomalies have a medium level of confidence; anomalies are present but not consistently. Anomalies such as these signify they are at a deeper depth than Grade A anomalies and register on the contour maps at a lower deviation from the normal magnetic vector for the site. Five anomalies detected in the magnetometer surveys have been classified into Grade B; marked as a dashed line on the magnetometer survey maps. These anomalies range in strength from 56,915 to 56,920nT in survey 1 and 56,787 to 56,793nT in survey 2. Grave 25, located between 100W-10N to 80W-40N on the site map has been designated as a Grade B anomaly (Figure 19). While the anomalies are known to exist in the empty grave, the lower metallic strength is a result of anomalies located at a greater depth than those on Platform 2. The next two Grade B anomalies are located where one of the expected graves is hypothesized to exist (50N-90W to 60N-80W and 55N-60W to 65N-50W). A fourth anomaly appearing east of the previous anomaly at 70N-40W and 100N-10W, also located in an area of distinct foliage and metal anomalies, is suspected to be a second intact burial. The magnetic signature at this locale is not as strong as the other possible intact grave. Taken together, with changes in vegetation, a uniform metal patterning identified through metal detecting and its location along the line of
empty graves, it is highly plausible that two intact burials remain in this gap between Graves 25 and 26.

There was a fifth, unexpected anomaly that consistently appeared between 90N-90W and 100N-80W in both surveys. The anomaly, north of the line of empty graves, did not register signals when metal detected. In this instance, the anomaly could either be buried at a deeper depth beyond the capabilities of the metal detector or may signify a change in soil composition as opposed to the presence of metal. Further subsurface testing is needed to determine its nature.

**Grade C**

All other areas within the magnetometer testing area have been designated Grade C anomalies. They include all areas that vary little from the earth's vector. They have not been identified on the magnetometer map.

The Chinese burial ground contains ample evidence for artifacts associated with offerings to the deceased. Liquor bottles and Chinese serving dishes were common artifacts recorded at the site. Metal tin billes were also prevalent. These artifacts were concentrated around grave pits or altar platforms on the west side of the site. Remains of fencing surrounding the upper boundary of the site was also located. This fencing is visible in archival photos of the altar. Magnetometer testing revealed the presence of two possible intact burials on the east side of the site. These artifacts and features, in particular the significance of food related artifacts in association with ritual features are discussed in detail in the next chapter.
...He felt he must tell of a most peculiar time when he went...looking for the bones of the dead. Chinamen strewn along the Canadian Pacific Railway, their ghosts sitting on the ties some standing with one foot on the gleaning metal ribbon, waiting, grumbling...” (Lee 1990:5).

Based on Chinese death ritual practices honed from ethnographic and literary research in China and the Canadian and American frontier, we can expect a specific type of patterning to emerge at overseas Chinese burial grounds. At Wild Horse Creek I set out to test how this patterning manifested in the site or rather, what types of rituals were practiced based on the visible material culture and landscape patterning at the site. In this chapter I present the interpretations of the results of my research, structured by the research questions posed in Chapter 5. These interpretations reveal the types of rituals practiced at this Chinese burial ground.

Interpretations at Wild Horse Creek

Site Selection

The presence of fengshui at overseas Chinese sites remains a debated topic as some scholars have reservations concerning its explanatory value, due to its vagueness and almost universal applicability. Despite these concerns, the potential fengshui at a Chinese site cannot be ignored. Wild Horse Creek was an ideal site to test for fengshui for upon arrival at the almost deserted town of Fisherville, the Chinese were free to select the location for their burial ground. The existence of fengshui would indicate that the overseas Chinese were selecting their burial landscape according to an ancient preordained cosmological complex. In addition, it further
indicates that the Chinese at Wild Horse Creek had enough choice in sites to select the most auspicious location for their burial ground. When the burial ground was established in the 1860s, there were still Euro-Canadian miners living at Wild Horse Creek. Either relations between Chinese and the Western miners were amicable enough to allow them to choose their own location, or alternatively, little mining value was placed on this area by the non-Chinese.

The definitive guide for fengshui, *The Zangshu or Book of Burial*, written by Guo Pu (A.D. 276-324) in the Jin Dynasty, remained an influential guide for burial practices for the overseas Chinese. Pu (in Lin 2000:37) states that:

> The objective of burial feng shui is to take advantage of the Qi energy of the deceased... For life is nothing but the reaction of Qi energy, which is condensed into the skeleton as one ceases to be. Flesh decays and disappears but the skeleton remains. At that time, Qi energy returns to the bones and remains in the grave for a long time to come. That is why the deceased can protect and benefit their descendants.

Chow (1996) observed on a recent visit to the site, that Wild Horse Creek has “excellent fengshui” (Lily Chow, pers. comm. 2002). Chow’s statement attests to the prevalence and penetration of fengshui in Chinese culture. To recognize the characteristics of fengshui at the site, the site map was compared to parameters of fengshui set out by Lai (1974). The Chinese at Wild Horse Creek selected an area whose natural 30% sloped contours meet the first requirement of fengshui. As the map demonstrates, the site is situated on a rolling terrain to allow positive qi to flow through the burial ground (Figure 19). The positioning of a burial ground on a sloped landscape seems less probable that it was chosen for its fengshui properties than for practicality as many pioneer gravesites are also situated on hillsides (Oliver 1993; Philpot 1976). However, at Wild Horse Creek, there are countless flat areas that could have been utilized. The contemporaneous Euro-Canadian cemetery at Wild Horse Creek is located on a horizontal plot of land to the west of the site. Evidence of artificial leveling is present at Griffith’s Cabin, where Chinese residents cleared and terraced areas for mountain gardens. Yet, the Chinese residents chose an area that was sloped, presumably to enhance the fengshui of the site.

A second consideration involves the proximity and cardinal direction of water to the site. Wild Horse River flows perpendicular to and south of the Chinese burial ground (approximately 1km south of the site), allowing sheng qi to filter up to the site from the river, but is far enough
away as not to disturb the deceased. It is the burial ground’s positioning north of the river that allows further speculation on site selection. As both sides of the river are sloped, the burial ground could have been placed on either side of the river; yet, they chose to place it where the deceased could receive the greatest benefit from the landscape. In Pu’s Book of Burial, a southern exposure to water is a critical component of good *fengshui* (in Lin 2000).

The graves are further arranged in an armchair or omega formation, parallel to the slope of the site. By western standards, this configuration is logical. Burials should be positioned perpendicular to the slope of the cemetery, as it offers the lowest surface area that will be impacted by gravitational erosion of a slope. How these burials differ is that the upward slope of the empty grave has been deliberately built up around the grave, thus resembling an omega shape. This arrangement ensures that the deceased are protected from behind (Black Turtle) and the sides (White Tiger and Azure Dragon) and allotted a view of the landscape and body of water below (Crimson Phoenix). A profile of Grave 9 illustrates the slope of the landscape and the specific omega or horseshoe shaped formation achieved with the burial plots (Figure 33 and 34). This formation is simply a microcosm of the White Tiger-Azure Dragon arrangement applied to the whole site, in that the deceased are protected at an individual level by high back and sides. The site is also situated within an arrangement of surrounding mountains that adhere to their proper sizes – larger mountains to the right (Azure dragon) than the left (White Tiger), high mountain behind (Black Turtle) and open to Wild Horse Creek below (Crimson Phoenix).

The final requirement of Lai’s model calls for a well drained slope. On observation, the burial ground is well drained to avoid the build up of stagnant *qi*. The Chinatown is located approximately 120m southwest of the burial ground – almost directly down slope. Presumably, this arrangement was deliberate to ensure that Chinese residents would benefit from the positive energy transmitted from the deceased.

**Funeral and Grave Rites**

The artifact types and distributions indicate that the Chinese at Wild Horse Creek were undertaking the practice of feeding the dead. A majority of the artifacts recorded (82%) are the
burial ground were items used to serve food or drink to the deceased. Table 11 summarizes the types and use of serving vessels found at the site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Serving Vessel</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liquor Bottles</td>
<td>Liquor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celadon Bowl</td>
<td><em>Ts'ai-fan</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celadon Rice Bowl</td>
<td><em>Ts'ai-fan</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celadon Teacup</td>
<td>Tea/liquor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Stoneware Lid</td>
<td>Bulk items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese Stoneware Shouldered Jar</td>
<td>Bulk Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earthenware Plate</td>
<td><em>Ts'ai-fan</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tin Can</td>
<td>Bulk Items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Food offering vessels from Wild Horse Creek

In China different types of food offerings invoke ghosts, ancestors, or gods (Thompson 1988). Gods are served unseasoned whole cooked food or bulk foods such as chicken or pig and a glass of wine. Conversely, ancestors are served prepared and seasoned *ts'ai-fan*, consisting of rice and five servings of meat and or vegetables. Ghosts, considered low status, are served uncooked rice or millet on modest, functional serving vessels. Archival data in the late nineteenth century supports the occurrence of Chinese funerals at Wild Horse Creek as well as the post burial ceremony *Qing Ming*. Both ceremonies honoured all three spirits with food offerings. At the Chinese burial ground we have evidence for the placation of all three spirit types based on the serving vessels recorded. Chinese stoneware shouldered jars typically held unprepared food items such as beans or tofu. Thus, the stoneware utilitarian shouldered jar fragment recovered at the site may have been used to serve whole foods to gods. Bottles of liquor, fragments of which are prevalent at the burial ground, are also typical offerings to gods. Based on the types of serving vessels found, it is likely that the deceased ancestors were offered a traditional *ts'ai-fan* meal in the celadon bowls and on the European earthenware plate found at the site. Liquor and tea typically accompanied these meals and would be served in celadon wine and teacups. Artifacts such as tin cans were possibly utilized as serving vessels for ghosts.

In terms of artifact distribution, we can gain insight into the types of burial rituals that occurred at the site. In China before a deceased spirit becomes an ancestor, he was placated at the grave – where the spirit remained bound. After the funerary rituals were complete (two
months after the burial), the deceased spirit became an ancestor. The spirit was thereafter worshipped at an altar located in a close relative's home or in an ancestral hall or temple. In the overseas Chinese context, altars were located in the cemetery as opposed to the home as the deceased spirit remained bound to the cemetery. Artifacts associated with an altar platform can be attributed to post funerary rites such as Qing Ming and Yong Chang. Therefore we can attribute Chinese celadon ware and bottle glass recorded at Platforms 1 and 2 as artifacts deposited for post burial ceremonies. Artifacts concentrated in the vicinity of the gravesites are associated with both funerary and grave rites.

Another avenue that was explored was to analyze the apple trees found at the head and base of Graves 31 and 38 respectively. The trees' leaves and bark were compared to apple trees from David Griffith's Orchard to the east of the burial ground. Griffith transported apple trees of the Green Pippin variety by horseback from the Pandosey Mission in Kelowna in 1872 and three of these elderly trees still stand in the orchard today. The apple trees from the Chinese burial ground and Griffith's Orchard were found to be the same species. Though highly speculative it is possible that these trees grew from offerings of Griffith's apples made to the deceased at the grave.

Apart from food related artifacts, only one class of artifacts found at the burial ground may have been used for burial paraphernalia. Archival records indicate that paper money and joss sticks were used during Chinese funerals at Wild Horse Creek; however, these items do not preserve. The existence of three metal pails raised questions as to their function at the burial ground. Two hypotheses have been postulated for the presence of these pails. One hypothesis is that the metal pails were brought to the burial ground by mourners, either filled with food or tea for the deceased. Ritchie (1986) explains that these pails were common cooking vessels in overseas Chinese sites. He states:

> As no kettles were uncovered [in Otago] it is likely that [metal pails] were the main vessels used for boiling water, besides their traditional roles as all purpose cooking and tea-brewing vessels (1986:404).

In the context of a Chinese burial ground, the presentation of food to the deceased was of significant importance to the Chinese. Offering ts'ai-fan in a tin pail to future ancestors was not
only insulting and disrespectful but could bring bad luck to a community (Thompson 1988).
Hence, it is not likely that metal pails were used to serve food or drink to the deceased.

More likely these pails were vessels for the traditional inscription stone, buried with the
deceased Chinese and filled with their belongings as well as pertinent information such as their
name, place of origin and kinship ties. This ensured identification when the deceased were
disinterred seven years later. In many overseas Chinese sites in North America, some form of an
‘afterworld suitcase’ was interred with the deceased. For instance, in Virginia City, Nevada,
buckets filled with belongings of the deceased were lowered into the graves before the Chinese
residents were interred (Magnaghi 2001). Their belief was simply that the deceased should be
provided with a change of clothes, and some food to take on their three day journey to the land of
bliss (Barsness 2001:386).

Altars

The presence of an altar at the burial ground has been confirmed through archival
photos. It is important to find the location of the altar as inferences can be made about spatial
and temporal relationships at the site. Through research at the site it has become apparent that
the location of an altar may shift throughout the burial ground’s use away from an area where
large numbers of individuals have been disinterred to areas where graves remain undisturbed.

The first thing one notices about the altar pictured in the photographs is that it was
deceivingly large (Figure 16). This photo dates to circa 1914 and judging by the state of the wood
and factoring in the harsh environmental conditions of the East Kootenay region, it was probably
constructed around the turn of the century at the earliest. The altar was manufactured of finely
crafted and carved wood that appears to be milled. The horizontal moldings appear to be
commercial millwork, widely available at the time. This decidedly non-Chinese design emulates
the Victorian Eastlake style, popular from the 1860s to 1890s (Eastlake 1872). The triple ring
symbol situated in the middle of the altar may be the clan symbol of the dominant Chinese
lineage at Wild Horse Creek. Similar symbols are found on the sides of Chinese utilitarian
stoneware pots to denote the clan or village where the vessels were produced (Morrow, pers.
comm. 2002).
The location of the altar pictured in historic photographs has been difficult to discern. From initial surveys, three possible locations were identified based on the following criteria: 1) physical evidence for the altar (presence of a platform and artifacts associated with post burial rituals); 2) adherence to fengshui (positioning above or below the graves); 2) and informant interviews conducted in the 2000 field season. It is highly plausible that both Platform 1 and Platform 2 served as altar locations at one time through the burial ground’s use. Both platforms are terraced and contain the remnants of hardware (3” machine cut nails) and planks likely utilized for the plank flooring under the altar. Both landscapes surrounding the platforms are similar in slope and vegetation to that seen in archival photographs. Platform 2 does not contain any visible surface artifacts besides machine cut nails and is much smaller than Platform 1; however, this could be a by-product of erosion and the presence of a dense litter mat covering the platform. Platform 1 contains artifacts associated with offerings of alcohol (glass bottle fragments) and food (celadon ware) made to the deceased. Both platforms are located below the graves and is a pattern visible in all Chinese burial grounds surveyed.

The small platform and depression (collectively Depression 2) are indisputably cultural and should be considered another variety of an altar platform because of the types of serving artifacts associated with the feature. A large concentration of machine cut nails was detected on the platform and celadon bowl fragments were found in association with the features. The features are located cut into a steep slope and are approximately 8m from the nearest empty plot (Grave 21). Chow (pers. comm. 2002) contends that in modern Chinese burial grounds, smaller altars or worshipping platforms were set up below intact burials to honour a few individuals – usually of higher status. These altars were often smaller and less ostentatious than community altars. This type of altar was also recorded at the Chinese Cemetery in Papeete, Tahiti, discussed in the next chapter.

Coffins

If the final goal of primary burial in overseas Chinese burial grounds is decomposition, coffins would in fact impede hasty decay. However, drawing from ethnographic research, coffins in China at the time of the diaspora up to the present day were highly valued in most
areas studied, mainly to protect the deceased from ghosts (Crowder 2002; Habenstein 1994; Zhang 2001). In Chinese tradition, only children and social derelicts did not receive coffins. Zhang (2001:4) addressed the significance of Chinese coffins in nineteenth and twentieth century United States and remarked that wealthy overseas Chinese communities continued to bury their deceased in black lacquered coffins, laden with large coffin nails. I hypothesize that some type of coffin was utilized at Wild Horse Creek 1) because of the important role they played in traditional Chinese burials and 2) because of heightened belief systems of ghosts and evil spirits in their new home. Testing on empty plots at Wild Horse revealed the presence of nails in and surrounding the grave, confirming the potential for coffin burials at Wild Horse Creek. Every empty plot tested contained remains of nails, the majority of which were the preferred, multipurpose 3" machine cut nail.

Secondary Burial Practices

The presence of empty plots is a critical aspect of overseas Chinese death ritual practices and is indicative of not only how pervasive and influential Chinese death ritual was but also the origin of the Chinese individual. If no indication of disinterment is visible, it is likely they sojourned from northern provinces that did not practice secondary burial. More often than not, an intermixing of both empty plots and intact burials occurs, suggesting that some Chinese settlers were more permanent and had adapted to the culture they sojourned to or simply that they were forgotten or were women not customarily disinterred. Because secondary burial practices were dominant at Wild Horse Creek, clearly the Chinese buried there migrated from southern provinces in China and continued to practice traditional Chinese death rituals enforced at the time of the sojourn. The evidence for empty graves further signifies that the Chinese at Wild Horse Creek were involved in volunteer associations that organized the pick up and shipment of the deceased to China.

The discovery of two intact graves between Graves 25 and 26 indicates a possible shift in key components of traditional Chinese death ritual. If the deceased were deliberately left intact at the burial ground then at the time of the burial preconceptions of the power of unplacated spirits had subsided and the concept of 'returning home' to China had either diminished or had
been replaced by their new home at Wild Horse Creek. While the exact cause for the intact remains is speculative, their discovery remains a compelling motive for future research and preservation at this remote Chinese burial ground.

Cemetery Design

In traditional Chinese culture, communities were allowed a degree of variation in their burial practices, granted certain components of the burial process were followed. Variation arose in the form of secondary burial practices, burial paraphernalia and burial offerings. In overseas Chinese communities there is the continuity of secondary burial practices but a more pronounced variation was seen in the design of their cemeteries. At Wild Horse Creek the main question is if the Chinese were principally adhering to traditional Chinese design or if they incorporated elements of late nineteenth century pioneer cemetery styles.

The remote placement of cemeteries and simplistic unadorned style of grave markers and fencing are not necessarily preferences of the overseas Chinese but a fashionable and economic style of rural pioneer culture at the time. Many pioneer graves reflect the shift from the rural or garden cemetery, popular from the 1830s to 1855, to the Lawn or Park Cemetery style (1856 to 1920s) (Farrell 1980). The lawn arrangement clearly displayed the delineation between the living and dead while simultaneously providing a place to “control the chaos caused by death” (Farrell 1980:115). Both were poignant themes that dominated Victorian beliefs. Cemeteries were typically removed from the urban context and controlled privately or by local towns. Pioneer cemeteries were often less grandiose than urban cemeteries and were frequently aligned to a grid system. Many rural pioneer cemeteries contained simple wooden, metal, or stone tombstones and were surrounded by a picket fence (Philpot 1976). Oliver (1993:105) who recorded and excavated a pioneer cemetery in Golden, in southeastern British Columbia further states:

Criteria for establishing a [pioneer] cemetery site in the late 19th century include fertile land, easy access to the site by the established population, and relative cost of the land to the community. Hillsides or elevated locations beyond the town were preferred.
The Wild Horse Creek Chinese burial ground is located on the side of a hill and all empty plots are aligned in a grid like pattern. However, in this instance, it has been previously established that the burial ground was likely selected based on principles of fengshui as opposed to adherence to a Victorian cemetery design. Where western cemetery design is visible is in the use of a wooden cross as a grave marker and in the adoption of a Victorian style picket fence to demarcate the boundary of sacred space. A composite wooden grave marker that pattern itself after the Christian cross was recorded south of Grave 23. In other remote overseas Chinese sites in North America, grave markers were often unpainted and adorned with the name of the deceased in pencil (Magnaghi 2001:150). These grave markers expressed the impermanence of the Chinese in North America as well as the preferred cemetery style of pioneer communities. In Victorian times, it was fashionable to enclose both the cemetery and individual graves with milled picket fences (Farrell 1980). The fence pictured in archival photos of the altar and found in situ behind Graves 16 to 18 was of simplistic pioneer design with pales tapered at one end. The fence served as an upper boundary of the burial ground. A similar picket fence is also present at the Wild Horse Creek Cemetery for non-Chinese, approximately 500m west of the Chinese burial ground. Fences were not typically used in burial grounds in China and are a direct product of western influence (Teather 1998). The application of cemetery styles of the country they sojourned to has been observed at all of the Chinese burial grounds I surveyed during the course of my research.

Clearly Chinese residents of Wild Horse Creek adhered to traditional death ritual practices established in the late Qing Dynasty. Archival documents revealed that Chinese were carrying out funerals and feeding the dead. Archaeological evidence at Wild Horse Creek broadened the understanding of burial rites to beyond what was visible to non Chinese residents living alongside the Chinese. Through this research strong evidence for the use of fengshui emerged. Moreover, from the context of the artifacts, it is apparent that tsai-fan was offered to the deceased at two possibly three altar locations as well as at the grave. It is also evident that metal pails may have served as inscription stones to aid bone collectors in identifying the deceased seven years later. The presence of intact graves and a pioneer cemetery style suggests that Chinese had adopted western elements into their burial practices. In the next chapter the rituals
identified here are compared to other burial grounds in hopes to establish universal overseas Chinese burial practices.
Until early this century, there was a wish to be buried in one’s home village, and many a set of bones was repatriated in a suitcase from California, Hawaii and elsewhere (Teather 1998:25).

The Chinese burial ground at Wild Horse Creek bares the physical remnants of death ritual practices from China, translated into a new environment. However, the question remains if the results of the archaeological testings are a singular adaptation, or if the patterning of artifacts and landscape modifications are visible at other Chinese burial grounds. To test for analogous overseas Chinese death ritual practices, I surveyed burial grounds in mining and railroad communities contemporaneous to Wild Horse Creek in Barkerville, Victoria, and Kamloops in British Columbia. I also surveyed a series of Chinese burial grounds in the South Pacific: in transient gold mining communities in the South Island of New Zealand and more permanent burial grounds in Honolulu, Hawaii and Papeete, Tahiti. The research questions were not applied to the surveyed burial grounds. Instead, material culture and landscape features were recorded and compared to the three stages of overseas Chinese burial rituals detailed in Chapter 4. Specifically, I recorded features associated with the use of fengshui, artifacts affiliated with death rites, the presence of an altar or burner and the practice of disinterment. Through this survey I sought to place the Wild Horse Creek site in context and to establish universal principles of overseas Chinese burial practices.

Barkerville

The Richfield and Stanley Cemeteries at Barkerville were surveyed in October 2002. Both cemeteries were Chinese quarters within Euro-Canadian cemeteries and were similar to cemetery design and secondary burial practices observed at Wild Horse Creek. Barkerville was the site of
a thriving gold rush in the 1860s to 1880s and housed an extensive Chinese population. In 1863, there were over 4,000 Chinese living and working in the Cariboo (Chen 2001). The Chinese were buried in Euro-Canadian cemeteries at Richfield, Stanley, Quesnel Forks, and Quesnel Mouth. Chen (2001) recorded and mapped all but the Quesnel Mouth Chinese burial ground. The first Chinese quarter was established in 1866 in the Roman Catholic Richfield Cemetery and the first Chinese man was buried the same year. The cemetery is situated on Richfield Mountain overlooking the town of Barkerville and Williams Creek (Chen 2001) (Figure 37). The remains of 71 Chinese graves were recorded by Chen (2001). A wooden fence surrounds the site. After surveying the burial ground, I noted that at least 15 additional empty plots exist outside of the gated area for a total of 86 empty plots; making it the largest Chinese cemetery in Western Canada. The empty plots are similar in configuration to Wild Horse Creek depressions (Figure 38). A mint green celadon rice bowl and teacup were located to the east of one of the grave pits. Other artifacts recorded include various glass liquor bottle fragments, tin cans, and tin billies – one with holes punched in the base for use as a watering can. All artifacts found at the site suggest that the Chinese were venerating their deceased through offerings of ts'ai-fan. No altar or burner was present. The Richfield Cemetery appears to be oriented to proper fengshui as it is situated on rolling terrain, is surrounded by mountains and overlooks Williams Creek. Quackenbush (pers. comm. 2002) suggests that any possibility of fengshui in Barkerville is unclear as the Chinese burial ground at Richfield was selected and utilized by European settlers. Nonetheless, the site possesses the qualifications for good fengshui and may attest to why the burial ground was so popular with the Chinese.

Stanley Cemetery, located approximately 20km west of Barkerville has a Chinese quarter that contains 21 empty plots (Chen 2001). A wooden fence encloses the site and the majority of the Euro-Canadian plots are within its confines. The site is situated on relatively flat terrain, but is surrounded by mountains on three sides and is open to Lightening Creek below. Thus based on these traits, it adheres to most of the fengshui parameters outlined by Lai (1974). The burial ground contains both Chinese and non Chinese plots and the majority of the deceased Chinese were buried outside of the fence as evidenced by the depressions and lack of burial markings on plots outside of the fence. No altar or burner was located and grave related artifacts were not visible on the surface. The empty plots indicate that the deceased were disinterred at the Stanley Cemetery.
Figure 37: Map of Richfield Cemetery (Courtesy of Chen 2001).
Bone collectors identified deceased Chinese as the right hand of Chinese buried in the Stanley Cemetery was bound in an oil skin cloth bag. This cloth bag served as the inscription tablet and contained pertinent information including the name, age, date of death and home village back in China of the deceased (Chow 1996). In 1959, remaining burials were disinterred by the Chinese Benevolent Association and returned to China (Peters 1997).

Victoria

The Victoria Chinatown once rivalled San Francisco in size and affluence and has a rich cemetery history. The first Chinese cemetery in Victoria, utilized between 1858 and 1873, was on Quadra Street nestled in the northeast quarter of the resident cemetery (Hawker 1987; Lai 1987). In 1872, this cemetery was replaced by the Ross Bay Cemetery. The Chinese were allotted Block L of the Ross Bay Cemetery, which was located in a low, stagnant area, plagued by floods. Grave markers were labelled simply as “Chinaman #1, Chinaman #2...” (Lai 1991:169). Between 1873 and 1909, 1,178 Chinese were buried at the cemetery. In 1903, after years of flooding and overcrowded conditions, the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association bought a plot of land on Foul Point, later renamed Harling Point. The site was favoured because it adhered to fengshui and also “that souls of the deceased hovering over tombs would enjoy viewing passing vessels bound for China” (Lai 1987:30). A stone altar and two burners were erected in the early 1900s and were used regularly by the Chinese community for funerals and post burial rituals (Figure 39). In 1909, Victoria City Council waived the $6 exhumation fee that was placed on the Chinese to move their deceased to Harling Point. The cemetery was used for over 40 years before it was closed in 1950.

In Victoria, funerals of wealthy Chinese (usually from Chinatowns) were often ostentatious displays of wealth and power that drew crowds of spectators. Macintyre (1895:5) argues that Chinese funerals were: “... simply the climax of vanity, which is looked forward to by the deceased individual as the greatest object to be attained through the efforts spent in a career of usefulness and in the accumulation of wealth”. In 1870s Victoria, the exorbitant funeral of a wealthy merchant named Yip Jack took place on Cormorant Street in downtown Victoria. Over one thousand Chinese attended the funeral. The deceased was paraded in a hearse down the
Figure 39: Post burial ceremony at altar in Harling Point Cemetery – early 1900s (Photo courtesy of BC Archives C-04513).
main street by men wearing white and yellow robes and carrying flags, which bare similarity to the soul banners utilized in funerals in China. Yip Jack was then honoured with a feast of roast pork, sheep, and chicken and buried in the Harling Point Chinese burial ground (Morton 1974:66). The funeral of Kong Pay King also conformed to traditional funerals in China. The May 2, 1871 report in The Colonist cites the use of a brass band, drums and cymbals and wailing mourners. The chief mourner, who was the son of the deceased, donned a "...coat and cap of sackcloth..." (ibid).

Today the Harling Point Cemetery houses the interred remains of numerous Chinese. I surveyed the cemetery in March 2003. The site is situated on a gently sloped hill overlooking a commanding view of McNeil Bay, Juan de Fuca Strait and Gonzales Bay. It is surrounded by the proper orientation of mountains to the sides and behind the site. In this respect, *fengshui* was undeniably a critical factor in selecting this landscape. The main distinction from Wild Horse Creek is that Harling Point is in an urban setting. The gravesite is representative of a Victorian cemetery as opposed to the simplistic pioneer style found at Wild Horse Creek. Permanent granite, marble and cement tombstones dominate the site. The majority are simple rounded top or squared off tombstones set on a cement rectangular base (Figure 40). One of the tombstones is a particular style of omega shape I call the flat backed omega grave, which is smaller than the typical omega style graves found in China and is rectangular as opposed to rounded (Figure 41). The grave has a composite engraved marble grave marker within the cement omega. The tombstones are typically inscribed with either Chinese or Chinese and English. No remnants of empty plots exist at the site and no offerings were found in or around the burial sites. At the base of the cemetery, a large stone altar flanked by two cement burner towers is situated on a cement platform (Figure 42). At the time of the survey, the burners had been recently used and offerings of oranges, joss sticks, incense, and flowers were present on the altar. The altar was built in the early 1900s and has been utilized consistently up to the present time.

**Kamloops**

The gold rush to the Kamloops area in central British Columbia was initiated in 1858 with the discovery of gold in Tranquille Creek and later Scotch Creek. The Chinese flowed into
Figure 40: Typical tombstones at Harling Point (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2003).

Figure 41: Flat backed omega grave marker at Harling Point (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2003).
the area soon after. However, the primary infiltration of Chinese occurred in the 1880s with the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway through Kamloops. The Chinese population reached its height of 400 (1/3 of the Kamloops population) in 1890 (Weaver 1985) and they built a small Chinese section on the west end of town. The Chinese burial ground was set up in the mid 1880s, with the first report of the burial ground in the Inland Sentinel in 1887. Hudson Bay owned the majority of the land where their town was situated but they allowed the Chinese to select a plot for their cemetery south of the town site (Weaver 1985). The site was supposed to be a temporary location but remained permanent as Chinese were banned from the Euro-Canadian Pioneer Cemetery (Olsen, pers. comm. 2003).

The Kamloops cemetery offers a rare glimpse into the ingrained nature of Chinese death ritual practices. If given the choice, did they select an area that conforms to principles of fengshui? Like Wild Horse Creek and Harling Point, the site is situated on a slope and is surrounded by a hill to the south (black turtle), and steeper cliffs to the east (white tiger), lower mountains to the west (azure dragon) and open to the Thompson River below (red phoenix). While the site does not conform precisely to fengshui, (the heights of the two east-west mountains are reversed), it does adhere to the basic omega shape and can thus be assumed that the Chinese did in fact select the locale based on this practice.

Chinese graves remained unmarked until the 1920s. With the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1923, Chinese residents decided to settle permanently in Kamloops (Weaver 1985). They enclosed the cemetery with a fence, and placed a stone altar and burner at the base of the slope (Figure 44). The first marked grave was placed in 1927. Most of the markers date between the 1930s and 1960s and the remains associated with them have not been disinterred. The last individual buried was Mau Hei Li in 1976 (Olsen, pers. comm. 2003). The Kamloops Chinese Cemetery Heritage Society has been active in promoting and restoring the heritage site. In 1998, they erected grave markers to acknowledge those Chinese who did not receive them 100 years prior. They also installed a new stone altar and two burners at the base of the burial ground. I surveyed the burial ground in May 2003. Overall, there are approximately 125 burial plots in at the site, over 50 of which have been disinterred. The empty plots have been marked with reconstructed metal grave markers, inscribed with the names of Chinese who were buried there (Figure 43). Although the Chinese did not erect permanent tombstones before the 1920s, they did inter the deceased with a bottle containing a piece of cloth inscribed with the name,
Figure 43: Kamloops Chinese Cemetery (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2003).

Figure 44: Altar at Kamloops Chinese Cemetery (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2003).
place of birth and death, and a gold coin (copper), representative of an inscription stone (Weaver 1985). Two of the more elaborate gravestones are marked with pictures of the deceased. According to Jones (2000) who has extensively studied the Chinese section of the Rookwood Cemetery in Sydney Australia, this custom was borrowed from Italian graves in Australia. Photos on tombstones are also frequently observed on more modern graves (post 1940s) in the South Pacific.

**Tahiti**

Research in Tahiti was centered on one Chinese cemetery known as the Arue Cimitere Chinois in Papeete, Tahiti in June 2003. The Chinese first arrived in Tahiti in 1851. During this decade, immigrants from South China did not arrive in large numbers. The few Chinese who settled in Tahiti in the 1850s spread out to work in trading stations throughout French Polynesia. The majority of Chinese immigrated as contract labourers in the 1860s to work the cotton and coconut plantations (Pan 1999). In 1865, 1,000 indentured servants from Hong Kong arrived to work the Atimaeno cotton plantation, almost all of them Hakka (ibid). When the cotton company went bankrupt in 1873, some of these men chose to stay in Tahiti. They opened small businesses and developed market gardens. Many intermarried with Polynesians. It is clear, however, that a number of the Hakka chose to leave Tahiti. The Chinese population declined for a variety of reasons and by 1881 only 447 Chinese immigrants lived on the island. Not until 1911 would the number of Chinese born residents living in Tahiti again approach 1,000. By 1926 Chinese residents represented 11% of the Society Island population (Saura 2003). Labouring on plantations and opening a variety of enterprises, Chinese Tahitians became a fixture on the Society Islands. Pan (1999:300) states: “altogether, between 1865 and 1941, some 20,000 Chinese went to the South Pacific as indentured laborers.” Today the largest numbers of Chinese reside in Tahiti, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea. In 1996 French Polynesia had 8,800 Chinese residents, Fiji 5,000, and Papua New Guinea 1,500 (Pan 1999).

The Arue Cimitere Chinois was built in the late 1800s and like Wild Horse Creek, Harling Pont and Kamloops was selected with consideration of the landscape and *fengshui* in mind. The site, spanning 1km in length, is surrounded by inland mountains on all sides and opens to
Matavai Bay to the north (Figure 45). The cemetery was principally organized by the Si-Ni-Tong (Xingi Tong), a volunteer association involved in funeral arrangements and the disinterment of the deceased. The Si-Ni-Tong, which was established in Tahiti in 1872, administered the Arue Cimitere Chinois and managed a small temple established in 1866 (Pan 1999). Not surprisingly, empty plots were visible in graves predating 1900. Gravestones that designate empty plots are usually simple rounded cement markers engraved with Chinese symbols like those observed at Harling Point. The presence of both permanent and impermanent gravestones suggests that early migrations to Tahiti were shared by northern and southern Chinese. The cemetery is generally arranged with the older burials at the base of the cemetery and becoming increasingly younger, moving up the hill. The oldest graves (pre 1900s) tend to be simple and exposed to the elements. These gravestones are typically composed of cement, marble, or a composite of both and generally have exclusively Chinese markings. The majority of the gravestones are shaped in a flat backed omega style also visible at Harling Point (Figure 46). During this phase we also see the introduction of the classic omega shaped tomb (Figure 47). These tombs emulate the omega shape, protecting the deceased from the sides and behind. Most of these tombs are painted white, which is the colour representative of death in Chinese folklore (Bruun 2003). This omega grave type also frequently displays personal burners and altars (Figure 47). The use of fengshui at a personal level was visible in many of the flat backed omega shaped graves. These graves had been oriented in opposing directions to the slope of the landscape, indicative of the use of a geomancer to determine the deceased’s most propitious direction.

Beginning around the 1920s, there is a significant shift in grave styles. Graves were noted to be covered with flat rectangular slab roofs, supported by four to six posts (Figure 48). The graves are delineated from older, uncovered graves by a stone cobble retaining wall (Figure 46). This style of grave maintains the omega style gravestone used in earlier graves but incorporates a stone or cement roof covering. This shift in grave styles also marks the beginning of the second migration of Chinese into Tahiti in the 1910s. Subsequent surveys of non-Chinese cemeteries in Tahiti revealed a similar style. Graves located in a family’s plot of land or in a cemetery were noted to be covered with similar roofs. The history of this roof style is rooted in prehistoric Tahitian burial practices. Prehistorically, Tahitians buried their deceased elite on a Fare tupapa’u, which is a wooden platform, covered with a thatched roof (Cook in Edwards 1999).
Figure 45: Cimetiere Chinois and view of Matavai Bay (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2003).

Figure 46: Flat backed omega style at Cimetiere Chinois. Note stone wall separating older graves from newer covered graves (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2003).
Figure 47: Classic omega style grave at Cimetere Chinois. (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2003).

Figure 48: Typical covered grave at Cimetere Chinois (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2003).
Deceased were placed on these platforms outside of the sacred marae, the ceremonial centre in Tahitian culture. The Chinese adopted this style out of necessity as protection from the elements but also to incorporate a symbol of power and respect into the grave, thus aiding in proper veneration of the deceased.

The newer graves (1940s to present), still maintain the roof but are typically more elaborate, ostentatious and diverse – incorporating a wide variety of building materials such as ceramic tile, marble, polished granite, gold leaf and cement. We also begin to see the emergence of more stylized roof coverings, which amalgamate traditional Chinese motifs with Polynesian styles such as that featured in Figure 49. Beginning about this time, there is a shift from omega shaped graves to more western style rounded or rectangular tombstones, usually set into a platform of variable material (Figure 48). The graves tend to maintain the elemental omega shape, offering protection above and on the sides of the grave. Most tombstones are engraved with both Chinese and French and frequently display photos of the deceased; a practice also recorded in Kamloops, Hawaii and New Zealand.

Recorded grave goods in the cemetery included Ng Ka Py Liquor bottles, incense, shell bead and flower leis, sand, artificial flowers and celadon bowls. Shell and flower leis were usually draped over the tombstone (Figure 48). Shell and flower leis and sand are common offerings found in traditional Tahitian graves, although the origin of these offerings is not known. We recorded these items in both Chinese and non Chinese cemeteries throughout the South Pacific. A stone pagoda exists at the base of the cemetery, possibly for use as an ancestor worshipping locale in lieu of an altar or burner.

Honolulu

Two Chinese cemeteries were surveyed in Honolulu in 2003: the Yee King Tong and the Hook Chu. Both sites were selected by the Chinese; however, the Hook Chu Cemetery shares its grounds with native Hawaiians. The Chinese make up a substantial portion of the overall population in Hawaii and many have intermarried with native Hawaiians. They first came to Hawaii through explorations in 1788 but arrived in mass numbers in 1852 to work in the sugar plantations. Under Captain John Cass, 293 indentured Chinese workers were brought to Hawaii
Figure 49: Modern pagoda style roof at Cimetière Chinois (Photo by L. Pascreta 2003).
where they were paid $3.00 per month and were required to work for five years in the sugar plantations to pay off their shipping debts (McKeown 2001). In 1882, the Chinese made up 49% of the total sugar industry working population (ibid). The Chinese established a thriving Chinatown in Honolulu and opened businesses catering to both the Chinese and non-Chinese populations.

The two cemeteries surveyed were similar to the Cimitere Chinois in Papeete, except that in Hawaii graves were not covered with stone roofs. The Yee King Tong Cemetery is the largest exclusively Chinese burial ground in Hawaii. The cemetery is situated on the side of a hill and a road separates the two halves of the cemetery. No source of water is located below the burial ground; however, the cemetery is surrounded by hills on each side. A stone wall surrounds the entire site, serving as additional protection from negative energies. Older graves are located at the top of the cemetery becoming progressively younger near the bottom. The older graves (1860s to 1950s) are similar to those found in Tahiti and are of three types: 1) classic omega graves; 2) flat backed omega graves; 3) and simple rectangular or rounded top tombstones. The former two styles of tombstones are typically composites of cement and marble or granite. Many of the graves have both Chinese and English writing. The omega shaped graves are located at the upper portion of the cemetery and are the dominant style found within the older graves at the cemetery (Figure 50). Evidence for white paint chips on the tombstones indicates these tombstones were formerly painted white.

Surface evidence for disinterred plots was apparent in the early 1900s graves in the upper portion of the cemetery at Yee King Tong. These plots were intermixed with permanent graves and marked with simple rectangular cement tombstones. Many of the older omega shaped graves were oriented in different cardinal directions perhaps suggesting that geomancers were consulted to select burial plots and propitious directions of the deceased. These omega graves are particularly intriguing as many mark areas where bones were reinterred – presumably family or lineages members (Figure 51). The presence of reinterred individuals suggests that the Chinese in Hawaii were continuing to practice a modified version of traditional secondary burial practices but selected Honolulu as their final ancestral tomb. The presence of multiple reinterred individuals in ancestral tombs is the first recorded throughout my research and reflects the traditional practice of final burials in China whereby burials were transferred from kam laap jars and interred for a third time in a communal ancestral tomb. In the overseas Chinese context,
Figure 51: Grave with reinterred remains at Yee King Tong (Photo by L. Pascreta 2003).
bone houses served as the second burial location akin to the kam taap jar in China. Chinese bones were picked up by volunteer associations and stored in a bone house at the Manoa Chinese Cemetery in Honolulu, which remains intact today (See Figure 10) (Abraham et al. 2003). The first volunteer association in Hawaii was established as early as 1856 to return bones to China (McKeown 2001). The association, known as the Manoa Lianyihui (McKeown 2001) was succeeded by numerous other burial volunteer associations.

Below the omega shaped tombs, tombstone style is dominated by more simplistic rectangular tombstones engraved in Chinese with little to no embellishments. Empty plots were associated with many of these graves and possibly served as primary burials for the Chinese. Newer graves (1950s to present) are delineated from the older graves by a road that bisects the cemetery. The more recent tombstones were generally rectangular or rounded and composed of granite, marble, or cast cement. Modern graves usually displayed both English and Chinese symbols. Offerings of flowers, plants, American flags, and incense often accompanied the graves.

In general, a plethora of offerings were recorded at the cemetery including Chinese stoneware vessels, incense, flowers, and boiled eggs. The remains of firecrackers and fireworks were found throughout the burial site and were used to scare off evil spirits. More traditional Polynesian grave offerings such as shell necklaces, flower leis, and sand were found in association with traditional Chinese offerings at many of the graves recorded at the site. The only altar recorded in the South Pacific was located at the base of the Yee King Tong cemetery (Figure 52). The altar is composed of cement and is marked with the name of the cemetery in English. No offerings were located near or on the altar.

The Hook Chu cemetery is located on relatively flat ground and is not situated near water or mountains. In lieu of natural protection the Chinese made use of a low (approximately 60cm) stone cobble wall that both surrounds and intersects the site (Figure 53). The rock wall is intriguing as it appears to have preceded the cemetery as it extends beyond the boundary of the cemetery and is buried below the cemetery in some areas. The site may have served as an older occupation or ceremonial site for native Hawaiians. The selection of this ‘sacred landscape’ by the Chinese as the location of their cemetery may have been intentional to increase the auspiciousness of the site.

Tombstones in the cemetery are generally simple rounded or rectangular permanent tombstones marked with Christian symbols. The tombstones date from as early as 1879 to the
Figure 52: Altar at Yee King Tong (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2003).

Figure 53: Stone wall at Hook Cnr. (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2003).
present. Grave offerings include typical Polynesian shell necklaces, flowers, incense, and bottles of beer. Like Kamloops, Tahiti, and Yee King Tong, many of the more modern tombstones displayed photos of the deceased. There is no evidence for empty plots or an altar in this burial ground.

New Zealand

In the final survey, I analyzed overseas Chinese cemeteries in the South Island of New Zealand. These surveys offered a unique contrast to those in Tahiti and Hawaii as in all of the cemeteries surveyed, none of the sites were selected by the Chinese. In total four Chinese Quarters were surveyed: Cromwell Cemetery, Anderson Bay Cemetery, Lawrence Cemetery, and the Queenstown Cemetery.

In New Zealand, Chinese sojourners arrived from Guangdong to pan for gold in the mid 1860s. In the nineteenth century, 70% of the New Zealand Chinese came from the northern part of Panyu County in the province of Guangdong (Ritchie 1986). They traveled to the South Island where they worked in the Central Otago goldfields. At their peak between 1878 and 1881 there were 5000 Chinese in New Zealand (Ritchie 1986). Chinese settlements clustered around the gold mines in the Otago Goldfields. Like elsewhere around the Pacific Rim, Chinese immigrants would open laundries, restaurants, and a variety of shops. These Chinese entrepreneurs in New Zealand formed the backbone of Chinese settlements throughout the goldfields.

As a whole, the Chinese quarters in the South Island varied little between the cemeteries. All quarters except Lawrence were located on flat ground and fengshui was not evident as quarters were assigned by the non Chinese. Typically, grave markers were simplistic stone slabs with Victorian style elements. Chinese symbols were muted in all the quarters, limited to Chinese characters on the tombstones. Many Chinese tombstones displayed Christian elements as well. No offerings were recorded at any of the early graves.

At the Cromwell Cemetery in the north central extension of the Otago Goldfields, the Chinese were grouped in the southwest corner of the European cemetery. Fengshui at the site is not evident as the cemetery is located on flat ground and is far from an immediate water source. All grave plots open to the east in line with the European plots except for one grave, which is
facing west. Geomantic orientation was likely applied to this particular grave. The landscape
does not appear to have been modified by the Chinese. There are 16 stone grave markers at the
site and all mimic the grave marker style found in the rest of the burial ground (Figure 54). All
are simple rounded headstones labelled with Chinese characters. Four of the gravestones are
larger and are composed of white marble – both English and Chinese writing were evident on
these grave markers. An ornate metal fence surrounds these graves. One of the more elaborate
Chinese graves is that of Wong Kew. Wong died in 1904 and was a store owner in the town of
Cromwell in the late 1800s.

Depressed areas, both in the vicinity of grave markers and on their own were evident at
the cemetery. Like the American and Canadian west, the practice of disinterment was common
in New Zealand (Ritchie 1986). Disinterments were organized through volunteer associations as
early as the 1860s (ibid). In 1882 the Ch’eung Shin Tong was established to exclusively organize
and implement the exhumation and shipment of the deceased back to China (Ng 1993). Sin yan
(former men) were generally returned to China in coffins accompanied by elders who were
returned to their families before they died. In the nineteenth century one source estimates 1,000
Chinese deaths in New Zealand prior to 1900, but only 150 known graves (Ng 1993). On October
28, 1902, a shipment of deceased on route from Wellington to China sank. Don (1906:8) (in
Ritchie 1986:81) stated, “many considered the ‘sin yan’ on the ship had died twice”. To appease
the lost spirits, an ancestral hall and cemetery was built in China for the “friendless men who
died abroad” (Don in Ritchie 1986:81). No grave goods were evident at the site.

Another Chinese cemetery surveyed was the European Queenstown Cemetery in
Queenstown. Chinese were relegated to the northwest corner of the cemetery and graves were
oriented to the east. All grave markers adhered to the typical styles of the rest of the cemeteries
(either stone or marble plaques set into the ground). Two stone grave markers labelled Ng Gong
and Wong Kong (a Chinese storekeeper) with Chinese characters open to the south, which is the
most desirable direction to be buried. Because the cemetery was established by Europeans,
fengshui was not a consideration in selecting the site. The cemetery is located on flat ground with
no close water source. The area however, is surrounded by The Remarkables mountain range on
all sides, providing some protection to those who are buried there. All graves postdate the 1930s
and many modern Chinese burials (post 1990s) have been interspersed throughout the cemetery.
Despite the absence of Chinese symbols in early graves in New Zealand, there appears to be a re-
Figure 54: Typical Chinese tombstone at Cromwell Cemetery (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2004).

Figure 55: Modern tombstone at Queenstown Cemetery (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2004).
emergence of traditional Chinese burial practices and expression in modern Chinese graves.

Offerings of incense, candles, and joss sticks were recorded and many of the modern gravestones displayed pictures of the deceased and Chinese symbols (Figure 55). At the time of the survey, there were seven Chinese buried in the cemetery. The cemetery also features a memorial to the Chinese gold miners during the rush. It states:

In memory of the Chinese commoners who worked in these parts from 1866 and earned an honourable place in Otago History (Queenstown Cemetery Chinese Memorial).

No historic grave goods were evident at the site.

In the late 19th century, volunteer associations established to exhume Chinese burials in New Zealand were headquartered in Dunedin (Ng 1993). Thus at the Anderson Bay Cemetery in Dunedin, I expected to find empty plots in burial grounds in the cemetery. Anderson Bay is the central cemetery for Dunedin and is located on the side of a hill facing the South Pacific Ocean on the Otago Peninsula. The quarter was utilized from the 1920s to the 1950s. While the site was selected by Europeans, the cemetery possesses excellent fengshui and may have been a popular place to bury Chinese deceased. The Chinese were delegated to a recessed area of the cemetery, surrounded by a hill behind and to the sides of the quarter. All graves except for one opened to the south. This single grave opened to the north on the western periphery of the quarter and was likely oriented by a fengshui expert. In total, 53 Chinese grave markers were recorded. Seventy percent (36) of the graves were simple, small white marble grave markers carved with Chinese characters. The more elaborate graves were composed of a variety of stone and were surrounded by a rectangular cement boundary (Figure 56). These graves typically stated the name of the deceased in both Chinese and English. The earliest grave recorded was that of Choie Gee Chung, who died on February 13, 1928. Five of the burials recorded were women. No burial paraphernalia was observed in the quarter and no empty plots were found.

The final Chinese burial ground surveyed was in Lawrence. Lawrence was the largest Chinese camp during the gold rush in New Zealand. This cemetery was utilized during the gold rush of the 1860s thus the graves were much older than those recorded in the other cemeteries. The Chinese were buried in the northwest corner of the European cemetery. All grave markers are simple cement slabs either standing on their own or set on rectangular blocks. All have rounded tops and are engraved with almost exclusively Chinese characters. Only three of the 31...
Chinese graves located in Lawrence had both Chinese and English writing. In total 31 graves were located in the quarter. All graves opened to the north except for two, which faced uphill (south). Again, *fengshui* is likely the reason for their orientation. Despite that the site was being selected by European settlers, the Chinese quarter has good *fengshui*. The graves are situated on a gently sloped hill overlooking a creek below and the area is surrounded by mountains. No grave goods were found in association with the graves and as a result of recent problems with erosion and slumpage at the site, empty plots were not visible. The oldest grave is that of Ah Sue, who died November 15, 1889 at age 52. Of interest, legendary merchant Sam Chiew Lain who made his home in Lawrence is buried at the Lawrence Cemetery. He was buried in a mausoleum (the first recorded in New Zealand) and integrated into the Presbyterian portion of the cemetery (Figure 57). Lain’s tomb is made from limestone blocks and has a slate roof. According to one account:

> It is one of the most imposing structures in the Lawrence Cemetery. His Masonic brotherhood also erected a brass plaque to him in their headquarters. His deceased wife was buried with him in the tomb (Ng 1993:66).

Prior to his death, Sam Chiew Lain specified in his will that the tomb be constructed (ibid). Mausoleum’s have been recorded in Manila, Philippines (Abraham et al. 2003); New Orleans; Lima, Peru (McKeown 2001); and Santiago, Chile (Gardner, pers. comm. 2003) and reflect the acculturation of Chinese to a particular area. What is particularly intriguing is that mausoleums are not a typical burial style in New Zealand, suggesting that this style was borrowed from another culture.

**Main Trends Observed**

A broad spectrum of Chinese graves is represented in these surveys. The surveys ranged with site location (urban to rural), permanence (transient to permanent), region (North American to South Pacific) and origin of sojourner (northern China to southern China). Yet despite the polarity of burial grounds represented, uniformities have emerged that attest to the potency of death ritual in Chinese society. As a whole, rites associated with the placation of ancestors
dominate most sites surveyed. Foremost there is strong evidence for *fengshui* at both the site and personal level. Of the 11 sites surveyed five or 55% displayed elements of positive *fengshui*. If we take into account those gravesites that were selected by the Chinese that figure surges to 80%. *Fengshui* was applied to many individual graves surveyed as well. This condition typically accompanied permanent and more urban cemeteries such as the Cimitere Chinois and the Yee King Tong which had access to geomancers to conduct the procedure. Moreover, more affluent Chinese individuals like merchants who could afford a geomancer usually lived in the urban context. Another universal trend observed in the burial grounds surveyed was the feeding of the dead. In older cemeteries surveyed (Barkerville, Yee King Tong, Cimitere Chinois) there is ample material culture associated with serving meals or liquor/tea to the deceased. The majority of the serving dishes recorded was Chinese utilitarian ware vessels and Celadon ware. Presumably, these held traditional *ts’ai-fan* dishes. Liquor bottle fragments, *Ng Ka Py* bottles and celadon teacups were prevalent as well. Artifacts were typically concentrated around graves suggestive that post burial rituals continued to be practiced. For those burial grounds with extant altars (Harling Point, Kamloops, Yee King Tong and the pagoda structure at Cimitere Chinois) all were located below the graves. Their location strengthens my proposal that altars were deliberately placed below the graves to enhance positive *qi* to the deceased. Offerings of food, drink, and joss sticks were observed on two of the four altars recorded. In many of the burial grounds surveyed empty pits were observed. Their presence signifies the Chinese were practicing secondary burial, and more importantly that they had immigrated from southern provinces in China. Grave markers associated with empty graves were dependant on the location of the cemetery in either a rural or urban context. In rural cemeteries such as those recorded in Barkerville, markers were composed of simple wooden stakes or metal markers. In urban sites, these markings remained simplistic but were typically embellished more than rural grave markers. Urban impermanent tombstones were usually squat cement markers engraved with Chinese symbols. In permanent graves, disinterring tends to dissipate by the turn of the century, which coincides with the abandonment of many of the transient graves at approximately the same time. Around this time, there is a marked and progressive decline in the natural resource boom of the mid to late nineteenth century throughout the world and many Chinese returned home to their families. At the Yee King Tong Cemetery, a number of reinterred graves were recorded. The tombstones indicated that the burials were reinterred from primary burials in Hawaii. They mark an
intriguing development in overseas Chinese burial practices as questions arise to why they were not initially buried in an ancestral tomb. Essentially it substantiates that burial rites were practiced not only for ancestral reverence and appeasement of malevolent spirits but for the proper performance of a sequence of rights. Their presence stresses the continued importance of orthopraxy over orthodoxy (Watson 1988a) in the overseas Chinese context.

Variability between sites is confined primarily to cemetery styles. There is an apparent trend to adopt cemetery styles of the native communities and while the cemeteries surveyed seem to differ between regions, there are subtle cross-cultural interconnections between transient and permanent cemeteries. In most of the transient cemeteries surveyed, non Chinese styles were amplified, whilst Chinese symbols were subdued. The Chinese in New Zealand for example adopted western styled tombstones and a western styled picket fence surrounded the Chinese Cemetery in Kamloops. The opposite is occurring in permanent graves. Early tombstones in permanent graves are dominated by omega shaped tombs and permanent altars and burners. In modern permanent graves non Chinese elements dominate. Chinese expression, while still readily apparent, is subdued in comparison to earlier graves. In most modern cemeteries, rounded or rectangular slab tombstones are favoured over traditional omega shaped graves. What is also becoming apparent is that Chinese seemed to select non Chinese symbols or landscapes that were deemed sacred or powerful to the native culture. The Chinese at Cimetere Chinois, for example, began to erect cement roofs over their deceased. The design of this grave structure emulates traditional burial practices of elite Tahitian chiefs. Likewise, the Hook Chu Cemetery is built on top of a stone wall and platform that may have been a former Hawaiian habitation or ceremonial site. Grave goods such as shell and flower leis, bottles of beer and white sand are other artifacts recorded that may have been appropriated to increase the auspiciousness to a grave. In the final chapter, I discuss how the patterns of burial rituals observed in these surveys fit in with the development of overseas Chinese burial practices up to the present and if they serve to strengthen those ritual patterns observed at Wild Horse Creek.
Figure 56: Typical Chinese graves at Anderson Bay Cemetery (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2004).

Figure 57: Sam Chiew Lain's mausoleum at Lawrence Cemetery (Photo by L. Pasacreta 2004).
If one who attains honor and wealth never returns to his original place, he is like a finely dressed person walking in the dark (Chinese Proverb) (Spokesman Review, September 24, 1905).

The governing theme in overseas Chinese death ritual honed from archival records and ubiquitous archaeological signatures at Chinese cemeteries is fundamentally based on the concept of filial piety and how it was manipulated through time. Teather (1998:34) states that "The well-tended grave, visited each year in order to propitiate the spirit of the deceased with the necessary rites, signifies a world of contented and benevolent spirits". Filial piety is the main conviction in Confucianism, a belief system manifested by Master Kong in the Zhou Dynasty and later reinterpreted to meet the political agendas of Imperials in the Han Dynasty. The Han Dynasty brought about a profound paradigm shift in Chinese culture that allowed for the later unification of death ritual in the late Qing Dynasty. Filial piety involves the veneration of deceased based on patrilineal descent. Those who properly placated their higher ranked ancestors received good fortune. The Han state, recognizing the power of filial piety adopted the model of patrilineal ranked worshipping as analogous to members of the state. Thus the Emperor was equivalent to a male ancestor. The idea of controlling chaos to bring about good fortune in the home and in the state through veneration of a higher ranked individual became indistinguishable during this period.

These concepts became more deeply ingrained in the following Wei and Jin Dynasties, particularly with the elite, as death ritual manuals were widely circulated and funerals exorbitant and ostentatious. At the same time, commoners were prohibited from accessing these manuals and as a result, adopted heterodox religions into their burial practices such as Buddhism and Taoism. This occurrence stimulated another major development that continues to influence Chinese death ritual up to the present day. With the introduction of Buddhism and Taoism, a major rift in burial practices developed between north and south China: those who cremated the deceased and those who practiced secondary burial, respectively. Taoist beliefs have become a dominant feature of modern Chinese rituals as they include the practice of fengshui and its
relation to the contentment of ancestors. Beginning in the Song Dynasty there was a resurrection of traditional Confucian ideals. Elaborate burials by the elite were shunned and a number of simple Confucian ritual texts, such as Chu Hsi's *Family Rituals* were published. Chu's and other similar texts were extremely influential in Chinese society and were utilized through the Ming-Qing Dynasty transition and up to the time of the diaspora.

With the idea of the parallel concept of society still intact in the Qing Dynasty, the Qing state embarked on a total unification of death ritual practices in China. They undertook this task through controlling the publication of ritual texts and hiring county officials to propagate the proper practice of rituals through public lectures. The state enforced through the aid of county officials that a Chinese woman or man was not Chinese unless they practiced rituals ordained by state.

Although immensely simplified from the Song Dynasty ritual manuals, Late Imperial Dynasty death rituals were for most Chinese individuals impossible to undertake to their full extent. Ideally, rituals associated with the burial and post burial rites of an individual were complex and involved the entire community. Higher ranked members of the community were expected to abstain from certain types of food, liquor, and sexual relations until the deceased was buried. During this three month period, the mourners were required to routinely placate the deceased through offerings of *ts'ai-fan* and wine. Death specialists (Priests, professional mourners, and geomancers) were hired to oversee the funeral and elaborate grave goods were purchased or made as offerings to the deceased. After the funeral was complete and the deceased had been buried, the mourners were expected to perform a set of three rituals over two years and two months to dispel the deceased's spirit from the community. Once the spirit had been purged, a series of four annual post burial rituals at the gravesite were required to be completed by the mourner for an indefinite period.

What transcends in Chinese communities at the time of the diaspora is a reinterpretation of these idealized death ritual texts. Assisted by county officials, Chinese communities were encouraged to practice set criteria of death rituals that involved soothing and appeasing the confused soul of the deceased until it was ritually purged from the community. There are three ranks of intimately interconnected spirits, which include (in descending order): gods, ancestors, and ghosts. Their rank is dependant on the caliber of veneration provided by the living ancestors. Consequentially, an ancestor who is not properly revered will become a ghost. It is
the role of the family that plays a critical role in how well an ancestor will fare in the afterworld, which is why the proper care of a deceased lineage member is a critical undertaking. These rituals were what the state and Confucianism defined as definitive acts of being Chinese and at the same time, brought about the complete unification of death ritual in China in the late Qing Dynasty.

The main rites propagated by county officials during this time include the announcement of death to the community and the donning of approved mourning clothing. It was also imperative to purify the deceased through ritual bathing. The Chinese believed that death emitted inauspicious airs that brought sickness to a community and as a result, specialists were hired to ritually bathe the deceased. These specialists dominated death rituals since as early as the Song Dynasty and became increasingly influential during the Qing Dynasty due to the elaboration of death pollution. Women, who carry yin characteristics associated with death, may also handle the deceased with no dire consequences. Another ubiquitous feature of Chinese death ritual at the time of the diaspora was the use of food and goods as a means of exchange between the living and the deceased. Food in the form of offerings is coded and has meaning to spirits in the afterworld while burial paraphernalia was usually burned and the essences received by the deceased. Funerals were important components of the unified death rituals as well. Before the funeral, the coffin was tightly sealed to protect the deceased from inauspicious spirits and to prevent the deceased from escaping from the coffin before ritually purged. Typically, the coffins were lined with funeral paper, and then nailed shut and sealed with caulking (Watson 1988b). Rites imperative to the funeral included those involved with the calming of the spirit during the funeral procession. This was achieved by hiring specialists such as pipers or acrobats to distract or calm the spirit on their way to the gravesite. The final rite associated with the funeral was the removal of the deceased from the community. Gravesites were usually set up outside of the village and once buried, a set of rites was performed to expel the spirit. With these rites, the deceased ghost could become an ancestor. By meeting these set criteria, the Chinese were free to incorporate personal or community based variation into their ceremonies. At the time of the diaspora, Chinese from southeastern China predominantly practiced secondary burial rites – a trend that continues in the overseas Chinese context.
Overseas Chinese Death Ritual

Main Influences

A number of conditions affected unified Chinese death ritual when Chinese settled in their new homes. The first of these circumstances concerned the general lack of women in overseas Chinese communities. Exclusionary laws against the immigration of Chinese into both Canada and the United States in the late 1800s directly affected the dynamics of death ritual practices. In China, women held rights to burial rituals and texts because of their yin characteristics (Potter 1974; Watson 1988a). In fact, in many small villages that could not afford a Priest, women were appointed to read death ritual manuals during the funeral and burial of the deceased (ibid). Hired specialists also had access to this information. For the most part, women were restricted to immigrate to Canada and the United States during the late 1800s to mid 1900s. The impact of exclusionary factors on the Chinese community, lead to a reinterpretation of rites usually retained by women and priests.

With this transition, men performed death rituals according to what they recalled from funerals in China. From information honed from archival records and material culture recorded in cemeteries, the one ritual that unfailingly occurred and was typically aggrandized in overseas Chinese communities was the funeral. Because funerals were community affairs in China, it is likely that a high number of sojourners had attended or participated in a funeral before migrating to their new home. Therefore, the funeral becomes the focus point of Chinese death ritual practices in the American and Canadian West and the South Pacific. The appearance of highly elaborated funerals is also tied into the most important driving force of death ritual practices in their new home – heightened belief systems and in turn a greater dependence on Taoism. As the Chinese were in a new, unfamiliar home, surrounded by foreigners who were generally regarded as ghosts, the Chinese adopted new measures to protect themselves from the malevolent fortune brought about by ghosts. Deceased spirits could not transcend into an ancestor spirit until the bones were returned to China. Thus there was an excess of ghosts in their new home: ghosts of ancestors, ghosts of foreigners, and ghosts of unplaced non Chinese spirits.

Another contributing factor to the changes in overseas Chinese burial practices was the accumulation of wealth due to the success, albeit silent, of the Chinese in their new home. We see the emergence of thriving Chinatowns, the erection of joss houses, and grandiose permanent
tombs like those recorded in Tahiti, New Zealand and Hawaii. In the rural context of western North America, this wealth tends to be more subdued yet is prominently displayed during funerals. The merchant class, who in China were considered low class, were the highest ranked in the overseas Chinese context. This situation allowed the merchant class more freedom in death ritual expression. The role of government official in the Chinese government transferred to the merchant class, thus serving to maintain the parallel concept of society present in China at the time of the diaspora. The trend of elaborated and ostentatious funerals is in part a result of the influence of the high status merchant class.

An influence that remained strong in overseas Chinese communities but served to adapt Chinese death ritual is kinship ties. The framework of kinship ties was familiar to the overseas Chinese, yet kinship groups in this context did not necessarily comprise individuals from the same lineage. Instead, volunteer associations were based on general interest groups such as the Chih Kung T'ang or societies that managed the welfare of a geographical locale like the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association. The latter of these volunteer associations acted much like the Qing state and were directly involved in the organization of funds for burial rites considered to be of value to the community such as funerals and shipment of bones to China. Thus in the overseas Chinese context, state officials were replaced by regional chapters of volunteer associations who distributed pertinent information to Chinese communities.

Finally, the notion of being Chinese through the practice of ritual enforced during the Qing Dynasty carried over to their new home. Maintaining a basic structure of rituals differentiated the Chinese from non Chinese communities and reinforced their culture, while at the same time, preserved traditional Chinese death rituals in their new home. The concept of orthopraxy (proper ritual) over orthodoxy (belief), a condition that dominated late Imperial Chinese culture is seen in the maintenance of secondary burial practices in their new home. At the Yee King Tong Cemetery, a number of graves have been reinterred in ancestral tombs within the same burial ground. This suggests that the rituals were carried out to complete the correct sequence of rites as opposed to a practice to return the deceased to their ancestral homes.

**Patterns in Overseas Chinese Burial Practices**

Based on archival data, archaeological research at Wild Horse Creek and surveys in western Canada and the United States and the South Pacific, consistent patterns of Chinese death
ritual have emerged. These unified features have been sufficiently modified from practices in
China but follow a simplified version of the original rituals that have incorporated elements from
the culture they sojourned to. The development of overseas Chinese burial practices was
consistently controlled by two concepts: filial piety and enhanced fear of ghosts. All ritual
patterns observed during my research were designed to concurrently meet these goals.

One of the more consistent patterns visible in sites surveyed is *fengshui*. Table 12 exhibits
the main characteristics of sites surveyed over the course of my research and which sites
displayed evidence of *fengshui*. In all but one site where the Chinese selected the site, a landscape
was selected that met the parameters of *fengshui* outlined by Lai (1987). In fact, 65% of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Burial Ground</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Fengshui</th>
<th>Quarter (Q) or Exclusively Chinese Cemetery (E)</th>
<th>Proximity to Water</th>
<th>Altar (A) or Burner (B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wild Horse Creek</td>
<td>Wild Horse Creek</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Wild Horse Creek</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harling Point</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Juan da Fuca Strait</td>
<td>A B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamloops</td>
<td>Kamloops</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Thompson River</td>
<td>A B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richfield</td>
<td>Cariboo</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Williams Creek</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>Cariboo</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Lightning Creek</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hook Chu</td>
<td>Honolulu</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yee King Tong</td>
<td>Honolulu</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cimetere Chinois</td>
<td>Papeete, Tahiti</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Matavai Bay</td>
<td>A B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cromwell</td>
<td>Cromwell, New Zealand</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queenstown</td>
<td>Queenstown, New Zealand</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anderson Bay</td>
<td>Dunedin, New Zealand</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>South Pacific Ocean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence</td>
<td>Lawrence, New Zealand</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Small Creek</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12: Main characteristics of cemeteries surveyed
cemeteries surveyed are situated in proximity or view of a water source, which is an important source of positive qi for the site. In China, fengshui increased in popularity in the Qing Dynasty because it afforded more control of the destiny of a community without the time consuming investment of ancestor rituals. If ancestors were simply situated along pathways of qi, the deceased would be content which in turn would bring good fortune to the community. This concept certainly does not beget the practice of ancestral worship, which has continued up to the present time; however, it has added a tool of manipulation for the deceased to increase benefits to the living. Ultimately it allowed a higher potential for lower status families to get ahead (Watson 1988a). In overseas Chinese communities, there is an apparent increased reliance on fengshui 1) because of an increased fear of inauspicious spirits and 2) because the Chinese risked everything to migrate to sites around the world. They had to succeed; their families were depending on them to send money home to China, and depending on them to eventually return home. Fengshui served as a tool to ensure their success.

For those areas that were allotted a cemetery plot by Western settlers or simply as a precautionary measure, many of the Chinese burial grounds surveyed display evidence of individual grave orientation to increase the propitiousness to a particular individual or lineage. Grave orientation was noted at Stanley, Yee King Tong, Arue Cimitere Chinois, and Anderson Bay and was more prevalent in permanent and urban sites.

In each instance, the grave was oriented in complete opposition to the slope of the cemetery or the orientation of other graves. Different orientations denote the use of fengshui experts, which usually requires a sum of money that few overseas Chinese possessed during their sojourn. Chinese funerary rites play an integral role in overseas Chinese burial practices throughout the burials ground's use. Rites performed in China at the time of the diaspora were maintained overseas but individually modified in different cultural contexts. What remains a constant rite in all sites analyzed is the funeral. Because of increased fear of inauspicious spirits, the funeral was amplified. Oftentimes, the entire community was invited to the funeral, including non Chinese residents. The merchant class who in China, traditionally were of low status, became high status individuals, serving as mediators between Chinese and non-Chinese communities. Coupled with new found wealth and power, merchant funerals in overseas Chinese communities were showcases for their accumulated wealth (Crowder 2001). In the late 1890s, western elements were integrated into the funeral. Western style garb adorned the
deceased and a brass band was adopted as the primary musical accompaniment to both scare off malevolent spirits and soothe the confused spirit of the deceased (Crowder 2001; Habenstein et al. 1994). It is important to distinguish that the incorporation of western components was not an act of assimilation but was used as a vehicle to enhance the effectiveness of Chinese rituals.

After the deceased was expelled from the community, he or she was honoured in a relatively uniform manner at all the sites recorded. In cemeteries, this was reflected in the appearance of altars, burners and grave goods used to placate the deceased. Altars were visible in five of the twelve cemeteries surveyed (40%). Altars tended to be of variable design, and often adhered to the western cemetery style dominant in the area. An example would be the Victorian Eastlake styled wooden altar at Wild Horse Creek. Another popular style recorded is a stone altar flanked by two stone burners like those located at Harling Point and Kamloops. Altars tended to be relative to the size of the cemetery and all altars recorded were located at the base of the cemetery. This observation further verifies my assumption that the altar at Wild Horse Creek was located at the base of the cemetery. While a ubiquitous feature at Chinese cemeteries (see Abraham et al. 2003), only three burners were recorded at the cemeteries I surveyed. At the Arne Cimiteere Chinois, burners were located at the individual level to honour a specific individual rather than the entire cemetery. Typical items recorded at the cemeteries were primarily serving vessels used to serve ts'ai-fan to the deceased. The serving of food was an important component to many of the traditional burial rites and remained as such in the overseas setting. Chinese celadon ware intermixed with western style serving dishes were the most prevalent of these serving items. Liquor bottles and Tiger Whiskey bottles were typically found in association with food serving dishes strengthening the importance of liquor to the deceased spirit. Grave goods recorded and researched in archival records were typically more subdued compared to those recorded in China. Smaller paper items were burned in small burners and incense and joss sticks were lit on the altar as opposed to the grave. Regional variability in grave goods was apparent, particularly in modern graves. Graves in the South Pacific for example, often displayed white sand, flower leis, and shell bead necklaces indicative of indigenous influence.

In terms of grave markings, we can identify two broad marker types: transitory and permanent. Transient markers are typified by simple wood, metal, or stone markers that were often inscribed in Chinese only. These markers were intended for identification within the Chinese community for funerary and grave rites and some years later for bone collectors as the
Chinese did not intend to remain in their new home. In the case of Wild Horse Creek, however, the Christian cross was utilized as a marker. In permanent cemeteries such as those graves found in Tahiti and Hawaii, early graves mimicked ancestral tombs found in China. Graves tended to be either classic omega or flat backed omega types. Early inscriptions were usually exclusively Chinese. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the ancestral tomb was abandoned and a more simplistic western style tombstone was adopted that usually displayed both Chinese and the dominant language of the region. All of the permanent graves surveyed in North America and the South Pacific displayed this evolution in tombstone style.

In both permanent and transient graves, I recorded the use of the three stage burial that originated in southeastern China. In China this burial practice comprised initial burial in a shallow grave or mound, exhumation and storage in a kam taap jar, which was placed with other lineage members on a hill that may or may not have aligned to geomantic principles. These pots were often arranged by status within the lineage. For those with financial means, a third burial occurred in a more ostentatious ancestral tomb. Archaeologically, the first phase of the overseas burial is marked by transient grave markers and composed of either wood or metal panels or squat cement slabs. The second phase is more complex. Ample research pertained to an inscription stone marking the name and pertinent information in China of the deceased that was interred in the primary burial. At Wild Horse Creek, tin billies may have been used for this purpose. Exhumation depressions visible at Wild Horse Creek, Richfield, Stanley, Kamloops, Arue, Yee King and Cromwell and indicate that some form of organized bone collecting was occurring.

It is my contention that bone houses served as secondary burial sites for the overseas Chinese. Bones were stored here for up to ten years which is the same amount of time they were stored in kam taap jars in China. These vessels are similar in form to stoneware barrel jars, which were typically used to hold bulk items such as peanut oil or 100-year-old duck eggs. In overseas Chinese communities they were also used to hold deceased Chinese' bones. Wayne Chow, a Chinese elder from Prince George, British Columbia, remembers visiting one of these bone houses in the Victoria Chinatown in the 1920s or 1930s and recalls seeing row upon row of these large ceramic vessels, which held bones of his ancestors (Morrow, pers. comm. 2003). References by Chow (1996), Abraham et al. (2003) and Lai (1991) cite observations of wooden and metal boxes, suitcases, and peanut oil cans. Many kin groups in China could not afford to bury their
ancestors in ancestral tombs and thus remained in the secondary burial kam taap jar. Because overseas Chinese individuals were usually wealthy compared to their families in China, they could afford to be buried in ancestral tombs. Thus as a result of overseas Chinese lucrative endeavors, there was undoubtedly a resurgence of ancestral tombs once the bones were returned in China.

In the early stages of Chinese migration, the final burial would invariably take place in China. As a result of both restrictions placed on shipping during World War I and II and an 'assimilation' of overseas Chinese communities, Chinese continued to practice the three stage burial and as was the case with Yee King Tong, reburial began to transpire in their new home. This continuity stresses the importance of the practice of a sequence of rites in honouring the deceased (Crowder 2002; Zhang 2001). Permanent Chinese headstones emerged as early as the 1900s in North America and as early as the 1880s in the South Pacific and South America (Gardner et al. 2003).

The presence of intact burials at Wild Horse Creek appears to be an anomaly to the patterning of exhumation and reburial, but is rather an isolated instance of changes in burial practices or burials that were missed by bone collectors. Many remote Chinese burial grounds are poorly maintained and grave markers have eroded or are missing. Furthermore, many remote Chinese communities in North America were abandoned beginning in the early 1900s leaving no records of who remained buried. The intact graves therefore may be an isolated instance where bone collectors failed to find the graves. Alternatively, as noted in earlier discussions, the graves may also be associated with women who typically were not returned to China.

In terms of cemetery design, two general trends have materialized. The first trend visible in many of the graves analyzed is the presence of local symbols and landscapes that have been incorporated into the Chinese cemetery. These symbols have powerful meanings in the non Chinese community and may have been amalgamated into Chinese cemetery design to increase the positive energy to the site. Examples include the use of the traditional Tahitian chief's fare tupapu'u roofs over graves in Arue Cimitere Chinois, the use of a mausoleum at the Lawrence Cemetery and the placement of the Hook Chu Cemetery over an historic rock wall. On more general terms, the use of Christian symbols on tombstones in New Zealand may also be a method to increase the auspiciousness of a site. The presence of non Chinese symbols in Chinese
cemeteries stresses the importance of venerating the deceased outside of China to ensure that they are content in their new surroundings and in turn bring good fortune to the living sojourner.

The second trend concerns the incorporation of western design into cemeteries and the expression of Chinese symbology, both within the community and externally. In more transient cemeteries, there is a general trend to adopt the regional cemetery design while Chinese elements were subdued. Wild Horse Creek for example conformed to a typical pioneer style design with a picket fence, the use of a simple Christian cross grave marker and a western style altar. Likewise, New Zealand cemeteries utilized Victorian tombstones similar to contemporaneous non Chinese tombstones in the same cemetery. Chinese expression was externally presented through the funeral and internally through grave rites at the altar. Quite the opposite was occurring in permanent graves. In early permanent graves Chinese symbols are unmistakable. At Yee King Tong and Arue Cimitere Chinois, the earliest graves are grandiose omega shaped graves and are clearly Chinese in origin. Beginning in the 1900s, tombstones replaced omega shaped graves in all sites where omega graves were recorded. During this later phase, Chinese symbology was subdued in comparison to earlier expression and was reduced to grave offerings and Chinese writing on the tombstones.

Modern Expressions

Chinese death ritual is a critical component in the solidification of Chinese identity and culture. Modern tombstones tend to display a resurgence of Chinese expression and symbols balanced within the stylistic framework of the region. Tombstones in New Zealand boldly display a photo of the deceased and traditional Chinese offerings of ts'ai-fan, joss sticks, and incense. In Tahiti, roof coverings have become stylized, incorporating Chinese architecture into the roofs. In the San Francisco Chinatown, traditional Chinese funerals complete with elaborate processions and brass bands continue to enliven the main streets of Chinatown (Crowder 2002). Limousines have taken the place of the catafalque traditionally used in China.

Zhang's (2001) research in the Philadelphia Chinatown revealed that a major transition in overseas Chinese burial practices occurred after the 1970s. The most significant of these changes was the adoption of cremation to replace secondary burial practices. Because of the surging
population in China, cremation was adopted as the primary means of final burial in China as well (Teather 1998). Under a Funeral Reform' program, ancestral burial grounds in China were systematically destroyed by the Chinese government beginning in 1991. Between 1997 and 2001, 430,000 ancestral tombs were demolished (The Province, September 28, 2003). As a reaction to this movement, many Chinese families ironically, have begun to send their ancestor's bone's and ashes back to overseas Chinese centres in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Vancouver for reburial in cemeteries. Surrey, British Columbia resident Chi Sing Lau, who is shipping twelve of his ancestor's to Valley View Momorial Garden in Surrey states:

This is not a bothersome procedure... If you can find the money, then as the descendant, you should try to do it. At the end, our ancestors have given a lot and worked hard for the next generation (in The Province, September 28, 2003).

For the Future

It is highly recommended that research be continued at the Chinese burial ground at Wild Horse Creek. Focus should be centered on excavating the area tested with the magnetometer to confirm if interred burials do indeed exist. More geophysical survey, perhaps resistivity or ground penetrating radar in collaboration with magnetometer testing, in other areas deemed high potential should occur before any further damage is done to the site. While preservation is a critical component, it is felt that locating interred burials is an honourable gesture to pay homage to some of the East Kootenay region's first pioneers. It is also imperative that overseas Chinese sites in other areas of the world continue to be documented. A broad cross cultural examination of expressions of overseas Chinese burial practices will help solidify or reject patterns observed in the burial grounds surveyed here. Collaboration of comparative research with other disciplines will also help to strengthen these conclusions.

As a final conclusion I suggest that the overseas Chinese maintained a modified version of traditional burial rituals that was further reshaped by regional variation of isolation, intolerance by the non Chinese and influence of western burial practices. What remains constant is that the ancestor must be properly cared for under all circumstances. The continuity of Chinese death ritual up to modern times infers a perpetuation of veneration of the deceased that
transcends time, locale, and hardships. This research clearly illustrates the fact that Chinese communities throughout the world go to all lengths to honour their deceased and ensure the continuity of their legacy as the ultimate act of filial piety and the ultimate act of being Chinese.
### APPENDIX 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Dynasty</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late Neolithic</td>
<td>Yangshao</td>
<td>5000 B.C – 3000 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lungshan</td>
<td>3000 B.C – 2000 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Xia</td>
<td>2205 B.C – 1766 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Imperial</td>
<td>Shang</td>
<td>1766 B.C – 1122 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zhou</td>
<td>1122 B.C – 221 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qin</td>
<td>221 B.C – 206 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Imperial</td>
<td>Han</td>
<td>206 B.C – A.D. 220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wei</td>
<td>220 – 265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jin</td>
<td>265 – 420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Song</td>
<td>960 – 1279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yuan</td>
<td>1279 - 1368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Imperial</td>
<td>Ming</td>
<td>1368 – 1644</td>
</tr>
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<td>Qing</td>
<td>1644 – 1911</td>
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Appendix 1: Dynasties pertinent to development of Chinese death ritual practices (Derived from Craig 2001).
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