

Showing Respect: Death Rituals of the Chinese Community in Coastal Urban British
Columbia

Julia Frances Lacy
B.Sc., University of Victoria, 1983
B.A., University of Victoria, 2009

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of Anthropology

© Julia Lacy, 2016
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This thesis may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy
or other means, without the permission of the author.

Supervisory Committee

Showing Respect: Death Rituals of the Chinese Community in Coastal Urban British Columbia

by

Julia Frances Lacy
B.Sc., University of Victoria, 1983
B.A., University of Victoria, 2009

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Peter H. Stephenson, Supervisor
(Department of Anthropology)

Dr. Lisa Meryn Mitchell, Departmental Member
(Department of Anthropology)

Abstract

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Peter H. Stephenson, Supervisor
(Department of Anthropology)

Dr. Lisa Meryn Mitchell, Departmental Member
(Department of Anthropology)

Decisions on how to proceed at the death of a loved one can be very hard on those tasked with arranging funeral plans. When the deceased or their family span more than one culture, as frequently occurs in immigrant communities, those who remain may not even know what the culturally appropriate practices are. The difficulty of making decisions and plans without a resource base during times of mourning can increase the emotional burden of those who experience the death of a loved one.

This research gathers information from persons in the culturally diverse Victoria and costal urban British Columbia's Chinese Canadian community about some of the death rituals practised locally. It also delves into the beliefs about renegotiated relationships with the deceased, other family members, and the community at large. A summary of this research is provided in a brochure intended to assist people who, as was the case for myself, find they need to make final arrangements but who do not have much knowledge of practices in the Chinese Canadian community.

Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Figures.....	vi
Acknowledgments	vii
Dedication.....	viii
Chapter 1 - Introduction	1
Chapter 2 - Selected Literature Review.....	7
2.1 Early Diaspora	12
2.2 Historical Belief Systems of China	14
2.3 Funeral Practices in China.....	18
2.4 Ritual Days for the Dead	20
2.5 Early Chinese Migrants to North America.....	21
2.6 <i>Tongs</i> in Lieu of Family	23
2.7 Sojourner vs. Immigrant.....	24
2.8 Assimilation.....	24
2.9 Chinese Death Rituals in North American Diaspora.....	25
2.10 Mourning Clothes.....	27
2.11 The Funeral Procession and Burial.....	28
2.12 Secondary Burials.....	29
2.13 The Creation of Victoria's Chinese Cemetery and the use of <i>Fengshui</i>	30
2.14 A modern Chinese funeral in San Francisco	33
2.15 Example of Censure by the Chinese Community.....	36
2.16 Importation of Ancestors Remains from China.....	37
2.17 Current Diaspora	38
2.18 Conclusion.....	40
CHAPTER 3 - Methodology	42
3.1 Research Objective.....	42
3.2 Reflexivity	43
3.3 Ethical Considerations.....	49
3.4 Language Considerations	51
3.5 Participant Recruitment Methods	53
3.6 Data Collection	53
3.7 Semi-Structured Interviews	54
3.8 Photo Elicitation	55
3.9 Autoethnography	56
3.10 Analysis	59
3.10 Summary.....	59
Chapter 4 - Re-Negotiating Relationships through Respect.....	61
4.1 Respect for the Wishes of the Deceased.....	61
4.2 Showing Care and Respect for the Deceased.....	63
4.2.1 <i>Ketou</i> (磕头).....	64

4.2.2 Blanket Ritual	65
4.2.3 Wailing	67
4.2.4 Burning Incense	67
4.2.5 Providing of Material Goods for the Deceased	68
4.3 At the Funeral Service	70
4.4 Journey to the Cemetery	73
4.5 Funeral Meals	74
4.6 Religious Assistance	76
4.7 Continuation of Relationship with the Deceased	79
4.8 Respect for Family Members	83
4.9 Respect for the Community	84
4.10 Relationships in Context	86
4.11 Conclusion	88
Chapter 5 - Conclusion	89
Bibliography	98
Appendix 1: Interview Questions	105
Appendix 3: Chinese Recruitment Poster (Traditional and Simplified)	107
Appendix 4: English Statement of Informed Consent	109
Appendix 5: Traditional Chinese Statement of Informed Consent	111
Appendix 6: Simplified Chinese Statement of Informed Consent	113
Appendix 7: English Community Leader Statement of Informed Consent	115
Appendix 8: Traditional Chinese Community Leader Statement of Informed Consent	117
Appendix 9: Simplified Chinese Community Leader Statement of Informed Consent	119
Appendix 10: Brochure of Chinese Funeral Practices Available in Victoria	121

List of Figures

Fig. 1 Chinese funeral on Government Street 1890

<http://web.uvic.ca/lancenrd/AViewofVictoria/galleryphotos/galleryphotos.php>

Fig 2 Gate to Victoria's Chinese Cemetery

Picture taken by Julia Lacy November 2008

Fig 3 Offering Burners and Altar at Victoria's Chinese Cemetery

Picture taken by Julia Lacy November 2008

Fig 4 Burial monument of Taishan County

Picture taken by Julia Lacy November 2008

Acknowledgments

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the assistance and support of the many individuals and agencies that made my research possible.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Peter Stephenson, without whose support and encouragement, I would not have been able to continue my thesis.

I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Lisa Mitchell and Dr. Kelli Stajduhar who kindly agreed to be on my committee. I appreciate your willingness to help me given the short time frame available.

I also would like to acknowledge the generous financial support provided by both the Pacific Century Graduate Scholarship and the UVic Graduate Award.

I would also like to thank those who have supported my efforts in finding out about Chinese death rituals by spending time with me, sharing their knowledge, and allowing me to become part of their community.

Thanks also to my family and friends, who have been encouraging and supportive during my journey.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated in memory my mother, Siu Yung Easley, whom I love and miss.

Also to my children and Don – with all my love.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

My research objective was to investigate the experiences and practices of Chinese in Canada towards death and bereavement. Specifically, I was interested in variations in intergenerational expectations and religious affiliations regarding the practices of funerals, grieving, and attitudes towards the relations of the living to the newly deceased, as well as distant ancestors. Death, and matters pertaining to it, are not readily discussed by the Chinese (Nichols and Braun 1997:339; Hsu et al. 2009:167). My research enabled me to collect, assess, and share authentic information about current practices related to death in the Chinese Canadian community. The results of this research may help foster and secure a positive bereavement experience for members of the Chinese community in Canada who, like myself, did not have access to such knowledge.

Death rituals are practices that may include rites performed upon the death of an individual, as well as related to the disposition of the body, preparation of the soul for afterlife, a gathering of survivors, and a continuing relationship with the soul of the dead (Watson 1988; Rouse 2005b). There is a belief that death is in fact not the end, but rather an extension of life in a new form. There is a reciprocal and ongoing responsibility between the living descendants and the spirits of their dead ancestors (McCreery 2008). The living provide spirits of the dead with food and material wealth in the next life, while the spirits can affect the lives and prosperity of the living (Chung and Wegars 2005:2-4; Rouse 2005b:20-23).

The combination of Chinese beliefs concerning death and the dead, immigration to Canada, and a certain amount of taboo within the community about discussing this topic

has led to the very real possibility of survivors having to act for the dead and the family in a vacuum of information. In my own experience, despite having a Chinese mother, I had no connections to the Chinese community at the time of my mother's passing, and my knowledge of Chinese culture was piecemeal at best. Ten years after the death of my mother, I became aware of how much I didn't know regarding the Chinese death rituals, and how that knowledge would have been comforting to me at her death. Perhaps it could be so for others as well.

In chapter two, I present a selected literature review. My quest to understand what is essentially Chinese regarding death rituals here required a look into historical and cultural practices in China and in North America. This is complicated by the extensive history of the Chinese. Evidence of seed cultivation has been found dating as far back as 10,000 years ago (Chang 1999:44), and written language by 1200 BC (Boltz 1999:75). Changes over time are further complicated by geographic variations. Massive emigration of Chinese have occurred in waves since the nineteenth century, in order to escape from famine, war, and invasion, and also to find prosperity (Roy 1989). Emigration to Canada of Chinese peoples (Stephenson 2005) have occurred either directly from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam, as well as essentially from anywhere in the world that the Chinese diaspora exists (Kuah-Pearce and Davidson 2014).

Given the range of information available, I found it necessary to limit my literature review to information that pertained to North American practices, and British Columbia specifically. In my selected literature review, I describe the early wave of Chinese who came from China (Roy 1989; Chase 2005), and provide an overview of the belief systems that were prevalent at the time (McCreery 2008; Paper and Thompson 1988). This

includes common funeral practices (Watson 1988), as well as holidays specifically for the dead (Stepanchuk and Wong 1991).

The early migrants to North America (Chung et al. 2005; Lai 1991), mostly male sojourners from Guangzhou province, who intended to return to China, joined associations based on their hometown or surname. Racist policies in Canada and the United States prevented Chinese families from moving to North America (Roy 1989). As a result of the lack of family networks, groups such as tongs or other associations provided them with the assurance that they would not be forgotten should they die here, and were a means of connecting with people having familiar backgrounds and beliefs (Chace 2005; Lai 1991). Funeral clothing, processions, and secondary burials of the skeletal remains that were common at the time in Guangzhou are described.

In order to provide context on how some rituals were carried out here in Victoria, I give a brief history of the Chinese cemetery at Harlan Point (Lai 1987). In addition, current practices of Chinese funerals held in San Francisco (Crowder 2005) are described as a comparison with local practices here in British Columbia. Examples of how communities censure their members for not adhering to local norms (Crowder 2005), and the importation of remains from China to the United States (Greenwood 2005) illustrate some of the variety of changes that have occurred.

In chapter 3, I present the methodology of my research. My research objective is to increase the understanding of the rituals and practices of Chinese regarding death in the local context. I present my personal background in a section on reflexivity (Denzin & Lincoln 1994:3), in order to clarify any biases that I may have based on my own history. I then describe how this research is both an academic endeavour and an attempt to

reclaim my Chinese heritage by learning about rituals that I did not have to guide and comfort me during the loss of my mother.

I had the opportunity to speak with community and religious leaders to determine if this research could be of benefit to the Chinese community. With the support of three community and religious leaders, I was able to obtain ethical approval from the university to proceed. I was given the go ahead to interview people in the local community regarding their knowledge and experience of death rituals here in British Columbia.

Given the sensitive subject matter being researched, my supervisor ensured that I would minimize emotional distress of the interviewees (Leavy 2014) and had contingency plans in place should anyone find the interviewing process too upsetting. Interviews were only conducted with individuals who had not experienced the loss of an immediate family member during the last year, the interviews did not exceed an hour in length, and a list of counsellors with appropriate language skills was made available should the need arise. Posters were placed at the university and at community centres in both English and Chinese, and were also handed out to friends and acquaintances who had expressed an interest in this subject. I also prepared consent forms in both English and Chinese.

Interviews were conducted at locations chosen by the participant, and in the language preferred by the participant. Semi-structured interviews with open ended questions (Davies 1999; Bernard 2006), were conducted in English, Mandarin, Cantonese, or a mixture of any of these three languages, depending on the preference of the participant. In addition to what I learned during my interviews, by becoming part of the local Chinese

community, I was able to discuss issues with my friends, and also attend three Chinese funerals and learned through participant observations (Cresswell 2007:68).

In chapter 4, I analyse the data collected, which consists of ten interviews and my personal notes. As part of my analysis, I transcribed the interviews into English. The data gathered was analyzed using thematic analysis (Ryan and Bernard 2003; Creswell 2007:244), and discussed in chapter 4. Issues of respect became the overarching theme in my analysis. Respect for the wishes of the deceased expressed in life, and show of respect for the deceased both during the funeral and afterwards, allowed the surviving family members to provide for the comfort of the deceased in the next life. From rituals such as the blanket ceremony, where descendants place a blanket on the deceased, to the annual feast held at the cemetery, families continue their reciprocal relationship with the deceased. In addition to respecting the deceased, families also showed respect towards other family members by negotiating which ritual practices are acceptable. For example, the use of incense that may have upset one member of the family was postponed so that incense was not burned during their presence.

The show of respect for others in the community was also very important. Families of the deceased showed their respect and appreciation for community members by holding funeral banquets and handing out candy and coins after the funeral. It was also common for mourners to stay away from other kinds of gatherings, such as celebrations of weddings and births. This show of respect allowed those who were mourning to keep the taint of death away from happy celebrations.

Chapter 5 provides the conclusion to this thesis with a summary of the research findings and suggestions for further research. A look into current research on the

importance of migration, movement, and formation of identity as important aspects that determine choices made by migrants when dealing with funerals and burials indicate a need for further research on how these concerns affect local decisions made by people of Chinese descent.

Chapter 2 - Selected Literature Review

Death rituals are specialized practices that usually include a series of rites performed upon the death of an individual, but which can also include practices that continue in some form for as long as the deceased person is remembered. These practices may include some or all of disposition of the body, preparation of the soul for afterlife, and a gathering of the survivors (Watson 1988; Rouse 2005b). Death rituals performed for the deceased can extend far beyond the immediate. They may include reburial years or even decades later, and may involve the maintenance of a continuing relationship with the living, which is in some cases expressed indefinitely through a variety of devotional or retrospective practices (McCreery 2008:312-315). The meaning of specific practices varies widely from culture to culture (Watson 1988). For example, across cultures even the simple practice of visiting a grave (Watson 1988) varies in meaning and intent. It may be intended to support the spirit of the deceased in the afterlife, as a vehicle to establish communication between the spirits of the dead and living visitors (Chan et al. 2005:937-938), or simply as a commemoration of one who has passed on. These variations exist not only within the culture (Watson 1988), but also within communities (Crowder 2005). A simple visit to local cemeteries illustrates the variety of options that are chosen by Chinese families. There are burials in full caskets, burials of cremated remains, English only headstones, headstones that contain Chinese, and icons that represent different religious affiliations.

The term Diaspora (Diaspora 2010) has been associated with the dispersal of Jews. However, as noted by Brubaker (2004:2), it has also come into use to refer to those

peoples who have moved away from their homeland (Brubaker 2004:2), and are without the support of either their extended family or their original community. Ritual practices, especially those dealing with death, often require the support of family and friends, which may not be available when the individual is separated from the homeland. In cases where vast distances separate those who have died from their families, even the simple act of visiting the gravesite becomes impossible. When one dies in diaspora, methods of maintaining relationships with those who survive in a faraway homeland often prove problematic if not impossible, as Chace (2005 :47) described for those who died in America.

To add to the complexity of being in diaspora, the Chinese within Canada are ethnically diverse (Stephenson 2005), being comprised of multiple waves of migrants coming from different areas, speaking different dialects, and with differing religious beliefs. Even within a religion, there is contradiction and conflict. Stephenson notes that Daoists resist death due to the potential of eternal suffering, and yet it teaches the acceptance of death as a natural event. Such conflict and variety is manifested with variations on how rituals surrounding death are observed.

Death rituals serve as rites of passage marking the end of one kind of existence and transformation into another. For the community of the living, death rituals are often constructed to serve as reinforcements of social bonds and reaffirmations of relationships among the survivors (Chan et al. 2005; Greenwood 2005:258). In a broader context, death rituals sometimes help the living maintain both their personal and cultural identity. On one hand, death rituals are opportunities for the living to celebrate the life that has been lived (Braun 1997:337). On the other hand, death rituals may also be intended to

assist the spirit of the deceased to attain the best possible afterlife (Cohen 1998:181). In this sense, the ritual is considered more than a mere recognition of the existence of an afterlife for the deceased, or even of a way to reaffirm ties with the dead: the practices of the living, with respect to the dead, help to determine the type of afterlife the deceased will experience. Coming full circle, many rites are performed in the belief that dead can influence the lives of the living. For example, many cultures not only pray for the dead, they also pray *to* the dead, seeking intervention on their behalf *by* the dead (Watson 1988).

In Chinese traditional culture, which for the purposes of this paper means practices common in China during the last half of the nineteenth century¹, many of the above general characteristics have specific and fundamentally important application to the death rituals of Chinese in diaspora. Essential to understanding these practices is recognition that among the Chinese there is a close tie between the dead and the living (Chung and Wegars 2005:2-4; Rouse 2005b:20-23). Not only do the dead rely on the assistance of the living to exist well in their afterlife, but the living require the blessings of the dead to protect them from misfortune, and to provide them with good fortune in the form of wealth and fertility.

In the early years of Chinese migration to North America, the immigrants were often completely cut off from family and the traditional rites of passage (Roy 1989:x-xii).

Being separated from family and friends, there was a sense of loss and disconnection.

The concept of filial piety (Thompson 1996:37), that expresses itself in practice as both

¹ This time frame encompasses the first wave of Chinese migrants arriving in Canada between 1858-1870s lured by the prospect on gold in the Fraser River (Lai 1991). Most of these migrants were sojourners, male labourers who originated from Guangzhou province who were escaping economic hardship from their home villages.

respect for parents and as ancestor worship, and which is believed to connect people with their cultural and personal identity was disrupted by this isolation. The identity of these people, who were mostly men, was established primarily through membership in their patrilineal group in their homeland (Lai 1991:50-54).

Foremost among these ideas is that not only were the Chinese in diaspora separated in life from their community, but to die in diaspora meant that in their afterlife they could expect to spend the rest of eternity lost and adrift (Watson 1988:9) – a particularly bleak prospect for an already isolated and lonely group of people (Roy 1989:13-22). It was just as important for the people who were living and performing the rituals to know they were continuing their beliefs and values and know that the practices and rituals they were carrying out for those who died in their community would also be carried out by the community when it came time for them to die (Chace 2005:68-69).

With their great historical depth and geographic spread, the Chinese have developed a diverse and fascinating set of prescribed rituals pertaining to their ancestors (Hsu et al. 2009:154; Watson 1988). The earliest archaeological and written records suggest an already established belief in a continuation of the relationship between the living and the dead (Rouse 2005b). Since it is believed that the dead require offerings provided by the living, and also that the living require blessings of the dead in order to flourish, it is not surprising that rituals surrounding death in Chinese culture remain extremely important to many Chinese people.

Aside from a fundamental belief in a continuing relationship between the living and the ancestors, Chinese culture has been neither static over time nor homogeneous. In particular, variations in expression have emerged as local expressions of a shared belief

(Watson and Rawski 1988). Among the Chinese in diaspora there is both fidelity to constancy and variation from the death rituals that had been practiced in China. Many Chinese and persons of Chinese ancestry have been able to adapt to new lifestyles in diaspora, including how they conduct their funerary rituals (Greenwood 2005: 256-258). From the very beginning, many Chinese who came to North America have attempted to retain their ties with family, despite laws and other discriminatory practices that prevented them from enjoying close contact. The importance of the connection with family continuing in death made it necessary for the Chinese to form *tongs*, or fraternal societies, in order to provide for the care of the deceased, as many Chinese migrants were otherwise separated completely from family and support systems of their home culture. For example, it was especially important to be able to organize and carry out the shipping of remains home to family in China (Chung and Wegars 2005:6-8). Underlying this practice was the belief that return to the place of one's origins would help to ensure the life of the deceased in the afterworld, and prevent the spirit of the deceased from becoming a hungry ghost (Abraham and Wegars 2005:152-153).

Maintaining traditional practices as carried out in China has not always been possible for the people of the Chinese diaspora. This has provided an impetus to adapt through both internal innovation and assimilation of North American cultural practices (Chung and Wegars 2005:12-14). For example, in cases where there were no women family members to mourn and lament for the deceased, women would often be hired to wail and lament for them (Chace 2005:55). More than simply for show, it was part of a prescribed preparation of the deceased for life in the spirit world (Watson 1988:12). In other situations, where there were no local corpse handlers, the local coroner or undertaker

would be engaged to perform those duties (Chung et al. 2005:12). When remains could not be shipped back to China, such as after the invasion of China by Japan in the twentieth century, then permanent burial in North America became the norm (Chung and Wegars 2005:8). Over time, these new practices became part of the established rituals for the Chinese in diaspora, as they had already become for those who were born in North America.

None of these changes meant that traditional practices were discarded. It was more a case of keeping some rituals, adopting other practices, and eventually creating a unique system that celebrated both the traditional Chinese values and customs from the homeland as well as embracing the customs of the new land. For example, Chinese funerals in San Francisco eventually began to incorporate the use of hearses, limousines, and even brass bands playing songs such as *Amazing Grace* (Crowder 2005:229-232). This interweaving of customs and values, combined with the increasing wealth of persons of Chinese ancestry in North America, has even given rise, in some cases, to the practice of importing the remains of parents and grandparents from the old country into the United States (Greenwood 2005). This very recent practice preserves a link with the ancestors by permitting the continued practice of traditional observances.

Cultural adaptation and acculturation is never a simple single directional force for change. This study of the funeral rituals and death rites of the Chinese in North America is intended to provide a glimpse into how cultural practices change and yet manage to maintain continuity.

2.1 Early Diaspora

The term 'diaspora' is closely tied with the concept of a homeland, and was associated and even defined by the Jewish dispersion from their homeland (Brubaker 2004:1-2). As the term became widely used, it came to be associated with other groups who have left their conceptual homeland (Brubaker 2005:2). The reasoning behind these dispersals varies, and can be attributed to catastrophes, victimization, and even for trade. What these groups have in common is their ties to their homelands.

Despite the distance in space from their homeland, many of those who have been dispersed still derive their identity and their values from the homeland (Brubaker 2005:2). This connection can take the form of active political support within their homeland and also some degree of emotional and social ties (Brubaker 2005:2). It is the existence of connections that creates a boundary between the host community into which the Chinese moved and those in diaspora. They create a distinct community (Brubaker 2005:6-7), which can extend to successive generations, but which is affected by the assimilation or partial assimilation of these groups into the mainstream community with whom they reside.

Chinese migration to North America began early in the nineteenth century (Rouse 2005b). Many historical, political, economic and social realities of the day affected those migrant peoples (Roy 1989:vii-xiv). Most of the early migrants from China were trying to escape a severe economic downturn in southern China and gain economic success elsewhere (Roy 1989: x-xi). However, political and social forces within North America combined to make it difficult for these new migrants to assimilate into the new land. Because women were not allowed to immigrate, the men were left without families (Chung and Wegars 2005:2). Without families, rites of passage pertaining to birth and

marriage were not practiced in North America. Neither were the people able to take part in ancestor worship, which was an important part of life in their homeland (Watson 1988:2).

Without the connection to their families, men joined associations or *tongs* that acted as surrogate families (Chung et al. 2005:110). *Tongs* provided their members with the ability to maintain their cultural practices, acting as a surrogate family that could provide them with access to contacts and practices not available to the individual sojourner. The *tongs* took care of their members, creating ties based not on blood, but rather on surnames or hometowns (Lai 1991:51-55). The most important rites that still existed in the new land were those associated with death. It was the continuation of these rites that enabled the new migrants to maintain their connection with their homeland, and to forge a new connection with others in their new land. The knowledge that they would be cared for even in death provided them with the assurance that their current separation was not eternal. The knowledge that their association would ensure the proper care of their spirits until they could be returned to their families provided them with the confidence of belonging to their homes and families despite their current separation (Crowder 2005:196-198). The surviving members used these rites to provide them with the opportunity to take part in familiar rituals, which provided them with a sense of belonging, and affirmed their ties with their homeland (Chace 2005:68).

2.2 Historical Belief Systems of China

Funeral practices in China have been supported by the belief systems in which these practices evolved. Chinese beliefs and practices have evolved through a syncretic mix of Chinese religion (Paper and Thompson:1998) and the other three main belief systems:

Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism (McCreery 2008:304). Chinese religion² (Lai et al. 2005) “is the oldest contemporary religious contract for which we have written documentation,” focusing in large part on rituals to honour the dead. Although an argument could be made that almost any belief system entails these attributes, the meaning here is that they do not represent comprehensive or extended belief frameworks. As Shih stated (2010:122) “religion is itself embedded with Chinese culture, and is mediated through familial and social relations and orders.” These less formally structured beliefs tend to vary between local Chinese groups, and result in differences among local practices. As described below, a constant and important overarching aspect of the rites and rituals practiced by Chinese people is that of the concept of ancestor worship.

Daoism (McCreery 2008:307-309), founded by Laozi, believed in living in accordance with nature. He advocated being indifferent to human desires, and to treat everyone in the same way. The Cosmologists conceived of a cosmos created through the interaction of yin and yang forces, and developed the theory of the five elements. Daoism underwent changes during turbulent times, including incorporation of concepts about rebirth which came from Buddhism between the second to the sixth century, C.E.

(Brokenkamp 2007:4-7)

Confucianism (McCreery 2008:207-308) follows the teachings of Kungzi (a.k.a. Confucius). Kungzi lived during a time of turmoil (551-479 B.C.E.) and taught the importance of following the teachings of ancient sages both by rulers and common folk, in order to reform society. The concepts of Confucianism have intermingled with the

² There are those who describe Chinese religion as Chinese popular religion (Yu 2012:200-204), and relegate it to a less important standing, stating that it is comprised of less formally structured, but still powerful belief systems, often described as being of a superstitious or magical nature

beliefs of the Legalists. The Legalists believed in a rigid system of clearly stated laws enforced by strict rewards and punishments. Rouse (2005b:21) describes the importance of rites in Confucianism connected with ancestor reverence and filial piety, which includes honouring the dead. The proper performance of burial rituals reinforced these beliefs.

Buddhism came to be of influence in China (McCreery 2008:309-311) during the collapse of the Han dynasty (200 C.E.). Buddhists taught that the world's suffering is caused by desire and that the only path to salvation is to eliminate all desire. Buddhism also introduced the concept of Hell, and provided funeral rites to assist the dead in passing through the various levels of Hell.

Chinese religion as it is practiced today is the product of the syncretism of the original clan beliefs and the influences of Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism. The result is a complex mixture of rituals and beliefs. Lai et al. (2005) noted that the current practice of Chinese religion has been fairly consistent for the last thousand years, comprised of family altars in the homes of the eldest son where the ancestors are named and worshipped. Chung and Wegars (2005:6) described how ritual practices were influenced by Daoists, who were concerned with the forces of nature, the Confucianists with the community and family, and the Buddhists with the afterlife. Evidence of Chinese Religion, as stated by Paper and Thompson (1998), can best be seen in the practice of Chinese culture.

Ancestor worship (McCreery 2008:314-318) gained prominence during the Shang Dynasty (1600-1050 B.C.E.). Historical records show that the Shang kings made sacrifices to their ancestors. In defining filial piety, Confucius mentions the importance

of treating parents with *li*, the need to follow proper forms of behaviour both in life and in death. One result of this is the perceived importance for families to have sons (Rouse 2005b). This makes it possible to carry on the ancestral line, an essential component of ancestors worship. Ancestor worship also reinforces the importance of genealogies, ancestor halls, and lineage estates. Consequently, it is important for the younger generation to serve the elder, and provide them with food and other goods. In this way, the dead depend on their living descendants to survive and prosper in the spirit realm and in return, they provide their living descendants with good luck, material wealth, and fertility.

The ancestor's soul is divided upon death (McCreery 2008:315). The *hun*, the spiritual component, is brought home to be worshipped through a spirit tablet, which is placed on the family altar. The *po*, the earthly component, is left at the grave. China is a patriarchal society, so the most important and influential members are males who have had children. With this in mind, there are fewer obligations towards those who have not reproduced (Greenwood 2008:246). Since public demonstrations of grief were not expected of family members towards those who died without offspring, family altars do not usually have spirit tablets for juvenile males or unmarried women.

While the spirits of ancestors are considered members of the family (McCreery 2008:315-318), there are others in the afterlife as well. Some of these spirits are called ghosts. Ghosts are hostile, hungry strangers. Fear of ghosts, yin, spirits, and contamination by the dead are common amongst the Chinese. Many people of Chinese origin will not discuss death and dying due to this fear (Hsu et al. 2009:154; Braun and

Nichols 1997:329). Many rituals such as the use of firecrackers and gongs are designed to confuse or frighten away these evil spirits.

Another belief that has strong influence on death rituals is that of *fengshui*. *Fengshui* is an ancient Chinese art that combines traditional knowledge of both the heavens and the Earth – a kind of geomancy – in order to live harmoniously in the world. It is used in correctly placing and aligning graves and buildings to improve the luck of those associated with them (McCreery 2008:318). According to *fengshui*, a well-chosen grave site will make the new spirit more comfortable, and the spirit will be more inclined to channel good fortune towards their descendants.

2.3 Funeral Practices in China

Funeral and burial rites in China have a remarkable consistency over both time and place (Watson 1988:9). Flowing from the widespread belief in the continued relationship between the living and the dead, as well as codification of the rites and rituals relating to the dead, certain widely practiced procedures have been observed (Watson 1988:10). Watson (1988:11-15) noted that there were nine specific actions to be performed irrespective of class, status, and wealth of the individuals involved:

1. Public notification of death by wailing and other sounds associated with grief is mandatory. There can also be white banners and blue lanterns placed on the homes of the deceased.
2. White mourning clothes with sackcloth hoods are the required mourning garb. White is the colour associated with death, and the specific attire for each individual is based on the degree of kinship with the deceased.
3. There is ritualized bathing of the corpse. This can be accompanied by a change of clothing for the deceased for their journey into the underworld. The bathing can vary from a full body scrub to a small daub of liquid on the forehead.

4. Transfer of food, money, and goods is made to the dead. This is usually done by burning paper models, which become usable by the deceased in the underworld. Food is placed as an offering, where the deceased spirit will consume the essence, and the remnants will be eaten by the mourners afterwards.
5. There is preparation and installation of a spirit tablet for the dead. This serves as a repository of one aspect of the soul, the *hun*, and can require the help of a ritual specialist. It involves writing the name of the deceased on a tablet, which is then kept at the home of the deceased. The wealthy can store the tablet at an ancestral hall. If the deceased was an unmarried woman or one who did not have children, the tablet can be stored in temples, convents, or other institutions for a fee.
6. There is ritualized use of money and payment of professionals. Due to the complexity of certain rites, mourners could not perform all essential services. A required feature of the death rituals is that someone had to accept money from mourners before the corpse could be safely expelled from the community. This points to the importance of monetary exchange, even in death.
7. Music is used to accompany corpse and to settle the spirit. The musicians would accompany the corpse, especially when movement was required.
8. There is the sealing of the corpse in an airtight coffin. Paid specialists usually settle the corpse in the coffin. The sealing of the coffin is usually done by the chief mourner or a high status relative.
9. Lastly, there is expulsion of the coffin from the community. This is the last formal act pertaining to the death ritual.

In spite of common aspects among death rituals, there remain significant differences in practice. Differences are based on region, religion, status, and sex of the deceased. A major regional variation, noted by Watson (1988:16-17), is the southern Chinese practice of secondary burials. This has led to certain localized practices there. For example, in order to encourage decomposition before the bones are exhumed and buried permanently, some villagers in southern China would break open the coffin with an axe, while others would drill holes in the coffin prior to the burial. The practice of secondary burials was common even among those who travelled and died in foreign lands, such as the early migrants to North America (Rouse 2005b). Prior to World War II in Canada, the

exhumed remains of deceased migrants from China, most of whom came from the southern province of Guangdong, were shipped to and stored in a bone house in Victoria, awaiting repatriation (Lai 1987). By contrast, in northern China, secondary burial is not practiced. However coffins may be stored above ground until the death of a spouse or parent so that the entire family can be buried together.

The elaborateness of the funeral and the placement of the grave are determined by the status of the deceased (Rouse 2005b:24-27). Richer patriarchs have the highest status, and receive the most elaborate rituals. Also, the placement of their graves is usually in the most auspicious locations. Those of low status, such as unmarried women, children, or victims of violent deaths may be buried with less fanfare, and their spirit tablets might not even be kept with the family altar, but instead stored at a convent or temple.

2.4 Ritual Days for the Dead

The two main ritual days relating to the dead are the *Chingming* Festival and the Hungry Ghost Festival. The *Chingming* Festival involves sweeping the family graves in the spring (Stepanchuk and Wong 1991:61-70). Honouring in the dead on these days is very important because of the belief that the dead are intimately connected with the lives of the living, thus affecting fertility, wealth, and health. Sacrifices of food and spirit money are made to keep the ancestors in good humour so that family members will receive blessings and good harvests. The *Chingming* Festival day is observed through the practice of having ceremonial meals beside the family tomb and by cleaning and repairing hillside graves. This keeps the homes of the dead tidy. It is not a mournful occasion, but more like a picnic that is shared with their dead. Offerings are also made at both ancestral halls and at the graveside. Less appetizing food is provided at the

gravesite, due to the belief there are other spirits in the area and they may be attracted to a more sumptuous fare.

The other day for the dead is the Hungry Ghost Festival, which is also known as *Yulanhui*, *Yulanpen*, or *Puddu* (Stephanchuk and Wong 1991: 71-80). This day marks the transition for spirits in the underworld from being a threatening ghost to becoming a stable spirit. According to this belief, all ghosts are released from the underworld to enjoy a month of freedom in the seventh month of the lunar calendar. On the 15th day of the month, there is a special ghost feeding ritual. This is meant to pacify the ghosts of strangers and the uncared-for-dead. When dead, the soul or *hun* lives in a world of darkness, dependent on the care of their descendents for a comfortable afterlife. Without the support of their descendents, they turn into desperate ghosts. The offerings to these ghosts are made outside, so the wandering spirits don't take up residence in the homes of living. Buddhist and Daoist priests chant liturgies, perform rituals on an outdoor altar, and offer incense and burn paper goods for the ghosts. Buddhist monks and nuns chant the *Yulanpen* sutra to rescue these forgotten ancestors from punishment in the underworld (Stephanchuk and Wong 1991:179).

2.5 Early Chinese Migrants to North America

The discovery of gold in California in 1849 was followed by the immigration of thousands of Chinese (Chung et al. 2005:108). These new immigrants spread eastward as new employment opportunities arose. While some continued their search for gold, others found jobs in lumbering, in the service industry, and in the laundry and restaurant businesses. The construction of the Central Pacific Railroad starting in 1868 also provided employment for approximately ten to twelve thousand Chinese in the United

States (Chung et al. 2005:108). Some of the Chinese workers stayed on the in the towns along the rail lines.

In Canada, the first Chinese arrived in Victoria (Lai 1991:2) during the gold rush in the lower Fraser River by boat from San Francisco. By the 1800s (Lai 1991:5) 16,000 Chinese had arrived in Victoria from various ports in the United States and China. Victoria had become the gateway to Canada for the early Chinese migrants, and it was here that the oldest Chinatown in Canada was established (Lai 1991).

The ancestral home of most of the early Chinese who arrived in North America is Guangdong Province, located in southern China (Chung and Wegars 2008:8). These early Chinese populations in North America were overwhelmingly male. In British Columbia (Roy 1989:xi) noted that in 1911, only 3.5% (961 individuals) of the Chinese population was female. Some of the early migrants wished to retain ties with family in China (Roy 1989:xi) and kept their families in China by choice. Others were prevented from having family join with them in North America by discriminatory laws that were designed to limit the number and the rights of the Chinese.³

Euro-Canadians generally saw the Chinese as economic competitors whose presence was detrimental to the formation of a “white man’s country” (Roy 1989:91). Efforts were made to prevent the Chinese from attending public schools (Roy 1989:91), to restrict the Chinese from working in timber camps (Roy1989:252), and to discourage any Chinese influence by forming the Anti-Chinese Union (Roy 1989:60).

³ In 1884 the government introduced two anti-Chinese bills: An Act to Prevent the Immigration of Chinese and An Act to Regulate the Chinese Population of British Columbia. These are designed to forbid entrance to British Columbia and a measure to prohibit “annoying” Chinese Customs, including the exhumation of Chinese bodies. The Chinese Immigration Act, passed in 1886, charged Chinese immigrants a head tax of fifty-dollars per person. More information can be found in Roy’s *A White Man’s Province*.

Between discriminatory laws and unhappy neighbours, life in the new land was not easy for many Chinese. Not infrequently, death came at an early age (Chung et al. 2005:109; Lai 1989). Evidence that life was hard is provided by osteological remains found in a Nevada Chinese cemetery, which show that the deceased had performed heavy labour, had a high incidence of arthritis, and most had suffered physical trauma (Chung et al. 2005).

2.6 *Tongs* in Lieu of Family

Because most early migrants from China to North America were male labourers, these people tended to arrive in North America without family members. Since it was important for the Chinese to maintain ties with families in death as in life, *tongs* (Chace 2005) were created to care for the physical and ritual needs of the dead in lieu of family. *Tongs* (Lai 1991), or associations, were formed on the bases of geographical origin of their members and their descendents, dialects, political affiliations, recreation clubs, religious groups, and other groups. In Victoria, the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) was a powerful *tong* that served as an umbrella organization, and was composed of representatives from the other *tongs*. Some of the activities that the CCBA undertook included the administration of the Chinese hospital, school, and cemetery (Lai 1992).

In Nevada, Chung et al (2005:111) described how immediate family members were replaced as the main figures in the funerary process in Nevada by other Chinese who happened to live in the same district, and therefore were in the same *tong*. These *tongs* arranged for the cemetery plot, funeral services, funeral procession, and the exhumation and return of remains to China. It was a practical, if not completely successful

arrangement in the circumstances. For example, personal touches usually provided by immediate family were missing in these situations.

2.7 Sojourner vs. Immigrant

Most of the Euro-American and Euro-Canadian public tended to think of all Chinese as sojourners. In an early article from the *Cariboo Sentinel* (Roy 1990:9), the Chinese were described as being alien in nationality, habit, religion, and allegiance. The article claimed that the Chinese desecrated their dead, and that they were sojourners who had no intention of becoming part of British Columbian society.

In spite of the widespread belief that the early Chinese migrants did not intend to stay in North America, Chung et al (2005:110) noted that some in Nevada had no intention of returning to China either alive or dead. These were immigrants who spent the rest of their lives in their adopted homeland. As a result, the remains of those Chinese who immigrated to Nevada were left there, buried near kinsmen and friends. Their cemeteries and graves were not exhumed, and despite their immigration from the south of China, they may never have been intended to be exhumed (Chung et al. 2005:110).

2.8 Assimilation

American influences began to be incorporated into the Chinese death rituals as decades went by (Chung et al 2005:114-115). By the 1880s the Euro-American undertaker was often replacing the Chinese specialist in preparing the corpse for burial (Chung et al. 2005:112). Also, haircuts and clothing in remains that have been examined also indicate that the deceased showed transition from Chinese styles of the time to American styles (Chung et al. 2005:125). Rouse (2005a:104) noted the adoption of American clothing,

burial hardware and personal goods as well. By 1916, Christian ministers were burying the Chinese members of their congregations. After the Christian ceremony, some Chinese would still perform their own ceremonies with candles, roasted chicken, flags, burning incense, incantations, and goods by graveside. This indicates an increasing incorporation of North American customs into important rituals for the Chinese.

Changes in burial practices and cemetery markers (Abraham & Wegars 2005) indicate changing traditions as the Chinese began to adopt more Euro-American practices in the Pacific Northwest. In Hawaii (Chung & Newman 2005) the increased variation of grave sites and markers also show an increase in the adoption of American customs.

2.9 Chinese Death Rituals in North American Diaspora

Rituals that are followed by the Chinese in North America vary according to family, location, wealth, status, and other factors. In order to provide an idea of what some of the rituals and rites are that have been performed in North America, the following is provided. It gives a general sense of how funeral rites and rituals have adhered to historical Chinese customs and how they may have changed over time and geographical distance.

Wealth and status played an important role on how elaborate a funeral may be. Funerals for the poor Chinese in North America, like those in China, were simple affairs (Crowder 2008:202). With this in mind, the following description is that of a more elaborate Chinese funeral: After a death, a white paper with Chinese calligraphy (Rouse 2005b:33-34) is posted on the door of the residence of the deceased to announce that a death has occurred. White is the colour associated with death and mourning (Toulson 2013:156; Lobar et al. 2006:45). A relative may announce the death to the gods at the temple, and obituary notices are made and posted. Geomancers are called to determine

the most auspicious time for the burial and to determine the best grave site if none exists. Priests, bands, and professional wailers will be hired at this time if they are required for the funeral and the procession (Rouse 2005b:34).

It was common by the late 19th century for Chinatown undertakers (Crowder 2005:200) in San Francisco to prepare the corpse and have it lie in state in single-parlor mortuaries. Chinese mortuaries were available starting around the 1870s and by the early 20th century there had been seven of them in San Francisco. In Marysville, California (Chace 2008:54-55; Chung et al 2008:112) it was common from the earliest years for the Chinese to hire Euro-American undertakers, and they or the coroner would take the place of the traditional corpse handler in preparing the body for burial. This enabled the Chinese to distance themselves from the contamination and potential bad luck associated with dealing with a corpse.

While the body lay in state, the family performed the final rituals (Crowder 2008:223) of the symbolic washing of the dead and placing of four blankets on the deceased, each blanket representing one of the four seasons. These blankets were then also available for the spirit to use in the next world (Chung et al 2008:113). This was also the busiest time of the Buddhist and Daoist funeral process (Crowder 2008:223) as priests and nuns performed their rituals and chants for the soul of the deceased.

Guests who pay their last respects to the deceased lying in state are given *li shi* (coins and candy in envelopes) when they leave. It is common for the guests to receive two envelopes (Crowder 2008:205) – a white one containing a coin and a piece of candy, and a red one with just a coin. The red envelope provides good luck, the white envelope signifies death, and the candy is meant to ease the bitterness of death. The common

Chinese practice of guests giving funerary money to the family in white envelopes to help pay for the expenses of the funeral was not part of the early practice in North America (Chung et al 2008:113). Without family nearby, the *tongs* and the associates of the deceased, usually through dues paid to the associations, paid for early Chinese funerals.

2.10 Mourning Clothes

The traditional Chinese colour of mourning for immediate relatives is white (Chung and Wegars 2005:10). The immediate family would wear white sackcloth (Chace 2005:55) with burlap bands around their heads, and yellow mat sandals (Rouse 2005b:33). This type of mourning attire can be seen to this day at funeral processions in San Francisco (Crowder 2005:218).

Funerals for members of the Chinese Freemasons tended to be more elaborate, with the lodge brothers taking part in the procession. The Freemasons would generally wear their best suit with a red rosette in the lapel (Chase 2005:55). The colour red is representative of the lodge colour, and it also provides protection from spirits who may be unsettled.

As time passed, more Western customs became incorporated into the Chinese funeral rituals. In 1926, the widow of a well known doctor, Hoy Chung Gar, in Spokane, Washington, wore black to the funeral (Chung and Wegars 2005:10). In San Francisco, most families choose to wear black, or wear black armbands during their funerals (Crowder 2008:215). It is now common for female relatives to be in black net veils with coloured yarn bows in their hair representing their relationship to the deceased. White bows are for wives, children and in-laws, green for granddaughters. The mortuary provides the veils, bows and black arm bands to the family.

2.11 The Funeral Procession and Burial

Traditionally, the eldest son leads the procession that brings the coffin to the cemetery to be buried. However, when the Chinese first arrived in North America, few men had elder sons living with them, so friends or relatives would perform this duty (Chung et al 2005:113). The mourners would follow the coffin to the cemetery, often stopping at the home and work of the deceased. During the procession, they would scatter paper with circular cut outs to confuse evil spirits who were only able to travel in straight lines.

Often, the *tong* that the deceased was associated with would provide musicians for the funeral procession. The sounds of music and firecrackers were to discourage evil spirits from following. It is now more common in processions to have Western brass bands and Western music (Crowder 2008:202).

Also in the funeral procession were women dressed in white who would wail and lament, as required by the traditional rituals. While the women would have been relatives in China, the lack of family in North America meant that many were professional

Fig. 1 Chinese funeral procession southbound on Government Street 1890



Title: Chinese funeral procession southbound on Government ...
<http://web.uvic.ca/lancenrd/AViewofVictoria/galleryphotos/galleryphotos.php>

mourners who had been hired (Chung et al 2005:113). Other objects were also part of the funeral procession. These include banners and flags with writing that described the status of the deceased individual. Wagons carrying food, clothing, bedding and paper offerings

would follow the mourners (Rouse 2005b:34-35). A photograph of a funeral procession in Victoria, British Columbia held on 1890 can be seen in Figure 1.

When the procession reached the burial site, the food would be placed on an altar (Chung et al 2005:114). The burning of the belongings of the deceased along with paper offerings was often done at the cemetery. Some Chinese cemeteries had built burners for this purpose. When no burner was available, the offerings would be burned in a large depression on the ground.

2.12 Secondary Burials

As noted earlier, it was the southern Chinese custom to perform secondary burials. Since most early Chinese migrants came from southern China, the practice continued in North America. This meant that initial graves were kept relatively shallow, not more than three feet deep (Rouse 2005a:90), to aid in rapid decomposition of the body, and make exhumation easier. Exhumed bones were to be removed and returned to China, where the deceased would be reunited with and taken care of by their family members (Abraham and Wegars 2005:153). This would ensure the continuity of care of the deceased in the afterlife.

The onset of the Sino-Japanese War in China in 1937 (Lai 1987) halted the process of shipping remains to China. With the subsequent establishment of the People's Republic of China, the practice of repatriation of remains to China ended. As a result, the Chinese in North America adopted local burial customs and were interred permanently in North American cemeteries. Exhumations in North America became a rarity. However, as will be discussed in more detail later, the importance of the continuation of ancestor worship

has resulted in remains being imported to North America from China by some Chinese families that are established here.

2.13 The Creation of Victoria's Chinese Cemetery and the use of *Fengshui*

The first cemetery in Victoria, British Columbia was the Quadra Street Cemetery. It was in use from 1858 to 1873 (Lai 1987), and the Chinese were allowed the use of the northeastern corner to bury their dead. As the cemetery became overcrowded, the Ross Bay Cemetery was established, in 1873. This cemetery was situated along the waterfront, and "Aborigines and Mongolians" were to use the southwestern corner, which bordered the bay. The grave markers for the Chinese at this site were marked as "Chinaman No. 1" and "Chinaman No. 2", and so on, instead of being marked with individual names (Lai 1987).

As the Ross Bay Cemetery began filling up (Lai 1987), the remaining unoccupied sites available to the Chinese were very close to the water and would often flood during storms. The local Chinese decided that this was not an auspicious site, and the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Society purchased a plot of land near Swan Lake on Christmas Hill as a location that was more appropriate for the home of their dead, and which had been determined to have good Fengshui. However, the neighbours of the newly purchased property did not want to have a Chinese cemetery near their homes, and the property was never used for this purpose (Lai 1987).

The Chinese burial sites (Lai 1987) at Ross Bay Cemetery continued to be placed very close to the waterfront. After a series of storms some of the grave sites became eroded and human remains exposed. Other sites were completely destroyed and the remains in them were washed away. Eventually, the situation could no longer be tolerated by the

local Chinese, and another attempt at creating a Chinese cemetery was made. The property by Swan Lake was sold, and a new search for an appropriate cemetery site began.

A geomancer or *Fengshui* master was engaged (Lai 1987) to determine an auspicious site for the internment of the deceased. A site was found and purchased at Harling Point (formerly Foul Point) in 1903.

Fig 2 Gate to Victoria's Chinese Cemetery



Picture taken by Julia Lacy November 2008

According to the *Fengshui* guidelines, this site was ideal. There was a hill behind with rock platforms on both sides, and it was at a high enough elevation to give it a good view of the Strait of Juan de Fuca. According to *Fengshui* terminology, the site was guarded on the left and the right by the

“Azure Dragon” and “White Tiger”. The location on a waterfront was also a symbol of wealth and affluence.

In order to ensure that neighbours would not oppose having a Chinese cemetery nearby, a mock funeral was held (Lai 1987) to see how local residents would react. One

Fig 3 Offering Burners and Altar at Victoria's Chinese Cemetery



Picture taken by Julia Lacy November 2008

resident appeared with a shotgun to try to interrupt the funeral and threatened the mourners. The police were called and the man was arrested. There were

no further incidents of funerals being interrupted.

At the cemetery, a bone house was constructed. Its function was to contain exhumed remains in preparation for shipment back to China. However, by 1937, the Sino-Japanese war, which merged into WWII, made it impossible to repatriate any further remains. This prohibition continued during the Chinese civil war and after the establishment of the People's Republic of China under communist rule. Because Victoria had been the main collection point for remains from across Canada, a large number of remains were eventually placed in storage at this site. When it became clear that these remains could not be sent to China, the Chinese Benevolent association sent out messages asking for descendents to come and claim their bones. Even after this process, a large number of remains, comprising 820 boxes in total, were left uncollected. These remains were then placed in 13 mass graves, organized by the county where the deceased had come from in China. On Oct 15, 1961, the last of these elaborate (mass) burials was held at the cemetery (Lai 1987). Figure 5 shows the burial monument of Taishan County in Guangdong, China.

Fig 4 Burial monument of Taishan County



Picture taken by Julia Lacy November 2008

Both neighbours and real estate developers had made attempts over the years to remove the Chinese cemetery from its Harland Point location. However attitudes changed over time, and by 1990, both the local council and a group comprised of a significant majority of neighbours took strong

positions favouring maintaining the site as a cemetery. They also worked at the council level and also in the courts to block real estate development there.⁴ Such debates ended entirely in 1996, when the Chinese Cemetery at Harlan Point was declared a National Heritage Site. Following this designation, there was a significant restoration of the cemetery by the Chinese Benevolent Society, and municipal and federal governments (Chiu, 2003). This process can be viewed as a continuation of the traditional practice of caring for the deceased.

2.14 A modern Chinese funeral in San Francisco

The description of a typical modern Chinese funeral in San Francisco (Crowder 2005) of a married man with children and a surviving father and wife provides an intriguing look into the how the Chinese community has been able to maintain their own traditions while incorporating American traditions as well.

Informal visitations with the family occur the day before the funeral at the chapel where the body lies in state in an open casket (Crowder 2005:205-206). In the same room, there is a portrait of the deceased, usually a large photograph framed with flowers, and a table containing food, wine, tea and incense that are offerings for the deceased. There is also a display of the paper offerings to be burned at the burial. Guests who come to visit with the family bow three times to the deceased, and then either bow or shake hands with family members and offer condolences. There is no speaker or program involved, and the guests stay with the family members in the chapel. Part way through the day, the family performs the blanket ceremony (Crowder 2005:205). The blanket

⁴ See Lai's *The Chinese Cemetery in Victoria* for details on court cases and health issues raised by people who wanted the cemetery removed without recompense.

ceremony is the last act of caring for the deceased. The first blanket, which is placed on the corpse by the eldest son, is white, signifying death. The second blanket is red, for life, placed by the eldest son's wife. Others blankets with placed by the other children with no specific colour or number required.

The guests pay their respects again before leaving, and are given candy and *li shi* (Crowder 2004:205). Paper copies of money may be placed in the coffin by family members, and sometimes a silver coin is placed on lips of dead as toll to the guardian of the underworld (Crowder 2005:205). Personal effects of the dead, such as clothing and jewelry may be placed in the coffin by the family as well.

The mourning family usually wears either black or black armbands. Sons wear black waistbands, and female relatives wear a black net veil with coloured yarn bows, signifying relationship to the deceased (Crowder 2005:206).

The formal service is held the next day in same chapel (Crowder 2005:207). Organ music is played in the background, a minister or speaker gives the eulogy, and the guests pay their last respects. The portrait is carried out by two people. They are followed by eight pallbearers wearing white gloves and black bow ties. Next is the eldest son, carrying a large incense stick. *Li shi* and candy is again handed out to guests, who are the next to leave. Finally, the rest of the family follows in order of the deceased's father, sons with wives by their side, the deceased's wife, then daughters (Crowder 2005:207-208).

If a band has been hired, they will be waiting outside as the casket exits (Crowder 2005:208). As soon as the portrait leaves the chapel, there is a drum roll and a gong. Amazing Grace is played as the casket is carried to the hearse. Family members and

guests go to their limousines and cars while the band continues to play either Chinese folk tunes or Christian hymns (Crowder 2005:208-213). When all is ready, the band leads the procession. For this, the portrait is placed in the back seat of a car that drives behind the band. This is followed by the hearse, family, and then guests.

Most processions stop at the home, the business, or the association that the deceased belonged to. This gives the spirit of the deceased an opportunity to make final visit (Crowder 2005:210). At the home of the deceased, the funeral director will enter the house through the back door and collect a western style hanging black wreath from inside the house. It is then placed on the casket. Then the portrait is taken out of the car, placed to face the house, and the family members bow three times to the home. They also toss spirit money into the air (Crowder 2005:211). Next, the band plays a tune and the portrait is placed back into the car so that the procession can continue. The driver of hearse will occasionally throw out spirit money to divert malevolent spirits. The band typically plays 10 to 12 tunes during the procession, depending on the route and number of stops. The procession eventually goes to Chinatown. Here the band leaves the procession, remaining at a street corner and playing while the rest of procession goes to the cemetery.

Sometimes processions walk through Chinatown, although it is more common for new immigrants to do so. These mourners may wear traditional Chinese mourning clothes of white sackcloth and burlap, with attending Daoist and/or Buddhist priests playing cymbal and gongs (Crowder 2005:214). This is considered old fashioned by longtime residents in Chinatown, and is not done by the modern Americanized Chinese (Crowder 2005:215).

At the cemetery all wreaths and bouquets are arranged and placed at the head of the grave, and the pallbearers carry the casket to the grave (Crowder 2005:216-217). The minister says a few words and may also say a prayer. The pallbearers then lower the casket into the grave, bow three times, remove their bow ties, boutonnieres and gloves and toss them into the grave. Flowers are picked from the wreaths are handed to each guest to toss into the grave later. Paper offerings are burned, and the eldest son places the giant incense stick into the ground and head of the grave, he and wife bow three times and toss in their flowers and armbands. Others follow with their flowers. The portrait is taken home by the eldest son (Crowder 2005:217).

Directly after the burial it is traditional to have a meal at a restaurant. Many restaurants have special set menus for this occasion. The meal is an opportunity for the family to thank the attendees at the funeral, and the shared meal provides closure, sustenance, and support to the mourners (Crowder 2005:217-219).

2.15 Example of Censure by the Chinese Community

Some practices regarding funeral rites have been censured by the Chinese community itself. An example is illustrated by the funeral procession of a family from Southeast Asia (Crowder 2005:214-216). There was a procession with a Western brass band followed by a hearse car, and then family who were walking barefoot. They were followed by Daoist and Buddhist priests in ceremonial robes. An assistant then dragged a live chicken along on a string. After the funeral, there were complaints from animal rights activists. Some Chinatown community members also complained about mourners being barefoot, since they felt it made Chinatown look shabby. Future plans of such

processions may be discouraged by the funeral home as well as by district or family associations (Crowder 2005).

2.16 Importation of Ancestors Remains from China

In order to maintain ties with the dead, and to continue the practices that allow for the care of the dead, there is a trend in the United States of importing the remains of ancestors from China, Taiwan, and other Asian countries (Greenwood 2005:248-249) for some Chinese-American families.

It is usually the oldest descendants who make the decision to import the remains of ancestors from China and rebury them in the United States (Greenwood 2005:252), but only to the grandparent's generation. It is considered more respectful to carry the remains personally (Greenwood 2005: 254) rather than having the remains shipped. For example, the Chung Way Funeral Home, in an interview from 1999, stated that they send the remains of ten to twenty individuals back to China each year, while they receive almost one a week from China (Greenwood 2005:254). Other mortuaries are receiving remains as well.

Greenwood (2005:255) suggested that the annual obligations to the dead become burdensome when the remains are in China, so the people most acculturated to life in North America will bring the remains here so that the ritual observances can be made. Good fortune for the living depends on the blessings of the dead who are treated well (Greenwood 2005:256,258), and it is more important to be able to visit and honour those who have gone before. This enables the continuation of honouring the patrilineal roots of the family, and to maintain the family identity. Relocating the remains enables the

family located in the United States to maintain the traditional observations that are an important part of the cultural makeup of the Chinese people.

2.17 Current Diaspora

One of the main issues regarding the concept of those in diaspora is whether boundaries around such a community are maintained through successive generations (Brubaker 2005:7). The simplistic view that a group comprised of new comers as well as descendents of the original immigrants maintain the exact same values, beliefs, and identities cannot be expected to be true (Brubaker 2005:8-9). However, these communities do continue to exist, albeit in a hybridized, fluid form (Brubaker 2005:11). These new communities maintain some boundaries, but manage to incorporate and assimilate with the rest of the society in which they reside. Richmond, British Columbia, is an example of a modern Canadian community with a strong mix of ethnic Chinese influence. There are bilingual English/Chinese street signs in many places and a three story public market containing predominantly Chinese vendors. Mandarin and Cantonese language programs are supported in some public schools. The integration of Chinese into local communities do not always run smoothly.(Chan 2015; Rafael 2014).

Current Chinese death ritual practices in diaspora enable the Chinese community to maintain their identity, both as part of North American society, and as members of the Chinese community within North America (Crowder 2005:230-232). One example of this is in the widespread use by Chinese in diaspora of North American funeral homes, hearses and western brass bands. However, instead of losing their unique identity, those in diaspora have managed to integrate these practices into their rites and rituals so that a unique blend of Chinese and North American ritual practices developed that serve to

identify them as members of the Chinese community in North America (Greenwood 2005:257). These rituals allow both families and the greater community to participate in and witness the continuation of ties with China. It also allows them to witness that the Chinese community are also members of the North American society. The public display of these rituals reaffirms the values and beliefs that hold the community together. The banquet held after the funeral is a very tangible example of how funerals are both a private and a public demonstration of grief. It is also an opportunity to maintain ties to both the past and to the present and a chance to share and reaffirm their identity as members of a unique community that celebrates together (Crowder 2005:217-219). It is now common to find vehicles, Christian elements, and black mourning clothes during Chinese funerals (Crowder 2005). Observations of Chinatown life in San Francisco in 1937 by Pardee Lowe (Crowder 2005:203) indicate that Christian Chinese sponsored by their churches were seen to retain traditional practices, stating that “it is by no means unusual to witness corteges with Chinese orchestras and American brass bands, Christian ministers and Taoist devotees scattering ghost money to purchase right of way for the dead.”.

Customs often change and become syncretized as local influences affect the practices of populations that move to new locations (Hidayat 2014;White 1989). Variation within the community of which practices are kept is determined by the “social embeddedness of the person in a web of family and ethnicity” (Stephenson 2005). Of course, changes also occur within populations that remain in their homeland. Political and economic changes in China have influenced the practice of death rituals tremendously, as shown in Oxfeld’s (2004) description of the death rituals at Moonshadow Pond, a small village in

Guangzhou. It is therefore, not surprising that some of the rituals and practices from families that have been in Canada for several generations have more in common with rituals from an earlier period in China.

2.18 Conclusion

The Chinese in North America have been able to adapt to life in diaspora both by adopting new customs and also by continuing the traditional practices that are important to them. Just as the Chinese have historically syncretized their beliefs and practices between Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism over time (McCreery 2008:304), those who have moved to new lands have managed to adopt new customs and alter existing ones to fit into their new lifestyle (Chung and Wegars 2005:14). In short, they are eclectic.

Early Chinese migrants managed to form *tongs* and associations to ensure that they were not left alone in a new country (Lai 1987). These same *tongs* and associations allowed them to ensure that they were not left without support even in death. Family and the continuity of the family were and are important parts of traditional Chinese belief and practice. It was important for those ties to be maintained both in life and in death (Hsu et al. 2009:155), and so many early migrants chose to have their remains shipped back to family in China (Chung and Wegars 2005:7). *Tongs* frequently arranged for funerals, burials, exhumations, and repatriation of remains to China.

Difficulties arose with the return of human remains to China due to political unrest in China itself (Lai 1987). As political winds changed, families became more able to unite in North America. Funeral practices in North America for the Chinese adapted to new circumstances, and certain practices ended. However, throughout all the changes that

have occurred, there continues to be certain rites and rituals that persist and even flourish in the new land. One of the most unexpected changes is the importation of the remains of ancestors into North America (Greenwood 2005), so that those who live here can perform the traditional annual rituals.

In my research on the local Chinese death rituals and practices, I explore the specifics of recalled experiences of individuals who reside in British Columbia, what was deemed to be meaningful, and how these practices vary locally as well as in the global Chinese communities. The next chapter will provide details on how I proceeded with the research design, the methodology that I used in this research.

CHAPTER 3 - Methodology

In this chapter, I describe the process undertaken for this research, which includes:

- my research objective
- reflection on the inspiration for my research (personal experience with a death, being between and among Canadian and Chinese cultures)
- ethical considerations guiding research (Chinese culture, interviews of the bereaved, respect for attitudes surrounding death)
- language considerations (whereby English and two Chinese dialects are used during interviews)
- participant observation (drawing on my own informal interactions with a variety of persons regarding Chinese attitudes towards death)
- qualitative methods used to collect information for the research (semi-structured, open-ended qualitative interviews, and the visual method of photo elicitation, whereby the research participants provide or I provide photos and then discuss in interviews), and
- methods of analysis.

3.1 Research Objective

My research objective has been to explore and develop an understanding of Chinese practices of bereavement in the Canadian context and what practices may be available to help bereaved persons at the time of passing of a loved one and also later on. The specific questions I developed for my research include:

- What is the experience of bereavement of Chinese Canadians in terms of living through the passing of a loved one?
- What practices may be available to help the bereaved along the way to create a relationship with the deceased in the context of local Canadian Chinese customs?

3.2 Reflexivity

Situating myself in this research included personal reflections about my own biases and assumptions, as these surely were fundamental to my own preparation for interviewing participants and analyzing participant responses. Interviewer biases and assumptions about the planned research were inevitable and reflexivity was fundamental to keeping myself, as the interviewer, on track and open to these challenges. Since “research is an interactive process shaped by [the interviewer’s] personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity, and those of the people in the setting” (Denzin & Lincoln 1994:3), analysis of biases and assumptions has been critical.

The seed for my interest in this research topic began with the sudden passing of my Chinese Canadian mother in Calgary in September 2000. She was an immigrant to Canada from Shanghai, China via long periods first in Hong Kong and then Taiwan. She spoke three Chinese dialects, including Cantonese and Mandarin, the two most common dialects among Canadian Chinese. She also was highly competent in spoken English. My mother was very social and made friends easily. Long separated from her husband, my father, after a failed marriage, she lived in Calgary for a while with my brother’s family, and eventually took up her own apartment there. When my brother’s family

moved overseas for his work, she stayed in Calgary – living alone but not isolated. She loved to socialize and dance and mixed with both the Chinese and Canadian community there. For example, she joined the Canadian Legion (though not a veteran) for their vibrant community and strong social connections.

Then my mother, otherwise healthy and active, succumbed suddenly to a brain aneurism at age 72. She lost consciousness, and died a week later having been removed from life support at the family's request on the advice of the surgeon who had performed emergency brain surgery. During this week she never regained consciousness. There were many poignant aspects to this event, to say the least, and a fundamental one being that there was never an opportunity for a good-bye from my mother (though certainly every family member took an opportunity to say good-bye to her, each in their own way). Another poignant aspect is that no one among family or friends had any idea what my mother would have wanted at the time of her death, if anything, in terms of ritual. Though she left a will that clearly settled her estate, there were no instructions, either written or spoken about what she would want, or not want, to mark her passing. How would she have wanted us to celebrate her life, to commemorate her remains, to bring her community and family together to meet each other, and to say good-bye?

I came to this research as a daughter who even now, 15 years later, is still processing the two-week series of events surrounding the passing of my mother. How common is my sort of experience? Dying without leaving instructions to those who remain happens all the time and is more common as “de-ritualization of society's approach to dealing with death left some bereaved people at sea about what to do, lacking in community and family support” (Rosenblatt 2009:498). It is surely a trauma for many who are charged

with managing the final dispositions and grieving at the same time. One can hope that in the absence of specific instructions, cultural norms can offer insights, and reasonable guesses made. Yet dying without leaving instructions while also straddling two cultures can leave a vacuum that the family left behind can be hard pressed to fill. Family members may themselves straddle two cultures, but this may only complicate the process of choosing for the loved one who died before choosing for themselves. In our family's case here was an enormous time pressure. No family members were living in the province, and there was only going to be one opportunity to mark this passing. Anyone who has prepared for a funeral in a matter of days knows the complexity of this event, such as in our case: Should there be a funeral, and if so, Chinese Buddhist or secular? Should it be a service or a gathering? A meal? A minister? Chinese or Canadian? Or a mixture? A coffin or an urn? Probably cremation, but then what: Internment, scattering, a place in a mausoleum, or in a home or homes?

In preparing to interview others and both evoke but also be open in my mind to listening to responses clearly and with attention, I had to pay particular care not to overlay my own experiences on those of others or taint my analysis of responses with an overlay of my own feelings.

Caught between two cultures, but identifying more with western culture as a youth, my interest initially flowed out of my desire to find a connection to part of my Chinese heritage that I had not fully embraced previously. It is, therefore, a reflection both of what I have learned and who I am (Davies 1999:4). To paraphrase Haraway (1988: 575-599), my perspective is coloured by my race, gender and experience, thus my research is influenced by this as well. I was born in Hong Kong, the daughter of a Chinese mother

and an English father. My mother was an ex-patriot from China, who fled the Chinese Mainland not long after the Communist takeover. She escaped overland from Shanghai, pregnant and with a two year old daughter in her arms. She landed in Hong Kong with not much more materially than some hidden gold and the clothes on her back. My father, at that time, was a very successful captain in the merchant marine, based out of Hong Kong. Eventually my parents met, married and started a family that grew to include my older brother and myself. My half siblings (four, by this time, all on my mother's side) were raised as cousins to me and their true relationship to myself as siblings was revealed to me over a very long period of time (two at my mother's funeral). As far as I know, father was never told, nor did he ever find out, the secret that that my mother had had children before their marriage.

In terms of religious practices, my mother was not strongly religious but had followed some Chinese Buddhist practices and also some Chinese Religion practices. These included putting a small altar in her home (though not when she and my father were together). My father was an atheist, with an intense hatred of religion. He also had a strong belief in the superiority of the Anglo-Saxons.

After a time, my father decided that he wanted the family (consisting of himself, my mother, my brother, and myself) to move to England. This did happen, but it was a disaster for my mother. With the exception of my great aunt and uncle, his family and the community rejected us. After a brief stay, my mother decided that she was unable to live with the overt racism that she was experiencing. Since my father was away at sea most of the time anyway, she decided unilaterally to bring us back to Hong Kong. My father ultimately agreed, but put his foot down regarding our education, and insisted that we go

to English speaking schools. And so we did. Also, he was adamant that we not learn Chinese. But we did anyway. Though I cannot read Chinese, I am fluent in two dialects, and can understand a third, and I am grateful to my mother for this.

We lived in Hong Kong for a few years, and then went to live in Taiwan, where we were reunited with our half-siblings. When my father wasn't home, we would speak a mixture of English, Cantonese, and Mandarin. When my father came home for occasional short stays, we would speak in English in the American accents that we heard at school, and which he would attempt to correct, meaning for us to sound more British.

Both my brother and I attended Catholic schools until grade nine because my mother believed that a religious school would provide us a stronger moral compass. There were no Catholic English speaking schools in Taiwan past grade nine, so my brother went to Canada to continue his education, and I continued in Taiwan at the local non-religious International School.

As I grew up I did not feel that I had a sense belonging with any group, living in the third space (Bromley 2000:7), a state of perpetual liminality (Turner 1969:95). I was an alien, a British national, living in a foreign land where each year I had to renew my alien residency permit. I lived in a local Chinese community, but looked different, and didn't attend local schools. At school, I was not considered a Chinese student, but wasn't part of the non-Chinese ex-patriot community either. It was an intense immersion of being Other (both at home and away).

My knowledge of religion is pieced together from catechism classes at school and watching my mother practice what she sometimes called Buddhism, and at other times just from what we did on certain occasions. For example, we would not use any

electrical appliances or household cooking or cleaning utensils on Chinese New Year's Day. This included not using light switches, pots and pans, or even brooms. Certain foods would only be eaten during certain days. I also knew this was all to be kept secret from my father.

Growing up in Taiwan, I saw local Taiwanese funerals as huge processions through the streets of Taipei; large tents were set up outside in neighbourhoods where there would be a coffin, flowers, huge feasts, and even live Chinese style puppet shows. Once, while hiking along the hills by the beach, we came across a large urn placed against the partially dug up ground, and when we looked inside, human bones resided. My knowledge of Chinese funeral practices was limited to these experiences and from one funeral my mother arranged at the death of my Great Uncle. His funeral was very simple, unlike the ones mentioned above. We did burn paper money, knelt by his body in a rented alcove at a funeral parlour and, after cremation, we went to view his ashes being placed in a Buddhist temple.

It wasn't until the death of my mother in Calgary that I realized how little I knew of what she may have wanted at her own funeral. If it wasn't for the arrival of my fully Chinese half-siblings, who brought along an MP3 player of Buddhist chants that played quietly in the emergency room on Mom's pillow, she wouldn't even have had that to help calm her way from this life. We all knew enough to kneel and bow three times when she died, not caring how strange it would seem to the others in the multi-person ward. We invited her friends and acquaintances to a lunch at a local Chinese restaurant. There, Mom's photograph and flowers were displayed for those who gathered, including a small number of family and many of my mother's friends, most of whom we did not know. I

discovered years later that the Chinese Canadian attendees at the lunch likely would have expected to exit by receiving white envelopes filled with coins and money.

We muddled along in our grief. At times, it seemed as though we were making up our own rituals, such as a last viewing of my mother's body before the cremation, and also when my two brothers decided to ceremonially both press the start button on the crematorium furnace. Then the siblings chose to reflect, together with our immediate families, upon our memories of our mother in an antechamber while the actual cremation occurred.

Ten years later, I returned to university where I studied Anthropology. During my studies, I realized that I wanted to reclaim my Chinese heritage, and to explore again what it might have been that my mother would have wanted during her funeral. I come to this present research as both an "insider" and "outsider", a hybrid (Narayan 1993) that is searching for a place to belong. This study is the culmination of what I have been able to learn about local Chinese practices of bereavement, and I hope it may be of use for others who may have lost a loved one and wishes to find what rituals and practices may be available to help them along the way to create a new relationship with the deceased in context of local Canadian Chinese customs.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

Prior to the beginning of my project, I approached community and religious leaders in the Chinese Canadian community who had specialized knowledge of traditional Chinese practices and the ways they are practiced in a Canadian context. They were able to provide me with some guidance on the feasibility and usefulness of this study, and it was with their support and encouragement that I proceeded to Ethics Approval.

Approval from the Human Research Ethics Board was obtained by filing an Application for Ethics Approval for Human Participant Research. It provided me with the opportunity to clarify my approach this study while minimizing emotional distress to those I interviewed (Leavy 2014).

Mitigation of harm to the participants was taken by various methods. Since interview duration and subject matter being discussed could be inconvenient or stressful to some, I ensured interviews would not exceed one hour, and participants were able to choose to stop at any time. In order to alleviate potential conflict, only one member from a given family was interviewed. Throughout the interview, I was attentive to the participant's state of mind, with particular care taken to detect any sign of emotional distress or uneasiness.

Community and religious leaders might not have been able to maintain their own anonymity in the interview process, as other community members reading the research might be able to recognize them by their comments and descriptions. Furthermore, these leaders did play a role in recruitment, and so other subjects could know of their interest in the research. These leaders were apprised of this, and I suggested the option of having the results published using a pseudonym to maintain anonymity outside of their more immediate community. Further, the confidentiality of the participants in general was maintained by offering the use of pseudonyms, unless the participant preferred to use their own name, and by keeping the interview data in a password coded computer. In addition, key identifiers (names, country of origin, etc.) were deleted from any quotes used in the thesis in order to reduce identification and maximize confidentiality.

In setting up each interview, the location of the interview was conducted at a safe environment chosen by the participant. This resulted in interviews at my home, at the home of a participant, at the university, at restaurants, at A Taoist Temple, a Buddhist nunnery, a Pentecostal church office, and even while travelling to Vancouver Island on a BC ferry. When the interview was held at the home of the participant, I gave them a small basket of fruit. It is customary among the Chinese to bring a gift of food when visiting a person's home for the first time.

If a participant became upset, disturbed, or fatigued during the interview, they were to be given the opportunity to take a break, reschedule the remainder of the interview, or to discontinue, and decide later whether they wish to continue or not. If the participant wished to end the interview process, they were to be asked if their partial interview could be used in the study, or whether they wished to have it excluded. A list of culturally appropriate grief counsellors, including those recommended by community leaders, was made available, and I was prepared to help arrange an appointment if needed.

Fortunately, no participant interviewed needed to stop, or to access counsellors.

In order to maintain the anonymity of participants, all data was stored on a password-protected computer (electronic copies), and in a locked filing cabinet (hard copies of interview transcriptions and backup electronic copies), which will be destroyed after five years.

3.4 Language Considerations

The Chinese community within BC is varied, and the dialects spoken by individuals, most of which are mutually unintelligible in spoken form, varies accordingly. Almost 800,000 Chinese or ethnic Chinese people immigrated to Canada from 1980 to 2000,

speaking different dialects of Chinese (Wang and Lo 2005), including Cantonese, Mandarin, Shanghainese, and others. As of 2001, there were over a million people of Chinese origin living in Canada (Lai 2012:106), with Mandarin, Cantonese and Taishan as the most prominent dialects.

I speak both Mandarin and Cantonese, and have interpreted both of these dialects into English for family members, the RCMP, and Immigration Canada. Conducting interviews in either English, Mandarin, Cantonese was not a problem. In fact, during many of my English interviews, it was common to throw in Chinese terms that did not have an exact equivalent in English, and all the Cantonese speakers that were interviewed were able to understand the Mandarin terms that I occasionally used.

The written forms, such as the flyers and consent forms required translation into written Chinese. Conveniently, written Chinese is almost entirely the same in all Chinese dialects, a product of the pictorial form of the written language. There are two main variations of written characters: Traditional characters (Taiwan, Hong Kong, and other areas with a large expatriate Chinese population originating from China prior to the 1950s) and Simplified characters (mainland China after the formation of the People's Republic of China, and expatriate Chinese communities originating from China post 1950). A translator recommended by an instructor of Mandarin at the University of Victoria was able to employ both Chinese scripts in my recruitment flyers (Appendix 3 for both traditional and simplified Chinese) and general interview consent forms (Appendix 5 for traditional Chinese, and Appendix 6 for simplified Chinese), as well as consent forms for community leaders (Appendix 7 for traditional Chinese, and Appendix 9 for simplified Chinese).

3.5 Participant Recruitment Methods

I posted flyers in both English (Appendix 2) and Chinese (Appendix 3) at the University and on community boards at the senior centres in Victoria. I also handed out flyers to people who expressed an interest in my research project. In the end, all my interviews resulted personal connections and recommendations, rather than by contacting me after seeing one of my fliers. This is not surprising from a cultural perspective, as the Chinese are known to be reticent to discuss matters pertaining to death (Nichols and Braun 1997:339; Hsu et al. 2009:167).

3.6 Data Collection

The results of my data collection are not comprehensive or representative of people with Chinese heritage in British Columbia or Victoria, nor were they meant to be. They are, however, a starting point from which more extensive research in the future might take place. This research is intended to help us to understand the most salient issues, and to address the kinds of questions with which we might deal as both a community, and as researchers. My results consist of information I have gleaned from my interviews and also from my experiences with those in the local Chinese community since 2010. Data were collected two ways, through formal interviews and by keeping a personal journal. My personal journal is comprised of regular accounts of my personal experiences. The timing of my entries varied from daily to weekly.

The ten interviews were recorded (two men and eight women). At the time of each interview, formal informed consent was obtained and pseudonyms were given unless the participant wished to have their actual names used in my research results. A copy of this form was left with the respondent, unless the participant declined to keep a copy.

Three participants were religious leaders (Buddhist, Christian, and Taoist), two others were Buddhists, two were Christians, and three claimed no religious affiliation.

Two interviews were conducted only in Cantonese, four only in English, and four were predominantly conducted in English interspersed with Cantonese and Mandarin terms and phrases, depending on which language seemed most appropriate to express a concept. All the recordings were translated and transcribed by myself into English, and pertinent portions of my journal were copied into a text file. These transcripts and notes formed the basis of my collected data that was analyzed.

3.7 Semi-Structured Interviews

I used semi-structured interviews, with open ended qualitative questions (Appendix 1) to gather information. The use of open ended questions enabled me to maintain the ability to focus on my objectives of gathering information without restricting the responses of those being interviewed (Davies 1999; Bernard 2006). This technique also gave me the leeway to alter the wording and order of my questions, and to ask for elaboration to encourage further responses.

In my interview with Pam, a woman in her late seventies from China, I was asked to tell her about my experience at the death of my mother. The semi-structured interview gave me the opportunity to use this as a starting point to progress into the rest of the interview in a much more natural conversational style. In this case, Pam felt that she was guiding me, and telling me how funerals were to be conducted, and my subsequent questions came naturally a result.

As my interviews progressed, I was able to bring in questions regarding details that I had learned from my previous interviews. An example of this occurred when I asked

Pastor Wan about the practice of asking an elderly woman friend to be present at the home of the deceased while the funeral was underway. Mary had brought up this practice. In the course of the interview, I realized that house sitting during funerals is localized, and not common even among those originating from the province of Guangzhou, where Mary had originated.

3.8 Photo Elicitation

Given the sensitive subject we were to discuss, I intended to use photo elicitation to help ease some of the tension (Harper 2002:14-15), and open up new dialogue opportunities during the interviews. I used photographs from the public domain of funerals held in San Francisco and Vancouver, along with pictures of the Chinese Cemetery at Harlan Point in Victoria, which I took myself. These photographs were used to trigger the memory of participants (Collier and Collier 1986; Creswell 2007:129-130).

I found photo elicitation of limited use in my study. My interview with May is a good example. The interview went well, and she brought out a photo album showing the funeral she had arranged for her godmother in Europe. The photographs were useful, and helped jog her memory to discuss how she located the funeral service and the flowers that were used during the ceremony. However, when I brought out my photographs, May's comments became short, with responses like "that's interesting", "where was that", "that's nice" and "oh yes". The same short answers came about during another two interviews when the photographs I brought along were shown.

When a participant, as in the case of May, used her own photographs to discuss her experiences, the photographs brought up her memories, and what she considered important to her. My photographs were not personal and seemed to create a wedge

between the participant and myself. Although I had no intention of doing so, my use of third party photographs seemed to increase the imbalance between me, as the researcher, and the participant that was being interviewed. The sense of a power imbalance seemed to occur (Packard 2008:65), as if I was trying to use my knowledge from my research to undermine the lived experience of the person being interviewed. As Harper noted (2002:20), my photographs “did not lead to a reflective stance vis-à-vis the taken-for-granted aspects of” their own experiences with funerals. After four attempts in using outside photographs, I abandoned the technique. I believe that the use of personal photographs taken or chosen by the participant may be more conducive to creating a more collaborative experience in this research (Pink 2001:68).

3.9 Autoethnography

A serendipitous and rich source of data for my research came about from my joining several organizations including a Canadian service organization that emphasized Chinese culture, a Vipassana meditation group based at the Po Lam Buddhist Association and Nunnery, and a Cantonese speaking seniors association in Victoria, all as part of my personal journey and to connect with my Chinese heritage. The resulting autoethnography (Tedlock 2005) was a result of my own engagement with the local communities and it enriched my understanding of local practices and variances regarding death rituals.

Autoethnographies, as described by O’Byrne (2007:1382), require a researcher to study one or more of the four options:

- (a) his or her own culture
- (b) a culture in which he or she has been adopted and accepted completely
- (c) the culture of the self

(d) the culture of another as it relates to the self of the researcher

In my case, the Chinese culture is both one that I was born into, and one in which I have recently become part of here in Victoria.

There were numerous occurrences when my own lived experience provided me with insights into how local practices dealt with death, funerals, and the continuing relationship with the dead. For example:

- A prominent member of the local community expressed an unwillingness to discuss death too close to Chinese New Year.
- When the subject of my research came up with a Chinese man prominent in the local community, he made the comment, “We Chinese are a superstitious bunch,” and the conversation was gently steered by him towards a different topic.
- While driving back to Victoria from Chilliwack after a meditation retreat, I gave a ride to four women. We started talking about my research, and they ended up discussing the purchase of Buddhist blankets with mantras written on them to cover the deceased.
- During a discussion with graduate students from China, the subject of the location of palliative care centres came up. The example of a Vancouver palliative care centre recently being constructed close to the university hospital was discussed. Despite the comments from the students that they didn’t mind the location, when I brought to their attention that I had spoken with a senior Chinese Canadian, aged 90 years, who had mentioned that she believed there needed to be a separation in space of places for the living and places for the dead a dying, the students admitted that they would prefer not to be living near a palliative care centre.
- A senior in her 70’s claimed to have no religion whatsoever, and yet when I was invited to her home, I saw an altar in her living room for her ancestors.
- During lunch with a Chinese Canadian friend, she showed me a red envelope that had been given to her during her grandmother’s funeral. She had already kept it for over 10 years. It was very important to her. By contrast, when another Chinese Canadian friend came by and was shown it, he noted that one of the contents was a small cedar leaf. He mentioned that this was very old fashioned practice and that it wasn’t common anymore.

- When invited to the home of a senior, I was shown paper clothing that she had cut and glued together herself. She said that she burned objects twice a year for her deceased ancestors.
- At the home of a senior woman, I was shown her family altar, which consisted of a three tiered bookshelf. She explained that the top tier had a Kuanyin statue representing the sky gods; a middle tier displaying pictures of her deceased husband and his parents; and a bottom tier for the earth gods. She said she offered food and incense to the gods, her ancestors, and other deceased persons twice a month.
- When discussions came up among a group of seniors regarding death, the eldest commented that it wasn't auspicious to talk about these things. However, if they were to be discussed, it should be done away from homes or where they usually congregated.
- During a mahjong game with several senior women, a visitor inquired of the eldest member, a 90 year old, whether it was necessary to cover the hands of the deceased with a white cloth. The eldest member said that was old fashioned, and not done here.
- A friend informed me that when she was invited to a funeral dinner at a restaurant, there happened to be a celebration being held in another part of the dining area. She was careful to avert her gaze from those who were celebrating, even though she was friends with some of them and normally would have shared a greeting. This was done out of respect for those celebrating, to not contaminate their event with the death related to the funeral.

These opportunities came about as I became part of an extended community. It provided me with an opportunity to practice participant observation (Creswell 2007:68), something I had not considered a possibility prior to my attempt to reclaim my Chinese heritage. My journal now contains notes ranging from incidental comments, to narratives, to stories that were told to me spontaneously (Czarniawska 2008) by my friends and associates since my reconnection with portions of the local Chinese community since 2010.

Although the autoethnographic approach has been criticized as being limited by the researcher's personal biases that can cause them to overlook data (Burnard 2004), my use

of both ethnographic data as well as semi-structured interviews should alleviate some of this concern. The concept of combining qualitative approaches, as suggested by O’Byrne (2007), should provide a richer source of information than any single method used. Even though my research is not, and can never be, a full representation of the wide range of rites and rituals practiced by the local Chinese community, I believe that disregarding what I have learned in my daily interactions would present an inaccurate result in my research.

3.10 Analysis

The ethnographic information which I collected through my personal journal and interviews (Creswell 2007:129-142) formed the basis of my data. My analysis comes through my interpretation of what I have heard, lived and experienced. As Haraway (1988) stated, my thoughts, my gender, my past, and my present circumstances influence how I perceive the world. Undoubtedly, though the themes speak to me personally as being important, they are a sampling of the wide variety of experiences and practices that exist even within the local Chinese community.

Typed transcripts of my interviews, in English, along with typed copies of pertinent portions from my personal journal have been collated and used. Analyzing the data consisted of reading through the data multiple times, noting certain similarities and differences. This method of thematic analysis (Ryan and Bernard 2003; Creswell 2007:244) allowed me to focus on major themes and subthemes that became apparent via comparison with the data. There was a constant interplay between reflection on the data and the emergence of themes.

3.10 Summary

This chapter describes how I came to conduct my research, outlining my how my own experiences and lack of knowledge fuelled my wish to understand more about the death rituals of people with Chinese ties in Canada. The sensitivity of the subject required special ethical consideration in order to mitigate potential conflicts and to minimize emotional upset. My ability to speak both Mandarin and Cantonese enabled my interviews and conversations with both interview participants and friends that I have made since I began this research. Through connections with members in the Chinese communities here in British Columbia, I have been able to conduct semi-structured interviews and also to learn firsthand from conversations held during meals, games and drives, about the practices and experiences regarding death by people here in Canada. The next chapter will examine all data that I acquired and show how funerals and other practices continue the relationship, not just with the dead, but also with those who survive.

Chapter 4 - Re-Negotiating Relationships through Respect

In this chapter, I will describe a number of ways in which relationships are maintained during and after the loss of a loved one within the Chinese community in British Columbia. Foremost, there is the formation of a new relationship with the deceased. There are also relationships with family members and the rest of the community to be strengthened and renegotiated. Much of this is accomplished through demonstrations of respect during the time of mourning.

The rituals and practices performed by individuals in British Columbia vary greatly depending on the religious beliefs of the deceased and their families, location, ancestral home in China, and personal preferences. As Pastor Wan of the Chinese Pentecostal Church in Victoria stated, “most of the Chinese, they have the concept, but those pictures aren’t clear, so they grab it from different things; even from different province, they have different understanding” of what practices are used and the purpose of those practices.

4.1 Respect for the Wishes of the Deceased

Most of those interviewed believed in the importance of respecting the wishes of the deceased in terms of funeral rites and rituals. In addition to practical questions that need to be asked prior to the death, such as the disposition of the body, the preference of cremation versus burial, and where the final internment of the body or ashes are to be located, family members may need to know if it is important for there to be a funeral service, a funeral banquet, the burning of incense, or the attendance of religious practitioners. While certainly of concern in other than Chinese communities, within the Chinese context these questions may be very tightly bound to the idea that the spirit of

the deceased lives on, coexists with, and can interact positively or negatively with the fortunes of the survivors (Watson 1988). Thus, the respect shown to the deceased is predicated upon the relationship prior to the death of the individual, as well as opportunities to discuss end of life/beginning of afterlife wishes.

- May, a Canadian immigrant who arrived from Hong Kong as an adult, spoke of her conversations with her mother. It was important to May that such conversations be kept informal and light hearted. This was so that they would not cause distress to her mother. May described one conversation in which she inquired about her mom's favourite outfit. That conversation determined her burial outfit. Her mother's comments about a funeral that they had recently attended helped determine what her mother would prefer at her own funeral.
- Richard, an elder in the community, noted the respect shown by community members at the funeral of an acquaintance through the use of formal bowing and presentation of a flower wreath at the funeral home.
- Pam, a Cantonese elder who has returned to China, told her daughter specific details of how she would want her funeral to be held if she died here in Canada. In her words:

“I told my daughter already, I want to go back to China to die. If I die here, I want to be cremated. Scatter my ashes in the Pacific, return to nature, I told her that. I don't think I can get nuns or monks here, that's why I want to return to China.”

Pam's wishes for the handling of a funeral in China were much more elaborate and detailed. This was possible due to her perceived availability of various temples, monks, and nuns who would be able to provide a traditional Chinese Buddhist funeral.

The preference of type of ritual practices during the funeral were also determined by the religious beliefs of those who arranged the funeral. Jane, who came to Canada as a young child, related that her father's funeral followed Taoist procedures, as her mother was Taoist at the time. When Jane's mother passed away, the family was able to get Buddhist nuns to help at both her passing and her funeral, since her mother had converted to Buddhism after the death of Jane's father.

4.2 Showing Care and Respect for the Deceased

The Chinese reverence for their elders, especially parents and grandparents, is known as filial piety (Ng et al. 2002: Ho 1994). The reverence and respect accorded to one's parents is reflected in how they are treated in death. Among the practices that show care and respect include *ketou* (also known as *kowtow*, from the Cantonese dialect), which requires the participant kneel and bow; the blanket ceremony, where family members place a blanket or light covering over the body; placement of objects in the casket, which allows the attendee to provide the deceased with items that they may need or enjoy in the afterlife; and wailing, or crying out loud during a wake, funeral, or funeral procession. Other demonstrations of respect to the deceased include bowing, burning incense, burning paper goods, and the donation of money in a white envelope and flowers to the mourning family.

In reviewing the following descriptions of demonstrations of respect, I think it is important to note that all of my interviews, my personal experience, and my discussions with people, have dealt with the death of elders: either parents, grandparents or elderly friends and relatives. Given the sensitive nature of the death of children, and being cognizant of the need to minimize distress in my interviews, I did not inquire about any

practice that the participants did not freely discuss. Here is a detailing of what have appeared to me to be the most significant demonstrations of respect of the deceased.

4.2.1 Ketou (磕头)

Ketou is the ultimate show of respect, and one that is commonly practiced by many Chinese (Cohen 1990). Anglicised from the Cantonese dialect, it is also called *kowtow*. *Ketou* requires the person to kneel and bow. One of the things that I recalled from my mother's death at the hospital when she died was that we all took turns to *ketou* three times. This included all my siblings and my children. It was a ritual that I had also performed during the death of my great-uncle back in Taiwan when I was a child.

This show of respect was practiced by all of those that I interviewed at some point in their lives, regardless of religious affiliation. When I asked Jane, who was not religious, about *ketou*, she said, "We did the *kowtow*. For my dad we would kneel on the ground, my mom was at the ICU, we knelt on the floor there, we did it both at the death bed and at the service." May, who is Christian, replied "yes I do, because I pay respect to my mom, because of all the time she raised me and bring up me, (it is) the highest respect you can give to elders. You have to kneel down, too, that's the most important thing." May also mentioned that it is the Chinese custom to kneel to *ketou* at the funeral home.

When speaking with Pastor Wan regarding his views of how the practice of *ketou* fit in with the Christian faith, he said:

"In the first year I came here, they don't recommend they kneel down or bow head, don't kneel, because in Christian belief you only kneel down for God, not for people. Because in China, only worship god, or only for parents. And when I came here, I note that is the way they express, they kneel down to express their honouring and respect. To them it's not related to worship, just respect."

4.2.2 Blanket Ritual

Another ritual that was known or practiced by four of the interviewees was the blanket ritual. In this ritual, blankets or coverings are placed on the body of the deceased by various family members, depending on the local customs. Crowder (2005:236n45) noted variations on the colour of the blankets, the provider of the blankets, and order in which the blankets were placed. These variations existed between San Francisco, Vancouver, and differences were found even at specific funeral parlours within New York. In my interviews, such variations were also apparent.

The Venerable Sik Yin Kit, also known to English speakers as Sister Jessie, is from the Polam Buddhist Nunnery in Chilliwack. She referred to this practice as the Descendants' Blanket (子孙被), where all generations of the family would take part. The youngest generations would place their blankets first, ending with blanket from sons or husbands at the top. In contrast, according to May, only daughters took part in the blanket ceremony. She and her sisters placed blankets on her mother, who was buried with the blankets. After the ceremony, May buried the blankets with her mother, but she cut off the four corners of the blanket she gave and kept them as a memento. Others also buried the blankets with the deceased. Pastor Wan described the placing of the blankets being done by each child of the deceased, to "show they care".

Pam described how the blanket ritual was practised in her village in China, saying:

“Blankets in our village will be given by relatives, they would cover the body themselves even aunts and uncles would each give a blanket, they put in on the body themselves, not all the blankets would be buried, only one is buried, the rest is used by the family as blankets or made into clothing.”

Pam also noted that it enabled the family members to show respect and caring of the deceased.

There is also a Buddhist practice with blankets for the deceased. I first heard about this practice during a car ride with several Chinese women who were returning to Vancouver from a meditation retreat. When I had the opportunity to ask Sister Jesse about this, she informed me that there are two separate “blankets”, which are actually sheets of cloth with certain markings on them. Sister Jesse described them this way:

“Nowadays, in the Buddhist tradition, there are two blankets, one is the lotus blanket one is the *tololaipei*, it has all the mantras, all the mantras printed on there. It’s a mantra, because *tololei* is a mantra. Among the Buddhists, they believe the mantra is not to be burnt, you cannot burn them because it is sacred. So it’s getting so complicated, so they put the *tololaipei* on the near dead, and when they die you let them go to the funeral home with them, after the last viewing, if it is to be buried, then it’s okay to leave it there. If it’s to be burned you have to take the *tololaipei* out, fold it up, and after the ashes are ready, you put them with the ashes because it’s not to be burnt. But the Lotus blanket, it can be burned, it can be buried, no problem. It is just because the mantra is supposed to represent the Buddhist teachings but the Lotus is only a symbol, so it’s different.”

The Buddhist blanket was important for Pam, who described her understanding as follows:

“The blanket covers them, if one is Buddhist. I am Buddhist, when my mom died, I could buy a blanket from the Buddhist temple that has writing on it with their stamp, and the blanket will have prayers said over them by the priest. I use that to cover the dead. That is used to help them reach nirvana, not go to hell or be reborn as an animal. If you aren’t Buddhist, you can still buy this blanket for the elder that dies. A lot of people buy the blanket for themselves, and get various temples to put a stamp on it. Each of them, every stamp, has prayers that

have gone into it. The blanket is worth a lot of money then.”

4.2.3 Wailing

Wailing, crying out loud, is a traditional practice (Watson 1988:11) for the Chinese.

Mary, a practicing Buddhist who was born in Canada of immigrant parents, noted that:

It’s important that you, that there is wailing at the service. So if you couldn’t wail, you have to make sure that you pay other people to wail. Probably more common in Vancouver, in Richmond, but I have been to lots, that’s pretty common.”

Mary also added that at the funerals of her parents there were enough family members who could wail, so it was not necessary for them to hire anyone to do so. Pastor Wan explained that it was customary in China to have wailing at funerals, but Western funerals tend to be quiet. An exception to the wailing is what Pam called a laughing funeral, which occurs when the deceased is very elderly, in their nineties or older. In that case, the long, full life should be celebrated, so one doesn’t cry: one is to laugh.

Not everyone wishes to have wailers at a funeral. Margaret stated that for her an ideal funeral would not have wailing. Susan recalled that at her grandfather’s funeral, they were allowed to cry, but not to laugh, and she did not agree with this sentiment. When Jane’s mother passed away, it was recommended not to cry loudly, so that her mother’s soul could leave in peace and not be upset. Sister Jesse also recommends silence as it is calming both for the soul of the deceased and for the others who are present.

4.2.4 Burning Incense

The burning of incense is also common during funerals amongst the Chinese.

Although no incense is burned at Christian funerals, Pastor Wan explained others burn incense because:

“They thought the dead become a spirit or a ghost and the incense can attract and direct these people to come home. During the funerals I officiate, they usually burn incense. Even if they don’t really know why exactly, they believe the incense can lead them and direct the spirit to a certain destination.”

Pastor Wan also noted that many people burn incense simply because that is what their parents did, so they follow along without knowing the reason behind burning incense.

May said that incense was burned during her mother’s funeral, even though she is Christian, because her sister-in-law was Buddhist, and it was important for her to have the incense burning.

4.2.5 Providing of Material Goods for the Deceased

Another common practice to show care for the deceased is to provide them with items that they liked in life or which it believed that they may need in the afterlife. It is common to place such items in the coffin (Crowder 2005), and also to burn paper versions of what may be used in the afterlife (Chung and Wegars 2005:5; Jing 2008).

May noted that “some people like to bring personal belonging and put in the casket and burn together and they think in the next life they can use it.” Jane recalled:

“We put in a few other mementos were important to my dad, we wrote a card that we all signed, we wrote messages and then we signed them and put them in the casket, and then a few other things that were personal to him ... We buried a pair of his glasses with him The one thing he loved to do is watch TV, he had his own little TV there, and we used to always bug him ... we’d change the channel on him, so we were joking that we should have buried his remote with him.”

Mary, who was born in Canada of elderly immigrants from China, described her family traditions:

“You’re supposed to put coins in each four corners of the coffin, and then you’re supposed to put stuff that they like, stuff that they’ll need for the afterlife, extra underwear, her purse, and stuff like that. My girls remember putting stuff into in her purse, so we did that, made sure she had McDonald’s card for coffee, that sort of stuff.”

Pam described how gold and jade jewellery would be buried with the deceased in her village in China. When the body was exhumed to rebury the bones, the family would take those items back. She noted that items that had been buried with a family member would have more value as they would have been blessed by the deceased. However, Pam noted that you wouldn’t do that as much in Canada, because once you bury the item, you wouldn’t be able to get it back.

At a funeral that I attended, many small stuffed animals were placed in the coffin of the deceased, as she was fond of stuffed animals. Her favourite stuffed toy was placed in her hands.

As in many cultures, it is common for people to place flowers on the casket. Margaret, who was born in Canada, found that the opportunity to place a flower on the casket and say a final few words to her grandmother had great personal meaning. Pastor Wan noted that flowers are traditionally given for the dead in China, and this is often done at the funeral and the practice is meant to show respect for the dead. It was not uncommon to determine the respect accorded to the deceased by the number of flowered wreaths presented to them from various corporations that had dealings with the deceased.

The choice of a casket varied quite widely. May mentioned that ashes could be kept in a plastic urn, which could then be placed in a nice velvet bag. May’s friend had recommended this since wood and ceramic would either break or decompose, but the plastic would not break down. This contrasts greatly with Pam, who maintained that the

fancy caskets used during funerals that she attended while here in Canada were inappropriate as the body would not get the chance to decompose properly, and that decomposition of the remains was important to her, recalling that those in her childhood village practiced the disinterment of the bones to be reburied in urns. May stated that the bones placed within the urn to allow the deceased to sit there in comfort for eternity. Susan commented on her dislike of the traditional Chinese casket, to the extent of disliking certain bed frames that reminded her of the Chinese caskets. At all the funerals I attended, high-end caskets were chosen for the deceased.

Many interviewees recalled the burning of paper items for the deceased, especially outside of Canada. Some found the custom meaningful, others found it quaint, and some did not agree with this practice at all. Susan, who came to Canada on her own as a young adult noted that as a Christian she knew where the deceased would go, but “the others, they didn’t know, so they were burning paper, paper everything, it cost an arm and a leg, what a waste of money, you are just burning it, so that didn’t make sense to me.”

The practice of burning items for the deceased is not uncommon and numerous kinds of items are commercially available. For example, there are items created out of paper to represent money, credit cards, clothing, radios, cars, houses, and even servants. All of these can be purchased in Canada, though the selection is limited in Victoria. A wide variety of these paper objects can be found in Vancouver’s Chinatown and in various stores in Richmond.

4.3 At the Funeral Service

Funerals in both Victoria and Vancouver are predominately arranged with local funeral homes. The three Chinese funeral services that I attended were all held at funeral

parlours. Two of the services were Christian, and one was non-religious, although it was officiated by a Christian minister. Pastor Wan is often called upon to officiate at non-religious Chinese funerals as well as those of his parishioners, and also provides this service to the indigent Chinese who pass away in Victoria with no known family and friend.

Although it is common to have an open casket (Crowder 2005:205), it is not mandatory. Susan, an immigrant from Southeast Asia, found open caskets troubling and unnecessary, whereas most of the other interviewees preferred to have an open casket as long as the deceased looked peaceful and natural. As Chan et al. (2005:936) noted, “good cosmetic make-up of the deceased will provide for a good memory.” In fact, May made a point of noting the importance of providing the lipstick and other makeup used by the deceased woman to the funeral home so that she would look more natural to those used to those who wish a final viewing. Margaret, May, and Jane all found the final viewing of the deceased to be comforting, as the deceased looked to them to be at peace.

At the Chinese services I attended, a collage of photographs of the deceased during their life was displayed outside of the room the actual service was held. At one of the funerals, a presentation of life slide show was projected onto a screen in the funeral parlour just prior to the actual service. These displays are reminiscent of celebration of life gatherings that I had attended for non-Chinese friends and family members.

Not everyone is required to attend the funeral. Pastor Wan noted that “In China, if the deceased is younger, parents won’t attend the funeral, because it’s a tragedy. They don’t need respect from the younger generation, only the younger generation has to respect the older generation.” In Mary’s case, she said that “when my dad died my mom didn’t go to

the service. It's her choice, for her kids go for her, it's part of it, so you don't have to, it's like shedding your responsibility or passing it on."

Those who stay at the house can be family members who did not attend the funeral, or others that have been asked to stay at the house. Mary described how two elderly ladies from the community, preferably those who have had sons, were asked to stay at the house during the funeral. Although Mary was uncertain as to the reason for the two ladies present, the practice was confirmed by Pastor Wan who knew of this custom from Chinese families in Victoria. Pastor Wan also said that he was not familiar with the practice of asking two elders to house sit during the funeral and internment in either Hong Kong or China.

Males of the family usually wear black armbands (Crowder 2005:205), which is often provided by the funeral home. Depending upon how traditional the funeral is, female members of the family will wear yarn wound around a hairpin to show that they are in mourning as well. However, with the exception of Mary, no one I interviewed actually remembered what colour the yarn was used. Mary recalled wearing white yarn with some cedar attached to a bobby pin in her hair for the funeral of a parent, and also for the next two days. After the third day, Mary switched to wearing blue yarn in her hair for the rest of the month. According to Crowder (2005), white yarn was used for daughters and green yarn was used for granddaughters in San Francisco.

It is also important to show your respect for the deceased by not wearing red. Pam was clear that "on the day of the funeral, you can't wear red, even your underwear can't be

red. There can be no red on the body, the red is like fire. During celebrations you wear red, at funerals you can't wear red at all⁵.”

After speeches, the funeral attendees would have a chance to approach the open casket for a final viewing. It is not mandatory for attendees to file past the open casket, but it is not uncommon to hear comments made about how peaceful the deceased appeared, and how comforting it was to see them for the last time in such a positive state. Although many simply walk past the casket, some to stop and bow to the deceased as a show of respect. A friend's father noted how three bows accompanied by the presentation of a flowered wreath during each of the bows showed a lot of respect for the deceased.

As the people left the funeral home, small envelopes containing a coin and an individually wrapped hard candy was handed out to the attendees (the significance of this will be discussed during the Respect for Others section of this chapter).

4.4 Journey to the Cemetery

The journey to the cemetery involves a convoy of cars, including the hearse, and following family members. It is common for the convoy to stop at the home of the deceased prior to going to the cemetery. Margaret recalled stopping at her uncle's home where her grandmother had lived, and also a flower arrangement that was taken from the lawn of the house to bring to the cemetery. This was further clarified by Mary, who noted that the order of the procession is based on the family hierarchy; therefore the eldest son would be at the head of the procession. At the home, someone will open the door of the home and acknowledge the arrival of the family. The eldest son of the family

⁵ Red is a celebratory colour for the Chinese, as Toulson (2013:155) states, “Red is the colour of joy, auspiciousness and fertility, and therefore the colour of a traditional Chinese wedding dress.”

will then come out of the vehicle and bow three times at the house. This is the time for the spirit of the deceased to reach home again.

Pastor Wan explained the practice of stopping at the home this way:

“In Victoria, the deceased mostly die in hospital, so they are moved directly to the funeral home. From the funeral, the procession passes by the home, the last time they go home, to let the deceased recognize they are home, and not to go astray, at the hospital or funeral home. So they need someone to stay at home to burn incense and paper to help guide the deceased home. That is a Canadian way, not in Hong Kong or China. In Hong Kong and China they carry the incense from leaving the funeral home to the burial park and from the burial park to home to lead the deceased”.

4.5 Funeral Meals

Meals are always an important part of Chinese ceremonies, and the meal at a restaurant allows the participants of the funeral a way of transitioning from the association with death to regular life at home (Crowder 2005:217-219). When I asked Sister Jesse who the meal was for, she explained that the meal is for the deceased, the family and friends, and also to show the status of the family. She explained:

“They call the meal *jiehuijiu* (解口酒), it means get rid of dirty wine. It’s not a nice thing. Death is actually is a taboo. So after the funeral, they have, everybody has to go the dinner to get rid of the bad things, because death is not good. Just by that meal, you know Chinese are so, have such a strong taboo about death.”

If a public dinner is held, it can be announced at the funeral. Alternately, invitations can be sent out to friends and family via word of mouth or through other media. If the banquet is open to all attendees of the funeral, an announcement is made at the end of the service stating the time and the restaurant where the meal will be held. The banquet meal for a funeral will only have seven (or sometimes nine) courses, instead of the traditional

eight or ten for other banquets. The meaning behind having seven dishes is explained by

Pastor Wan:

“Even numbers symbolize good things, always give even numbers. Eight is good, because it’s even. Seven is an odd number, so it’s not a good thing. Different from Christian belief. In Chinese we say, good things come in pairs (好事成双), but funeral is not a good thing, only want it once, so provide seven dishes. That means it’s an odd number, it’ll only happen once.”

May stated that most Chinese restaurants are familiar with funeral banquets and will assist in determining the number of tables required and the menu items. At least one vegetarian item is usually included in this meal. Often, if several tables are required, the tables will be placed in either a separate room, or in one specific part of the restaurant away from the rest of the diners.

Pastor Wan explained the origin of this meal as follows:

“In ancient China, transportation wasn’t good, so people come from far away to the funeral. They have to spend many days. So you have to billet them, and in ancient times funerals take at least seven days, up to 49 days. It’s easy for rich families, but really tough for poor families. So they come, and you have to billet them for seven days. Even if they don’t provide meat, it’s still a lot of food. Sometimes they have to sell their children and sell themselves as slaves in order to pay for the funeral. Those traditions come down to today, to feed them the meal. After the meal, the whole process is finished, and there is a wish that the meal is a blessing to the guests for coming to show sympathy for the family. The family provides a meal to be thankful and also to bless (the attendees) to wish them to have a good trip back home.”

Jane recalled that her family went to a local restaurant in Victoria for a vegetarian meal after the funeral. Mary also mentioned that it was important for the family to have a meal at home prior to the funeral service.

4.6 Religious Assistance

For those who have a professed religion, the assistance from their church or other religious respect can be invaluable. Christians have access to their ministers or priests, who will preside over a funeral service and Buddhists who belong to a community are assisted by the monks and nuns from their community.

During my interview of George, a lay brother from the Taoist Temple in Vancouver, I was able to find out about services available through the Daoist priests in Vancouver. Daoist beliefs include many deities and in the adherence to rituals (Rouse 2005b:21-27). George was very specific about the necessity of having an actual Daoist priest perform the rituals used to assist the spirit of the deceased to pass into the next life without being lost or misled. The importance of the eldest son was also remarked upon. The son is supposed to carry a flag and purchase water. George agreed with Crowder (2005) that the purchase of water is mainly symbolic, and just requires the son to get some tap water. May also said that it was the responsibility of the oldest son to carry the portrait and buy the water.

George told me that because there aren't many actual Daoist priests in British Columbia, those unable to hire a priest, or who lived too far away can have an offering altar set up at the Daoist Temple. There, the priest will perform the necessary chants and rituals in the absence of the deceased or their family members. For the temple altar and ceremony, the family is required to provide the name of the deceased, the date of birth, the date of passing. There is a fee to pay for the food, incense, and other required materials. I was shown a temple altar. It consisted of a small table with cooked food, fruit and wine along with a paper tablet inscribed with Chinese writing. Burning incense

was also present. I was told that appropriate chants, rituals, and offerings would be performed by a priest on all the appropriate days, and without the need of the family being present.

As noted previously, Jane's mother was Daoist when her father passed away, and they were able to have a Daoist priest perform the rituals with them. Jane recalls her younger brother, as the oldest son, holding onto a small object that was to symbolize the spirit of her father. At the prompt of the Daoist priest, her brother slowly moved the object over a paper bridge, which, along with the chants and rituals performed by the priest, were intended to guide her father's spirit to the best location.

George clarified that there are traditional Daoist priests called the Namo Fellows. Namo refers to the Pure Land Buddhist of Namo Amitufo chant (Chen 2010). George informed me that the Namo Fellows dedicate their lives to their religion and are frequently hired by people to chant and perform rituals for the deceased at funerals. However George also cautioned that in his personal opinion they are not proper Daoist priests, and their rituals may not be effective.

Christian ministers and pastors are able to provide funeral services at their church for their parishioners. It is common for the pastor of a Christian church to officiate at a non-religious funeral service held at a funeral home. Pam attended a couple of such services here in Canada, and commented that at one of them the Christian minister turned the funeral into a Christian service, which Pam did not appreciate. This is not always the case, as Pastor Wan, who is often asked to speak at non-religious funerals, makes clear that the wishes of the family are to be respected.

Buddhist nuns and monks are available in Vancouver to attend at funerals where they chant and burn incense. The intention is to help the deceased along their way in the next stage of their existence. Several Buddhist temples in Vancouver perform funeral services. Mary stated:

“In Victoria, they don’t have Chinese nuns. I have seen people, they hire nuns from Vancouver to do it, make it easier to go to the next life, so the next life will be better. But I don’t think this is the kind of thing they do in Canada, it’s very rare. But in Vancouver, it’s easier.”

Sister Jesse and the nuns from Polam Buddhist Nunnery also attend the death beds and funerals of community members. However, they have a different approach from other Buddhist temples. Sister Jesse explains:

“The transition of Buddhism into Canada is, it sort of becomes more embracing, more inclusive and less exclusive. In China they don’t mix. Here it is mixed, is more inclusive, is an evolution of Buddhism into the West. Rituals change here. The funeral ceremony that I conduct would be very different from funeral services conducted by other monasteries in Vancouver, because I see that it is a ceremony for the dead, but I see that we have to respect the live ones, and (the living, they) are not necessary taken into Buddhism. The non-Buddhist funeral services I conduct or the other nuns conducts, we don’t have a Buddhist statue, we don’t burn incense, we just have flowers. Because we believe that everything comes from the heart, it doesn’t come from the symbol, doesn’t come from the picture. If somebody comes in, and if he is a Christian, but going to a dead Buddhist funeral, he would feel very uncomfortable seeing a Buddhist picture there, seeing incense there, even seeing nuns there. They are very awkward, embarrassed, and uncomfortable. A lot of times I can feel that tension. But because they don’t see that Buddhist statue, then they feel a lot at ease. So I think that is a kind of respect. That is also a kind of evolution that we actually brought. But it’s only Polam. It is making it more for everybody else, not just for yourself, for everybody else to come and honour the dead, to be in that situation, to be together. You

don't want people to feel out of place, when it comes to a funeral, you don't want anyone to feel out of place, so that's how we adapted. People look at us with very funny manners, no picture? No incense? I said no, no picture, no incense. It's not easy though. And we decorate the table with very beautiful cloth, with candles, with flowers and the picture of the dead, that's all. The picture is the family's choice. It's not our choice. Sometimes at funerals you might not have the last view of the body. You may have just the ashes there. The picture is to remember the kin."

4.7 Continuation of Relationship with the Deceased

The relationship with the deceased does not end with the funeral for many Chinese. Chung and Wegars (2005:3-5) explain that at death, the souls of an individual becomes a *shen* (神), which means "the spirit that ascends to heaven". The relationship with the deceased is symbiotic, where the living revere and care for the dead and the dead provide blessings for the family in terms of good health, wealth, and happiness. This relationship is carried out in part by the use of family altars, visits to the cemetery, and the purchasing of plaques at temples.

Family altars vary greatly, from small individual altars created by members of the family to elaborate constructions that can be purchased from specialty stores. An elder in who practiced Chinese Religion showed me her family altar. It was a three tiered bookshelf located in her living room. She explained to me that the top shelf, which contained some writing and a statue of *Quanyin* (观音) a goddess associated with mercy, was for the sky gods. The middle shelf, which contained a spirit tablet and photographs of her deceased husband and his parents, were for the ancestors. The bottom shelf was for the earth gods. On the first and fifteenth day of every month, she would provide food,

wine and incense for the ancestors. One of the dishes that she would make would always be vegetarian.

She also marks certain annual events that occur on the Chinese calendar. One is the *Chingming* festival (清明), which is a one day celebration for the dead, usually occurring in early April. The name translates literally as the celebratory term Pure Brightness festival, and is marked by visiting the grave or tomb of ancestors and ritually cleaning it. In Canada, since *Chingming* is not a holiday, it is common for families to visit the gravesite on the weekend either before or after *Chingming* itself if the actual date falls on a weekday. Another day when people visit the gravesite of family members is the *Chongyang* festival (重阳) which occurs in the fall, on the ninth day of the ninth month in the Chinese lunar calendar (99, 九九), when pronounced in Chinese is a homonym for “a long time” (久久). In recognition of the long relationship with the dead it is considered a fitting time to show filial respect and worship. On both *Chingming* and *Chongyang*, the elder that I spoke with would burn gold and silver leaf paper to provide her ancestors with money. She would also burn paper clothing, which she made herself by cutting and gluing sheets of patterned paper to form shirts, pants and skirts.

Rose, who grew up in Taiwan and immigrated to Victoria as an adult, also practices the Chinese Religion. She has a family altar on her mantle that consists of a spirit tablet for her ancestors, a place to burn incense, and *jiaobei* (筊杯) which are which are wooden blocks used as divination tools. Also called moon blocks, they would be thrown to answer a yes or no question, such as whether members of the afterlife had eaten their fill. Rose would use them to determine when the ancestors have finished eating the meal that

was offered. Once it had been determined the ancestors had finished eating, the family would then eat their meal.

When I inquired about the spirit tablet, Rose explained it to me this way:

“Spirit tablets, they have it standardized. You can buy one in the store. For mine, in my house, since I can’t buy it in Victoria, my husband made one for me, simple wood, and then on the tablet both sides of my family, my mother and my father’s ancestors are written on it. Basically what it says is the ancestors of this family (Wang, father’s side) and all ancestors of my mother’s side (Lee). That is the tablet I have in my home. You can buy a blank one and have the name carved on it, or buy the standard one. Not one tablet per person, they are ancestors, so you don’t need an individual one, when someone dies, they join the ancestors, you don’t need one person’s name. We are a family. It’s group oriented, so if you die, no matter who dies, you are part of the ancestors.”

Pastor Wan also stated that spirit tablets were created for the family, saying:

“In China there are so many gods, a wooden plaque is placed at home to burn incense. The plaque will say all the ancestors of one’s family, that is the gods of all people with the same last name. One plaque for the family, we use the term god, *shen* ... It’s always by family, because they don’t want to miss anyone. (It) is for all generations.”

Mary to ritualizes her continuing relationship with the ancestors at her altar in this way:

“We still pray to our ancestors, I have an altar, but it’s an Anglicized altar. It’s not red, and it doesn’t have all the cool Chinese junk. My mom didn’t even have that, all she did was have her um, uh dad’s mom and dad. We never went that route of what you see in the Chinese restaurants. We always had pictures of dad’s family up, not as much mom’s family. On festival days and feast days, we always did the three little cups, not with whisky, but scotch, and then the incense of course. So what I do, I don’t do the three things of scotch, because my husband wouldn’t want me to dump it out, but we still do the incense.”

Mary also mentioned having a shadow box containing photographs of her parents and items that were important to them in life, such as the chop her father used. She says she will use “that as a place to ground and to meditate when I am in a disquiet place.”

May, who does not have an altar, stated that with respect to her mother:

“I have her picture, I have my father’s picture. I still keep my mom’s hair. I put it in a jar, because I cannot bring her ashes to Victoria. I have her hair, it’s one of the ways to remember her, and her picture. I have her picture in my office. It’s all the small things to remember.”

Another friend mentioned that she did not have an altar as such, but she used a picture and flowers to mark a place where she felt that she could commune with the deceased. Several of the people I interviewed found this to be appealing for them: to have a place where they can continue the relationship with the deceased without using traditional altars and incense.

Besides the worshipping of ancestors at the family altar, there are also visits to the cemetery. As indicated above, the most common day for the Chinese to visit the cemetery in Victoria is *Chingming*, which is held in the spring, and the other is *Chongyang*, held in the fall. Pam describes the practice in her village in China this way:

“*Chingming* cleans the gravesite, it’s a practice in China. Cleaning the gravesite is not just at *Chingming*, there is *Chongyang* holiday, on the 9th of the 9th month in the Chinese calendar. It also cleans the gravesite. It depends on which day your village tends to go clean the gravesite, both days are to clean the gravesite. Cleaning the gravesite is not like here, just bring flowers, leave it there, and leave. It’s not like that, in China you roast a whole pig if you have money, otherwise you bring a chunk of pork there, you bring cakes that have been risen for *facai* (wealth, 发财), and some sugar cane. Each section should have shoots ready to come out (for wealth). To worship the ancestors is to request wealth. People like money, roasted pig for good health, duck eggs: I don’t know what that’s for. You bring

all that to the cemetery. All the relatives go there on that day, eat there, and bring home the leftovers. It's a happy time to go to Chingming. I don't do it here, I have nobody here."

Although several of the people I interviewed, including Margaret, would go to the cemetery at Chingming with family and bring flowers, this is not true of all the people I spoke with. Mary follows a different Chinese tradition with her children regarding ancestor worship. On feast days, she and her family burn incense and bow to the ancestors, and at *Chingming*, they all go to the gravesite of her parents with food and incense. There, her "kids sit there with their food, and sit and chat with each other and with my mom."

4.8 Respect for Family Members

Many of those I interviewed mentioned the importance of respecting the wishes of family members. May, a Christian, describes her experience at her parents' funerals:

"Sometimes I think now a lot of people, they not only thinking pay respect to the deceased parent, there also is an opportunity for the sister and brother to get together. They make silver and gold bullion (from paper). They have to do it all night long. And because I am Christian, I didn't do it. They understand, they respect me. Because my Mom and Dad, they're into Buddhism. Usually we don't fight for what kind of ceremony. We just go with the majority, because we don't want this kind of things, you don't want to fight with them. The most important thing is getting things done peacefully."

Other people I interviewed told similar stories. Mary, who wished to have incense burning at the funeral of her parents, refrained from doing so because her sister-in-law was Christian and did not want incense burned. Mary waited until her sister-in-law left before burning incense.

4.9 Respect for the Community

Respect is shown to community members by the family of the deceased in the handing out of small envelopes called *lishi* (利事, pronounced *laisi* in Cantonese) and the banquet meal after the funeral (see Funeral Meals section).

The *lishi* is usually in the form of a small white envelope, often provided by the funeral home, that is passed out to all the people who attend the funeral. Although white is the most common colour used, and is the colour associated with death, if the deceased is very elderly, a red envelope of celebration is used. Pam referred to these types of funerals as laughing funerals, as it was appropriate to laugh and celebrate the full and long life of the deceased.

Placed inside each envelope is an individually wrapped hard candy and a coin, usually a new one dollar coin. The coin, according to Pastor Wan, is a carryover from ancient China and is meant to help reimburse individuals for the expenses they incurred in attending the funeral. It is also used as a means of thanking the person for attending and as a blessing for the attendee - a wish of good fortune. Pam explains that the candy is to sweeten the experience.

Margaret showed me her *lishi* from her grandmother's funeral. She noticed that in addition to the usual candy and coin, there was also piece of cedar wood. Who was also there said that the use of cedar is a very old custom, and most people don't do that anymore. When I inquired about this practice with Pastor Wan, he suggested that it was a variation of the aromatic pomelo leaves that was used in China to ward off the negativity of the event, and placed in baths to help wash away the taint of death.

It was emphasized by several people that the coin and candy should be eaten and used right away and not be brought home. This is consistent with practices in San Francisco as noted by Crowder (2005). Her parents told Margaret, who is diabetic, that since she couldn't eat the whole candy, she should just place the candy in her mouth and throw the rest away.

Another way to show respect for other members of the community is for family members of the deceased to minimize contact with others. May describes as follows:

“And also in Chinese you know, when you, your parents pass away and people think it's not a lucky thing, you shouldn't go to visit other friends. They think it's unlucky, so some friends they don't go to other people's party. Keep yourself away from laughter or party maybe for a month or so. When my mom passed away and (a friend) had party, she turned 40, and she called me. I said no, my mom passed away, not have the mood, and then she understood.”

The keeping of those who are mourning away from others was also described to me by a friend who was attending a funeral banquet. Part of the large restaurant was sectioned off for the funeral banquet, and at another part of the restaurant the family of an acquaintance was celebrating the birth of a child. My friend would usually have gone over to greet the celebrators, but since she was attending a funeral banquet, she made sure to avert her eyes from the celebrators and stayed within the boundaries of the funeral attendees. This showed her care and respect for the family of those who were celebrating.

In addition, several who mentioned that elders were the source of much of the information also showed respect for elders. They mentioned that when in doubt, they would ask elders for advice, not only from within the family, but also from elders in the community as well. I saw this respect of knowledge of the elders during a *mahjong* game

with three seniors. A friend of the seniors who appeared to be in her late sixties came by to greet the ladies at the *mahjong* table and inquired of about a funeral practice from the most senior lady in our group, who had just turned ninety. The question was regarding the practice of covering the hands of the deceased after death. The ninety year old replied that the covering of hands is an old custom in China, and was not done here in Victoria. The other ladies present nodded in agreement, and the *mahjong* game continued.

The conscious choice made by individuals and groups to respect everyone is most evident to me in the adaptation of rituals by Sister Jesse and the nuns of Polam. Their use of flowers and beautiful cloths instead of incense and Buddhist icons in public places has been adopted to show respect not only for the deceased, their family, the Chinese community, but also for the conscious adaptation of those in the community at large making use of the Polam nunnery's services.

4.10 Relationships in Context

Death, according to the Chinese, does not sever the relationship between the deceased and the family. Both Pastor Wan and Rose described how traditionally the deceased becomes an ancestor and a new reciprocal relationship is formed (Chung and Wegars 2005:2-4; Rouse 2005b:20-23). Several participants describe how they worship their ancestors through offerings of incense, food and even material items by burning paper offerings. This is the time those who are living ask for blessings of health, wealth, happiness and fertility. The ancestors, it is believed, require the support from those who are in this world through these offerings, and in return they have the ability to bless favoured descendants. If the ancestors are not treated well, then these blessing may not be granted.

The relationship with the deceased then, is both emotional and practical. One shows respect and care for the ancestors as their due, but also ensures that life here in this world is improved by their intervention. There is also the fear that if the ancestors are not appeased, not only will they withhold their blessings, but also they may curse the descendants in retaliation. It is important to point out that this belief is not universal, even among those that I interviewed and spoke with, as some people only wished to remember their relatives, and others only wished to communicate with them in their own way.

After the death of a loved one, especially when the deceased is an elder in the family, social connections are reorganized both within the family itself and with the community at large. Cohen (1990) described how traditional Chinese families have a hierarchy of importance, from the oldest to the youngest, and from male to female. The death of an elder can cause a significant disruption in the family hierarchy. As in the case of any major change, the relationships between those who are left can be fragile. The Chinese place significant importance on face, as described by Leung and Yee (2003) to represent both the confidence of an individual within society (*lian* 脸) and one's standing or prestige (*mainzi* 面子). The death of an elder, who is accorded the highest amount of respect, can cause one to lose face.

In order to mitigate the loss of face, funerals are also a time to ensure that familial relationships are not strained. May and Mary both described how they respected their family members during funerals by ensuring their practices and beliefs did not infringe upon the wishes of others. May accepted her siblings wish to have Buddhist monks chant at her mother's funeral despite her own Christian beliefs, and her siblings respected her

wish to not take part in the forming and burning of paper offerings. Mary refrained from burning incense until her sister-in-law, who as Christian, had left the house.

The loss of face can also occur within the local community. The loss of an elder means that the respect that was accorded to the family based on the deceased no longer exists. Community members show how they respect the deceased through their offerings of money and flowered wreaths, and the family in return, shows their respect and appreciation to community members by handing out white envelopes and holding the funeral banquet. This allows the family to formally acknowledge community members and allows the family to regain face in this way.

4.11 Conclusion

Funerals are as a method of marking the end of a life and also as an opportunity to re-negotiate the relationship of family and community members. The relationship with the deceased is transformed into a new relationship where reciprocal care is shown. The new connection is formed by respecting the wishes expressed by the deceased in life, by showing reverence and care of the deceased in death through various rites and practices, culminating in new ways of maintaining the relationship through the use of altars and mementos.

Funerals help to strengthen bonds between family members and is an opportunity to show respect for the strongly held beliefs of everyone involved. Connections with the attendees of the funeral are strengthened through various mutual displays of respect at the service, the banquet, and others rituals related to the disposition of the deceased.

In the next chapter, I will present by conclusion and suggest areas of further research.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

This thesis is the culmination of my research into the rites and rituals practiced in the local Chinese community upon the death of a loved one. Like many communities that have migrated to another country, the Chinese community in coastal urban BC is vast and varied (Stephenson 2005; Wang and Lo 2005). Members of the community range from individuals whose families have been in Canada for generations to those who have recently arrived, and their point of origin covers many different parts of China and from countries to which the Chinese diaspora has spread. The participants in this research varied from those whose families have been in Canada for two generations to those who arrived in the last seven years, including from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and Vietnam. Religious affiliations, or the lack thereof, have strongly influenced the practices of these individuals.

The resulting sampling of individuals in this study is not meant to be representative of the Chinese community, which is vastly more complex and varied. As Olwig (2009:520) noted, a diaspora identity imply a “continued attachment to the homeland of origin while living in a distant migration destination.” This simplistic definition does not allow for the complexity of time, space, economic, social and kin ties that provide context to the understanding of the makeup of a community. Olwig used the attendees of a funeral to define the members of a Caribbean migrant community. She noted that Bruner (1986:9) suggested that the people should define the unit, rather than having a category imposed upon them. This paper also used self-definition as the basis of determining who would be used as a source of information. Those who were formally interviewed took part as

people of Chinese descent, and the others with whom I spoke were active in Chinese communities, ranging from religious groups to service and community organizations with Chinese ties.

Death is (obviously) universal (Huntington and Metcalf 1998), but the experience of how death is dealt with brings to the forefront social and cultural issues that are not always obvious, and certainly not universal. How an individual defines their identity is made immediate, or manifested, when one has to choose how to proceed at the time of the death of a loved one. Hyphenated identities (Bretell 2006) of many immigrants allow the individual to pick and choose from what they see as the best in both cultures, but this is not always an easy decision when a person is forced by circumstance to make decisions quickly. Funerals and rituals surrounding death are such a time. In addition, many migrants straddle multiple geographical sites (Zirh 2012). The funeral is then not just an isolated local event, but is complicated by geographical, religious, socio-economic and familial expectations—and in a very large country like Canada, these can become difficult. Zirh noted that some individuals do not wish to be affiliated with their cultural heritage, but instead, as in the case of Susan, prefer to adopt local and Christian practices that reflect better how she self-identifies.

The people I interviewed and the friends I have spoken with have provided me a glimpse into what was important for them in their time of mourning. It is my hope that the information gleaned from the experiences that they willingly shared can be of use for others - in particular for those who have and value a Chinese heritage but who may feel they lack knowledge and sufficient connection with others knowledgeable of Chinese ancestry to allow them make confident and informed decisions about end of life practices

in their lives. The rites and rituals that I have described in this thesis are by no means universal, and should be understood to be a selection of some rituals that are practiced and which have been comforting to those who survive after the demise of a loved one. Although the overarching concept of showing respect does seem to be important to all participants, the specifics of how that respect is shown varies widely. I have chosen to emphasize the practices that are specifically Chinese, as described by Chinese religion (Lai et al. 2005), even though my participants may not personally claim to be adherents of the Chinese religion. Specific Buddhist and Christian practices were not included in this thesis, as my interest was specifically in determining Chinese customs regarding death.

My hope is that the resulting information can be a resource for those lacking other resources about local Chinese customs, and that they will be able to select what they find to be helpful while navigating the new territory of life without the loved one in this world. One such example is from my conversation with Jane, who found the concept of an “altar” based only on flowers and photographs to be a way to remember and respect the deceased without making it obvious for others. Likewise, the covering of the deceased with a blanket can provide an opportunity for those who survive to physically perform a personal act of caring for their loved one.

In addition, certain practices can help ensure the standing of the family within the community. Even among Caribbean immigrants in England (Olwig 2009:527), funerals are “an occasion for the family to demonstrate its social worth and thus gain prestige.” An example is the importance of thanking those who attend the funeral and/or the funeral banquet by providing the attendees with a white envelope containing candy and a coin.

When my mother passed away, we were not aware of this practice, and I cannot help but wonder if by not doing so, my family may have offended my mother's friends who were invited to her funeral banquet. Understanding the importance of such practices can only help to retain the respect and standing of the family within the community.

In order to disseminate this information to those who may find it useful, I have created a simple brochure (see Appendix 10), which contains a brief selection of options available for people in their time of mourning. It contains information about *ketou*, blanket ceremony, family altars, *Chingming* practices, funeral banquets and the handing out of *lishi* to funeral attendees. I would have found such a resource to be helpful when my mother died. I have also provided an email address, which I will maintain, for any questions or comments that may result from those who read the brochure.

The brochure will be in English only, as it is meant as a resource to those who do not have a connection with the local Chinese community, and knowledgeable family members and friends who could help in their time of grief. This assumes that people who read and write Chinese would have more resources available to them, and would not need such a brochure. The brochure will be made available to the two main funeral parlours in Victoria, the local hospice, and also sent to local grief counsellors (determined by counsellors who list grief counselling under their areas of practice).

This research is limited in scope due to the wide range of practices that are here. The local Chinese community, much like Zirh's (2012:1765) study of the Alevi (a Shi'a community with origins in Turkey), are geographically spread out, have various beliefs, and contain ethnic regional differences within intra-groups. Further research can clarify and provide more information of how individuals in coastal urban British Columbia

negotiate this difficult time locally. Although this research touched upon some of the differences within families and communities, such as the practice of burning incense, that aspect of the investigation was limited in order to demonstrate respect for the various beliefs and preferences of the participants. However, further study in this area would provide a deeper understanding of how local communities change and adapt to accommodate differences.

In addition, most of the people I spoke with were mature women, and it would be worth looking more closely into what men in the Chinese community consider important at the time of passing of a loved one. The Chinese are historically patriarchal (Rouse 2005b: 24-27), and it would be interesting to research further males' point of view of how death is seen and practiced.

My research was limited to the deaths of elders. The death of a child or a young adult can be much more traumatizing and difficult. It would be worth understanding how these deaths are viewed. Would the idea of respect be as prevalent in these practices? Historically, death of children and women who have not had children are not accorded with a lot of ceremony (Greenwood 2008:246). There have been studies into the death of children, such as Farnsworth and Allen's (1996) look into the bereavements experiences of ethnic Chinese mothers. Local bereavement practices pertaining to the death of younger individuals would be a source of further study.

Another area of potential research is an in-depth look at how the local communities maintain bonds with the deceased after death. Many people here do practice the visitation of the gravesite at *Chingming*, and I have seen a number of family altars and

evidence of ancestor worship. It would be a rich source of cultural knowledge to have more in depth understanding of how these rituals are put into practice.

A comparison practices and beliefs focussing on people of different age groups, countries of origin, length of time in Canada, and religious affiliations could provide an increased understanding of these rituals and their meanings. Migrant communities in South Africa (Lee 2011:227) experience the fear of death from being far from home. Do Chinese migrants also share this fear? At which point does the notion of home no longer refer to one's ancestral home? Jane's grandfather's remains were exhumed and cremated in Hong Kong, so that his final resting place could be relocated to Canada. Does the mobility of remains, already a common practice as secondary burials in southern China Watson (1988:16-17), reflect a new relationship between mobility and death as described by Lee (2011:240), or is this merely an extension of existing customs? Within individual families, one can assume there will be some variation among the expectations of people from different generations, and also between those with standing within the family hierarchy. From this could arise uncertainties or possibly conflict in such things as who is expected to perform which ritual. Further study in this area would be a source of practical information.

The discussion of death and dying is not one that Chinese tend to be comfortable with (Nichols and Braun 1997:339; Hsu et al. 2009:167). They are certainly not alone in this, but their reticence can have some problematic consequences when dealing with the western funeral industry as well as busy, and perhaps blunt, health care practitioners. Death is traditionally taboo, and the belief that bad luck is associated with such discussions persist even now. Because of this belief, the opportunity for further research

into these practices will require the researcher to be able to gain the trust and confidence of those who can provide information. I believe that it is important for any researcher to be engaged as a part of the community, to show their respect for the knowledge of the elders, and in this way gain the trust and acceptance of those who hold this knowledge. Because of the sensitivity of the subject at hand, I would recommend that further research not be simply based on interviews, but through interactions and experiences within the community at large—observation should play a key role. Any findings should be made available to the bereaved in order to foster a positive experience for those who may not have access to such knowledge.

Identities, as described by Christina-Georgina (2013), are based on how one sees oneself and is constantly changed based on one's life experiences. Death occasions a shift in identity, not only of the person who dies, but of those who continue—they were children, perhaps they now become orphans; they were wives, they become widows, etc. Alongside this, identities change when people migrate—they become immigrants, or perhaps refugees: they are no longer simply “Chinese” or “French”, and so on. They also add elements of new identity in their new home as hyphenated individuals (Bretell 2006): Chinese-Canadians or Indo-Canadians for example. Thus identity is in some sense inevitably contested by death, which may result in difficulties among the bereaved in the context of migrant communities because their own identity has become ambiguous. The shift (Christina-Georgiana 2013:163) from “what we really are” has to be reconciled with “what we have become”.

Although this research highlights some of the complexities of such a double shift in identity, it should also occasion a fresh discussion of how grief itself might persist as

survivors wonder whether or not they have done “the right thing”, or whether they have inadvertently insulted older relatives, or confused younger ones. Zirh (2012) noted how funerals are multi-sited, creating bonds not only of new communities in new lands, but also serve to strengthen cultural ties with communities at home and other locales. Balkan (2015) described how family, the significance of territory, and one’s position in society are the main factors in determining Muslim funeral and burial practices in Germany. These considerations would undoubtedly also affect death practices in the ethnic Chinese practices in Canada as well. Future research on death in migrant groups should move away from some fairly static models of death in what are assumed to be relatively homogenous communities living in traditional geographical as well as cultural space. Traditional assumptions are not well connected to the tides of people sweeping across the globe. Multi-sited (Zirh 2013), mobile (Lee 2012), and identity-forming (Balkan 2015; Reimers 2009) concerns need to be taken into consideration in determining why people choose certain practices when dealing with the death of a loved one.

In summary, as I have approached my research as an Autoethnography, it is important for me to describe how this experience has affected my personal life. My wish to become connected with more of the Chinese community has been fulfilled in two ways. I have joined a local service organization, centred in Victoria’s Chinatown, where part of our outreach includes providing traditional Chinese meals at Chinese New Year, as well as presenting speakers who are knowledgeable of certain aspects of Chinese culture and heritage, either as authors of fictional books that touch upon Chinese culture, or as authorities who have studied Chinese issues. My connection with local communities also included friendship with people of Chinese descent, including several seniors who have

taught me how to cook Chinese dishes, and have invited me into their homes and lives. Through this I have gained a better understanding of the daily practice of living Chinese in our local community. I have learned to embrace being Chinese, and by accepting that part of me, I have also been able to accept that I am English as well.

This research would not be complete without a description of how my research has given me the opportunity to understand what I could have done when my mother died to make the connection with our shared Chinese heritage. When I showed my daughter the brochure that I created, she looked through it, looked me in the eyes, and told me how useful she thought it was. In so doing, an opportunity has been created that may make it easier for my children to have options when I die. Instead of being left floundering and not knowing how to proceed, they now have access to a resource should they wish to honour our common Chinese heritage.

Bibliography

- Abraham, Terry, and Priscilla Wegars
 2005 *Respecting the Dead: Chinese Cemeteries and Burial Practices in the Interior Pacific Northwest*. In *Chinese American Death Rituals: Respecting the Ancestors*. Sue Fawn Chung and Priscilla Wegars, eds. Pp. 147-173. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Bailey, J.
 2008 *First Steps in Qualitative Data Analysis: Transcribing*. *Family Practice* 25(2): 127–131.
- Balkan, Osman
 2015 *Burial and Belonging: Burial and Belonging*. *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 15(1): 120–134.
- Bernard, H. Russell
 2006 *Research methods in Anthropology*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Boltz, William G.
 1999 *Language and Writing*. In *The Cambridge History of Ancient China from the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.* Michael Loewe and Edward L Shaughnessy, eds. Pp. 74-123. Cambridge University Press.
- Brokenkamp, Stephen R.
 2007 *Ancestors and Anxiety*. Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.
- Bromley, Roger
 2000 *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions*. *Tendencies*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Brubaker, Rogers
 2005 *The ‘diaspora’ diaspora*. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28(1): 1-19.
- Bruner, Edward M.
 1986. *Experience and its expressions*. In *The Anthropology of Experience*. (eds.) V.W. Turner & E.M. Bruner, 3-30. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. Victor W. Turner and Edward M. Bruner, eds. Pp 3-30. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Burnard, Philip
 2004 *Some Problems in Using Ethnographic Methods in Nursing Research: Commentary and Examples from a Thai Nursing Study*. *Diversity in Health and Social Care* 1(1): 45–51.
- Chace, Paul G.
 2005 *On Dying American: Cantonese Rites for Death and Ghost-Spirits in an American City*. In *Chinese American Death Rituals: Respecting the Ancestors*.

- Sue Fawn Chung and Priscilla Wegars, eds. Pp. 47-79. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Chan, Cheryl
2015 Richmond City Council Votes against Bylaw That Would Require English on Storefront Signs. *The Province*, May 26.
- Chan, Cecilia L. W., Amy Y. M. Chow, Samuel M. Y. Ho, et al.
2005 The Experience of Chinese Bereaved Persons: A Preliminary Study of Meaning Making and Continuing Bonds. *Death Studies* 29(10): 923–947.
- Chang, Kwang-Chih
1999 China on the Eve of the Historical Period. *In* *The Cambridge History of Ancient China from the Origins of Civilization to 221 B.C.* Michael Loewe and Edward L Shaughnessy, eds. Pp. 37–73. Cambridge University Press.
- Chen, Pi-Yen, ed.
2010 Chinese Buddhist monastic chants. Recent researches in the oral traditions of music, 8. Middleton, Wis: A-R Editions, Inc.
- Chiu, Ling
2003 From Harling Point. 40:06 min. National Film Board of Canada, Canada.
- Chung, Sue Fawn, Fred P. Frampton, and Timothy W. Murphy
2005 Venerate These Bones: Chinese American Funerary and Burial Practices as Seen in Carlin, Elko County, Nevada. *In* *Chinese American Death Rituals: Respecting the Ancestors.* Sue Fawn Chung and Priscilla Wegars, eds. Pp. 107-145. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Chung, Sue Fawn, and Reiko Neizman
2005 Remembering Ancestors in Hawai'i. *In* *Chinese American Death Rituals: Respecting the Ancestors.* Sue Fawn Chung and Priscilla Wegars, eds. Pp. 175-194. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Cohen, Myron L.
1988 Souls and Salvation: Conflicting Themes in Chinese Popular Religion. *In* *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China.* James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski, eds. Pp.180-202. Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.
- Cohen, Myron L
1990 Lineage Organization in North China. *The Journal of Asian Studies* 49(03): 509–534.
- Collier, John, and Malcolm Collier
2004 *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a Research Method.* Revised and expanded edition. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press.

- Creswell, John W.
2007 *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*. 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Crowder, Linda Sun
2005 *The Chinese Mortuary Tradition in San Francisco Chinatown*. In *Chinese American Death Rituals: Respecting the Ancestors*. Sue Fawn Chung and Priscilla Wegars, eds. Pp. 195-240. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Czarniawska, Barbara
2008 *Narratives in Social Science Research*. Reprinted. *Introducing Qualitative Methods*. London: SAGE.
- Davies, Charlotte Aull
1999 *Reflexive Ethnography Guide Researching Selves and Others*. Routledge: New York.
- Denzin, Norman K., and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds.
2005 *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 3rd edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Diaspora
2010 In Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. Retrieved July 15, 2010, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diaspora>.
- Farnsworth, Elizabeth B., and Katherine R. Allen
1996 *Mothers' Bereavement: Experiences of Marginalization, Stories of Change*. *Family Relations* 45(4): 360–367.
- Greenwood, Roberta S.
2005 *Old Rituals in New Lands: Bringing the Ancestors to America*. In *Chinese American Death Rituals: Respecting the Ancestors*. Sue Fawn Chung and Priscilla Wegars, eds. Pp. 241-262 . Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Haraway, Donna
1988 *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*. *Feminist Studies* 14(3): 575.
- Harper, Douglas
2002 *Talking about Pictures: A Case for Photo Elicitation*. *Visual Studies* 17(1): 13–26.
- Hidayat, Samsul
2012 *Syncretization Of Chinese Religion In Singkawang West Kalimantan*. AL ALBAB - Borneo Journal of Religious Studies 1(1).

- Ho, David Yau-fai
1994 Filial Piety, Authoritarian Moralism, and Cognitive Conservatism in Chinese Societies. *Genetic, Social, and General Psychology Monographs*.
- Hsu, Chiung-Yin, Margaret O'Connor, and Susan Lee
2009 Understandings of Death and Dying for People of Chinese Origin. *Death Studies* 33(2): 153–174.
- Jing, Jun
2008 For Gods, Ghosts and Ancestors: The Chinese Tradition of Paper Offerings by *Janet Scott Lee*. *American Ethnologist* 35(3): 3068–3071.
- Knowles, Caroline, and Paul Sweetman
2004 *Picturing the Social Landscape: Visual Methods and the Sociological Imagination*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kuah-Pearce, Khun Eng, and Andrew P. Davidson, eds.
2008 *At Home in the Chinese Diaspora: Memories, Identities and Belongings*. Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lai, David Chuenyan
1977 An Analysis of Data on Home Journeys by Chinese Immigrants in Canada, 1892-1915. *The Professional Geographer* 24(4): 359-365.
- Lai, David Chuenyan
1987 The Chinese Cemetery in Victoria. *BC Studies* 75: 24-42.
- Lai, David Chuenyan
1991 *The Forbidden City Within Victoria*. Victoria: Orca Books.
- Lai, David Chuenyan, Jordan Paper and Li Chuang Paper
2005 The Chinese in Canada: Their Unrecognized Religion. *In Religion and Ethnicity in Canada*. Paul Bramadat and David Slejak, eds. Pp. 89-110, Toronto, Ontario: Pearson Education Canada.
- Lai, Daniel W.L.
2012 Ethnic Identity of Older Chinese in Canada. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology* 27(2): 103–117.
- Leavy, Patricia, ed.
2014 The Centrality of Ethics in Qualitative Research. *In The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Oxford University Press.
- Leung, T. K. P., and Ricky Yee-kwong Chan
2003 Face, Favour and Positioning - a Chinese Power Game *in European Journal of Marketing* 37(11/12): 1575–1598.

- Lobar, SL, JM Youngblut, and D Brooten
2006 Cross-Cultural Beliefs, Ceremonies, and Rituals Surrounding Death of a Loved One. *Pediatric Nursing* 32(1): 44 – 50.
- McCreery, John L.
2008. Traditional Religions of China. In *Religions in Culture: An Anthropological Focus* (2nd Edition). Raymond Scupin, ed., Pp. 303-321.
- Narayan, Kirin
1993 How Native Is a “Native” Anthropologist? *American Anthropologist* 95(3): 671–686.
- Ng, Anita Ching Ying, David R Phillips, and William Keng-mun Lee
2002 Persistence and Challenges to Filial Piety and Informal Support of Older Persons in a Modern Chinese Society: A Case Study in Tuen Mun, Hong Kong. *Journal of Aging Studies* 16(2): 135–153.
- Nichols, Rhea and Braun, Kathryn L.
1997 Death and Dying in Four Asian American Cultures: A Descriptive Study. *Death Studies* 21(4): 327–359.
- O’Byrne, P.
2007 The Advantages and Disadvantages of Mixing Methods: An Analysis of Combining Traditional and Autoethnographic Approaches. *Qualitative Health Research* 17(10): 1381–1391.
- Olwig, Karen Fog
2009 A Proper Funeral: Contextualizing Community among Caribbean Migrants. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15(3): 520–537.
- Paper, Jordan D., and Laurence G. Thompson, eds.
1998 *The Chinese Way in Religion*. 2nd ed. The Religious Life in History Series. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Pub. Co.
- Pink, Sarah
2001 *Doing visual ethnography: Images, media and representation in research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Raphael, Philip
2014 Richmond Protesters Blame Immigration for Their Traffic Woes. *Richmond News* November 20.
- Reimers, Eva
1999 Death and Identity: Graves and Funerals as Cultural Communication. *Mortality* 4(2): 147–166.
- Rosenblatt, Paul C.
2009 Funerals and funeralization in cross-cultural perspective. In *Encyclopedia*

of death and the human experience. Clifton Bryant and Dennis Peck, eds. Pp. 496-500. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Roy, Patricia C.

1989 *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Rouse, Wendy L.

2005a Archaeological Excavations at Virginiatown's Chinese Cemeteries. *In Chinese American Death Rituals: Respecting the Ancestors*. Sue Fawn Chung and Priscilla Wegars, eds. Pp. 81-106. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

Rouse, Wendy L.

2005b "What We Didn't Understand": A History of Chinese Death Ritual in China and California. *In Chinese American Death Rituals: Respecting the Ancestors*. Sue Fawn Chung and Priscilla Wegars, eds. Pp. 19-45. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

Ryan, Gery W., and H. Russell Bernard

2003 Techniques to Identify Themes. *Field Methods* 15(1):85-109.

Shih, Fang-Long

2010 Chinese "bad Death" Practices in Taiwan: Maidens and Modernity. *Mortality* 15(2): 122-137.

Scott, Janet Lee

2007 *For Gods, Ghosts and Ancestors: The Chinese Tradition of Paper Offerings*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Stepanchuk, Carol and Charles Wong

1991 *Mooncakes and Hungry Ghosts: Festivals of China*. Hong Kong: Regent Publishing Services, Ltd.

Stephenson, Peter

2005 Health Care, Religion, and Ethnic Diversity in Canada. *In Religion and Ethnicity in Canada*. Paul Bramadat and David Slejak, eds. Pp. 201-221, Toronto, Ontario: Pearson Education Canada.

Tedlock, Barbara

2005 The Observation of the Participation and the Emergence of Public Ethnography. *In The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, Third Edition*. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, eds. Pp. 467-482. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Thompson, Laurence G.

1996 *Chinese Religion: An Introduction*. 5th ed. *Religious Life in History*. Belmont: Wadsworth Pub. Co.

- Toulson, Ruth E
2013 The Meanings of Red Envelopes: Promises and Lies at a Singaporean Chinese Funeral. *Journal of Material Culture* 18(2): 155–169.
- Turner, Victor
1969 *The ritual process: structure and anti-structure*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Voicu, Cristina-Georgiana
2013 Cultural Identity and Diaspora. *Philobiblon (Cluj, Romania)* 18(1): 161.
- Wang, Shuguang, and Lucia Lo
2005 Chinese Immigrants in Canada: Their Changing Composition and Economic Performance. *International Migration* 43(3). a9h: 35–69.
- Watson, James L.
1988 The Structure of Chinese Funerary Rites: Elementary Forms, Ritual Sequence, and the Primacy of Performance. *In* *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*. James L. Watson and and Evelyn S. Rawski, eds. Pp. 3-19. Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.
- Watson, James L. and Evelyn S. Rawski
1988 Preface. *In* *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*. James L. Watson and and Evelyn S. Rawski, eds. Pp. ix-xv. Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.
- White, Shane
1989 Pinkster: Afro-Dutch Syncretization in New York City and the Hudson Valley. *Journal of American Folklore*: 68–75.
- Yü, Dan Smyer
2012 Chinese Popular Religion. *In* *Encyclopedia of Global Religion*. 2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks California 91320 United States: SAGE Publications, Inc. <http://knowledge.sagepub.com/view/globalreligion/n132.xml>, accessed May 27, 2015.
- Zirh, Besim Can
2012 Following the Dead beyond the “nation”: A Map for Transnational Alevi Funerary Routes from Europe to Turkey. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 35(10): 1758–1774.

Appendix 1: Interview Questions

‘Chinese Death Rituals’: Interview Questions

I will be exploring several themes with open-ended questions. Sample question(s) are provided for each theme, but actual questions may vary from the given samples:

- *Background Information:*
 - 1) Can you please tell me about your family?
 - 2) Have you attended Chinese funerals here in Canada?
- *Funeral Experience:*
 - 1) Can you please describe what happened?
 - 2) What, if anything, did it mean to you?
- *Other Experiences:*
 - 1) Can you please tell me about your experience with the Ching Ming Festival?
 - 2) Can you please tell me about your experience with the Hungry Ghost Festival?
 - 3) Do you have a family altar? If so, can you please tell me about it?
- *Photo Elicitation (Using public domain photographs from books and the internet):*
 - 1) Could you please let me know if and how any of these photographs may be meaningful to you?

Appendix 2: English Recruitment Poster

**University
of Victoria****Research Study****Call for Research Participants****Death Rituals in the Chinese Community:
Understanding Options in the Bereavement Process*****Background:***

I am conducting research on the ritual practices regarding death in the Chinese communities in Canada. I am a Master's Student in the department of Anthropology at the University of Victoria.

When my mother, who was Chinese, passed away ten years ago, neither my siblings nor I knew what my mother would have wanted at her own funeral. Since then, I have found that there is very little information available that would have helped people like me in their time of bereavement.

The purpose of this research is to provide a source of information and ease the grieving process of those who may not be aware of the options and practices in the Chinese – Canadian tradition that are available or common here in Canada.

Your participation in this research would involve: 1) one interview of about one hour in length with the researcher; and 2) a possible follow-up interview of 30 minutes (optional).

*Interview location and time will be arranged for your convenience.
Involvement is voluntary and everything you share is confidential and anonymous.*

***If you would like to participate or learn more, please contact
Julia Lacy at 250-889-8257 or jlacy@uvic.ca***

Approval for this research has been given by the University of Victoria

Appendix 3: Chinese Recruitment Poster (Traditional and Simplified)



University
of Victoria

需要您的參與

研究課題:

華人社區的喪葬儀式: 了解喪親之時可以選擇的方式

背景簡介: 我是維多利亞大學人類學系的碩士研究生，目前正在從事一項與加拿大華裔族群喪葬儀式有關的研究。

當我的中國母親在十年前去世的時候，我和我的兄弟姊妹們都不知道母親對自己的葬禮會有怎樣的要求。從那以後，我發現與此相關的信息非常有限，而這些信息對於如我一般的人失去親友的時候大有裨益。

此項研究的目的： 很多華裔可能對加拿大現有的或通行的中式傳統喪葬習俗並不了解，本研究可以提供相關信息以幫助進行悼念活動。

您對本研究的參與將會包括: 1) 與研究人員進行一場長約一小時的面談; 2) 可能會進行的第二輪 30 分鐘的面談(依情況而定)。

面談時間和地點悉聽尊便。

本研究採取自願原則，所有您提供的信息均嚴格保密並且是匿名的。

如果您願意參與本研究或者獲取更多信息，請通過以下方式與
Julia Lacy 取得聯繫：250-889-8257 或 jlacy@uvic.ca

此項研究已獲維多利亞大學批准

需要您的参与

研究课题:

华人社区的丧葬仪式: 了解丧亲之时可以选择的方式

背景简介: 我是维多利亚大学人类学系的硕士研究生，目前正在从事一项与加拿大华裔族群丧葬仪式有关的研究。

当我的中国母亲在十年前去世的时候，我和我的兄弟姊妹们都不知道母亲对自己的葬礼会有怎样的要求。从那以后，我发现与此相关的信息非常有限，而这些信息对于如我一般的人失去亲友的时候大有裨益。

此项研究的目的： 很多华裔可能对加拿大现有的或通行的中式传统丧葬习俗并不了解，本研究可以提供相关信息以帮助进行悼念活动。

您对本研究的参与将会包括: 1) 与研究人员进行一场长约一小时的面谈; 2) 可能会进行的第二轮 30 分钟的面谈(依情况而定)。

面谈时间和地点悉听尊便。

本研究采取自愿原则，所有您提供的信息均严格保密并且是匿名的。

如果您愿意参与本研究或者获取更多信息，请通过以下方式与
Julia Lacy 取得联系：**250-889-8257** 或 **jlacy@uvic.ca**

此项研究已获维多利亚大学批准

Appendix 4: English Statement of Informed Consent



University
of Victoria

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

Research Study: ‘Death Rituals in the Chinese Community’

Introduction:

I (Julia Lacy) am conducting a research project entitled “Death Rituals in the Chinese Community: Understanding Options in the Bereavement Process”. The purpose of this research is to investigate the practices of the Chinese in Canada during their time of bereavement and continued relationship with their loved one.

This research will shed light on what practices are common in the Chinese community here, and what options are available to those who are in bereavement. I request your assistance and invite you to participate in this research project. Involvement is voluntary and everything you share is **confidential**.

What You are Asked to do if you Participate in this Study:

If you agree to participate in this research you will be first be asked to participate in an interview for no more than an hour, on your own with me, in-person. The interview will focus on your experiences and knowledge around Chinese practices associated with the loss of loved ones here in Canada. I may also be calling specific individuals after the initial interview to clarify my interpretations. At this time you be given the opportunity to participate in 30-45 minute follow-up interview.

While I do not anticipate that the questions I will ask will be upsetting to you, I would like to emphasize that at any time should you experience emotional difficulty we can take a break, stop or reschedule the interview. I will provide you with a referral list of experienced counselors, and can assist you in contacting them and providing translating services if required.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are also free to ask questions about the study at any time and to decline to answer any particular question without explanation. You can stop the interview at any time and may withdraw at any time from the research without consequences or explanation. If you do withdraw, any information you have provided will be included in this research only with your written consent. There are no known or anticipated risks for participation in this research.

Confidentiality:

All responses and personal information that you provide will be protected and kept confidential. My research interest is in your experience and knowledge of Chinese cultural and religious practices around the loss of a loved one. No identifying information will be attached to your responses. I will not, for instance, publish or release your name or information that might identify you. Information will be analyzed in the aggregate (e.g. combining all participants or in broad groups such as men or women). I will not analyze information for one person at a time, but rather combine it and look at broad associations, trends and themes.

In order to protect the confidentiality of participants’ responses, the data will be secured. Computerized electronic data will not have any identifying information and will be stored on a password-protected computer. Hard copy data, that is, information recorded on paper, digital audio files will be kept in a will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. Computerized data will be deleted seven years after the data are collected, and hard copies will be shredded five years after the data are collected.

Benefits of Participation:

The potential benefits in this research include an understanding of Chinese practices and ritual options related to the loss of a loved one here in Canada. As one of a growing and changing community, the gaps this research may thus be of benefit to those who may be unfamiliar with common practices and rituals, either as new immigrants, or due to lack of connection with those who are more knowledgeable about these practices.

The information you provide will be used as part of this research project specifically, and possibly in additional research on local ritual practices of the Chinese community by project researchers or other university students perform in the future (if you agree to this). I will be sharing the findings with professionals and other researchers through conference presentations and journal publications. Aggregate results from this study will be shared with others but no individual data will be shared. I will provide a summary of the results to Chinese community organizations and funeral homes, so that it may assist in the bereavement process of those who may find this information useful.

Contact Information:

Julia Lacy, a Master's student in Anthropology at the University of Victoria, is conducting this study. I may be contacted by phone at: 250-889-8257 or email: jlacy@uvic.ca. Dr. Peter Stephenson, Professor of Anthropology, may be contacted at the Department of Anthropology, by phone at 250-721-7351 or email: pstephen@uvic.ca. Dr. Heather Botting, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Victoria, may be reached at 250-721-7044 or by email: hbotting@uvic.ca.

In addition to being able to contact the researcher and researcher's supervisors at the above phone numbers, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria, phone: 250-472-4545 or email: ethics@uvic.ca.

Do you have any questions about this research or the process?

Your signature below means that you understand the conditions of participating in this study.

<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
----------------------------	------------------	-------------

Do you agree to the use of the data for other research on Chinese cultural practices, as long as it remains confidential? YES _____; NO _____; or,

Would first like to be contacted before deciding about future use: contact information:

Lastly, would you like to receive a summary of the findings? NO _____ or YES _____

If yes: record either E-mail _____ or Mailing address _____

I will keep this form, and leave a copy with you.

Appendix 5: Traditional Chinese Statement of Informed Consent



University
of Victoria

知情協議書

研究課題：‘華人社區的喪葬儀式’

簡介：

研究人員：Julia Lacy

研究課題：華人社區的喪葬儀式: 了解喪親之時可以選擇的方式

研究宗旨：調研加拿大華人喪親時採用的習俗以及他們用何種方式緬懷失去的至親

此項研究可以幫助人們了解加拿大華人社區中常見的喪葬習俗，也可以為失去至親的人提供可能的選擇方式。我請求您的協助並邀請您參與這項研究。此項研究採取自願原則，任何您所提供的信息都是嚴格保密的。

需要志願者合作的内容：

如果您同意參與此項研究，首先您將會跟我進行一個不超過一小時、僅限你我二人的面談。面談的重點為您對加拿大華人家庭喪葬儀式的了解以及個人在此方面的經歷。第一次面談結束後，我可能會再度邀請您進行一次 30 至 45 分鐘的面談，以確保我對您答案的正確理解。

雖然我不會刻意詢問讓您困擾的問題，但是我保證在面談過程中，您一旦感到情緒不安，可以隨時休息一下，中止面談，或者重新安排面談。我可以提供一些經驗豐富的輔導員，也可以幫助聯繫，也可以幫助翻譯。

是否參與這項研究完全採取自願原則。您有權對本項研究隨時提出任何問題或者拒絕回答某一問題而無需解釋原因。您也可以在任何時刻中止或退出面談，無需解釋或承當後果。如果您中途退出，您之前提供的答覆必須經過您的書面同意才會被包括到研究中。在本項研究中並無任何已知或預期的危險存在。

保密條款：

您所提供的所有答覆和個人信息都將受到保護並嚴格保密。我的研究興趣在於您對華人喪親文化及其宗教儀式的認識和經歷。所有的答覆中不會附有能夠確認您身份的信息。例如，我不會公布或發表您的名字及其他個人信息。您的答覆將作為抽樣中的一例，與所有參與者（男女皆有）提供的答覆共同進行分析。意即我不會只分析個例而是將個例整合起來以觀察整體的關聯、趨勢與概念。

為了保證參與者所提供答覆的隱秘性，數據將被妥善保管。數字化的電子數據不會顯示任何身份信息並將保存於一臺有密碼保護功能的電腦中。其他硬體材料，包括書面文件及錄音數據檔案，則將鎖在儲物櫃中。數字化信息會在資料收集七年之後自電腦中刪除，硬體材料會在五年後銷毀。

參與之效益：

此項研究可能的價值包括幫助人們了解在加拿大的華人之間流行的，與喪親有關的習俗和儀式。加拿大華裔是一個正在增長並處於變化中的族群，這項研究填補的空白可能對很多不熟悉這些風俗和儀式的人有所幫助。這些人或許是新移民，或許是對這些習俗缺乏瞭解渠道的華裔子弟。

您提供的信息會作為本項研究的一部分而利用。如果您允許，將來也可能提供給其他以當地華人群體的儀式為研究對象的研究人員或學生。我也會通過參加學術會議或參與學術期刊發表的形式與此領域內的專業人員和研究人員分享我的研究成果。然而所分享的僅限於整體性結果，而非任何個人相關數據。我還會為華人社區組織和殯儀館提供研究成果的概要，以便為喪親者提供可能有益的信息。

聯繫方式:

研究人員：Julia Lacy，維多利亞大學人類學系碩士研究生。電話：250-889-8257。電子郵件：jlacy@uvic.ca

指導教授：Peter Stephenson 博士，維多利亞大學人類學系教授。電話：250-721-7351。電子郵件：pstephen@uvic.ca。

指導教授：Heather Botting 博士，維多利亞大學人類學系教授。電話：250-721-7044。電子郵件：hbotting@uvic.ca

除了通過以上方式與研究人員及其導師取得聯繫之外，您也可以向維多利亞大學的 Human Research Ethics 辦公室確認本項研究確已通過倫理批准程序，或詢問任何相關問題。聯絡電話: 250-472-4545。電子郵件: ethics@uvic.ca

您對本項研究或研究過程有任何疑問嗎？

您若在下列空白處簽名即表示您已閱讀並了解參與此項研究的各項條款。

參與者姓名	簽名	日期
-------	----	----

您同意將本調查的數據依照相同的保密原則，用於其它有關中國文化習俗的研究嗎？

是____; 否____; 或者,

希望在每次使用前事先徵求您的同意，請留下聯繫方式:

最後，您願意收到一份研究結果的概要嗎？ 不願意 _____ 願意_____

如果選擇願意，請留下電子郵箱地址: _____

或者郵寄地址 _____

我將保留此表格並為您提供一份副本



Appendix 6: Simplified Chinese Statement of Informed Consent

知情协议书

研究课题：‘华人社区的丧葬仪式’

简介:

研究人员：Julia Lacy

研究课题：华人社区的丧葬仪式: 了解丧亲之时可以选择的方式

研究宗旨：调研加拿大华人丧亲时采用的习俗以及他们用何种方式缅怀失去的至亲

此项研究可以帮助人们了解加拿大华人社区中常见的丧葬习俗，也可以为失去至亲的人提供可能的选择方式。我请求您的协助并邀请您参与这项研究。此项研究采取自愿原则，任何您所提供的信息都是严格保密的。

需要志愿者合作的内容:

如果您同意参与此项研究，首先您将会跟我进行一个不超过一小时、仅限你我二人的面谈。面谈的重点为您对加拿大华人家庭丧葬仪式的了解以及个人在此方面的经历。第一次面谈结束后，我可能会再度邀请您进行一次 30 至 45 分钟的面谈，以确保我对您答案的正确理解。

虽然我不会刻意询问让您困扰的问题，但是我保证在面谈过程中，您一旦感到情绪不安，可以随时休息一下，中止面谈，或者重新安排面谈。我可以提供一些经验丰富的辅导员，也可以帮。

是否参与这项研究完全采取自愿原则。您有权对本项研究随时提出任何问题或者拒绝回答某一问题而无需解释原因。您也可以在任何时刻中止或退出面谈，无需解释或承担后果。如果您中途退出，您之前提供的答复必须经过您的书面同意才会被包括到研究中。在本项研究中并无任何已知或预期的危险存在。

保密条款:

您所提供的答复和个人信息都将受到保护并严格保密。我的研究兴趣在于您对华人丧亲文化及其宗教仪式的认识和经历。所有的答复中不会附有能够确认您身份的信息。例如，我不会公布或发表您的名字及其他个人信息。您的答复将作为抽样中的一例，与所有参与者（男女皆有）提供的答复共同进行分析。意即我不会只分析个例而是将个例整合起来以观察整体的关联、趋势与概念。

为了保证参与者所提供答复的隐秘性，数据将被妥善保管。数字化的电子数据不会显示任何身份信息并将保存于一台有密码保护功能的计算机中。其他硬体材料，包括书面文件及录音数据档案，则将锁在储物柜中。数字化信息会在数据收集七年之后自电脑中删除，硬体材料会在五年后销毁。

参与之效益:

此项研究可能的价值包括帮助人们了解在加拿大的华人之间流行的，与丧亲有关的习俗和仪式。加拿大华裔是一个正在增长并处于变化中的族群，这项研究填补的空白可能对很多不熟悉这些风俗和仪式的人有所帮助。这些人或许是新移民，或许是对这些习俗缺乏了解渠道的华裔子弟。

您提供的信息会作为本项研究的一部分而利用。如果您允许，将来也可能提供给其他以当地华人群体的仪式为研究对象的研究人员或学生。我也会通过参加学术会议或参与学术期刊发表的形式与此领域内的专业人员和研究人员分享我的研究成果。然而所分享的仅限于整体性结果，而非任何个人相关数据。我还会为华人社区组织和殡仪馆提供研究成果的概要，以便为丧亲者提供可能有益的信息。

联系方式:

研究人员：Julia Lacy，维多利亚大学人类学系硕士研究生。电话：250-889-8257。电子邮件：jlacy@uvic.ca

指导教授：Peter Stephenson 博士, 维多利亚大学人类学系教授。电话：250-721-7351。电子邮件：pstephen@uvic.ca。

指导教授：Heather Botting 博士, 维多利亚大学人类学系教授。电话：250-721-7044。电子邮件：hbotting@uvic.ca

除了通过以上方式与研究人员及其导师取得联系之外，您也可以向维多利亚大学的 Human Research Ethics 办公室确认本项研究确已通过伦理批准程序，或询问任何相关问题。联络电话: 250-472-4545。电子邮件: ethics@uvic.ca

您对本项研究或研究过程有任何疑问吗？

您若在下列空白处签名即表示您已阅读并了解参与此项研究的各项条款。

参与者姓名

签名

日期

您同意将本调查的数据依照相同的保密原则，用于其它有关中国文化习俗的研究吗？

是____；否____；或者，

希望在每次使用前事先征求您的同意，请留下联系方式：

最后，您愿意收到一份研究结果的概要吗？ 不愿意 _____ 愿意 _____

如果选择愿意，请留下电子邮箱地址：_____

或者邮件地址 _____

我将保留此表格并为您提供一份副本

Appendix 7: English Community Leader Statement of Informed Consent



University
of Victoria

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY LEADER INFORMED CONSENT

Research Study: 'Death Rituals in the Chinese Community'

Introduction:

I (Julia Lacy) am conducting a research project entitled "Death Rituals in the Chinese Community: Understanding Options in the Bereavement Process". The purpose of this research is to investigate the practices of the Chinese in Canada during their time of bereavement and continued relationship with their loved one.

This research will shed light on what practices are common in the Chinese community here, and what options are available to those who are in bereavement. I request your assistance and invite you to participate in this research project. Involvement is voluntary and everything you share is **confidential**, although confidentiality may be hard to sustain within your community.

What You are Asked to do if you Participate in this Study:

If you agree to participate in this research you will be first be asked to participate in an interview for no more than one hour and a half, on your own with me, in-person. The interview will focus on your experiences and knowledge around Chinese practices associated with the loss of loved ones here in Canada. I may also be calling specific individuals after the initial interview to clarify my interpretations. At this time you be given the opportunity to participate in a one hour follow-up interview.

While I do not anticipate that the questions I will ask will be upsetting to you, I would like to emphasize that at any time should you experience emotional difficulty we can take a break, stop or rechedule the interview. I will provide you with a referral list of experienced counselors, and can assist you in contacting them and providing translating services if required.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are also free to ask questions about the study at any time and to decline to answer any particular question without explanation. You can stop the interview at any time and may withdraw at any time from the research without consequences or explanation. If you do withdraw, any information you have provided will be included in this research only with your written consent. There are no known or anticipated risks for participation in this research.

Confidentiality:

All responses and personal information that you provide will be protected and kept confidential. My research interest is in your experience and knowledge of Chinese cultural and religious practices around the loss of a loved one. No identifying information will be attached to your responses, although confidentiality may be hard to sustain within your community. I will not, for instance, publish or release your name or information that might identify you. Information will be analyzed in the aggregate (e.g. combining all participants or in broad groups such as men or women). I will not analyze information for one person at a time, but rather combine it and look at broad associations, trends and themes.

In order to protect the confidentiality of participants' responses, the data will be secured. Computerized electronic data will not have any identifying information and will be stored on a password-protected computer. Hard copy data, that is, information recorded on paper, digital audio files will be kept in a will be

kept in a locked filing cabinet. Computerized data will be deleted seven years after the data are collected, and hard copies will be shredded five years after the data are collected.

Benefits of Participation:

The potential benefits in this research include an understanding of Chinese practices and ritual options related to the loss of a loved one here in Canada. As one of a growing and changing community, the gaps this research may thus be of benefit to those who may be unfamiliar with common practices and rituals, either as new immigrants, or due to lack of connection with those who are more knowledgeable about these practices.

The information you provide will be used as part of this research project specifically, and possibly in additional research on local ritual practices of the Chinese community by project researchers or other university students perform in the future (if you agree to this). I will be sharing the findings with professionals and other researchers through conference presentations and journal publications. Aggregate results from this study will be shared with others but no individual data will be shared. I will provide a summary of the results to Chinese community organizations and funeral homes, so that it may assist in the bereavement process of those who may find this information useful.

Contact Information:

Julia Lacy, a Master's student in Anthropology at the University of Victoria, is conducting this study. I may be contacted by phone at: 250-889-8257 or email: jlacy@uvic.ca. Dr. Peter Stephenson, Professor of Anthropology, may be contacted at the Department of Anthropology, by phone at 250-721-7351 or email: pstephen@uvic.ca. Dr. Heather Botting, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Victoria, may be reached at 250-721-7044 or by email: hbotting@uvic.ca.

In addition to being able to contact the researcher and researcher's supervisors at the above phone numbers, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria, phone: 250-472-4545 or email: ethics@uvic.ca.

Do you have any questions about this research or the process?

Your signature below means that you understand the conditions of participating in this study.

<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
----------------------------	------------------	-------------

Do you agree to the use of the data for other research on Chinese cultural practices, as long as it remains confidential? YES _____; NO _____; or,

Would first like to be contacted before deciding about future use: contact information:

 Lastly, would you like to receive a summary of the findings? NO _____ or YES _____
 If yes: record either E-mail _____ or Mailing address _____

I will keep this form, and leave a copy with you.

Appendix 8: Traditional Chinese Community Leader Statement of Informed Consent



University
of Victoria

領導者知情協議書

研究課題：‘華人社區的喪葬儀式’

簡介：

研究人員：Julia Lacy

研究課題：華人社區的喪葬儀式: 了解喪親之時可以選擇的方式

研究宗旨：調研加拿大華人喪親時採用的習俗以及他們用何種方式緬懷失去的至親

此項研究可以幫助人們了解加拿大華人社區中常見的喪葬習俗，也可以為失去至親的人提供可能的選擇方式。我請求您的協助並邀請您參與這項研究。此項研究採取自願原則，任何您所提供的信息都是嚴格保密的，雖然您的社區可能有人認出您的貢獻。

需要志願者合作的内容：

如果您同意參與此項研究，首先您將會跟我進行一個不超過一個半小時、僅限你我二人的面談。面談的重點為您對加拿大華人家庭喪葬儀式的了解以及個人在此方面的經歷。第一次面談結束後，我可能會再度邀請您進行一次一小時的面談，以確保我對您答案的正確理解。

雖然我不會刻意詢問讓您困擾的問題，但是我保證在面談過程中，您一旦感到情緒不安，可以隨時休息一下，中止面談，或者重新安排面談。我可以提供一些經驗豐富的輔導員，也可以幫助聯繫，也可以幫助翻譯。

是否參與這項研究完全採取自願原則。您有權對本項研究隨時提出任何問題或者拒絕回答某一問題而無需解釋原因。您也可以在任何時刻中止或退出面談，無需解釋或承當後果。如果您中途退出，您之前提供的答覆必須經過您的書面同意才會被包括到研究中。在本項研究中並無任何已知或預期的危險存在。

保密條款：

您所提供的所有答覆和個人信息都將受到保護並嚴格保密，雖然您的社區可能有人認出您的貢獻。我的研究興趣在於您對華人喪親文化及其宗教儀式的認識和經歷。所有的答覆中不會附有能夠確認您身份的信息。例如，我不會公布或發表您的名字及其他個人信息。您的答覆將作為抽樣中的一例，與所有參與者（男女皆有）提供的答覆共同進行分析。意即我不會只分析個例而是將個例整合起來以觀察整體的關聯、趨勢與概念。

為了保證參與者所提供答覆的隱秘性，數據將被妥善保管。數字化的電子數據不會顯示任何身份信息並將保存於一臺有密碼保護功能的電腦中。其他硬體材料，包括書面文件及錄音數據檔案，則將鎖在儲物櫃中。數字化信息會在資料收集七年之後自電腦中刪除，硬體材料會在五年後銷毀。

參與之效益：

此項研究可能的價值包括幫助人們了解在加拿大的華人之間流行的，與喪親有關的習俗和儀式。加拿大華裔是一個正在增長並處於變化中的族群，這項研究填補的空白可能對很多不熟悉這些風俗和儀式的人有所幫助。這些人或許是新移民，或許是對這些習俗缺乏瞭解渠道的華裔子弟。

您提供的信息會作為本項研究的一部分而利用。如果您允許，將來也可能提供給其他以當地華人群體的儀式為研究對象的研究人員或學生。我也會通過參加學術會議或參與學術期刊發表的形式與此領域內的專業人員和研究人員分享我的研究成果。然而所分享的僅限於整體性結果，而非任何個人相關數據。我還會為華人社區組織和殯儀館提供研究成果的概要，以便為喪親者提供可能有益的信息。

聯繫方式:

研究人員：Julia Lacy，維多利亞大學人類學系碩士研究生。電話：250-889-8257。電子郵件：jlacy@uvic.ca

指導教授：Peter Stephenson 博士，維多利亞大學人類學系教授。電話：250-721-7351。電子郵件：pstephen@uvic.ca。

指導教授：Heather Botting 博士，維多利亞大學人類學系教授。電話：250-721-7044。電子郵件：hbotting@uvic.ca

除了通過以上方式與研究人員及其導師取得聯繫之外，您也可以向維多利亞大學的 Human Research Ethics 辦公室確認本項研究確已通過倫理批准程序，或詢問任何相關問題。聯絡電話: 250-472-4545。電子郵件: ethics@uvic.ca

您對本項研究或研究過程有任何疑問嗎？

您若在下列空白處簽名即表示您已閱讀並了解參與此項研究的各項條款。

參與者姓名	簽名	日期
-------	----	----

您同意將本調查的數據依照相同的保密原則，用於其它有關中國文化習俗的研究嗎？

是____; 否____; 或者,

希望在每次使用前事先徵求您的同意，請留下聯繫方式:

最後，您願意收到一份研究結果的概要嗎？ 不願意 _____ 願意_____

如果選擇願意，請留下電子郵箱地址: _____

或者郵寄地址 _____

我將保留此表格並為您提供一份副本



Appendix 9: Simplified Chinese Community Leader Statement of Informed Consent

导领者知情协议书

研究课题：‘华人社区的丧葬仪式’

简介:

研究人员：Julia Lacy

研究课题：华人社区的丧葬仪式: 了解丧亲之时可以选择的方式

研究宗旨：调研加拿大华人丧亲时采用的习俗以及他们用何种方式缅怀失去的至亲

此项研究可以帮助人们了解加拿大华人社区中常见的丧葬习俗，也可以为失去至亲的人提供可能的选择方式。我请求您的协助并邀请您参与这项研究。此项研究采取自愿原则，任何您所提供的信息都是严格保密的,虽然您的社区可能有人认出您的贡献。

需要志愿者合作的内容:

如果您同意参与此项研究，首先您将会跟我进行一个不超过一个半小时、仅限你我二人的面谈。面谈的重点为您对加拿大华人家庭丧葬仪式的了解以及个人在此方面的经历。第一次面谈结束后，我可能会再度邀请您进行一次一小时的面谈，以确保我对您答案的正确理解。

虽然我不会刻意询问让您困扰的问题，但是我保证在面谈过程中，您一旦感到情绪不安，可以随时休息一下，中止面谈，或者重新安排面谈。我可以提供一些经验丰富的辅导员，也可以帮。

是否参与这项研究完全采取自愿原则。您有权对本项研究随时提出任何问题或者拒绝回答某一问题而无需解释原因。您也可以在任何时刻中止或退出面谈，无需解释或承担后果。如果您中途退出，您之前提供的答复必须经过您的书面同意才会被包括到研究中。在本项研究中并无任何已知或预期的危险存在。

保密条款:

您所提供的所有答复和个人信息都将受到保护并严格保密，虽然您的社区可能有人认出您的贡献。我的研究兴趣在于您对华人丧亲文化及其宗教仪式的认识和经历。所有的答复中不会附有能够确认您身份的信息。例如，我不会公布或发表您的名字及其他个人信息。您的答复将作为抽样中的一例，与所有参与者（男女皆有）提供的答复共同进行分析。意即我不会只分析个例而是将个例整合起来以观察整体的关联、趋势与概念。

为了保证参与者所提供答复的隐秘性，数据将被妥善保管。数字化的电子数据不会显示任何身份信息并将保存于一台有密码保护功能的计算机中。其他硬体材料，包括书面文件及录音数据档案，则将锁在储物柜中。数字化信息会在数据收集七年之后自电脑中删除，硬体材料会在五年后销毁。

参与之效益:

此项研究可能的价值包括帮助人们了解在加拿大的华人之间流行的，与丧亲有关的习俗和仪式。加拿大华裔是一个正在增长并处于变化中的族群，这项研究填补的空白可能对很多不熟悉这些风俗和仪式的人有所帮助。这些人或许是新移民，或许是对这些习俗缺乏了解渠道的华裔子弟。

您提供的信息会作为本项研究的一部分而利用。如果您允许，将来也可能提供给其他以当地华人群体的仪式为研究对象的研究人员或学生。我也会通过参加学术会议或参与学术期刊发表的形式与此领域内的专业人员和研究人员分享我的研究成果。然而所分享的仅限于整体性结果，而非任何个人相关数据。我还会为华人社区组织和殡仪馆提供研究成果的概要，以便为丧亲者提供可能有益的信息。

联系方式:

研究人员：Julia Lacy，维多利亚大学人类学系硕士研究生。电话：250-889-8257。电子邮件：jlacy@uvic.ca

指导教授：Peter Stephenson 博士, 维多利亚大学人类学系教授。电话：250-721-7351。电子邮件：pstephen@uvic.ca。

指导教授：Heather Botting 博士, 维多利亚大学人类学系教授。电话：250-721-7044。电子邮件：hbotting@uvic.ca

除了通过以上方式与研究人员及其导师取得联系之外，您也可以向维多利亚大学的 Human Research Ethics 办公室确认本项研究确已通过伦理批准程序，或询问任何相关问题。联络电话: 250-472-4545。电子邮件: ethics@uvic.ca

您对本项研究或研究过程有任何疑问吗？

您若在下列空白处签名即表示您已阅读并了解参与此项研究的各项条款。

参与者姓名

签名

日期

您同意将本调查的数据依照相同的保密原则，用于其它有关中国文化习俗的研究吗？

是____；否____；或者，

希望在每次使用前事先征求您的同意，请留下联系方式:

最后，您愿意收到一份研究结果的概要吗？ 不愿意 _____ 愿意 _____

如果选择愿意，请留下电子邮箱地址: _____

或者邮件地址 _____

我将保留此表格并为您提供一份副本

Appendix 10: Brochure of Chinese Funeral Practices Available in Victoria

Chinese Funeral Practices in Victoria

This brochure has been created to provide a selection of Chinese cultural practices pertaining to the death of a loved one in Greater Victoria, BC.

It is hoped that this information will be of assistance to those who wish to embrace Chinese practices during this difficult time

Please note while it would be unusual for all of these practices to be performed by one individual, all of them are practiced within the Chinese Canadian community in Victoria.

They include:

- Showing respect for the deceased
- Practices at the funeral parlour and funeral service and journey to the cemetery
- Religious assistance
- Continuing relationship with the deceased.

Showing Respect for the Deceased:

Follow their expressed wishes

***Ketou* (磕头) also known as Kowtow**

- *Ketou* is the ultimate show of respect, kneeling down and bowing three times
- Traditionally a form of worship as the deceased is now an ancestor
- Now is acceptable among Christians as long as this is done as a show of respect and not worship
- Performed at the death bed or family funeral service

Blanket Ritual

- An opportunity for family members to actively show care of the deceased by placing a blanket or sheet on the body
- Done by either all descendants, family members, or just daughters
- Corners of the blanket/sheet can be cut and saved as memento for those who wish to do so

Providing of Material Goods for the Deceased

- Placing articles that meant something for the deceased
- Traditionally thought that the article left could accompany the deceased into the next world
- Now can be performed as a show of caring for the loved one

At the Funeral Service

- Funeral parlours will provide black arm bands for male relatives
- Funeral homes can also advise families on very traditional funeral rites such as embalming techniques and dressing the deceased
- Open caskets are traditional, but not mandatory
- Attendees may be given the opportunity to approach the casket
- Attendees may be given the opportunity to bow to show their respect
- The family of the deceased may provide attendees with a small white envelope (available from Chinatown or funeral parlours, red envelopes are sometimes used when the deceased has lived a good, long life) containing a coin and a piece of individually wrapped hard candy
 - The coin is to thank attendee for coming, and is to be spent prior to the attendee going home
 - The candy is to sweeten the memory or wash away the bitterness of sorrow

Journey to the Cemetery

- It is common to stop at the home of the deceased on the way to the cemetery, without backtracking. Traditionally this is to allow the spirit of the individual to come home
- Bowing three times and burning incense is also traditionally done at this time

Religious Assistance

- Christian pastors/priests can provide a religious service and/or speak at a non-religious funeral service
- Buddhist nuns and/or monks can be hired to chant at the bedside of the deceased or at the funeral
- Taoist priests can be hired to help guide the spirit of the deceased into the next world

Funeral Dinners

- Funeral dinners are traditionally held at Chinese restaurants for family and friends of the deceased
- Local Chinese restaurants can provide guidance regarding the selection of dishes that are appropriate as well as seating space
- An odd number of dishes, usually 7 or 9, are selected as even numbers imply celebrations and repeated

- Expensive dishes such as lobster are usually not recommended unless the deceased has lived a very long life

Continuation of Relationship with the Deceased

Family altars

- Altars can be a place of worship, a place to honour the deceased, or a grounded place for meditation for the survivors
- Elaborate altars with family spirit tablets meant to represent all ancestors of a given family can be purchased and/or made
- Incense is traditionally burned when worshipping the ancestor
- Wine and/or food is often offered to the ancestor during worship
- Some people do not wish to have an obvious altar, but wish to have a place to honour the deceased. A simple altar consisting of photographs and flowers can form a personal altar.
- Some people create shadow boxes containing photographs and small items that had meaning for the deceased.
- Worshipping can be done monthly, twice a month (usually on the 1st and 15th day of the Chinese Lunar month), or during traditional Chinese holidays.

Chingming Festival

- Traditionally falls in April, and is based on the Chinese lunar calendar (It is the 15th day after the Spring Equinox)
- It is a time for the family to visit the gravesite, eat and commune with the deceased
- Families can go to the gravesite with flowers, incense, and even food to enjoy a picnic with the deceased
- It is also a time to clean the gravesite

It is hoped that this brochure provides some comfort to those during their time of grief by providing a resource that may not be readily available.

The choice of which rituals one uses is very personal. No particular practice is universal, and choices can be made by simply deciding if it holds meaning for the participants.

If there are any questions and/or comments, please email:
ChineseDeathRitualsInVictoria@gmail.