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Date Defended/Approved: September 19, 2013
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Abstract

This thesis analyzes the practice of racism against the Chinese community in Vancouver-area cemeteries, and how it was modified by trans-Pacific political and cultural forces. It shows how, at Burnaby's Ocean View cemetery, the Chinese community moved away from segregation in the burial place and progressed to burial designs that responded to its cultural and religious needs. It analyzes the abandonment by some Chinese immigrants of their tradition of disinterment and repatriation to China, when they chose to be buried there rather than at Vancouver's Mountain View cemetery. It also argues that the Chinese community of the Lower Mainland modified its own burial traditions in a manner different from anywhere else in B.C., as a result of the wave of immigrants from Hong Kong in the 1980s-90s. These changes transformed the design, architecture and burial practices at Ocean View, and helped form a new physical Chinese identity in that landscape.

Keywords: Ocean View cemetery; Chinese burials; Mountain View cemetery; Chinese Benevolent Association; Repatriation of Human Remains; Chinese Community in British Columbia
À mes parents, Alphonse et Irène (née Legault),
qui m'ont inculqué la curiosité et
l'enthousiasme.

À ma jumelle, Monique,
qui s'est toujours réjouie de mes succès.

Et à mon partenaire, Néstor,
dont l'appui sans limites m'a permis
ce nouveau volet dans notre vie.
Acknowledgements

I am extremely grateful to my supervisors, Dr. Nicolas Kenny and Dr. Jeremy Brown, for their continued support, encouragement and guidance in this process.

This thesis would have not been possible without the friendly cooperation of managers Ralph McKnight, Brian Boyle, and Christine Harvey at Ocean View and Forest Lawn Memorial Parks, and manager Glenn Hodges at Mountain View Cemetery, nor without the hours that Larry Wong and Faye Leung spent with me, relating their family experiences at Ocean View cemetery.

I wish to thank all those whose expertise on issues related to my research aided me in my work: Dr. David Chuenyan Lai, Archie and Dale Miller, Winnie L. Cheung, Laura Pasacreta, Dr. Shelley Chan, Judy Lam Maxwell, Arilea Sill, Lorraine Irving, John Atkin, and Warren Summer. I extend my thanks to Bowen Zhang and OMNI TV for allowing me an interview on their news program. Thanks to Elwin Xie also for his time and support. A big thank you to Nancy Stagg for formatting my images. My thanks go to Kevin Lee and May Yan who assisted me in the translation of grave markers, and Ren Jia (Joanna) Cao, and Chun-li Yang for their research work in Chinese-language newspapers. The professionalism of UBC Asian Library librarian Jing Liu, RBCM archivist Marion Tustanoff and CVA archivist Megan Schlase greatly facilitated my work and enhanced the research process. Thanks finally to Ocean View Burial Park, Mountain View Burial Park, the University of British Columbia Archives, the Vancouver Public Library and the City of Vancouver Archives for allowing me the use of their photos.

My heartfelt thanks to Nancy, Dianne and Maria, who have supported me from the start, and who are probably the ones who most understand the route that led me to this endeavour. Fellow students Tim and James have been staid pals at every step. My family and friends, and in particular my partner, have been unbelievable through it all. Merci à vous tous!

This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the City of Burnaby (Doug Drummond Research Fellowship), and the SFU Graduate Students Society.
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## List of Acronyms

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBA</td>
<td>Chinese Benevolent Association (Vancouver)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCBA</td>
<td>Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (Victoria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CINARC</td>
<td>Chinese in Northwest America Research Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COACEB</td>
<td>Canada Overseas Chinese Amalgamated Exhumation Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVA</td>
<td>City of Vancouver Archives</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUC</td>
<td>Public Utilities Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RBCM</td>
<td>Royal British Columbia Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>SFU</td>
<td>Simon Fraser University (Burnaby, BC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UBC</td>
<td>University of British Columbia (Vancouver)</td>
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<td>VPL</td>
<td>Vancouver Public Library</td>
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Preface.

The Willow Section

In my fifteen years of museum work in Burnaby, B.C., I developed an interest in the diversity and richness of that city's cemeteries. They lay unexplored and underappreciated, crying out for recognition and interpretation.

Over several years, I walked most of those cemeteries' paths. One day, in Ocean View Cemetery, I found myself surrounded by Chinese graves, mostly pre-Second World War, on a tiny sliver of land that formed the "Willow" section. As used as I was to the enormous sections that form Ocean View, both the miniscule size and the culturally specific focus of Willow immediately fascinated me. Little did I realize then that I had stumbled upon a significant area that broached cultural, social and political boundaries and issues, the history of which had already long been forgotten.

As I walked through the hundred or so graves in Willow, I knew I had to find out who these people were and why they were buried there, in the middle of this huge cemetery, almost in a community of their own. This resembled a transplanted Chinatown within the cemetery. A few steps away in any direction, and there was not a Chinese name to be found. Then, back in Willow, there were a few non-Asian names interspersed among the others, as well as a few Japanese names. This was getting more and more compelling.

My first requests to the cemetery's management were met with a curiosity that matched mine, but I was made aware that most of the records and expertise that might help me in my quest had probably been lost during administrative changeovers. The manager encouraged me in my research and offered any resources they might still have to assist me.¹ And so the quest began.

The Willow section at Burnaby's Ocean View cemetery proved to have an uncomfortable background. It has once been called "Mongolia" and was the burial space ¹

Conversation with Ralph McKnight, manager at Ocean View Cemetery, July 7, 2005.
to which all non-whites were relegated, far from the eyes of the general public. The cemetery’s by-laws were instrumental in the construction of perceptions of racial difference in society. This segregation matched the social climate of the period, as well as its physical manifestations in Vancouver. Still, the graves in Willow were an unexpected, and indeed shocking, find. Much is written about racism in Vancouver, but there is little text to be found on its expressions in Lower Mainland cemeteries, in particular where all non-white groups have been collectively assembled after death.
Introduction

The Essentiality of the Cemetery

Cemetery memorials will relay messages of grief, status, national pride, genealogy, and cultural bias or belonging. Historian Brian Young stated it well: "For the historian, cemeteries are laboratories in material culture. Their landscape, architecture, buildings, monuments and epitaphs are profound cultural expressions pointing squarely to conceptions of religion, social position, nation, childhood, gender and ethnicity."¹ The evolution of cemeteries over the last 200 years, however, has complicated the interpretation of these narratives. Young explains that in the nineteenth century, when cemeteries were moved out of urban areas for reasons of health and urban expansion, the "rural" cemetery design was implanted in the new burial grounds, in order to generate a sense of beauty to the landscape, well away from the unpleasant sights and smells of the city. This new vision changed public perceptions of nature and the cemetery, which transformed the once overcrowded and unsanitary graveyard into park-like settings, with meandering roads and lush landscaping, providing romantic views and a new respectability.²

By the mid-nineteenth century, however, the mode of memorializing within the cemetery was already beginning a total transformation. The rural cemetery, overflowing with extremely elaborate monuments, enclosures, posts, copings and fences that were now considered more lugubrious than tasteful, was replaced by the early twentieth century by the lawn-plan concept. Now, identical flat markers would remain invisible at ground level, amid grassy vistas providing a new egalitarian public space. This transfiguration, partly a response to cemetery administrators' ongoing concerns with the

²  Ibid., 9.
costly perpetual care of a landscape greatly hindered by monuments, was meant to bring about the democratization of death, where all would benefit equally from the new efficiencies of the burial park. 3 Geographer Lorraine Guay refers to this new product as a "the contemporary polymorphic cemetery," which commemorates the memory of the deceased rather than their death. 4 Young adds that W. Ormiston Roy, the landscape architect who in the early 1900s transformed Montreal's Mount Royal Cemetery to the lawn concept, aimed to move away from "Victorian exaggerations of death, classicism, religion, and the individual" and towards a more secular, park-like setting, where grave markers would lose their centrality. The sentiment-driven crafts of poets, monument carvers and ironworkers would be replaced with those of scientifically trained horticulturists, engineers and landscape architects. While the charm of nature—however manicured—seemed to be the focal point of this transformation, the lawn-plan concept strived for affordable gravesites in an orderly setting. 5

The concept of lawn cemeteries quickly crossed the continent, in both Canada and the U.S. The city of Burnaby, in Greater Vancouver, boasts four major public cemeteries, all following the lawn-plan concept, and among the first of this type to be established in the Lower Mainland of B.C. These include Ocean View and Forest Lawn Burial Parks (opened respectively in 1919 and 1936), the Beth Israel Jewish cemetery (1945), and the Masonic Cemetery (1924)—the only cemetery in the world solely reserved for the burial of Freemasons and their families. 6 The Freemasons, while buying blocks of plots for their members in most cemeteries, chose to open their own burial grounds in Burnaby after their section at Vancouver's Mountain View cemetery filled up. Jewish communities and congregations have always strived for burial spaces set apart from those of Gentiles, and opened their own respective cemeteries in the Lower Mainland starting in the 1920s. Both Ocean View and Forest Lawn were non-

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3 Ibid., li, lli, 98.
4 Lorraine Guay, “Aux origines des cimetières du Québec,” in Cimetières: Patrimoine pour les vivants, edited by Jean Simard and François Brault (Québec, QC: Les Éditions Gid, 2008), 42. Guay ascribes the creation of the lawn-plan concept to Adolphe Strauch, who used this design at Spring Grove cemetery in Cincinnati in 1855.
5 Young, Respectable Burials, 107-18.
denominational since their inception. However, the active segregation displayed at Ocean View was a blow to the democratic tenets that were meant to be imbued in their very design style. There, non-whites were reminded of their social inequality, and that any thought of racial harmony, even post-death, was considered aberrant. The cultural evolution of each of these groups—the Chinese, Japanese and Black communities—in the urban landscape would eventually affect their positioning within Ocean View.

Plate 0.1. Map of Vancouver and Burnaby showing four cemeteries mentioned in this thesis.

Still, not quite a century after their segregation within Ocean View, this same cemetery would prove to become the burial place most sought after by the Chinese-Canadians of the Lower Mainland. Its cultural adaptations matched and surpassed their needs and expectations, and thus tailored a long-term relationship, in which the Chinese
community is rightly proud of its self-defining enclaves. These are of such particular merit that they now form picturesque destinations for all taphophiles.\footnote{A taphophile is a cemetery enthusiast.}

**Thesis**

My thesis explores three main questions related to Chinese burials at Ocean View cemetery. First, I analyze why some Chinese immigrants chose to be buried in Burnaby's Ocean View cemetery from 1929 to 1945, a cemetery from which their life-cycle philosophy could not hope to be completed, and yet where almost 100 families purchased plots for their loved ones. I will argue that the reasons for this choice reflected a significant transition in life-cycle concepts within the Chinese population, both in China and overseas, and that their decision was influenced by the regional, national and trans-Pacific politics of the day. I will also demonstrate that for some, it no doubt expressed a clear statement about the family's or the deceased's position as immigrants to Canada, moving away from the perception of Chinese immigrants as simple sojourners on the West Coast.

Second, I posit that the Chinese community of the Lower Mainland modified its own burial traditions in a manner different from anywhere else in British Columbia, as evidenced only at Burnaby's Ocean View cemetery. This particularity in development was not capricious but rather based on a new politico-geographical reality. The new flow of immigrants from Hong Kong in the 1980s and 1990s proved to be a catalyst for these changes, towards the betterment of burial conditions for the Chinese community as a whole. These changes assuaged their long-held burial traditions, until then frustrated by racially motivated impediments.

Third, I will argue that these burial modifications allowed for the tangible formulation of a new identity for the Chinese community of the Lower Mainland, one which asserted its claim not only to a Canadian belonging, but to an identity that stressed the importance of its "Chineseness" within the Canadian mosaic. This self-recognition propounded the concept of a new "home"—in the cemetery—where
generations could again come together as a foundational element to a new public vibrancy.

In presenting my arguments, I will compare the factors that originated the arrival of Chinese people on the West Coast and their influence on this milieu with those of the significant developments at Ocean View. These were critical changes, both for the Chinese community and for Ocean View cemetery. The first change occurred in the 1990s when Chinese-Canadians, whose remains were once relegated to segregated plots, were among the first allowed to install upright markers in unrestricted areas.

The second change transpired when the Chinese community required the use of an increased number of columbaria, hence the construction of a mausoleum *cum* columbaria for their own use, decorated in full Chinese traditional mortuary design and respecting *feng-shui* methodologies. Chinese residents had the option to be buried at Vancouver’s Mountain View cemetery, from where their remains would later be ritually disinterred and returned to China. However, no such repatriations occurred from Ocean View in Burnaby, which seemed to indicate permanence in the economic migrant’s life cycle, to an acceptance of immigration, even with respect to post-death remains. Later evolutions in burial modes also saw the enterprising reverse movement of cremated remains of ancestors from China to Ocean View, while no such movement was witnessed in Vancouver, from where the remains of almost 1,000 individuals had earlier been repatriated to China.

During the third change, the cemetery acquiesced to the construction in the 1990s of “family estates,” walled-in private gardens where the remains of ancestors transported from China to Canada could finally be buried side by side with their descendants in B.C. This complete turnaround in burial styles and methods over 94 years at Ocean View within the Chinese community, and indeed with respect to the lawn concept originally espoused by Ocean View’s designers, has manifested itself in significant changes in landscape, architecture and burial practices.

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8 When I refer to the “permanence” of a grave, I do so in contrast to the temporary nature of those thousands of temporary graves from which the remains were disinterred for repatriation to China prior to 1949.
My thesis is the first research to explore the development of this key manifestation in the burial grounds of the Lower Mainland, where the physical evidence of a new Chinese identity always brings the researcher back to Ocean View cemetery. As of the 1970s, the Chinese community had already begun favouring Ocean View cemetery as the principal destination of its deceased. There, the Chinese community of the Lower Mainland finally surmounted the long-standing racism that was exerted against it by legislative and social measures, and created for itself a singular landmark presence of its own choosing.

Primary Sources and Research Methods

I have found at the City of Vancouver Archives (CVA) some documents that have provided information on Chinese burials in Greater Vancouver, more specifically early business correspondence between Ocean View cemetery or the City of Vancouver and Vancouver's Chinese Benevolent Association (CBA) regarding its plots in the cemetery. Early by-laws of Vancouver's Mountain View cemetery are also available at CVA, as well as some exhumation records (a copy of the cemetery register), information on societal plots, photos, and related administrative fonds. Historian and former archivist Paul Yee's bibliography on Chinese people in British Columbia also includes a short section on burial customs. The archival documentation tends to be more of an administrative nature. It does include a few references to protests from neighbours of the Chinese cemetery section and to the segregation of these plots, both of these at Mountain View, which are vivid reminders of the social space and climate in which these developments took place. Still, there is relatively little information available in the archival fonds on this topic as a whole. This is perhaps symptomatic of the general ostracism that was earlier exercised against the Chinese community. However, a few documents state that the cemetery passed on sole and full responsibility to the CBA for its plots. This is not out of the ordinary, as similar agreements would have been established with other fraternal and community organizations that also owned their own plots, which they then managed for their members. This may account for the absence of further related material in City

records. The CBA's headquarters in Chinatown might thus have been the key source for records of this type, but I was denied access for my researchers to any CBA records at its headquarters. There may still be a trove of data there to be explored. Yet, similar records of Victoria's Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) at the Provincial Archives in Victoria do not include any documentation dealing with death rituals.

Professor David Chuenyen Lai, of the University of Victoria, who has conducted in-depth research on the Chinese fonds at the B.C. Archives, has stated that they contained no information whatsoever related to Chinese burials in B.C. or any participation of the CBA or CCBA in related activities. Still, he was not expecting to find any funerary references therein, since anything related to death was usually not spoken of in the Chinese community; its mention alone was perceived to invite death within the circle or family. This remains a fervently held belief among the elderly in this community. Still, the processes of repatriation, from the hiring of bone diggers to the payment of freight charges on Hong Kong-bound ships, must have generated related documentation, which so far has proved to be elusive.

I take this as well partly as the explanation for the lack of response or contact from the Chinese community in my attempts to reach the descendants of the deceased buried in Mongolia/Willow. In April 2012, before the Qingming festival, I installed two signs for two months in the Willow section inviting visitors to that section to contact me as part of my research. As well, I was afforded a television interview on the day of the festival during the Mandarin-language news program of OMNI TV station, during which I again invited participants to contact me. I had previously been cautioned by Chinese friends and academic supporters not to expect numerous follow-ups to these requests as these might be perceived as intrusive or not worthy of a response. As well, my race, French name and outsider status could very well prove detrimental to my efforts. The official nature alone of the posters in the cemetery, bearing the logo of Simon Fraser University and stating the sanction of its Office of Research Ethics (as required) might have had a reverse effect from the beginning, frightening away some older potential

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participants who might not be comfortable with officialdom. As well, when I approached both of the Vancouver-based Chinese-language Ming Pao and Sing Tao newspapers in April 2013 to print articles on my research including a request for assistance from potential descendants, both publications claimed disinterest in the topic. This might have been better interpreted as discomfort with the topic.

The management teams of Vancouver's Mountain View cemetery and Burnaby's Ocean View cemetery have both been extremely forthcoming in allowing me privileged access to otherwise confidential burial registers and documentation. They have also readily provided me with by-laws and early publications on their respective burial grounds. However, other than their by-laws, very little of the history of Chinese burials in these cemeteries has been committed to paper. While current managers at these cemeteries have willingly shared their knowledge, most of this data will appear in print for the first time in this thesis, in a logical and chronological sequence that will allow for a sense of understanding of the evolution and local particularities of Chinese burials in the Lower Mainland. Some key documentation from Ocean View cemetery remains to be found, but this seems mostly due to changes in record keeping in recent decades, when administrative changeovers may have led to perhaps over-zealous clean-ups. I have not witnessed any evidence of concealment or furtiveness with respect to a problematic past regarding Chinese graves. On the contrary, any available evidence of segregation there has been shared, and all those involved have been intent on providing and bringing about a clear and thorough historical record of the evolution of these issues.

By receiving permission to access Ocean View cemetery's burial registers, I have been able to identify the interred whose graves do not bear a marker, and with this information, to locate the death certificate of each individual buried in the Willow section, which actually provides a bit more information of a personal nature. These certificates have outlined family relationships among the interred, they have identified the "informants"11 pertaining to each certificate, and they have permitted a geographical pinpointing of their residences. This data allowed for a clearer understanding of the

11 "Informant" is the term used on B.C. Death Certificates to refer to the family member, friend, or organization representative who provided the deceased's personal information to the coroner.
deceased's social and professional status, family networks, and organizational ties, but they still did not facilitate the search for descendants of the interred.

The burial registers in both Vancouver and Burnaby permitted an overview of the history of disinterments pertaining to each specific grave, or the lack thereof. The registers for the CBA plots at Mountain View (see Plate 2.1) also clearly indicate, by the recurrent erased and crossed-out entries resulting from multiple disinterments and the reuse of graves, that the single-line European-style burial registration system was not suited for, nor did it anticipate, mass and repeated disinterments for large sections of graves. As a result, each of the two recording sites for burials at Mountain View was left to its own devices in this valiant record-keeping task, which led to some errors and certainly complicated the eventual consultation of the records. Given that the passing of time and administrative changes at Burnaby's Ocean View cemetery prevented the full interpretation of its Chinese burial records, it was fortuitous that Mountain View's management, even after administrative changes of its own, was still capable of deciphering the idiosyncrasies of its related record-keeping practices.

The grave markers themselves became crucial elements in the research: their material, design and text guided me in establishing their potential permanency and any cross-cultural attributes, thus gauging the plausible alienation of the "sojourner" qualifier from the interred. However, since many of the graves referred to in Ocean View's Willow section are almost a century old, it is extremely difficult to trace living relatives of the deceased in order to conduct oral history interviews. I have thus made contact with a few descendants of the interred through personal friendships. Conversations with these individuals, as well as with the authors of autobiographical novels recounting the early decades of Vancouver's Chinatown, have provided their personal experiences with respect to the burial of their family members at Mountain View and Ocean View cemeteries. While some have confirmed that their relatives wished to have their bodies remain in B.C. after death, others have discussed the uncertainties related to the abandonment of traditional burial rituals and the effect of this approach on their respective families. One source, a single detractor to my assumption of the overall permanency of these graves at Ocean View, decried her family's thwarted plans for the disinterment of a family member, due to the trans-Pacific political decrees of the day.
As I cannot read Chinese characters nor speak any of its dialects, I engaged researchers from the Chinese-Canadian community to assist me in the deciphering of Chinese grave markers, and in research in the Chinese-language newspapers of Vancouver's Chinatown. A first examination of the digitized archives revealed very little related to Chinese death rituals. To ensure nothing had been missed, these sources were examined a second time, with much the same results. While some articles from Chinese-language newspapers did yield some new data on the burial practices of the Chinese community, it was rather from the English-language press that I was able to obtain more detailed information on that topic.

I assumed that Chinatown's Chinese-language newspapers would allow me to feel the pulse of the Chinese community over several decades with regard to its burial practices, perhaps more freely and honestly than what might appear in the "white" press. Luckily, Multicultural Canada's index of Canadian newspapers included, in searchable digitized format, the principal newspaper of Chinatown, *Da Han Gong Bao* (*The Chinese Times*, 1914-1992). The digitization project also included the English-language *Chinatown News* (1956-1996), which was helpful as it presents the views of a younger, more westernized generation. Of Vancouver's earliest Chinese-language newspapers, *Ta Han Jih-pao* (*The Chinese Daily News*, 1910-1915), *Hsin-min Kuo-pao* (*The New Republic*, 1911-1984), *Jih Hsin-pao* (*China Reform Gazette*, 1901-1911), and *The Canada Morning News* (1921-1929), were not included in this digitization project, so they were not included in the research for this thesis. ¹² English-language newspapers of Vancouver and Victoria provided the most useful information on issues such as disinterment numbers, dates and locations, and on less tangible issues such as racist overtones in the media and society at large.

Beyond this desire by the Chinese community to resolve its own problems, the implications of the very mention of death—let alone reading about it in the community paper—cannot be eschewed in these media silences. The folk beliefs pertaining to death and its rituals still today cast a shadow, for example, over attempts by some families of senior Chinese-Canadians to purchase a burial plot for them prior to their death. It

should not then be surprising to see relatively few mentions in the Chinese-language press—and archives—pertaining to burials, disinterments and repatriations, and that a related narrative is not to found within their pages. These would have been reserved for the whispered conversations of elderly Chinese bachelors in the lounges of the various clan or family associations and rarely the fodder for a Chinese reporter's daily column.

Conversely, the English-language press, both of Chinatown and Vancouver, showed no such demure reserve towards the topic. The Chinatown News lends copious copy space to death-related columns and even advertisements from related businesses. This is perhaps facilitated by the fact that it was launched in 1956, when younger Chinese-Canadian generations gave less notice to what some perceived as folkloric—and less practical—aspects of their traditions. But it is in the pages of the "white" English-language press that chroniclers rushed to publish, sometimes in a sensationalistic style of questionable taste, the peripateia related to the "curious," "ghoulish" and even "horrific" burial traditions of the Chinese community. The early references provide clear examples of racist attitudes towards Chinese people, and of the total lack of understanding, and thus disgust, regarding their burial methods, openly mocked and decried in the press. Vancouver's Board of Health writes in 1901 that the "Chinese Ghoul Methods at the Cemetery Need Attention" (The Province, February 7, 1901).13 The "Annual Feast of the Dead: Curious Oriental Ceremony Celebrated at the Cemetery [...]" is highlighted in great detail in 1905 (Vancouver Province, April 3, 1905).14 "Weird Was Ritual of Chinese Masonic Funeral" is a page-length column in 1907 (Vancouver Province, May 21, 1907).15 And so on.

Historiography

Little is written on Chinese burial practices in Canada. In 1987, historian and geographer David Chuenyan Lai wrote a key article on the topic, "The Chinese

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13 "Chinese Ghoul Methods at the Cemetery Need Attention," The Province, February 7, 1901, 3.
14 "Annual Feast of the Dead," Vancouver Province, April 3, 1905, 1.
Cemetery of Victoria," that remains the principal cited Canadian source among related thanatological researchers. 16 Lai evaluates the various claims regarding the original burial spaces for the Chinese in the Victoria area, and resolves their chronology and level of importance. In so doing, he became the first scholar to provide a detailed overview of Chinese disinterment rituals in Canada and on the important role of Victoria’s Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) in the repatriation of Chinese remains from all sites in Canada back to Mainland China. In resolving conflicting origins attributed to the burial history of Chinese immigrants in Victoria, he also presents new data on racist attitudes that at times impacted Chinese burial rituals. He argues that the decision by the CCBA to move its burial activities in 1903 from Ross Bay cemetery to its newly opened Chinese cemetery at Foul Point resulted from the lack of proper burial space at Ross Bay for CCBA members, as well as its desire to provide for them a site with good feng-shui. 17 However, he adds that six years later, in 1909, given the recent mistreatment of Chinese graves at Ross Bay by its workers, the CCBA moved all the remaining Chinese remains from Ross Bay to Chinese Point. While Chinese remains had been segregated in one section of Ross Bay since its inception in 1873 (much as they had been in Victoria’s first cemetery, Pioneer Square, from 1858 to 1873), that segregation alone is not highlighted in Lai’s article as problematic for that community. As well, it was not until 1909 that the disrespect of Chinese graves is mentioned as a serious problem for the Chinese community, so much so that a precautionary move of the remains of some 300 individuals was deemed necessary. My research points out a similar segregation of Chinese graves in various burial places in the Lower Mainland as of the 1870s, but I have found no incidents of grave vandalism in these sections, though some may well have occurred. Lai does argue that the Chinese were not welcome additions at Ross Bay, nor even at Foul Bay, when they first opened their own cemetery. He cites someone shooting at a Chinese funeral in 1904, as well as a 1909 published statement of some Victoria city councillors voicing their discontent at Chinese remains being buried beside those of whites. He also provides examples of


17 Lai, “The Chinese Cemetery in Victoria,” 30. Foul Point was renamed Chinese Point when the CCBA established its cemetery there in 1903. In 1934, it was renamed Harling Point after a man who died there while trying to save children from drowning.
citizens protesting the decrease in their property values due to the proximity of Chinese graves. My findings mirror Lai’s with respect to public protests about the proximity of Chinese graves to homes. Our arguments thus point to racial biases against the Chinese community in both cities, and to the political organization that was necessary by that community to remedy against them. My research has also added to Lai’s findings the critical contribution of Vancouver’s Chinese Benevolent Association in the coordination of social and funerary processes for the local Chinese community, including the aspects of burial rituals that began to change the funerary landscape of Mountain View Cemetery.

While the references to repatriation in Lai’s article end with the 1949 termination of repatriation of Chinese remains to China and the 1961 mass reburial of Chinese-Canadian remains at Harling Point, I extend the related focus on the cultural need for burial with one’s ancestors into recent decades, with the reverse moving of ancestors’ remains from China into Burnaby’s Ocean View Cemetery. Lai, however, does not expand on the perception of Harling Point cemetery as a cultural and religious focus of Victoria’s Chinese community, other than the yearly Qingming celebration held there each spring since 1949, but not prior to that year. Lai states that the cemetery had always been a financial burden on the Chinese community. His article predates later events that were critical in the manner in which the Chinese community perceived its own burial space, no matter how great its feng-shui elements may have been. In 1989, the CCBA accepted an offer to sell the site to a developer, and planned to move the graves elsewhere. In an unexpected move, the local white neighbours of the cemetery organized to preserve the site—and their sea-side view—and this led to the declaration of the cemetery as a National Historic Site in 1995. This designation provided funding for maintaining the site, and its enhanced presence gained in historical and cultural value within the Chinese community as a consequence.¹⁸ This development is contrary to the examples I have studied in the Lower Mainland, where it was the Chinese community that made its burial space into the cultural venue it required, notwithstanding long-held

prejudices against that community. I thus agree with the arguments and chronologies proposed by Lai, and I build on them to move forward to the present and into the realities of the parallel—though certainly not identical—developments on the Lower Mainland.

Laura Pasacreta’s 2005 M.A. thesis deals with the meaning and archaeological significance of Chinese burial practices in the Canadian and American West between the 1850s and 1910s, with a specific focus on Barkerville, B.C. Pasacreta argues that an overt expression of Chinese culture is manifest in overseas Chinese burial grounds around the world. My research on Vancouver’s Mountain View cemetery confirms this argument, insofar as the repatriation of remains is concerned. Moreover, my findings have identified that once the Chinese community in the Lower Mainland was allowed to fully instil its cultural expressions into its burial modes, this overtness was manifested in more modern and vibrant ways, even 150 years after the examples that Pasacreta explored in Barkerville. Pasacreta confirmed that ethnographical accounts on the burial rituals of overseas Chinese had until then proved to be weak and superficial, and that historical and archaeological examinations of Chinese burial grounds had only begun to be addressed in the early 2000s, mostly in the United States. My research will assist in filling that gap. Not only will my findings concur with Pasacreta’s regarding early Chinese burial rituals in B.C., but I will also highlight the significant changes that have been enacted in burial rituals in Burnaby during recent decades, in a singular expression on the West Coast.

By far the most exhaustive publication with respect to Chinese burials in North America is *Chinese American Death Rituals: Respecting the Ancestors*, edited in 2005 by historian Sue Fawn Chung and archaeologist Priscilla Wegars. These editors argue how the evolution of these rituals up to the present has been predicated upon transnational political agency, regional American influences, and modern cultural standardization: “Chinese Americans have resolved the tensions between assimilation


into the mainstream culture and their strong Chinese heritage in a variety of ways\textsuperscript{21}, up to and including burial practices. My thesis demonstrates how these same forces propelled the new Chinese immigrants to Vancouver from Hong Kong in the 1980s and 1990s to seek for themselves and their community this same type of resolution, with particular results in the cemetery. No other cultural or social group has achieved at Ocean View a visibility and identity than has the Chinese community over the last 40 years. Several of the essays also explain how the exhumation of Chinese remains in the U.S. for repatriation to China had been a less systematic phenomenon in the U.S. than in Canada; my research asserts the coordinated and exhaustive efforts in Canada of various societies working to that effect. My thesis thus differentiates the application of this ritual in Canada and the U.S.

Most importantly, in her essay (chapter 8 in \textit{Chinese American Death Rituals}), archaeologist Roberta S. Greenwood makes a single short reference to the evolution of Chinese burials in British Columbia, including the architectural adaptations manifested to that effect at Burnaby's Ocean View cemetery.\textsuperscript{22} This remains the sole historiographical reference to these cultural features in Burnaby thus far. Greenwood provides it as one of few important examples on the West Coast of the marked progress that Chinese communities are achieving in the acculturation of their now permanent burial spaces. She probably chose not to expand on the Burnaby site because the focus of her article was repatriations of ancestors' remains specifically to the U.S. But the mention remains the sole Canadian example cited in the entire monograph where Chinese burials have kept evolving to the present in adaptive ways. Greenwood also argues that in the 1970s, the reverse movement of human remains began from China to U.S. cemeteries, but mostly from the recovery efforts made by Vietnamese Chinese boat people and students (and their descendants) who came to the U.S. in the 1970s and 1980s. I argue that in B.C., the similar movement of ancestors' remains to Burnaby's Ocean View cemetery shortly thereafter is attributable to the efforts of the thousands of Hong Kong Chinese who would eventually leave their Communist-controlled Territory for a new home in B.C. My thesis thus expands on the study of this trans-Pacific migration and its impact on the

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{Ibid., 1.}
\footnote{Roberta S. Greenwood, "Old Rituals in New Lands: Bringing the Ancestors to America," in Chung and Wegars, \textit{Chinese American Death Rituals}, 244, 248.}
\end{footnotesize}
Lower Mainland. My research identifies that the Hong Kong Chinese, with urns of ancestral ashes in hand, worked towards a permanent burial space for their families at Ocean View, which also benefitted the long-established Chinese community in the province. I will also argue that the new Chinese community in the Lower Mainland used Ocean View cemetery as a cultural springboard towards the creation of a new identity for itself. This is in diametrical opposition to the circumstances and rituals experienced by the original Chinese immigrants to Vancouver at that city's Mountain View cemetery, which in effect would efface them from the landscape as a result of the repatriation of Chinese remains to China.

Only Greenwood has hinted at the importance in Canada of Burnaby's Ocean View cemetery with respect to the evolution of overseas Chinese burial rituals and memorialization. Yet the changes effected were unique and pivotal, startlingly modifying the physical parameters of these modes of remembrance, and creating a new place for the Chinese community, a prized locale within the cemetery. This enhanced presence helped that community to position itself more securely within Canadian society, away from its previous geographical fringes (both at the cemetery and in the urban landscape), and also into a new mindset of Chinese people as established Canadians.

Given the paucity of research conducted on Chinese burials in Canada and in B.C., my thesis will develop scholarship on the changes in Chinese burials that have launched at Ocean View cemetery new trends in cemetery design and burial practices like nowhere else on the West Coast. My work will add an important chapter to the study of Chinese cultural developments in Vancouver and on the West Coast, in particular in its Burnaby-specific adaptations, but which now reflect the entire Chinese diaspora established in the Lower Mainland. It will provide an understanding of the coming together of commercial and cultural needs that benefited all parties, as well as of a unique adaptive response to trans-Pacific regulations that would otherwise have undermined religious and funerary traditions for Chinese people established in Canada. My analysis of the development of a new consciousness within the Chinese community, as influenced by those changes at Ocean View cemetery, will also be the first of its type, and will add a new dimension to the monographs of geographer and sociologist Kay J. Anderson, geographer David Chuenyan Lai, historian Lisa Rose Mar, historian Wing Chung Ng, and archivist and historian Paul Yee. These authors reveal to the scholar the
evolution of that community well into the Vancouver streetscapes of the twentieth century, though none alludes to its burial practices.\textsuperscript{23} Given the unequivocal and historical importance of death-related rituals in the Chinese community, it seems quite surprising that they have not been mentioned by any of the above, other than Lai, as formative factors in the identity of this community since its arrival in B.C. Most describe the importance of cultural developments in Chinatown as significant milestones, but none refers to those rituals that bind generations and cross-Pacific populations together. Each of these authors delves into the life of the Chinese community in the Lower Mainland; I pursue this study unto the deaths of its members.

**Websites**

Two specific websites are worthy of mention here since they apply directly to my research. The Chinese in Northwest America Research Committee (CINARC) website provides the most detailed descriptions of Chinese burial practices in Canada and of the processes involved in the repatriation of Chinese remains back to China. However, it makes no mention of the reverse movement of remains from China to Canada, nor does it reference Burnaby's contributions to their evolution.\textsuperscript{24} This is surprising given that it has been updated as recently as February 2013 and these practices have been in effect in B.C. since the 1980s. Such a significant development certainly warrants broad coverage on the CINARC website. This thesis may well facilitate further updates.

The former website of Vancouver's Mountain View cemetery furnished much of the data that allowed for the contrasting of the Vancouver burial experience to that in Burnaby, though again with no reference to the latter. Internal administrative changes at


\textsuperscript{24} Chinese in Northwest America Research Committee (CINARC) CINARC 金山西北角 - 华裔研究中心, last updated February 26, 2013, http://www.cinarc.org/Death-2.html
Mountain View have recently removed from its website much of its historical references, but a still accessible version allows access to adept researchers, who still bemoan the downgrading of the official site's content. Originally, this site could serve as a template regarding the history of a cemetery and the placement of its graves. I have referred often to it in order to position this cemetery's history in the context of Vancouver's development. Its growth and its challenges have mirrored those of the city, and good research was done to create this excellent resource. The recent removal of the site's historical section and grave-finding aid has been challenging to its users, especially given that Mountain View is Vancouver's only public cemetery, and no histories have yet been published on it. The "archived" site thus made it possible for me to effect my comparative work on the two cemeteries and to go beyond the consultation of Mountain View's present management for relevant information.

"Chinese" as a Descriptor

The term "Chinese" as a qualifier and identifier was of primary importance in this research. From the onset of Chinese immigration to the West coast of North America, "Chinese" has been used more as a cultural identification category for immigrants from China, but with pejorative overtones signifying "non-white," "them" and the "outsiders". Though most of the migrants from China (until the Second World War) originated from the province of Guangdong, on the south-east coast of China, westerners also used the term "Mongolians" to refer to the Chinese communities established abroad, as noted later in this thesis. This idiom was also disparaging in that it ignored the true origins of those immigrants and tagged them with an epithet that was deemed contemptuous.

Historian Timothy Stanley also states that the migrants from Guangdong did not particularly see themselves as "Chinese," as they had little affinity for the Imperial Chinese government that brutally ruled their region. The immigrants' ethnic origins could be traced back to population movements into Guangdong during the Tang dynasty, which led most of the immigrants to classify themselves as Tangren or "People of Tang."

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26 Ibid., 53; Chung and Wegars, Chinese American Death Rituals, 6.
then referring to their communities in British Columbia as *Tangren jie*, or "Tang people's street." Stanley also indicates that the *Tangren* were further divided into dialect and geographic groups. These are reflected in the numerous family/clan and county associations and societies in Vancouver's Chinatown.

Anderson further reflects on the use of "Chinese" as a racial delineator, a social construct that further separates the "other" from the hegemonic European community and culture. She indicates how this "useful idiom" was formalized in British Columbia by the 1878 passing of the Chinese Tax Act, which imposed a head tax on most new immigrants from China. The racial divide had thus been sanctified by law, as had the term "Chinese," which amalgamated therein all immigrants from that land under a single nomenclature, regardless of any geographic, political, linguistic or cultural belonging on their part, thus implanting a "social cleavage" into Canadian society that remained for a century. Anderson also applies this European need for categorization of the "other" with the very existence of Vancouver's Chinatown, as the "geographical articulation of racial ideology," a construct that was not created by the Chinese residents, but rather by the Europeans who needed to delineate the foreign nature (indeed the "Chineseness") of the living area of these aliens, as opposed to the normalcy (hence the superiority) of their own. Stanley comments succinctly on the use of this and related terms: "Chinamen, Chinese and Chinatowns were originally ascriptions rather than accurate statements of the self-identities of Guangdong migrants. These terms said more about migrants from England or Canada West than they did about migrants from

28 Ibid., 476.
30 Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown*, 10-17.
31 Ibid., Chapter 2; The Chinese Immigration Act, R.S.C., ch. 67 (1885); An Act to Amend "The Chinese Immigration Act, R.S.C., ch. 67, 48-49 V, c. 71, s. 24 (June 23, 1887). An Act Further to Amend the Chinese Immigration Act, R.S.C., ch. 67, 48-49 V, c. 71, s. 24 (July 9, 1892); Chinese Immigration Act, ch. 38, s. 13-14 (1923).
Guangdong." He continues, stressing obvious ironies: "[The term] sojourner was applied to Guangdong migrants by those who defined themselves as racial others, homogenized them into a single group, and who themselves often came to BC to make fame and fortune and then return to the old country."34

Still, Anderson relates how Chinese people in Chinatown embraced this categorization as it allowed them official authority and coherence in legal issues, as well as in the eventual revitalization of their neighbourhood as a tourist and nightlife destination after the Second World War, on which the community could capitalize. She also speaks to the "reverse essentializing" of Europeans by the Chinese community, who when faced with racism, preferred to fall back on themselves, into the very Orientalized identity that was meant to decry their very presence. From this inward focus, they gained stability and power, maintaining their outsider status so that their identity and territory would be recognized.35

Stanley adds to the appropriation of this term by the Guangdong migrants by referring back to the establishment, by the Chinese merchants themselves, of community associations in Victoria and Vancouver in the 1880s and 1890s under the term "Chinese," which grouped together all migrants from China, regardless of their dissimilarities, in order to facilitate cultural cohesiveness and political organization. He contextualizes the term in today's society as having "variously an ethnic, a racial, or a national identification."36 I apply this term in my work, as well as "Chinese-Canadian," in reference to the immigrants from China who migrated to Canada, some of them remaining as settlers; these terms also apply to their descendants.

Romanization

I have used names of people, places and organizations as I have found them, in their romanized form. These follow the pinyin system, in accordance with the Chicago

33 Stanley, "Chinamen, Wherever We Go," 477.
34 Ibid., 7.
35 Anderson, Vancouver's Chinatown, 249.
36 Stanley, "Chinamen, Wherever We Go," 490.
Manual of Style. Chinese names are traditionally given with the last name stated first. All divergences from this tradition are based on the common usage of those names in English-language sources. Problems encountered in the recording of names and the determination of their proper order did in several cases complicate the identification of the deceased, but they did not skew data nor, as a whole, the research process.

Overview of Chapters

In Chapter 1, I situate the Chinese community both within the urban landscape of Vancouver and within the boundaries of Ocean View cemetery. I outline the origins of Vancouver's Chinatown and of the CBA, which was created to assist Chinese immigrants with their transition into the harsh realities of their life on the West Coast. I then explain how religious beliefs and politics hold sway over the finality of the Chinese life cycle and how the traditions of exhuming and repatriating Chinese remains to China have been conducted on the West Coast. The very existence of Chinatown, a Chinese ghetto created by the hegemonic pressures of European Vancouverites, and also of segregated burial sections in several cemeteries, provides the framework from which Chinese organizations and individuals would eventually attempt major changes in the burial practices at Ocean View.

Chapter 2 provides the first detailed history compiled of discriminatory practices in the cemeteries of the Lower Mainland, to better understand the importance of the evolution of the practices at Ocean View in favour of the Chinese community. Each family was faced with choices with respect to burial place and the permanence of that grave. My research has identified significant differences between locales, and variances between individual families with respect to the final resting place of their deceased. I discuss the political changes that China's Communist government brought upon century-old burial rituals practiced by the overseas Chinese in B.C., and compare their impact on the Chinese sections at Vancouver's Mountain View and Burnaby's Ocean View cemeteries, which display dramatic differences. I refer to the choices made by four different local families, some opting for a permanent grave, while others still considered repatriation of their remains. Extortion measures perpetrated during the 1940s and 1950s, in which the men of Vancouver's and Victoria's Chinatowns received threatening
letters from the People's Republic of China (PRC) demanding large sums of money in exchange for the safety of their relatives in the PRC may also have played a significant role in the CBA moving away from its role as a facilitator of repatriations, and thus in the reformulation of the self-identity of Chinese people in B.C. upon burial.

Chapter 3 explains how the new wave to the Lower Mainland of new Canadians from Hong Kong manifested itself in the 1980s-90s in modulations that transformed the architecture and design of Ocean View cemetery, while providing a new and firm presence for the Chinese community in that burial ground, in sync with its cultural needs, both new and traditional. Canada's new immigration laws allowed for a renewed Chinese community that arrived with riches in hand rather than solely in search thereof. I elucidate the neoliberal transformation of Ocean View's burial space into an appropriated space responding to this surge of economic power, which assisted in the establishment of Chinese people as full members of the larger community as well as in a "home" of their choosing and design, both in the land of the living and that of the dead. The new Chinese sections at Ocean View provided a material footprint for a community that had regained its vibrancy, its voice, and its visibility.

The conclusion will revisit how the life experience of Chinese immigrants played a role in the determination of their final burial place—in Canada or in China—until such a time that larger international issues narrowed their options. The changes in trans-Pacific political dynamics and their influence upon Chinese burial practices at Ocean View cemetery formulated a new social space for the Chinese people in the burial landscape, and indeed a new identity for them that matched their evolution in the greater community.

To begin to understand the very existence of the Mongolia plots, a basic comprehension is necessary of the history of Chinese people in B.C., of their isolation in Chinatowns, their death-related beliefs and rituals, and the political decrees that propagated or obstructed these practices. The first chapter will delve into these issues.
Chapter 1.

The Segregation of Chinese Remains

1.1. Post-Death Segregation

No person of Asian or African blood in any degree whatsoever shall be buried in any part of the Burial Park, except in that portion allotted and set apart for such purpose, and the conveyance of lots, or any interest therein, to such persons in any other part of the Burial Park is prohibited.\(^{37}\)

So stated the by-laws of Burnaby’s Ocean View Cemetery when it opened in 1919, relegating the deceased from all non-white communities to the burial section that was situated the farthest away from the memorial park’s front gate at the corner of Imperial Street and Patterson Avenue.\(^{38}\) This section was given the xenophobic name “Mongolia” in the burial records and the gravediggers’ daily workbooks, while most of the other sections bore innocuous tree names or names related to the British empire\(^ {39}\) (see Plates 1.2 and 1.3). "Mongolia,” however, was not even identified in the cemetery’s early maps and marketing documentation\(^ {40}\) (see Plate 1.3). It was not deemed of any significance by the mapmakers since European clients would not wish to be buried there anyhow, given the entrenched racist sentiments of the day. Chinese clients, for their part, would have no choice but to be buried there, so the maps were not created with them in mind. As well, it was probably thought best to keep white clients in the dark as to who might be buried in the section next to theirs.


\(^{38}\) See the current map of Ocean View Cemetery in Plate 2.2.

\(^{39}\) Ocean View burial register, “Mongolia/Willow” section; Ocean View gravediggers’ daybook, Mongolia/Willow section.

\(^{40}\) See the map of Ocean View Cemetery, ca. 1945, in Plate 2.3.
While a few members of the Japanese and Black communities, as well as two individuals whose death certificates simply identified them as of “Racial Origin Not Known”\(^1\) were also unceremoniously routed to this purloin for the racially undesirable, this thesis will focus on the Chinese graves in the Mongolia/Willow section, leaving the remaining non-white graves in this section to be studied by other students and scholars. Research on the Chinese graves will be based on parameters that differ from those involved in the remaining interments. The Japanese and Black communities evolved with their own community organizations, and following their own distinct political paths in B.C. Indeed, the residential and cultural areas of both these communities were eradicated in Vancouver when, in 1944, after the attack by Japan on Pearl Harbour, the Japanese were exiled en masse to internment camps from their homes in "Japantown" and anywhere else on the West Coast, and then later, in the 1970s, when the Black quarter named Hogan's Alley was bulldozed by the City of Vancouver to clear the land for highway construction, and purportedly, to ensure the social redemption of the area. The presence in Vancouver of Black and Japanese people was never again the same, nor did their respective identities develop in the same manner as that of Chinese people in the Lower Mainland. Any burial sections added as of 1945 at Ocean View with a view to cultural or racial alienation seem to refer only to the Chinese community.\(^2\) Any other non-white burials seem to have been integrated into "unrestricted" burial sections as of that year, though it could be safely assumed that few Japanese people would be requesting a burial plot for their deceased in the near future, given their mass exile away from the West Coast. The culturally rebarbative issues, therefore, that surface at Ocean View and that temporally—and more importantly, physically—transcend early discriminatory by-laws thus pertain more specifically to the Chinese community, hence the focus of this thesis.

\(^1\) B.C. Registration of Death certificates for Rebecca V. Wilson (B13159 / 1937-09-527457) and George W. Seals (B13159 / 1937-09-529292).

\(^2\) The sections named "Alberta" and "Alder" seem to include deceased solely from the Chinese community.
Plate 1.1. Ocean View Cemetery, Mongolia/Willow section, 2013

Note: Photo by the author.

Plate 1.2. Ocean View Cemetery, Gravediggers' Day Book and Burial Register for Mongolia/Willow section

Note: "Mongolia" has been scratched out and "Willow" written in above it. (The names have been blurred for reasons of confidentiality.) Photo by the author.
Plate 1.3. Ocean View cemetery, Mongolia / Willow section burial register

Note: "Willow" has simply been written in beside the original name, "Mongolia". (The names have been blurred for reasons of confidentiality.) (Photos by the author.)
1.2. The Origin of Vancouver's Chinatown

Before delving into the burial practices of the Chinese community in the Lower Mainland, it is essential to understand how that community came to be. When Chinese immigration to Canada's west coast began in the 1850s, the great majority of the migrants were men of rural origin, leaving home to earn money to send back to their families and then return there themselves to live in the comparative luxury that their wages would have earned them. These sojourners first followed the call of the California Gold Rush in 1858, and then continued chasing the dreams of wealth up to the Gold Rush of B.C.’s Fraser River and Cariboo areas in the 1850s and 1860s. Most of those who did not return to China immediately after their mining experiences settled in Vancouver in the area surrounding the intersection of Pender and Main streets that came to be known by the city's European community as "Chinatown."

Anderson shows that Vancouver's Chinatown was created by the European community as an artificial enclave, a social construct that was reviled in the newspapers as a "Celestial Cesspool" and in the city records as a "public nuisance." Historian Patricia Roy also refers to the assumption by white Canadians that the Chinese residents were inassimilable. Though Anderson does not refer to the Chinese section at Vancouver's Mountain View Cemetery in either the article above nor in her 1991 monograph on Vancouver's Chinatown, the caustic "imaginative geographies" that she

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44 Ibid., Part 1, ch. 2. The involvement of the Chinese immigrants in these gold rushes is also detailed in Mark Forsythe and Greg Dickson, *The Trail of 1858: British Columbia's Gold Rush Past* (Vancouver, Harbour Publishing, 2007), 78-84.
45 Pender and Main streets were then named Dupont St. and Westminster Ave., respectively, per Elizabeth Walker, *Street Names of Vancouver* (Vancouver: Vancouver Historical Society), 74 and 98.
ascripts to areas such as Chinatowns were clearly paralleled even in the post-mortem environment at Vancouver's Mountain View Cemetery. Anderson succinctly states that "For all contemporary purposes, the races were immutably separate." The extension of this exclusionary tendency into burial spaces will be demonstrated in this thesis by the study of Ocean View's development.

1.3. The Chinese Benevolent Association

In order to better manoeuvre around the barriers erected against their community, merchants in both Victoria and Vancouver created organizations that would allow them to protect their own and to bring about change. The Chinese Benevolent Association (CBA) was formed in Vancouver in 1895 by Chinese businessmen, to be the main representative body for Chinese people in the Lower Mainland. They followed the lead of Victoria's Chinese community, in which the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) was created in Victoria, B.C., a few years earlier in 1884. Both organizations promoted equality for their members within the larger community and attempted to protect Chinese commercial aspirations and livelihoods against discriminatory laws and the generally hostile milieu. Other associations (or shantang) were also established in order to group and provide assistance to those who had travelled from specific counties or districts in China, and clan associations (or fangkou) gathered together those bearing the same surname. One of the raisons d'être of these associations was to provide a burial insurance that assured not only the interment of

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49 Ibid., 594.
50 Ibid., 585.
51 "Chinese Benevolent Association of Vancouver," accessed January 5, 2013, http://www.cbavancouver.ca/. However, Wickberg, From China to Canada, 77, states that the CBA was informally established sometime between 1889 and 1896, and not registered under the B.C. Societies Act until 1906.
54 Ng, Chinese Community Leadership: Case Study of Victoria in Canada (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing), 22-4.
55 Ng, Chinese American Death Rituals, 6.
their members after death, but also the exhumation of their remains several years after their burial in order to return these to China for reburial with their ancestors.\textsuperscript{56} Chung and Wegars stipulate that the involvement of the county and clan associations in these activities stems from the fact that the cost of a burial plot was beyond the reach of any single Chinese worker, other than the merchants.\textsuperscript{57} This mortuary tradition was to prove vital in the establishment of Chinese burial spaces in any locale chosen abroad by Chinese immigrants. In effect, the CBA and CCBA took over the role of the Chinese nuclear family, a mostly non-existent entity in B.C., in order to accomplish and perpetuate these burial traditions.

\textsuperscript{56} Wickberg, \textit{From China to Canada}, 78. The CINARC website also states this as one of the main tasks of the CCBA when it was established in 1885. Chinese in Northwest America Research Committee (CINARC) CINARC 金山西北角 - 华裔研究中心, last updated February 26, 2013, http://www.cinarc.org/Death-2.html

\textsuperscript{57} Chung and Wegars, \textit{Chinese American Death Rituals}, 6.
Plate 1.4. Mountain View cemetery, Vancouver

Note: The "Old" section is the original cemetery.
a. Japanese and Chinese graves and Chinese altar, 1910. The small wooden posts are markers for Chinese graves (Philip Timms photo, Vancouver Public Library 7356)

b. Second Chinese altar, 2013 (Photo by the author.)

Plate 1.5.  *Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver, Chinese section*
1.4. Religious Beliefs—and Politics—Direct the Chinese Soul

The Chinese custom that most offended North American sensitivities was the exhumation of Chinese remains several years after death for their eventual return to China. Europeans were generally more comfortable with filling a grave than emptying it. The motivation behind disinterment was dual: salvation for the dead and felicity for the living. There exist a great number of combinations of beliefs in China pertaining to the soul, emanating from tenets melded from Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Christianity and folk beliefs. Historian and archaeologist Wendy L. Rouse explains that the basic conception of the Chinese soul is that it is composed of two elements: the *hun* and the *po*. In the *hun* is subsumed the person's spiritual and intellectual energy, and in the *po*, the physical presence of the individual. At death, the *hun* ascends to the realm of the immortals, but the *po* remains with the body.58 Historian Susan Naquin adds that the *po* becomes a transitional spirit, at home within the grave and the accompanying ancestral tablet on which its name is engraved. The *po* then may acquire the long-lasting power to assist the family or to cause it financial or physical harm if its own post-death needs are not met. From this belief stems the complex and demanding network of rituals related to "ancestor reverence," the more precise term coined by Chung and Wegars to replace the more commonly used "ancestor worship."59 Filial piety towards the deceased parent is a key component of these rituals, but the family as a whole is expected to respect a profusion of rituals that will ensure a successful long-term symbiotic relation between the living and the dead. This includes the exhumation process dreaded by the white community, a tradition observed mostly by the residents of Guangdong province, the place of origin of most Chinese-Canadians. For the Chinese abroad, the return of a person's remains to the ancestors' burial site was critical for the completion of the


deceased’s life cycle. If unfulfilled in this matter, the po became a homeless and malevolent ghost, to the dire detriment of its living relatives.\textsuperscript{60}

There was also a political motivation for the return of Chinese remains to the motherland: during the 1850s, when thousands of Chinese men were making their way to Canada and the United States, China’s Qing government ordained that the merchants and coolie brokers who signed up the migrants for work abroad were responsible for their return to China, including the return of their remains should they die overseas.\textsuperscript{61} The Chinese men who emigrated composed the greater part of the indentured work force. While the wealthy merchants and brokers could afford to look after their own interests when the time came for the repatriation of their own remains, it was to their advantage to encourage their contracted workers to join the shantang and fangkou and to buy into their burial insurance policies so as to ensure that this duty was accomplished.

The Chinese sojourners to Canada were thus bound by sacred duty as well as by official proclamation—and indeed by the terrifying fear of the lack of closure in their cycle of life and death—to ensure their remains were returned to lie beside their ancestors.

1.5. The Exhumation and Repatriation of Chinese Remains

The website of the Chinese in Northwest America Research Committee (CINARC) provides the clearest information on the process of the exhumation and the processing of bones in Canada.\textsuperscript{62} The CBA and CCBA worked together with the various shantang and fangkou in coordinating and executing these tasks. Professional


exhumers\textsuperscript{63} (also referred to as bone collectors\textsuperscript{64} or bone diggers\textsuperscript{65}) were hired by the *shantang* and *fangkou* (and later directly by the CBA and CCBA on behalf of all the other organizations)\textsuperscript{66} in order to visit all the burial sites of Chinese workers and residents reported to them by the various communities across Canada. The bone collectors were shunned, since their work with the dead made them anathema in both European and Chinese society.\textsuperscript{67} In the Chinese community, any person working with the dead was deemed tainted and their company was thus avoided.\textsuperscript{68} In the European community, the idea of disinterring bodies was deemed horrific, so those associated with the process were beyond contempt.\textsuperscript{69} Indeed, the dishevelled condition of a burial ground after the disinterment of its remains was the cause for much discontent in white parlours and newspaper pages.\textsuperscript{70}

The bone collector’s job was exacting and tiring. Bones were carefully dug up, ritually cleaned and then packaged in well-identified containers. The entire skeleton had to be retrieved, as only the reburial of complete remains would allow the eventual "freeing" of the deceased’s soul.\textsuperscript{71} Chinese burials were usually shallow to allow for the rapid deterioration of the body and to facilitate its exhumation.\textsuperscript{72} After each cycle of disinterment in Canada, which took exhumers across the country,\textsuperscript{73} the remains made their way to Victoria, where they were stored in the bone house designated for this
purpose, until the next major shipment of bones back to China (via Hong Kong). The main shipment centres in the United States were Sacramento, San Francisco, and Honolulu. The cycle was repeated once every seven years.74

Exhumed bones sent to Victoria were, until 1906, stored in a building on Store Street (near Chatham Street) in Victoria's Chinatown, that was repurposed as a bone house (or "Chinese Dead House")75 by the Chinese community. When the Chinese cemetery was established at Foul Point in Victoria in 1903,76 a bone house was built there in 190777 to replace the original one in the downtown area.78 All bone shipments repatriated to China from any country were shipped to the Tung Wah Hospital in Hong Kong, from where the individual remains were redirected to their respective villages across China.79 While the first shipment of bones back to China from San Francisco took place in 1855,80 it was not until 1909 that the first shipment coordinated by the CCBA left Victoria for Hong Kong.81 Some smaller shipments had been made from B.C. in previous

74 Lai, "The Chinese Cemetery in Victoria," 32. However, American exhumations were usually conducted within a decade of the burial. (Rouse, "What We Didn't Understand," Greenwood, "Old Rituals in New Lands," and Linda Sun Crowder, "The Chinese Mortuary Tradition in San Francisco Chinatown," in Chung and Wegars, Chinese American Death Rituals, 37, 245 and 199 respectively.)

75 Morton, In the Sea of Sterile Mountains, 35.


77 Ibid., 32. The film From Harling Point provides a good history of this site. From Harling Point, directed by Ling Chiu (National Film Board of Canada/Selwyn Jacob, 2003), http://www.nfb.ca/film/from_harling_point


80 Chung and Wegars, Chinese American Death Rituals, 6.

years, organized by the various Chinese aid associations. In 1937, the Canada Overseas Chinese Amalgamated Exhumation Board (COACEB), the origins of which remain unknown, became involved in these duties, posting several announcements in *The Chinese Times* (*Da Han Gong Bao*) about upcoming registrations of remains headed for China, as well as advertisements looking to hire bone collectors, and seeking donations from the Chinese community to contribute to this task (*The Chinese Times, July 3, 1937*). The following year, it was announced in the same newspaper that eighty bodies were ready to be moved back to China from the Victoria bone house (*The Chinese Times, April 13, 1938*). These references to burial traditions were among the few found in Chinatown's Chinese-language press.

The COACEB's late 1930s job ads for bone diggers in *The Chinese Times* were a first and last such entry of this type in this major publication; the closure of repatriations within the next planned repatriation cycle put an end to this employment opportunity. Mar and Roy both mention in numerous instances how the Chinatown enclave remained insular with respect to its own business, relying on its own power brokers to achieve those projects that could not easily be broached outside its invisible town walls. Any other quests for exhumers may well have been conducted by word of mouth or within circles more closely affiliated with the network of aid associations and the COACEB.

Perhaps in a continuance of the European community's fascination with what it saw as macabre rituals, it is from "white" English-language newspapers that I have been able to compile data regarding disinterments from Vancouver and New Westminster cemeteries for shipment to the bone house in Victoria, the requisite stop-over on their way to Hong Kong and later to the Chinese Mainland. One 1907 article refers to six

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82 Ibid., 32.
84 *The Chinese Times. (Da Han Gongbao).* Multicultural Canada. April 13, 1938. http://multiculturalcanada.ca/node/95088
85 Mar, *Brokering Belonging*; and Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown.*
individuals being "dragged from their resting places" in the Old [Chinese] Cemetery on Eighth Street in New Westminster (Vancouver Province, June 5, 1907). Victoria's Daily Colonist reported that same year that over 80 bodies from New Westminster would be recovered by end of summer from the "old Douglas road cemetery where the graves of the Celestials are all being reopened as the Chinese to be exported are all 'dead men'" (Daily Colonist, June 6, 1907).

It is also only in the white press, thus far, that can be found a reference to the CBA's 1907 shipment of 112 Vancouver sets of bones from Victoria to Hong Kong (Victoria Daily Colonist, July 5, 1907). This was prior to the mass shipments coordinated by the CCBA that began two years later. A surprising article from the Victoria Daily Colonist in 1910 explains at length how the bones of 81 individuals from Chicago, "all the bones of the dead Chinamen of the middle western state that were interred in the Chinese graveyards," would be arriving in Victoria for shipment back to China. This is the first indication found of American remains being transited via Victoria rather than San Francisco, Sacramento or Honolulu (Victoria Daily Colonist, January 29, 1910).

Even in 1938, the front page of the Vancouver Province reported that despite the Sino-Japanese War, plans were still underway for the disinterment of 82 Chinese bodies from New Westminster for shipment to Victoria's bone house, following the more than 200 exhumed from Mountain View in Vancouver the previous year, and in anticipation of 800 additional bodies to be exhumed that summer in Vancouver cemeteries [though this is pluralized, Vancouver had but one public cemetery; this must then refer to cemeteries in the Lower Mainland] (Vancouver Province, April 20, 1938). Cemetery records would indicate that the last disinterment at Mountain View took place in 1937, and in New Westminster, in 1937-38. Even with the Sino-Japanese War going on, the exhumations continued unabated.

86 “Remains of Orientals Sent Back to China,” Vancouver Province, June 5, 1907, 10.
87 “Export Dead Chinaman,” Daily Colonist, June 6, 1907, 3.
90 “Bodies of 1000 Chinamen To Be Shipped Back to Orient,” Vancouver Province, April 20, 1938, 1.
This chapter thus highlights the place that was ascribed to the Chinese immigrant in society, both geographically and spiritually. Ocean View cemetery's by-laws ensured their banishment well beyond any contact with visitors to its grounds, and their invisibility was further ensured by the site's maps, which specifically dissimulated the segregated sections, leaving them nameless in a seeming sea of white-only graves. Officially, only those who were kept apart knew of the practice, an obligation foisted onto them in their times of grief. Neither could they feel any affinity with the name of their original plot, since the term "Mongolia" meant nothing to them, other than a slur.

The expectations of filial piety towards the deceased could rarely be fulfilled, given the nature of the Chinese immigrant profile, so these duties were taken over by the CBA in the Lower Mainland. While the CBA tried to respond to the religious needs of its members with respect to burial, exhumation and repatriation, it also attempted to create a political nucleus from which the Chinese community could gain power and influence, and even its eventual rightful place in society. The CBA's influence did extend into the cemetery, but by the 1920s, some Chinese immigrants were thinking quite differently about their status in B.C., including that of their remains. The sojourner within had grown roots.

1.6. A Challenging Cultural Scenario

In Vancouver, Chinese immigrants thus were forced to live apart in Chinatown, an artificial space created by the hegemonic European community. This quarter perpetuated the "otherness" of Chinese people within that society, and prevented a cultural expansion of their own design. Chinese merchants established organizations such as the CBA to respond to the needs of this ghettoized society, to fill in the void of family ties, and to allow the performance of rituals and the completion of the religious life cycle of the deceased.

The Chinese-language press mostly remained silent regarding its death rituals, while its English-language counterpart often emphasized their alien nature. Neither media voice encouraged a more pronounced or positive place for the Chinese community, either in the urban or the funerary spheres. However, the processes that
would lead to the transformation of the Chinese community in both milieus, allowing for both cultural retention and transformation, were already in motion.

Historian Shelly Chan explains how during the war period that enveloped China (1937-1945), a true double identity was fostered in Vancouver's Chinese community, one that brought the Chinese people together as Canadians to come to the aid of those they had left behind in China. 91 To understand the rethinking by the Chinese community of its place in society—and, in particular, in the cemetery—the next chapter provides an overview of the treatment of Chinese people in Lower Mainland cemeteries, as well as the factors, both personal and political, that acted upon this evolution.

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Chapter 2.

The History of Racism in Lower Mainland Cemeteries

Since the arrival of Europeans to the Lower Mainland, the perpetuation of their hegemonic tendencies was evinced even in their burial places, where the separation of certain cultural communities remained sacrosanct well into the 1970s. The passing in B.C., one hundred years earlier, of the first law regulating cemeteries ensured that cemetery trustees could not "interfere directly or indirectly with the performance of any religious ceremony in the burial of the dead according to the usage of the communion to which the deceased may have belonged" and allowed "...any religious body, at their expense, to erect for their use a mortuary chapel or building for the celebration of any burial service...". However the Act made no mention of cultural groups and stopped short of preventing discrimination and segregation in B.C. cemeteries.\(^92\)

An overview of such practices in the cemeteries of the Lower Mainland is crucial to understanding how and why Chinese migrants were perceived as unwelcome outsiders. Segregation in the burial place was one method by which Europeans sustained the desire among Chinese immigrants to return home, dead or alive, after their work experience in B.C. By so doing, these immigrants were never able to claim an identity of their own, nor one of their own construction. Everything about their presence in B.C.—their homes in Chinatowns, their relegation to a pool of cheap labour and to demeaning jobs, and indeed their segregated and temporary burial places—branded them as alien.

2.1. Stanley Park, Vancouver

The first cemetery used by the European residents of Gastown (which was named Granville in 1870 and became Vancouver in 1886) was Deadman's Island, a small peninsula on the southeast shore of Stanley Park. The island, however, had a much longer history as a burial ground. For centuries, First Nations used this island as the repository for their deceased. The site was known to the Squamish as Mem-Loose-Siwash-il-la-hie, translated as "village of dead men". The eventual slaughter on this site of 200 Squamish warriors by an enemy northern band saw it rebaptized as the "Island of Dead Men," which was later reinterpreted as "Deadman's Island" by the new colonizers. The First Nations dead were usually encased in burial boxes or wrapped in blankets, then placed in the tree branches, where the remains, blankets and boxes were allowed to deteriorate and fall back to earth, thus completing the full life cycle of the deceased.

These burials were clearly visible from the opposite shore in the 1860s and 1870s, where the burgeoning Gastown/Granville townsite was being established. As the new community required gravesites, the new residents rowed the remains of their deceased over to Deadman's Island for burial. They remain there to this day. Still, the site gained a reputation as the resting place for undesirables and the socially problematic: Chinese workers, British sailors, infants (presumably unbaptized), suicides, and squatters. The smallpox epidemic of 1888 saw the unfavourable standing of this

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burial grounds reinforced when the affected were lodged there in a quarantined pesthouse, only to be buried alongside it shortly thereafter. Its very association with the First Nations and Chinese immigrants thus designated Deadman's Island as a resting place for the pagan, the unchristened, and the socially and culturally anathematized.

A short distance away in Stanley Park, on the roadbed and hillside between the present-day locations of the Nine O'clock Gun and the Brockton Point Lighthouse, an alternate pioneer cemetery was also developed in the late 1880s, where First Nations tree burials were also already common. This new cemetery served those families who did not wish to taint their deceased by burial at Deadman's Island. As many as 200 individuals were buried on this substitutive strip of land, including Chinese pioneers, as well as First Nations members who later abandoned above-ground burials. This second burial site seems to have been more integrated and inclusive than the one on Deadman's Island. When the City of Vancouver created its first official cemetery in 1886, most of the bodies in the Brockton Point area were left in situ, shortly to be paved over during the construction of the park's perimeter road. While local historian Richard M. Steele confirms this, photographers Lynn Vardeman and Freda Carr quote an 1893 excerpt from the Parks Board Minutes, which states that the "Chinese [were] ordered to remove bodies of relatives in Stanley Park, as the religious rite of lighting fires at graves is endangering [the] forest." Such were the antecedents of the city's first official cemetery, established in 1886 far from the growing city, on the Cemetery Road (later Fraser Street) at 33rd Avenue.


Ibid., 43-47.

After simply being referred to as "the Cemetery", it was named Mountain View Cemetery in 1903, as the result of a public naming contest.99

2.2. Mountain View Cemetery, Vancouver

From its opening, Vancouver's municipal authorities engaged in the cultural segregation of its graves. It followed the lead of Victoria's Ross Bay Cemetery which, when it opened in 1872, had circumscribed "heathens" (mostly Chinese Buddhists and non-Christian First Nations) to the area furthest from its entrance.100 Ross Bay was composed of areas reserved for the members of five distinct Christian congregations, and a special section for "Aborigines and Mongolians not attached to any of [these] churches," as well as a small public burial area.101 Historian John Adams specifies that this was at the furthest southwestern corner of the cemetery, adjacent to the potter's field, and almost on the beach along Dallas Road. Journalist Harald Gunderson adds: "A letter from the bishop, clergy and laity of the Church of England stated their position on church allotments quite clearly. They feared specifically that, 'The Buddhist may, and certainly will as the Chinese, become wealthy, have his heathen inscription in the midst of Christian symbols...". 102 No other non-European groups were forced to use the outlying locations within Ross Bay cemetery. When the Chinese graves placed closest to the beach began being eroded by the waves, the CCBA opened in 1902 its own cemetery at what is now called Harling Point, seeking a site that would offer its members a more respectful burial site, as well as one with better feng-shui. After the disturbing of

100 John Adams, Historic Guide to Ross Bay Cemetery (Victoria, B.C.: Sono Nis Press, 1998), 6 and 34. Lai, "The Chinese Cemetery in Victoria," 24, also states that in Victoria's first cemetery, the Quadra Street Cemetery, now known as Pioneer Square, used from 1858 to 1873, Chinese graves were also set to the side, in its northeast corner.
102 Gunderson, Funeral Service, 224.
some Chinese graves by Ross Bay staff, the CCBA moved its deceased to Harling Point in 1909.\(^{103}\)

When Mountain View opened, per the transcript of an interview with city pioneer Frank J. Scott conducted by the Vancouver City Archivist, Chinese people could not be buried there; they had to continue using Deadman's Island as a resting place.\(^{104}\) A December 1890 letter from lawyer John Boulthie to the City Clerk stipulated that he had been hired by "a number of Chinese" to obtain a small burial area for the Chinese community at Mountain View, preferably along its westerly boundary [probably the best feng-shui location].\(^{105}\) However, the City of Vancouver relegated Japanese, Chinese and also Jewish graves to the farthest extremity of its burial grounds, in this case, to its southern end (see Plate 1.4). The Orthodox Jewish communities of both Victoria and Vancouver, however, had sought from the outset to actually self-segregate their burial spaces for religious purposes by further enclosing their distanced burial grounds within a wrought-iron fence.\(^{106}\) The Chinese burials, however, were truly pushed to the furthest perimeter of the burial grounds. A version of the cemetery's website claimed that "it became a custom for families from the Chinese community to choose grave sites next to those of other Chinese families."\(^{107}\) This is not wholly accurate. In 1890,\(^{108}\) the CBA had


\(^{105}\) John Boulthie to Vancouver City Clerk Thomas F. McGuigan, December 22, 1890, City of Vancouver Correspondence, CVA microfiche, MCR 3-3, 2563 / RG2 A1 vol. 3, 1890.

\(^{106}\) This area was secured in Vancouver by then mayor David Oppenheimer, a member of this religious community. (The Scribe: The Journal of the Jewish Historical Society of B.C. 23, no. 2:15 (2003); The Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia, In the Footsteps of Jewish Vancouver 1886-2006, 19; and Vancouver Public Library, photo VPL 7359, 1910.)


\(^{108}\) City of Vancouver Archives photo CVA 152-81, shows the Chinese altar and burners in this section, ca. 1889. The tree line marking the border of the cemetery against the still forested landscape appears immediately behind the altar, near the cemetery's southeast extremity.
purchased 31 lots, each containing 16 graves, in which to bury its members, much as the Freemasons, the Knights of Pythias, and other fraternal organizations would do a few years later. However, the lots allocated to the CBA were granted only at the furthest extremity of the cemetery, rather than in the prime landscaped locations on the site later allocated to the other fraternal organizations.110 A 1947 letter and petition sent to the Mayor by the neighbours of Mountain View provides a concise but clear view of the community's attitudes towards the Chinese section in that cemetery. The originators of the letter did not make themselves known, but the signatories protested against the encroachment of a new cemetery section, which they foresaw would also be for the use of the Chinese community, of the "unsightly appearance" of the Chinese section, and as well, that the "ensuing effect on property values will be well understood."111

Is it surprising to note that the City of Vancouver by-laws relevant to the presence of Chinese plots at Mountain View made no mention of their segregation. This very silence in their records seems to matter-of-factly recognize that the "best" grounds were reserved for their European clients, in the same way that it was taken for granted that Asians in "white" society would know their place in day-to-day life. With respect to Chinese graves, Mountain View's by-laws only mention costs and practicalities pertaining to their burials and exhumations, and safety concerns related to the burning of offerings at the altar erected by the CBA within its section.112 These concerns echo those that saw Chinese remains banished from Stanley Park's Brockton Point cemetery in 1893. One must still acknowledge that the peripheral positioning by cemetery administrators of Chinese gravesites within the cemetery mirrored that of the ghettoization of the Chinese community in the urban landscape of Vancouver itself.


110 Lorraine Irving, in documentation sent to the author, 1992. Three Masonic Lodges, the Independent Order of Oddfellows, the Knights of Pythias and the Ancient Order of Foresters all purchased groups of lots for their members in 1902-03.

111 Petition letter from residents to Vancouver Mayor and Aldermen, received Oct. 1, 1947. City of Vancouver Correspondence, CVA 28-D-1, file 4 − Cemetery matters 1947.

112 City of Vancouver By-law no. 454, in The British Columbia Gazette, September 17, 1903, § 2075 and 2076; Cemetery By-law [...], City of Vancouver no. 1545, and Mountain View Cemetery Perpetual Maintenance By-law [...], City of Vancouver By-law no. 2287: Wrigley Printing Co., 1935, clause 31, 11; Public Utilities Commission, Regulations under the Cemeteries Act, May 1956, clause 17, 3.
2.3. The CBA at Mountain View Cemetery

When the CBA purchased its 31 lots of 16 graves (a total of 496 grave sites) prior to 1889, it was thus not only with the mandate of ensuring the availability of proper burial plots for its members, but also to facilitate their regular and unencumbered exhumation, in order to repatriate the remains back to China. While four major repatriations from the bone house in Victoria took place, in 1909, 1916, 1923, and 1930, Mountain View experienced only two mass exhumations of its Chinese remains, in 1919 and 1927. Selected remains were also disinterred in 1937. During each of the 1919 and 1927 disinterments, the remains of up to 496 individuals (a total of up to 992) would have been transported to Victoria's bone house to await the next transport to Hong Kong, in seven- to ten-year intervals.

Only one woman, a rarity abroad in her own right, was buried in this section before 1927, and her remains were repatriated to China along with the rest of the male remains. This was out of the ordinary in that women were less likely to have their remains returned to China. Abraham and Wegars state that within the Chinese community, the "emphasis on patrilineal descent and the lack of respect accorded women were contributing factors. In addition, the bringing of Chinese women to the United States [and Canada] removed them from the familial system in which they would become the curators of their husband's filial obligations. This may mean that some Chinese cemeteries, considered empty through removal, are actually still holding female remains.

113 Some earlier transports were organized by individual Chinese clan or county associations prior to 1909: Lai, "The Chinese Cemetery in Victoria," 32 and 35; and Burial registers, Mountain View Cemetery, "Chinese Section," sections 4/04 and 3/04; Glen Hodges, in discussion with the author, June 30, 2011 and July 19, 2013; and July 19, 2013.

114 Burial registers, Mountain View Cemetery, "Chinese Section," sections 4/04 and 3/04; Glen Hodges, in discussion with the author, June 30, 2011 and July 19, 2013; and July 19, 2013; and Pasacreta, "White Tigers and Azure Dragons," 66-67. Exhumation permit No.221A, dated July 27, 1937, stored at Mountain View, gives permission to the Chong Howe Tong Society to conduct the exhumation of a number of individuals whose names appear on a list (which has not yet been found) for shipment to China. It is interesting to note that it is not the CBA conducting this exhumation in 1937, though it was deemed responsible for such rituals at that time in Vancouver.

burials. Greenwood adds that "women, infants, and victims of violence were less apt to be removed, either for return to China or for relocation to a different local cemetery." 

The exact number of individuals repatriated from Mountain View will never be known. When the society organizing a disinterment paid the related fees at Vancouver City Hall, a line was drawn over the name of the interred on the specific line in City Hall's copy of the burial register for that section; the scratched-out name still remained legible. However, at the cemetery itself, staff simply erased the name from that line in their copy of the register (see Plate 1.3). Thus, when the next interment for that plot was paid for, the City Hall clerk added, in City Hall's copy of the burial register, the name of the next person to be interred just above the previous scratched-out name, whereas at the cemetery, the new name was written on top of the previous erasure. These dual practices complicate research, and have led to some inconsistencies between the two record-keeping systems. The burial records do indicate, however, that all of the CBA graves were filled up again a second and a third time, and indeed a fourth time in the case of the 1937 disinterments.

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Plate 2.1. Mountain View cemetery Chinese section burial registrations

Note. The names of the first and second individuals disinterred from each plot have been crossed out, and the third burials appear on another page; photo courtesy of Mountain View Burial Park.
Grave markers for these burials were simply small wooden stakes or boards that were discarded upon exhumation.119 This process, while fulfilling a crucial mandate that the Chinese benevolent associations set for themselves, in effect created at Mountain View some gaps in the historical record with respect to interments in the Chinese section. Given the somewhat simplistic and conflicting record-keeping procedures adopted for the CBA burial section, there seems to have been less importance given by the cemetery administrators to the correct recording of these burials and disinterments than there potentially could have been. The ritual of disinterment and the related administrative duties in the cemetery registers echoed the foreign nature attributed to the Chinese community by European residents and highlighted the temporary nature of their presence in B.C. The lack of a permanent Chinese burial space in the cemetery dissociated that community from the perception of a long-term historical presence. These factors perhaps justified, prior to the 1950s, these less than stellar record-keeping practices.

2.4. New Westminster’s Cemeteries

Since 1860, the city of New Westminster had operated a public cemetery known as the Douglas Road Cemetery or the Old Cemetery at the southeast corner of Douglas Road (today’s Canada Way / 8th Street) and 10th Avenue. In 1884, Mayor Robert Dickinson stated that "... Chinamen, criminals and Indians and the unfortunate who had no friends were buried there...".120 In 1892, the City granted permission to the Chinese community to use a large tract of land alongside 8th Street, probably to the south of the original cemetery site. In 1909, New Westminster’s Chinese community acquired a lease from the City for two acres at the north end of the Douglas Road Cemetery for its

exclusive use, and it became known as the Chinese cemetery. A public petition against the expansion of the Chinese section was immediately presented to Council, but the decision was not reversed. However, in 1914, City Council terminated its lease to the Chinese Benevolent Association of New Westminster, perhaps in anticipation of the proposed closure of the Douglas Road Cemetery in 1917. By then, various sections of the Douglas Road Cemetery included the Pioneer Cemetery, the Asylum Cemetery Grounds (for the deceased from the city's psychiatric hospital), and the Isolation Hospital Cemetery Grounds (for the deceased from a quarantine hospital, also located on site). The cemetery eventually closed in 1920, but burials still went on there for several years.

Local merchant Kwong Man Yuen had already carried out exhumations for repatriation purposes from this cemetery in 1890, when he disinterred 80 bodies for shipment to China. This work was later taken over by the local CBA. Newspaper reports in 1907 refer to the disinterment of the remains of another 86 individuals from this cemetery for their transfer to China (Vancouver Province, June 5, 1907; and Daily Colonist, June 6, 1907).

When the Douglas Road cemetery ceased its operations, the Fraser Cemetery, opened in 1870 at Richmond and Cumberland streets in New Westminster, became the destination of all remains from that city; it is the oldest municipal cemetery still

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124 "Remains of Orientals Sent Back to China," Vancouver Province, June 5, 1907, 10; and "Export Dead Chinaman," Daily Colonist, June 6, 1907, 3.
operational in the Lower Mainland. There are four sections in the oldest area, "Old Fraser," in which 181 graves of Chinese people are situated. As in Vancouver and Burnaby, Chinese graves were pushed to the extreme periphery of the cemetery. Though segregated, the site selected by the cemetery administrators for the Chinese burials, on its western boundary, turned out to offer the best *feng-shui* attributes of the entire cemetery. Similarly to Mountain View, Chinese remains at Fraser cemetery were disinterred for repatriation to China, though mostly in 1937 and 1938. Over 50 of the graves were reused after the first occupants were repatriated, and the remains of a few individuals were eventually reburied in their original plots—alongside or on top of their new occupants—after they were returned to Fraser Cemetery from Harling Point Cemetery in Victoria, once repatriations to China ceased in 1949.

By the Second World War, New Westminster's old Chinatown had been demolished and its inhabitants eventually dispersed throughout the Lower Mainland. Though the number of disinterred Chinese remains from the earlier Chinese cemetery is not known, it can be assumed that most would have been exhumed, since the process of repatriation was unencumbered at that point. Some of the pioneers from the Pioneer section were moved to the Fraser cemetery, but hundreds of other graves were never moved after the cemetery's actual closing in 1920. Over the next 25 years, the site was developed and a medley of structures and uses created a new vernacular stratigraphy over the space previously occupied by the cemetery—houses, a golf course, a Public Works yard and a military camp. Such was the insouciance associated with what should have been recognized as a respected burial grounds and an historical resource that New Westminster Secondary School was erected in 1948-49 right over the cemetery. In 2008, development plans including the replacement of the existing school with a newer building finally raised a public furore, since the cemetery would again be desecrated.

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126 The Fraser Cemetery information was obtained from researcher Dale Miller by e-mail to the author, July 17, 2013. Her sources include the Fraser Cemetery plot and interment books, the funeral records of S. Bowell and Sons, and the New Westminster City Council Minutes.
The City commissioned two studies, and a 2009 Engineering Department Report recommended that portions of the site be preserved and designated as a cemetery, though in the form of a public park. While the go-ahead was given for construction of the school on adjacent land in 2012, the Chinese community and the Qayqayt and Tsilhqot'in First Nations are still following the project closely and maintain their protests at the lack of transparency regarding the development. There is no assurance at this point that the old Chinese Cemetery will be respected during the upcoming construction.

129 Golder, Summary Report; and Sense of History, Probability of Discovering.
2.5. Ocean View Cemetery, Burnaby

Plate 2.2. Ocean View cemetery map, 2011

Note. The Willow section, formerly named Mongolia, is near the centre.
Just east of Vancouver, Burnaby’s population was growing steadily into the 1920s, with a population of about 20,000 by 1925.\(^{131}\) The need for burial facilities within the municipality was obvious. Lieut. Col. G.H. Dorrell (\textit{Daily Colonist}, December 31, 1918)\(^{132}\) led a group of investors in 1918 in the creation of the Ocean View Cemetery Company, which in 1919 opened Burnaby’s first non-sectarian cemetery at the corner of Imperial Street and Patterson Avenue.\(^{133}\) Most of the original sections open for burials bore patriotic names related to the British Empire: Imperial, Crown, Empire, Dominion, and National.\(^{134}\) No Chinese burials were recorded in those early years, as the tendency was still for the Chinese community to seek burial in the plots owned by the CBA at Vancouver’s Mountain View cemetery.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, when further burial sections were added, most of these bore names related to religion or trees: Calvary, Poplar, Pine, Maple, Heather, Holly and Laurel. The Calvary section, which would eventually multiply to 23 separate numbered sections, was reserved from the outset for the burial of Roman Catholics, a surprising designation for what was advertised as a non-sectarian cemetery.\(^{135}\) What remains the smallest section in the cemetery today also opened ca. 1919 on the new extreme periphery of the cemetery, but its name, "Mongolia," did not appear at all in its promotional literature, nor on the bird's-eye-view photo map that was used by Ocean View’s sales department in its office and promotional publications (see Plate 2.3).\(^{136}\) Though none of the available current or previous administrators of the cemetery can recall any pertinent details, in all likelihood, Ocean View’s management did not wish to draw attention to the section they had segregated in the By-Laws and in which all non-


\(^{132}\) Written as Darrall in "Proposal for Park Cemetery," \textit{Daily Colonist}, December 31, 1918, 7;


\(^{134}\) See Plate 2.2.


\(^{136}\) Ocean View Cemetery, ca. 1945 site photo map; and \textit{Ocean View: The Garden of Memories}, Great West Lithographers Limited, (with bird's eye view site photo map, 11-12), ca. 1945.
Europeans were to be buried as a result (By-Law 35, which appears at the beginning of Chapter 1). As stated earlier, in the gravediggers’ daybook from this period, any person they interred in this section was listed on pages bearing the racist title "Mongolia," even though several Japanese and Blacks also found their last resting place there, and none of the Chinese immigrants were actually from Mongolia\textsuperscript{137} (see Appendix for a detailed breakdown of the interred by community\textsuperscript{138}). Everyone buried there was denied respect not only by this physical marginalization but also by this callous bracketing and nomenclature.

Mongolia is matched in size only by the very next section to the north, "Elks," so named when it was sold in 1937 to the fraternal group called The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. The great majority of Ocean View's sections were considerably larger from the onset. The Willow section contains 114 graves, of which four are reported empty in the burial ledger. Between the 1920s and the 2000s, four graves were purchased by Japanese families; and seven, by members of the Black community; and two became the final resting places of a man and a woman branded as of "Racial Origin Not Known" on their death certificates.\textsuperscript{139} The simple fact that they could not have themselves categorized racially as members of the hegemonic "white" majority relegated them to the Mongolia section for burial.\textsuperscript{140} My assumption is that they were of mixed ancestry, which at that time merited dissociation.

\textsuperscript{137} Ocean View Cemetery, gravediggers' daybook, Mongolia/Willow section.
\textsuperscript{138} The data for Appendix A has been drawn from the Ocean View cemetery burial registers and the death certificates of all those buried in Mongolia/Willow.
\textsuperscript{139} Ocean View cemetery burial records, Mongolia/Willow section; and death certificates for Rebecca V. Wilson and George W. Seals (plots numbers 118-119).
\textsuperscript{140} A point of interest: the Chinese and Black communities of Vancouver were neighbours in life in Chinatown, Strathcona and Hogan's Alley. Funerary protocol dictated that they were to remain neighbours in death as well.
Plate 2.3. Ocean View cemetery map, ca. 1945
Individual members of the Chinese community purchased the remaining 97 graves, mostly between 1929 and 1945. This purchase of a plot and stone or bronze marker in itself forms the first significant issue relevant to the evolution of Chinese burials at Ocean View, as it indicates a choice of action taken by the purchaser, who selected not to act on the burial insurance that the deceased would have previously taken out with the CBA, for eventual burial at Mountain View in Vancouver. The second issue of great significance about Mongolia/Willow section is that while close to a thousand disinterments took place out of Vancouver's cemetery during the very same time period, Ocean View's management has confirmed that not one single disinterment for repatriation purposes took place at Ocean View. The records do indicate that some exhumations did occur in and from this section, and the related fees appear in the By-laws, but these are explained as follows: one was moved to the Alberta section; two were moved within the Mongolia/Willow section; one was moved to Scarborough, ON; and one move is not further explained. Neither the records nor the collective memories of the staff refer to any repatriations to China from this cemetery. Though the lack of evidence cannot totally infer the absolute absence of repatriations from Ocean View to China, the records seem fairly clear to that effect. These differentiations regarding the treatment of Chinese burials at Vancouver's Mountain View cemetery and Burnaby's Ocean View cemetery are a key indicator to the evolution of Chinese burial practices in the Lower Mainland.

It was not until 1929 that burials began in the Mongolia section. Leong Chang See and Jang Kwai Chong were the first interred there, both in 1929, and their plots were both adorned with engraved stone grave markers, very much in the western style, an indication of permanency, given the costs involved. These two family names do not stand out among those of wealthy merchants or power brokers in the 1920s Chinatown, so their graves are conspicuous at Ocean View. It remains unknown why

141 Ocean View Cemetery, By-Laws Including Those Related to the Abbey, Vancouver, 1931, regulations 40-42.
142 Leong Chang See was buried March 16, 1929. A little over a month later, on June 29, 1929, Jang Kwai Chong was buried in the plot next to hers. Interestingly, Jang's remains were first buried in grave number 2, and were later moved to grave number 40. The burial register provides no reason for this move, but it indicates that grave number 2 has remained empty ever since.
these individuals and most of those who followed them chose to be buried permanently at Ocean View (specifically in the Mongolia/Willow section), rather than temporarily at Mountain View in Vancouver, with a view to repatriation. The death certificates of those interred there indicate a cross-section of social backgrounds, so the choice was not necessarily motivated by wealth or social stature. Jang lived on Columbia Avenue in Vancouver's Chinatown, and Leong, on Dundas Street, near Hastings Park in Vancouver, so they had easy access to both cemeteries. Still, only the choice of Mountain View would have ensured a return of their remains back to their ancestral lands, should they have selected that option. Though the last exhumations at Mountain View occurred in 1937, there was no way of knowing at that point that war and politics would prevent further repatriations from Vancouver. Also, the cost of the grave in this section in 1930 at Ocean View was $30 (not taking into account the high cost of the granite or bronze marker), which was at least three times as much as burial, exhumation and repatriation would have cost the deceased or their relatives at Mountain View. All of these facts reinforce the permanent nature I perceive of these early Chinese burials in the Mongolia section at Ocean View.

The families of 95 other Chinese individuals also chose a permanent resting place at Ocean View, with all but six doing so before the end of the Second World War, when eventual repatriation could still have been considered an option for these deceased, via burial in Vancouver. Not all of their graves, however, bear grave markers, but they do so in approximately the same proportions as in all other burial sections. The lack of a grave marker in Mongolia can thus not be deemed an indicator of a planned eventual disinterment.

It seems that the Mongolia/Willow section would have been considered "full" in 1945, but at least four of the six individuals buried there after 1945 found permanent rest there beside the earlier graves of family members. By 1945, however, might they have had more freedom to be buried elsewhere at Ocean View? The cemetery's records indicate that it would be several more decades before Chinese people could actually pick the grave they desired anywhere in that cemetery. In fact, after 1945, almost all

143 Ocean View Burial Park, "Price List Effective March 15th, 1930."
Chinese burials were directed to two other sections of Ocean View, "Alberta," at the extreme northwest end of the site, and "Alder," at the extreme south-central perimeter, once again the furthest one could be placed away from the cemetery's main entrance, though this time towards the west and the new southerly perimeter, respectively.\(^{144}\) The burial registers indicate that these two new sections were "reserved" solely for the deceased from the Chinese community (see Plate 2.6).

The reason for the selection of the Alberta section for the new segregated Chinese graves seems clear. In the 1920s, the cemetery commissioned renowned cemetery architect Wallace H. Hubbert of San Francisco to create the Abbey Mausoleum on the site of Ocean View, which would in effect become the largest mausoleum in Canada (see Plate 2.4). His detailed design book has provided much valuable architectural information, as well as a clear indication as to the social class that would later occupy its stained-glass-ceilinged marble hallways.\(^{145}\) A simple walk through its galleries today provides the visitor with a catalogue of \textit{le tout Vancouver}, who showcased their dead in this opulent memorial hall as soon as it opened its bronze doors—for whites only, of course, and at a price that even few of them could afford.

As in many other major construction projects, however, the Depression intervened in the construction of the Abbey Mausoleum and only the west portion (the section at the left in the photo of the model in Plate 2.4a) was built, opening in 1929 (the same year as the first burials in the Mongolia section). Still, with later additions, it can probably retain its grandness claim at the national level. The opening of this mausoleum created the opportunity for a new grand entrance to the cemetery, which would now open onto Imperial Street, and which would have led visitors from the outset past this magnificent structure, along the Crown, Dominion and National sections. The unused portion of the site originally destined for the two unconstructed sections of the mausoleum were filled in with a new office building for the cemetery in 1966, and a new funeral home and large chapel in 1969, after the property had been purchased by

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\(^{144}\) The Oak 2 section, just north of the Alder section (the former appearing on the ca. 1945 map, but the latter, not), does have two full rows of Chinese graves from 1945-1946 along its most westerly boundary, but no mention of these appears in the “Availability” criteria for this section’s Tariff sheet, where restrictions would normally be listed.

\(^{145}\) Wallace H. Hubbert, \textit{The Abbey Mausoleum} (San Francisco, 1931).
Service Corporation International (see Plate 2.5b) The original intent, then, would have been to relegate the Chinese deceased to an area where they would become totally invisible to visitors, that is, directly behind and completely hidden by the proposed Abbey Mausoleum, whose corridors and alcoves were also restricted to wealthy Europeans. Ironically, the new access gate on Imperial Street and the eventual construction of the circuitous road around the new office building actually made the plots in Alberta among the most accessible in the cemetery. Still, the stigma of segregation remained, in this case perhaps even more so, since the mausoleum's enclosures were not only beyond the cultural grasp of those interred in Alberta, but for the great majority of them, also well beyond their social and financial means. The contrast could not have been more dramatic.

b. The first and only phase built of the original Abbey Mausoleum plan, 1931. This is the section to the left on the model above. The Alberta section is located immediately behind it. (W.J. Moore photo, City of Vancouver Archives AM54-54-: Bu N512.1.)

*Plate 2.4. Mountain View cemetery, Abbey Mausoleum*
Plate 2.5. *Ocean View cemetery, new entrance*

**Note.** Courtesy of Vancouver Public Library: a. 77366, b. 77661.

a. 1930s entrance, leading to Abbey Mausoleum, ca. 1950s

b. New cemetery office, shortly after it was built in 1966.
a. Alberta section

Plate 2.6. Ocean View cemetery; Alberta Section, behind Abbey Mausoleum

Note. Note the proximity to the back of the Abbey Mausoleum. (Photos by the author, 2013).
2.6. Won Alexander Cumyow

One of the more recent graves in the Mongolia/Willow section is that of Won Alexander Cumyow (named Wen Jinyou at birth, and whose name appears as Alexander Won Cumyow on his grave marker, though all literature pertaining to him refers to him as Won Alexander Cumyow). He died in 1955 at the age of 94, and is buried beside his wife Eva Chan Cumyow, who predeceased him in 1939. Won Alexander Cumyow is one of the most well-known figures of the Chinese community—and also the white community—in Vancouver, and indeed in British Columbia. He was the first person of Chinese descent to be born in Canada, in 1869 at Port Douglas, BC, and was the only Chinese-Canadian to have voted in Canada both before and after the disenfranchisement of Chinese-Canadians. Because of his fluency in English, Cantonese, Hakka (a south-eastern Chinese dialect) and Chinook (the trade jargon spoken with First Nations), he later proved invaluable as a court interpreter in New Westminster and as a police interpreter in Vancouver for over 30 years. Mar indicates his clear role as a community leader among Chinese people and as an established "power broker" between the two communities. Cumyow ran a firm that negotiated on issues related to immigration, commercial, financial and property matters. He felt himself in such integration with the European community that he was one of the rare Chinese individuals who chose to buy a home and live, not in Chinatown, but beyond its geographic parameters, in this case, as of 1911, on First Avenue, just west of Commercial Drive. Still, regardless of whatever power he might have been able to exert during his lifetime, he was unable to obtain a grave for his wife in 1939 in any other section but Mongolia/Willow. It comes as no surprise that at his death in 1955, he was buried at her side in the same section, in the plot he had bought earlier for himself. The only other sections that would have been open to him at Ocean View in the 1950s would

147 Mar, Brokering Belonging, 37, 51, 54-55, 82.
have been the newly segregated sections, Alberta and Alder. This is a perfect example of a Canadian-born man of Chinese descent who determined not to have his remains or those of his wife sent to China. Cumyow never actually visited China, nor did he have a geographical affinity for it, in death as in life. It is obvious that he saw himself as more Canadian than his father, who had been a temporary sojourner. Given the limited choice of cemeteries open to him in greater Vancouver, he would have knowingly selected Ocean View as a permanent resting place for himself and his wife. In this same vein of Canadianized spirit, the Cumyow children who have since died were themselves later interred in the Alberta section. His youngest son, Clifford Won Cumyow, and the first of his sons to die, was indeed the first person buried in the Alberta section, in May 1945 (see Plate 2.6b). With respect to burial practices, the convictions of the father were emulated by his children.

2.7. Views Against Repatriation

Not everyone in the Chinese community was in favour of repatriation. The CINARC website provides one single yet detailed reflection on the subject from an article in the May 29, 1928 issue of Vancouver's Chinese-language Dahan Gongbao newspaper. The pen-named author, Zu De, provides several reasons why he considered this practice to be harmful. First, it was financially ruinous for the overseas Chinese aid communities. The cash outlay for each exhumation greatly surpassed the $1 to $2 fee paid by the members for this service, and the money could have been better invested in the living than the dead. Second, the expense was prohibitive for the families of the deceased, who had to acquire a second burial place in China if one did not already exist and then ensure its perpetual care. Third, it lowered productivity in China, in that secondary burial sites used up what could otherwise be productive farmland. Fourth, the claim that the process allowed the deceased to rest in peace is unproven and perhaps more folklore than fact. Fifth, the repatriation hindered the growth of China, where overpopulated areas could not afford to give up precious space to add further cemeteries, a move that was counter to the government's progressive policies. And sixth, that the shifting of bodies broke down family ties and endangered clans due to related family disputes. The newspaper's editor added that repatriation was a sure sign to white people that the latter were correct in their assumption that Chinese immigrants
could never be assimilated. This made the practice actually harmful to Chinese people in Canada.\textsuperscript{149} This interpretation is a good indication of coming to terms with the negative impact in the general public of some of the Chinese burial rituals, if not of the outright westernization on the part of some community members with respect to burial practices.

Abraham and Wegars add that not all Chinese immigrants chose to have their remains repatriated. This could indicate that the individuals who chose to be buried in North America were more assimilated in the host society, had been Christianized, or that they had lost connections with family back in China, or even that they could not meet the costs of the burial insurance fees paid to the benevolent organizations. As well, since merchants were exempted from the Head Tax,\textsuperscript{150} many merchants chose to bring their entire families to North America, and would have preferred to have their children look after their remains here rather than have them returned to a potentially empty nest and an uncertain future in China.\textsuperscript{151} Yip Sang, one of the wealthiest merchants of Chinatown, was one such example in Vancouver. He died in 1927 and remains buried at Mountain View along with two of his four wives and several of his 23 children. The last mass exhumation at Mountain View took place the year of Yip’s death, but he had already determined that his family’s remains would not be repatriated to China. His numerous progeny would serve him well in Vancouver in the execution of the appropriate yearly reverence rituals, in the city where his many projects and businesses propelled him to social heights that were significant for a Chinese man of the period.\textsuperscript{152}

### 2.8. The Rise of Discontent

On March 3, 1960, in his "Down Pender Street" column, a chronicler with the Chinatown News, who wrote under the nom de plume "Chinatown Charlie," verbalized a


\textsuperscript{150} Wickberg, From China to Canada, 57.

\textsuperscript{151} Abraham and Wegars, Chinese American Death Rituals, 154-155.

direct riposte on the matter of burial segregation while referring to a recent burial at Ocean View:

"We've just finished observing Brotherhood Week—the hiatus when all the world was mouthing the clichés of democracy. But listen to this: Racial discrimination even lurks in our graveyard. The Public Utilities Commission [PUC] has confirmed charges that persons of Asian or African origin must be buried in special plots in Ocean View Cemetery. The cemetery regulations read: 'No person of Asian or African blood shall be buried in the park except in those parts set aside for those purposes.' The PUC says this custom stemmed from a time when it was quite common to do this and that it is investigating further the question of racial discrimination in cemeteries. Poor soul. Can't get away from being discriminated even after he's dead!" (Chinatown News, March 3, 1960)\(^{153}\)

At the same time, paradoxically, Ocean View Cemetery courted its Chinese clients in advertisements in this same newspaper and others like it in Chinatown. Its "Compliments of the Season to Our Chinese Friends" Christmas advertisement, decorated with a festive bell and holly leaves, freely provided the cemetery's phone number and address, but of course left out the fine print.\(^{154}\) Chinatown Charlie might have read of this situation a few months earlier on the front page of the Vancouver Sun, which stated that the first complaints to that effect had been heard, strangely enough, from Steelworkers' delegates in the Vancouver Labour Council, and sure enough, that the PUC would investigate (Vancouver Sun, January 6, 1960).\(^{155}\)

The provincial government established the PUC by the early 1950s to oversee many fields of governance, including cemeteries (Vancouver Sun, January 143, 1953; Vancouver Province, March 17, 1955; Vancouver Sun, May 4, 1955; Vancouver

\(^{154}\) These ads ran in the Chinatown News, for example, from at least 1959 into the 1960s. An example can be found in the issue of December 18, 1962, 28.
\(^{155}\) "Racial 'Plots' at Cemetery," Vancouver Sun, January 6, 1960, 1.
Province, August 9, 1957).\textsuperscript{156} To date, no PUC follow-up on this subject has been found, though a report certainly seemed forthcoming. The PUC’s lack of action or feedback may have been a classic case of an unfulfilled political promise, or a delicate matter aptly dodged. Chinatown Charlie’s complaint, however, clearly denotes the frustration felt by his community about the post-Second World War perpetuation of discrimination in society, even into the cemetery. Having served their country militarily during the Second World War, Chinese-Canadians had been expecting the total eradication of exclusionary immigration restrictions against their families abroad, that is, the repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act, but were left waiting until the "colour-blind" 1967 Immigration Act, while the much-touted reparative legislation enacted between 1947 and 1967 proved to be but a spurious stratagem that perpetuated the racial cleavage with respect to immigration legislation.\textsuperscript{157}

Back at Ocean View cemetery, it would take another decade before significant steps would be taken jointly by cemetery administrators and Chinese individuals towards not only rectifying the issue of segregation, but also to create a harmonious relationship that burgeoned into developments unsuspected and unmatched elsewhere on the West Coast of Canada.

2.9. Testimonials to Change

Some families originally had their deceased's remains returned to China, but then changed this pattern given either political obstacles or assimilation tendencies. In his autobiographical collection \textit{Dim Sum Stories: A Chinatown Childhood}, Vancouver author and historian Larry Wong greatly regrets that his father chose to agree to the wishes of


his mother, Lee Shee, to have her remains repatriated to China, after her death in Vancouver in 1940. She was the first and the last of his immediate family whose remains were returned to her home village; her body was returned to China intact, without prior burial. Wong feels the loss of a mourning place for his mother, and regrets the absence of any direct descendants to tend her grave in China, two repercussions directly attributable to the repatriation process.\textsuperscript{158} Larry's father, Wong Mow, was buried in Willow in 1966, a late insertion in this section, filling a grave purchased earlier. The grave of Larry's brother, Git Yung "Kit" Wong, however, is somewhat enigmatic. Though 22 years old at the time of his death in 1944, he was nevertheless buried in the Babyland section, immediately across from the Willow section. Kit Wong did not match either the age or racial profile for this section. This remains unexplained. Larry's other sibling, his sister Ching Won Wong, who died when she was only three years old, a decade before Larry's birth, was herself buried in Mountain View in Vancouver, but in a privately bought plot rather than in the lots owned by the CBA.\textsuperscript{159} It may be that her gender and age did not match the criteria of those to be buried in the CBA-owned plots. The disparity of burial legacies among the members of the Wong family may point to a much more complex history of Chinese burials that has been reaped in related documentation.

Another author from Vancouver's Chinatown, Wayson Choy, refers in two of his autobiographical novels to the burial practices of his own family. In \textit{Paper Shadows: A Chinatown Childhood}, he refers to the death of his grandfather, Choy King, in August 1945, and to his burial at Ocean View Cemetery. That choice of a burial spot "in the grounds designated 'For Chinese Only'"\textsuperscript{160} [this is the Alberta section] would again indicate a decision not to eventually repatriate his remains. However, in his prize-winning work, \textit{The Jade Peony}, Choy refers to his grandmother's burial at Ocean View, even though she had expressed a desire to have her remains shipped back to China. He then

\textsuperscript{158} Larry Wong, in discussion with the author, Aug. 29 2011. Wong's mother, Mark Oy Quon (whose public name was Lee Shee) is described in Larry Wong, \textit{Dim Sum Stories: A Chinatown Childhood} (Vancouver: Chinese Canadian Historical Society of British Columbia and University of British Columbia, 2011), 7-9, 106-111.

\textsuperscript{159} Larry Wong, in discussion with the author, July 26, 2006, August 28, 2011, January 21, 2013.

adds that his father swore, as a result of his son Sek Lung's visions of his deceased grandmother, that "if he could ever raise enough money, the Old One's bones would be dug up and taken to the Bone House in Victoria."\textsuperscript{161} This might indicate that exhumation was indeed considered possible—or at least wished for—from Ocean View cemetery, and that ghostly visits were enough to cause one to reverse assimilative trends with respect to burial. Though Ocean View can provide no single document that actually prohibited such disinterments, it does seem to be more a case of wishful thinking in this instance.

Entrepreneur Faye Leung [famous for her involvement in the 1991 resignation of B.C. Premier Bill Vander Zalm] also has a critical link to the Willow section, which contains the 1943 grave of Leung Sheung Yuen, the grandfather of her deceased husband, Leung Dean Chun Kwong. Mrs. Leung's interview yielded an unprecedented affirmation: the Leung family planned from the outset to have the elder Leung exhumed after seven years of interment, and to return his remains to his ancestral village in China. The grandfather had repeatedly made this request known to Mrs. Leung prior to his death. Dean Leung's great-uncle, Leung Sheung Yuen, was also buried at Ocean View in the 1940s, with a similar view to eventual repatriation. The Leungs had indeed purchased the plot for the elder Leung at Ocean View for some $200, a major expense at the time (and a much higher one than listed in the pre-1945 price list for this cemetery), but the expenditure was obviously considered acceptable for this wealthy entrepreneurial family. After the planned emptying of the grave, Mrs. Leung states that it would simply have been abandoned. The family chose Ocean View rather than Vancouver's Mountain View cemetery because the former was already more in favour within the Chinese community.\textsuperscript{162} Regardless, then, of the staid look of Willow's graves, this statement makes it clear that some were still realistically conceiving of disinterment from Ocean View for repatriation. The Leung family would have had both the political clout and the financial means to pull it off. Seemingly, only the political forces at play prevented this move from occurring as planned.

\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., \textit{The Jade Peony} (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1995), 17, 155 and 163.
\textsuperscript{162} Faye Leung, in e-mail to the author, March 20, 2013; and Leung, in discussion with the author, April 18, 2013.
Interestingly, the elder Mr. Leung's grave marker, while made of the prescribed granite, was so lightly engraved that it is now nearly illegible. This may be due to the fact that no great sum was spent on its production as it was meant from the beginning to be a temporary marker, to be discarded post-exhumation. This brought to mind five other similar grave markers in Willow, four from the same year, 1943, and one from 1942, which might have had parallel histories, or which might simply have been the product of a less costly memorialization process, or even the total run of one less-than-adept gravestone carver.

Still, the westernization of burial rituals began decades earlier. As early as 1924, there is a reference in *The Chinese Times (Da Han Gongbao)*, somewhat in passing but of sufficient importance to be noted therein: Mr. Liao Hong Xiang chose to be buried at Vancouver's Mountain View cemetery "in western ways" rather than following Chinese funerary traditions (*The Chinese Times*, October 27, 1924).\(^{163}\) While it is not clear if the westernized part of the burial referred to the rituals or the permanency of the grave, this remains an indication of the early transition by some towards westernized practices surrounding burial.

Historian Allison R. Marshall points to a later contrary example when she refers to Sam Dong, a well-known Chinese entrepreneur in Manitoba, who died there in 1960. Though totally bilingual and assimilated into white culture, he still requested that his ashes be buried in China "because he could not imagine enduring one more Manitoba winter, let alone an eternity of them." Still, his request was wrought from his traditional Chinese religious belief of the need to be buried with his ancestors.\(^{164}\) Whether his remains still suffer Manitoba winters is not indicated.

By the 1960s, most Chinese-Canadians would have bowed to assimilative tendencies, in part due to a younger generation within the community, and in part due to the changes in immigration legislation, which brought in a new influx of immigration from Hong Kong. The relationships with China that had been extant for most of the Chinese

\(^{163}\) *The Chinese Times. (Da Han Gongbao)*. Multicultural Canada. October 27, 1924. http://multiculturalcanada.ca/node/201281

immigrants to that point were far different from those experienced by the new migrant wave from Hong Kong. New significant differences arose within what had been known as "the Chinese community" but these were now based on social class, point of migration and date of migration. The recent immigrants were mostly westernized professionals or skilled workers and had been educated in the former colony's British school system, so linguistic adaptation was not an issue for most. Ng states that a new identity for the Chinese community was being forged. In the late 1960s, the CBA and the Chinese residents were successful in preserving their neighbourhood against wholesale destruction when the City planned to construct a highway through it. As well, Vancouver's Chinese Community Centre was built in the 1970s, and Chinatown itself was revitalized and recognized as a provincial heritage preserve, each development further raising awareness about the growing status and place of the Chinese community in the Lower Mainland.

Chinese-Canadians began espousing westernized burial rites and methods, though interesting meldings of traditional and modern rituals commonly occurred. A report in the Chinatown News of August 3, 1963, describes the large traditional procession that brought the remains of centenarian Mrs. Con Chan See to her resting place at Ocean View cemetery. However, rather than the expected traditional Chinese musicians leading the equally traditional procession, it was the well-known Dal Richards' band playing funeral marches that had been hired for that role. Richards and his very Caucasian band were already famous from their then 23-year run in the popular rooftop dance club of the Hotel Vancouver. This illustrates what historian Rebecca Nedostup refers to as "hybrid rituals." Yet another example of trans-cultured funeral music surfaced as early as 1928 when a Mr. Zu's funeral procession was also led by a Western music band, which was, in this instance, closely followed by a Chinese band for good

166 Ng, The Chinese in Vancouver, 99-119.
measure and to keep the spirit of the deceased traditionally content (The Chinese Times, October 10, 1924). Western cultural adjustment came in small spurts.

The question of Chinese people preferring to be buried together has arisen in but a few instances, including that of the former website of Vancouver's Mountain View cemetery, mentioned earlier. Faye Leung has repeatedly stressed this cultural preference as a reality within the Chinese community, preferring to diminish the importance of the official segregation policy at Ocean View to which her family was subjected. Abraham and Wegars also quote two funeral industry professionals who commented on it as a type of self-segregation, where according to one of these sources, the Chinese deceased buried side by side "talk to each other in the ground." Lai, however, repudiates this interpretation of underground banter, but also agrees with the Chinese preference to congregate. Abraham and Wegars also point to the communal facilitation of Chinese burials by the acquisition of blocks of cemetery land by benevolent societies as a type of self-segregation. Notwithstanding these references, I differentiate the term "segregation" with respect to Chinese gravesites to the relegation of the Chinese community to specific plots by the imposition of regulations against their free access to the cemetery as a whole. Still, the communal nature of Chinese burial spaces remains somewhat evident, by their conscious mustering in recently opened cemetery sections.

169 Leung, in discussion with the author, April 18, 2013.
170 Abraham and Wegars, "Respecting the Dead," in Chung and Wegars, Chinese American Death Rituals, 162.
172 Abraham and Wegars, "Respecting the Dead," in Chung and Wegars, Chinese American Death Rituals, 162.
2.10. The End of Repatriation

The repatriation of remains from Harling Point in Victoria planned for 1937 was cancelled due to the Sino-Japanese War then raging in China.\textsuperscript{173} The Second World War then prevented any repatriation from 1939 to 1945. Since crates of remains kept arriving at Harling Point from all points in Canada during those years, the CCBA stopped exhuming the remains from that cemetery, but the bone house still filled up.\textsuperscript{174}

After the Second World War ended, the Chinese community fully expected that the long-dormant processes of repatriation of remains would be set back into motion. In fact, even \textit{The Chinese Times} reported in 1946 the upcoming resumption of this service, as did the \textit{Vancouver Sun} (\textit{The Chinese Times}, October 3, 1946; \textit{Vancouver Sun}, August 1, 1946).\textsuperscript{175} However, a significant complication affecting the relaunch of repatriations arose after 1949, when the People's Republic of China was formed: its new government proscribed any further repatriations of Chinese remains from around the world.\textsuperscript{176} Barely one month after the Communist takeover, Party Chairman Mao Zedong was quoted as declaring that "Buddhist idols must be thrown away by the peasants themselves; ancestral tablets must be smashed by the peasants themselves; [...] and filial piety must be destroyed by the peasants themselves."\textsuperscript{177} Historian Vera Schwarcz describes how Mao reinterpreted some of the tenets of the May Fourth Enlightenment of 1919 to fit his philosophy towards the communization of China, one of these tenets being that the filial duties pertaining to burial rituals within the family system were so demanding, and that related land use was so draining, that these had transformed the

\textsuperscript{173} Lai, "The Chinese Cemetery in Victoria," 35. However, this shipment is erroneously reported to have occurred in several sources, such as in Paul St. Pierre, "Old Chinese Barred from Orient Burial," \textit{Vancouver Sun}, November 4, 1952, 32.
\textsuperscript{176} Theodore H.E. Chen, \textit{Thought Reform of the Chinese Intellectuals} (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), 74, quoted from Yang Hsien-chen. "T'ian-t'ian ch'uen-chung lu-hsien wen-t'ı" (On the problem of the mass line), \textit{Hsüeh-si}, I, 3, November 1949, 10.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid.
entire nation into slaves of the dead. Sinologist Wang Yanni adds that during the initial period of communization, tens of thousands of burial mounds and cemeteries, both ancient and recent, were levelled out to be used as agricultural fields, and the ploughed-up remains, as fertilizer for the new crops. The literal uprooting of ancestral graves in China was done very much against the wishes of most of the population, but those who complained were exposed and punished (\textit{The Chinese Times}, February 21, 1955). Historian Joshua Fan explains that this mass destruction of graves in Mainland China during the Cultural Revolution created what became known as the "Homeless Generation;" these were the Chinese in Taiwan who now had lost their roots, that is, all ancestral links with their families abroad, since their remains were nowhere to be found. That nomenclature could be applied to all those overseas Chinese who faced such a reality after the Cultural Revolution. Still, Watson and Rawski stipulate that since 1949, special privileges have been made available [for those able to afford the price] to Chinese abroad wishing favourable \textit{feng-shui} sites on the Mainland for their burials. Fan adds that since travel to China has been legalized in the late 1980s, a new lucrative business has emerged in Taiwan specifically to transport the ashes of overseas Chinese to select burial places on the Chinese mainland. There was still room in China for those who could pay for the privilege with quantities of foreign currency.

As of 1949 then, any Chinese persons buried in graves at Vancouver's Mountain View cemetery were there to stay. No further erasures would blemish the pages of the CBA section's burial register at Mountain View and no further Chinese interments in Vancouver or New Westminster would be lost to the historical record.

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Faced with hundreds of sets of remains accumulated in its bone house over the previous decade and that could no longer be repatriated, Victoria’s CCBA returned as many as possible to their towns and cities of origin across Canada, but was still left with the remains of 849 individuals. These were solemnly reburied in 1961 in thirteen mass graves at Harling Point Cemetery, each containing the remains by Chinese province of origin, in what was the last major traditional Chinese burial in Canada.\textsuperscript{184}

The long-standing segregation of Chinese immigrants in the cemeteries of the Lower Mainland continued their ghettoization into the burial grounds, and drained from them any potential for a voice, and any intention but to return home to China. Still, some immigrants progressed in their relationship with their new home, no longer feeling this drive to have their remains returned to the homeland, and establishing new lineages in the worlds of both the living and the deceased. This weighty decision, influenced for some by political events both in B.C. and in China, began to turn the tide towards the reversal of prejudicial processes at Ocean View cemetery. However, it would take the arrival of a new wave of permanent migrants from Hong Kong in the 1980s and 1990s to actually put an end to the practices of burial discrimination in the Lower Mainland.

2.11. The Extortion Measures From the PRC

Another factor that may have had a significant impact on the decision by many individuals not to have their remains repatriated to China was a crisis caused by a torrent of extortion letters from the PRC. From 1949 through 1954, overseas Chinese communities throughout North America were subjected to the perpetration of extortion measures originating from the PRC, in which huge sums of money, under the guise of taxes and government bond sales, were demanded from thousands of Chinese persons abroad in order to "ascertain the continued wellbeing of their families" back in China (\textit{The Province}, January 21, 1951 and November 17, 1951; \textit{Vancouver Province},

November 29, 1951). 185 These were more than veiled threats. Families in China were indeed being held as hostages as a means of reaping funds from wealthy relatives abroad (Vancouver Sun, November 14, 1951). 186 In her doctoral thesis, historian Shelly Chan explains how these tactics were part of the early years of land reform programs in China (1949-1956), where work teams, with no clear directives from the Communist party, acted in harsh and coercive ways towards families whose male workers had migrated overseas, in tentative efforts to redistribute property. 187 Historian Stephen Fitzgerald concurs that it was during that period that most of the related "lurid stories" that appeared in the Hong Kong press "usually concerned 'ransom notes' sent to Chinese abroad, demanding large sums of money in return for the release of imprisoned relatives or the granting of exit permits." Fitzgerald stresses the veracity of these reports, as tacitly verified in official Chinese sources. 188

By November 1951, more than $1 million had been demanded from the residents of Vancouver's Chinatown alone. Many reported their families in China having been kidnapped, imprisoned, tortured and even executed when the requested sums were not paid (The Province, November 20, 1951 and November 29, 1951; Daily Colonist, January 27, 1953). 189 Contrary to the usual response from Vancouver's Chinatown, where problems were usually dealt with within the community and without involving outsiders, the fear engendered by these tactics was such that dozens came forward to

185 "Chinese Here Fear Reds' Tax," The Province, January 21, 1951, 21; "City Chinese Pays Reds Extortion," The Province, November 17, 1951, 1 and 2; "I Sent Every Bit I Could, and More": Suicides Bare Horrors of Red Extortion," Vancouver Province, November 29, 1951, 21: Pang Mock of Vancouver stated that the extortion letters began around 1947.
186 "Red China Extortion Hit: City Chinese Asked to Pay for Protection of Families," The Vancouver Sun, November 14, 1951, 25.
Vancouver and Victoria newspapers to make these actions known. Many of the mail recipients were pensioners who had little money for themselves, and who became repeated targets of these extortion letters. Some even committed suicide faced with the helplessness of the situation (Vancouver Sun, November 22, 1951; Vancouver Province, November 29, 1951). It was reported that small but coordinated groups of "Red China sympathizers" in Vancouver and every major centre of Chinese residents in North America, working through Communist-backed financial houses in Hong Kong, were transmitting addresses to China, targeting those who were unsympathetic towards the PRC (Vancouver Sun, November 21, 1951 and November 22, 1951; The Province, December 1, 1951). The Canadian Department of External Affairs finally got involved in 1954 to put an end to the practice and to finally protect its Chinese-Canadian citizens (Vancouver Sun, April 9, 1954).

While the CBA sent official protests to China bitterly complaining about these tactics, these nevertheless continued for several years (The Province and Vancouver Sun, November 26, 1951). A culminating statement on the part of Foon Sien, the head of the CBA, may have had significant repercussions on Chinese burials in the Lower Mainland. On November 23, 1951, incensed at the extortion measures exerted upon the Chinese diaspora, he is cited as stating "We used to collect the bones of our dead every seven years for transport back to China, but not any more" (Vancouver Sun, November 23, 1951, 1; "Chinese Forsake Homeland Burial," The Vancouver Sun, November 23, 1951, 1; "'I Sent Every Bit I Could, and More': Suicides Bare Horrors of Red Extortion," Vancouver Province, November 29, 1951, 21.


191 “Ransom Demanded: Red Threats Drive Chinese to Suicide,” The Vancouver Sun, November 22, 1951, 1; “Chinese Forsake Homeland Burial,” The Vancouver Sun, November 23, 1951, 1; "'I Sent Every Bit I Could, and More': Suicides Bare Horrors of Red Extortion," Vancouver Province, November 29, 1951, 21.

192 "Chinese Here Sends $557 'Blood Money',' The Vancouver Sun, November 21, 1951, 2 and 44; "Extortion Plan Laid to Chinese Banks," The Vancouver Sun, November 22, 1951, 19; "RCMP Hunt 'Informers' in Extortion Racket: China Pipeline Suspected on 'Ability to Pay',' The Province, December 1, 1951, 12.

193 "Ottawa to Probe Chinese Red 'Bond Sale' Exposed by Sun," The Vancouver Sun, April 9, 1954, 8. This is also referred to in Ng, The Chinese in Vancouver, 83, but using terms such as "alleged" and "rumour," while the numerous newspaper reports seem to provide veracity to these events.

194 "Chinese Protest Threats; Complaint Sent to Red Chief," The Province, November 26, 1951, 17; "Vancouver Chinese Protest 'Extortion',' The Vancouver Sun, November 26, 1951, 1."
Ng indeed states that the CBA officially put an end to the practice of repatriation that same month, in November 1951, due to the political situation in Mainland China. As a result, the first man interred permanently by the CBA under this new policy was 71-year-old Leong Gun, an old-age pensioner who had hanged himself, shattered by the effects of the extortion scam on him and his family abroad. This financial attack upon Vancouver’s Chinese community brought forth this single comment found so far from the CBA that might have dictated a community-wide change in burial rituals, that is, the official abandonment of the disinterment of Chinese remains in Canada for repatriation to China.

2.12. Changes in Mindset and Policy Begin to Take Effect

Lower Mainland cemeteries perpetuated racism against Chinese immigrants, much as Canadian immigration policies placed an official stamp on these measures. Some cemeteries were more overt than others in their segregation efforts. Ocean View was perhaps the most blatant in its regulations and spatial assignations, yet many members of the Chinese community opted for burial there rather than at Vancouver’s Mountain View cemetery, thus removing themselves from the post-death repatriation process. I propose that many Chinese immigrants were already adopting this Westernized permanent burial tradition, even though the cemetery was not yet allowing any other cultural expressions to develop in their burial spaces. The termination of the repatriation process by the PRC finally forced the Chinese community to fully modify its burial processes in that respect, leaving it to contemplate its graves in what must have seemed a funerary no man’s land. Changes of further magnitude would yet impel this community in an altogether opposite direction.

195 “Chinese Forsake Homeland Burial,” The Vancouver Sun, November 23, 1951, 1.
196 Ng, The Chinese in Vancouver, 64, and note 16, 155-156.
197 Ibid.
Chapter 3.

A Transformative Wave

3.1. The New Chinese-Canadians

As the residents of Vancouver’s Chinatown began a progressive adaptation to western-style burials, eventually to burgeon around the 1970s in a desegregated framework at Ocean View, trans-Pacific developments of paramount importance would unexpectedly come to accelerate and accentuate their progress in this area. Not only would the physicality of these developments be significant, but it would also bring about the material manifestation of a new sense of identity for Chinese people in the Lower Mainland.

The end of the twentieth century saw a dramatic political change occur in Asia: in 1997, the PRC regained sovereignty over Hong Kong, which had been in the hands of the British since 1842. Already during the 1970s, hundreds of migrants from the former British colony had begun planning their move away from the Communist takeover by taking advantage of the Canadian Federal Government’s investor and entrepreneurial migrant programs. Most of them settled in British Columbia, growing further through the 1990s. Here, they established businesses and created employment opportunities, per the stipulations of their immigration agreements.198

Rapidly, the Vancouver suburb of Richmond became the new Chinatown, an "ethnoburb" of "astronaut fathers" and "satellite spouses and children". This was by no means the ghetto that Chinatown had been for decades, but rather a new Sino-arrondissement where any services would be available to its new residents in their mother tongue. Families moved into upper-scale neighbourhoods, and trans-Pacific work transit patterns for the breadwinners became a standard for thousands of households, in order to ensure the continued flourishing of the abundant—and now further diversified—wealth of the new immigrants.199

Sinologist and anthropologist Beatrice David reflected on the similar wave of Chinese migration from Hong Kong that was experienced in California prior to 1990: "They brought their families, capital, and skills or professions, with every expectation of permanence. Migration reinforces the need to preserve a sense of 'rootedness' defined in relation to past generations, and by bringing the ancestors to new homes, the local group finds one means of expressing its identity."200 This new sense of permanence, also felt by the new immigrants to B.C., would soon reverberate in the burial landscape by the appointments that would stake this new community's claim to affirmation, security, and visibility. Extroversion, as practiced in Hong Kong, would be the launching pin to several important changes at Ocean View which all proclaimed: "We have arrived." And they dragged the long-established Chinese community along for this change of a lifetime.

3.2. The First Accommodations at Ocean View

It was in this climate of innovation that the Chinese community began achieving for itself extensive changes in its burial patterns at Ocean View cemetery, like nowhere else in British Columbia. In the 1990s, the sections called "Aspen Gardens" and "Fountain Estates" were opened as the first areas in this cemetery to accommodate

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standing gravestones. This innovation followed recent developments. When the Alberta section became mostly fully occupied, the Chinese deceased were interred in the "Superior" section, just to the south of Alberta. This pattern continued well into the 1970s and 1980s. By then—and the exact year of this significant change has not materialized in the documentation—Chinese people were finally being allowed to choose a burial place anywhere in the cemetery, a first since Ocean View’s opening in 1919. This came at the same time as the first wave of migration to the Lower Mainland from Hong Kong, of wealthy families fleeing the upcoming Communist domination of their colony. These new residents were already flexing their financial muscle as major consumers at every level. Yet no other cemetery in the Lower Mainland had made any overtures to court their business. It was well known that Hong Kong Chinese preferred rather ostentatious markers (though no more so than those found earlier in now out-of-fashion Victorian-style cemeteries). This new modification in regulations would have called their attention to Ocean View.

This was a change of consequence, as well, as it proved a significant departure from the overall design of Ocean View, which had from its inception adopted the lawn-concept design. The by-laws stipulated until that point that memorial tablets of bronze or granite, 12 inches by 20 inches, "shall be set so that the face is level with the lawn," thus rendering them invisible in a park-like setting. Profusely illustrated sales booklets such as the ca. 1945 Ocean View: The Garden of Memories and even colourful postcards (at least 75,000 of them) distributed from door to door lauded the floral and scenic beauty of its design, with nary a grave to be seen. This landscape engineering model had been established in Canada much earlier, in the 1890s, by landscape architect W. Ormiston Roy, who implemented it when he redesigned Montreal’s Mount Royal Cemetery. This fashion became the norm, moving away from the perceived

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201 The burial ledger for the Superior section lists the first burial there in 1979.
202 This is verifiable by the post-1970 dates of Chinese-language markers in other sections than Willow, Alberta and Alder.
204 Ocean View Cemetery, Ocean View: The Garden of Memories, ca. 1945. The Dominion Photo Co., Vancouver, printed at least 75,000 postcards of at least six different photos of the cemetery’s vistas for Ocean View in 1959. (Letter from Dominion Photo Co. to Ocean View Burial Park, October 1, 1959.)
ghoulishness of the cluttered Victorian graveyard, to create a new verdant—and more easily maintained—setting for the modern burial ground.\textsuperscript{205} Indeed, during the several previous decades, Vancouver's Mountain View cemetery had tried to change over from the Victorian model to the lawn concept by flattening to ground level most of its own upright monuments and removing anything that reminded one of a cemetery (fenced family enclaves, carved granite surrounds, and individual grave embellishments), measures that would not entice the patronage of the new arrivals (\textit{Vancouver Sun}, December 30, 1965 and February 9, 1968).\textsuperscript{206} One letter from 1958 from the Veterans' Memorial Trust Association inquires about the possibility of flattening the markers in the Chinese section. The response is not documented, but many monuments from that section have indeed been flattened.\textsuperscript{207}

Ocean View manager Ralph McKnight affirmed that since requests for this type of upright memorialization were frequent from both the Chinese and eastern European communities, the cemetery had finally agreed to make this change.\textsuperscript{208} It is still important to note that the decision did not apply to any of the extant sections, and the transformed landscape would not be visible from any major entrance. Both the burial register for that section and the headstones themselves provide verification that the principal clients were from the Chinese community. At least 85 percent of those who partook of this "new" type of memorialization were either long-standing or recent Chinese immigrants. The change had begun, mostly in response to the needs of a new consumer group, the "new" Chinese community of the Lower Mainland. Both Lai and Leung confirm that no

\textsuperscript{205} Young, \textit{Respectable Burials}, 102-123.
\textsuperscript{207} Eric Chadwick, Manager, Veterans' Memorial Trust Association to Abe Gammer, Superintendent, Mountain View Cemetery, July 29, 1958. City of Vancouver Fonds, Series S20 City Clerk's Office, City of Vancouver Archives.
\textsuperscript{208} Ralph McKnight, in discussion with the author, March 18, 2011.
Chinese organization spurred these requests for accommodations; the movement came from Chinese individuals themselves, beginning around the early 1990s.\textsuperscript{209}

### 3.3. A Reverse Migration and Its Impact at Ocean View

The ancestors of many of the recent Chinese immigrants had been laid to rest in mainland China. Though they had been ensconced in a temporary British colony, many of the residents still adhered to the tradition demanding burial with one's ancestors, and that meant a post-death return of the remains to the Chinese mainland. However, the 1949 PRC embargo on human remains would affect the Hongkongers much as it had the established Vancouver Chinese community. Also, given the mass destruction of cemeteries in China during the revolution, only the lucky few would indeed be successful in actually finding their ancestors' tombs. Still, their affluence allowed many of them to search out their families' remains in China, and to have them brought to Burnaby for reburial with their descendants.\textsuperscript{210} This reverse migration of remains created a totally new paradigm in the burial industry as well as in the cultural reality of the Chinese community. One unexpected tangent in this turn of events was that the only way to remove human remains from the PRC was to have them cremated. For Chinese people, it had always been imperative for the body to be interred whole in order for the spirit to complete its life cycle. This demanded a major shift in burial methods, which necessitated an equally major shift in how Chinese people felt about cremation. Still, the political situation provided no other option.\textsuperscript{211}

Ocean View began experiencing a steady stream of burial urns arriving from the PRC as of the 1980s, several of them each week.\textsuperscript{212} For example, the cremated remains of Faye Leung's mother-in-law, Leong Tang Shou Jing, were among those arriving in 1988, since the family's burial plots in China had been paved over for the

\textsuperscript{209} Lai, in discussion with the author, Dec. 11, 2011; and Leung, in discussion with the author, April 18, 2013.

\textsuperscript{210} The American equivalent is explained in Greenwood, "Old Rituals in New Lands," 248.

\textsuperscript{211} Whyte, "Death in the People's Republic of China," 292, footnote 8, and 297-298.

\textsuperscript{212} McKnight, in discussion with the author, July 7, 2005.
construction of a shopping centre.\textsuperscript{213} Interestingly, though the remains of almost 1,000 individuals had been sent to China over the decades from Mountain View in Vancouver, next to no remains of ancestors were being returned there. Indeed, of those few that were coming into Mountain View, some were also related to other cultural communities, such as Filipinos.\textsuperscript{214} Mountain View also did not add columbaria to its burial options until the 2010s, which limited the possibilities for immigrants arriving with urns in hand.

This steady transfer of cremains (cremated remains) from abroad at Ocean View necessitated the construction of additional columbaria, walls containing niches for inurnments, that is, the publicly accessible storage of cremains. The South Mausoleum was built there in 1994, partly to accommodate this flow of urns, all in need of urgent accommodation. Greenwood provides the only historiographical reference to this local accommodation, in a one-liner that, as is often the case when referring to the city's metropolitan area, gives Vancouver as the location of the new mausoleum rather than the correct city of Burnaby. She cites the South Mausoleum at Ocean View as a rare example, similar to a new mausoleum having been built in San Francisco's Golden Hill Memorial Park, as a direct and progressive solution to the reverse direction of Chinese ancestors.\textsuperscript{215} In 2007, an additional wing was added to this Mausoleum for this purpose, following strict feng-shui stipulations. Access to the main door is via two curved staircases; the entrance is flanked by two guardian lion figures and leads into a dome-illuminated lobby, backed by a large Chinese-landscape tiled mural and protected by the statues of the three Chinese deities believed to guard the gates of the underworld: Tudi (T'u-ti, the earth god), Chenghuang (Ch'eng-huang, the city god), and Wudao (Wu-tao, the god of the five roads) (see Plate 3.1b).\textsuperscript{216} The Chinese community truly now had a space of its own, one that was built specifically for it, albeit still hosting mostly "new" immigrants.\textsuperscript{217}

\textsuperscript{213} Leung, in e-mail to the author, March 20, 2013.
\textsuperscript{214} Glen Hodges, in discussion with the author, June 30, 2011. It has not been determined, however, if these Filipino families are of Chinese descent.
\textsuperscript{216} Rouse, "What We Didn't Understand," 23.
\textsuperscript{217} McKnight, in discussion with the author, July 7, 2005.
Plate 3.1. Ocean View cemetery, South Mausoleum, Chinese section

Note. Photos by the author, 2013.
In spite of the practicality of this new facility in the furtherance of their burial aspirations, some members of the Chinese community were still not content with this new burial arrangement. While the recently arrived cremains of the grandparents were entombed in the South Mausoleum, their deceased descendants, though within sight, were still not buried "with" their ancestors. To work out a solution, wealthier patrons among the new immigrants approached Ocean View to create enclosed burial areas where families could once again share a private burial space. Ocean View was being asked to go full circle in a return to the fenced and gated family plots of the Victorian era.218 Thus were born the very high-end "Garden of Eternity" in 1997, the "Marquis Estates" in 1998 and the "Fountain Estates" in 1999, all catering mostly to the Chinese community (see Plates 3.2 and 3.3).219 These new sections provided peaceful walks along brick-walled and wrought-iron-gated private enclaves, landscaped gardens that became the post-death equivalent of the Bostonian brownstone boulevard. The family estates provided the solution to the problem, and more: tradition was respected and cachet was assured. Even more importantly, identity was highlighted. Landscape historian John Brinckerhoff Jackson wrote that "enclosure was a way of emphasizing and maintaining the individual's identity in a graveyard."220 This was even more so the case in the context of a lawn-concept cemetery.

Immigrants from Hong Kong may also have acted in this way because of the extremely high cost of a burial plot back in Hong Kong. Much as in the land of the living, these "family estates," startlingly expensive properties, now also play a role as investments that have launched on-line real estate speculation transactions for those within the community who wish to maintain their social standing, even after death.221

Given these significant changes in their favour, and the plain business fact that Chinese-Canadians were now respected as a valuable target market, Ocean View, as

218 Ibid.
219 Ocean View Cemetery burial registers.
221 McKnight, in discussion with the author, July 7, 2005 and June 18, 2013; and Leung, in discussion with the author, April 18, 2013.
well as its sister cemetery Forest Lawn, also in Burnaby, quite intelligently began the practice of hiring a feng-shui master each year during the Qingming festival to provide guidance to potential Chinese clients, at no cost to them (a significant savings), in order to ascertain the acceptability of potential burial plots, and thus future plot purchases. These plots would have now been culturally and religiously sanctioned as worthy of Chinese patronage.

As well, with the continuing flow of urns from within the community and from abroad, a further new wing was added to the South Mausoleum in 2012, and yet another mausoleum is in the planning process, soon to be erected alongside it. Though its enclosures will be open to all, it is expected that the present high rate of Chinese occupancy in the Chinese section of the extant South Mausoleum will continue in the new building.
a. Showing the South Mausoleum, 2012

b. Taken from the second floor of the South Mausoleum, 2005

Plate 3.2.  Family estates in Garden of Eternity, Marquis Estates and Fountain estates section, Ocean View cemetery

Note. Photos by the author.
a. A typical “family estate” plot, 2012

b. Upright grave markers and fountain, Aspen section, 2011

Plate 3.3. Ocean View cemetery, new Chinese section

Note. Photos by the author.
The accommodations provided at Ocean View cemetery for the Chinese community over just two decades had thus created more changes with respect to burial architecture, landscape and practices than any other forces over almost a century of existence, changes that were not experienced in any other B.C. cemetery. Burnaby's Forest Lawn cemetery has also been responding to Chinese market forces by building superimposed family mausoleums, and cannot keep up with demand. The arrival of a different type of Chinese immigrant, from a cultural world altogether different from that of Vancouver's Chinatown, became the catalyst for the forging in the cemetery of a tangible identity for the Chinese community as a whole. This, however, actually paralleled the establishment of the new Chinese into Vancouver's neighbourhoods and suburbs, in a type of housing that became problematically associated with them, the "monster house."222 The new Chinese were staking out their new, permanent, homes, in life as in death. Contrary to the public's negative reaction to "monster houses," the new Chinese burial enclaves have not attracted negative responses.

3.4. The Cultural Transformation of Space

The entire process of the Chinese community's enhancement of its burial space at Ocean View from the 1990s to the present and indeed into the future, closely reflects the theories of French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre, who presented a new conceptualization of space and its implications within the urban landscape.223 Lefebvre argued that society produces space within which it then endeavours to meet its productive needs, and indeed, to ensure its own reproduction. The creation of this space can be generated by a flow of energy that acts as a force upon the processes of urbanism and territorial management.

To fit the cemetery within this context, Ocean View appears not only as a city of the dead, but also as a vital adjunct to the needs of the living. Lefebvre perceives the

cemetery as being of such importance within the urban context of a city that its very absence from a city takes away the historical continuity of that community, hence diminishing its claim to vibrant cityhood and consigning to it the soulless appellation of "agglomeration" (or grands ensembles).224 The cemetery owns economic space that it provides to meet the funerary needs of its surrounding society. This space is very much a social product, regimenting the social relations of those who partake of that space. The Mongolia/Willow section clearly reflected the period-specific regimenting of social groups within the cemetery's space, partly in order for the cemetery to maintain the economic value of its space as a whole.

The arrival in the 1980s of the new Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong created that flow of economic energy that would generate a new spatial planning within both the cityscape and the cemetery, the two urban landscapes that the living and the dead of this new community would now occupy. Until their arrival, the administrators of Ocean View had ensured, within their lawn-concept design, the homogenization of all parts of society, where space became a political as well as an economic tool. The 1920s version of political correctness discounted non-whites from the social relations that were facilitated for all others in their respective burial environments, thus ensuring the continued economic desirability—hence viability—of this burial space for and by the hegemonic white community. Seventy years later, this important geographical consumer movement generated a new cultural reality that demanded its own social space and relations within the cemetery. In changing their lives, the new immigrants changed society in creating an appropriate space for themselves. Lefebvre states that "[t]he past has left its marks, its inscriptions, but space is always a present space, a current totality, with its links and connections to action. In fact, the production and the product are inseparable sides of one process."225 The comparison of the elements of this statement to the cemetery morphology at Ocean View, where its older inscribed grave markers have been giving way to much more visible and grandiose testimonials to the cultural presence of the new Chinese immigrants, is difficult to avoid.

Recent immigrants from Hong Kong have created a new urban fabric, which has led to enhanced means of production, both of space for its use, and of a new product that fits its needs. This has occurred in the context of a capitalist production system, where a staid company (the lawn-concept cemetery) has responded to the needs of a new community, by providing the ground, and indeed the underground, towards the economic enhancement of its space and productive capabilities. While doing so, the cemetery has maintained control of its space, while producing a type of counter-space, startling in its differences, in a rational bowing to the changing nature of its economic patrons. Sections of its dominated space, that is, the space upon which it imposed its design concepts, have taken on the form of an appropriated space, where public demand from a specific group—the new immigrants from Hong Kong—has tailored a new niche for itself. Ocean View has logically adhered to new neoliberal economic tendencies, courting the open market, all the while never forgetting its older, British roots and its moneyed tenants.

This new cultural space redefines social relations within Ocean View, and brings together the multiple interests and varied political and historical legacies of those still generally perceived as the "Chinese community" of Greater Vancouver. The palpable "Chineseness" of Ocean View's new sections thus creates a new, very public space for Chinese people, dissipating previous dismissive illusions about them as temporary and insignificant residents and replacing them with a substantial spatial foothold in the funerary landscape, one that is easily transferable into the new urban, social and cultural realities of Vancouver.
Conclusion

A New Home, A New Identity

Ng reports that in Hong Kong, the opening of the Permanent Chinese Cemetery at Aberdeen in the 1930s\textsuperscript{226} is perceived by most Sinologists as "perhaps the first community gesture towards a local identity." He continues: "Whether the new arrangement regarding burial practice effected any similar change among the Vancouver Chinese warrants further research."\textsuperscript{227} This thesis has demonstrated that this is manifestly what transpired, specifically at Burnaby's Ocean View Cemetery. The quest for identity burrowed into the burial landscape to affirm the new vigorous "Canadianness" of the Chinese immigrant, while establishing a very "Chinese" design ethic to that landscape. Most earlier Chinese cemeteries in Canada had long ago become empty shells, from which previous burials were removed for repatriation up to 150 years earlier. Chinese exhumers often left the graves they had just emptied open and dishevelled, an indication that the emptied grave no longer held any memorial interest nor deserved any related respect. These impermanent burial spaces held little cultural or historical interest for later generations since they were not memorials of a Chinese presence, but reflections of a Chinese absence or departure. A new permanent burial space for Chinese Canadians, in particular one that respected long-standing Chinese traditions, would become the focus of yearly Qingming rituals, where the permanency of the Chinese community in B.C. could be recognized and celebrated.

Fan refers to the importance of \textit{jia}, or home, in the mindset of Chinese overseas—how, when and why Chinese immigrants left their home in China, how they coped in their new home, and if, when and how they would return home.\textsuperscript{228} The concept

\textsuperscript{226} Most websites, however, give that date as 1915.
\textsuperscript{227} Ng, \textit{The Chinese in Vancouver}, 156-157, note 16.
\textsuperscript{228} Fan, \textit{China's Homeless Generation}, 2-3.
of home remains a recurring one in this thesis as well, be it for the living or the dead. The grave became the temporary home for the spirit, until its physical remains were returned to its ancestral home, and its previous burial space became a temporary home to another. Those who chose a more permanent burial at Ocean View created a new cultural and social space for their loved ones, albeit one that complicated the concept of home as a comforting space of desirable design. The evolution at Ocean View of Chinese burial spaces and memorialization methods truly created a new home for the Chinese deceased, in keeping with tradition and social needs, as these evolved in the Lower Mainland in response to trans-Pacific factors.

One contradiction, however, has emanated from one of these evolutionary manifestations, that is, that many in the Chinese community can never hope to own one of the new "family estates", largely a product tailored to the needs of the wealthier among their own. The steep cost of these enclaves forms an exclusionary barrier within the very section that was meant to highlight that community as a whole. Exclusivity can thus be self-imposed, while cultural representation might have been the original goal.

The Final Say

Perhaps Paul St. Pierre of the Vancouver Sun provides the clearest case for the cultural integration of the Chinese community with respect to burial practices when, in 1952, he reported on the still desperate hopes, despite the political and land use changes in China, of "Vancouver's old Chinese" to have their bones buried in China. St. Pierre quotes Foon Sien, still head of Vancouver's CBA, whose extortion-period rejoinder appears earlier in this thesis, then already aiming at the termination of the repatriation process. In this article, Sien states that "only the very old are interested in being buried in the Far East anyway. The young people have the same ways as any other Canadians" (Vancouver Sun, November 4, 1952).229

Not only would Sien's comments have borne considerable weight in his community, but also as head of the CBA, he would have had the wide-ranging ability to feel the pulse of his community and of its international positioning. Given his statements and the exigencies towards the adaptation of that community to redoubtable political and cultural transformations at a transnational level, I can only concur that the same assimilative traits were at play for the 95 Chinese-Canadian families who chose to bury their deceased in the Mongolia/Willow section at Ocean View between 1929 and 1945 (I have excluded in this count the Leung, Wong and Cumyow families, per their earlier related testimony or history).

As to the "sojourner" appellation, it may well correctly have been applied to the great majority of those Chinese men who arrived in Canada before the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act, implemented from 1923 to 1947. The immigrants' families had remained in China by law, and it was natural, and indeed expected, to return to them, even after death. However, the liberalization of Canadian immigration policy in 1967 and, starting in the 1970s, the influx of Hongkongers fleeing the upcoming Communist takeover of their Territory, significantly modified the sojourner myth as applicable to the Chinese immigrant in B.C.

The machinations of racism, war and ritual have made Chinese burial places into culturally and politically contested spaces. The transformation of Chinese burials at Ocean View cemetery also paralleled the social and cultural permutations of the community in the Lower Mainland. The Chinese presence at Ocean View cemetery remains one of the most visible examples of its cultural adaptation on the West Coast. Its progressive manifestations show how this community overcame racist policies to eventually create the space it needed to suit its own cultural needs, even as those evolved as well, up to and including their funerary narratives.

Regrettable incidents such as the closing of China's borders to overseas Chinese remains in 1949 and the extortion measures exerted upon the residents of Chinatown in the 1940s and 1950s served to force individual Chinese residents of the Lower Mainland to seek out their own place—even in the cemetery—in a province and country that offered more to them than their previous plans perhaps foresaw. The changes engendered at Ocean View cemetery with respect to funerary architecture, landscape
and burial practices would help them hone a new rationale for the permanence of their presence in Canada. The grave markers of the new Chinese cemetery at Ocean View have become the new ancestral tablets.
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Appendix. Mongolia/Willow Section Burials

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