

## Introduction

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The essays presented here are the result of a workshop entitled “Death, burial rituals, and cemeteries among Chinese communities in Insular Southeast Asia (16/17th-21st centuries),” organised by Teresita Ang See, Catherine Guéguen and Claudine Salmon, and which was convened in Manila by the Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran on August 5, 2015. Some articles originated from this workshop while others were written subsequently. This workshop was made possible thanks to the Kaisa Heritage Foundation which provided the venue and the secretariat support, to the Philippine Chinese Charitable Association, Inc., and the Filipino-Chinese General Chambers of Commerce, Inc. which provided financial support.

Although the dead have no longer their place in the large megacities of Asia, the researchers working on the challenges posed by the gigantism of these conurbations pay little or no attention at all to the burial question.<sup>1</sup> This question arises however with particular acuity in this region of the world in relation with urban expansion and galloping demographic changes. Indeed, burial grounds which were first considered as sacred have become places of seriously conflicting discourses. In Indonesia, the old cemeteries of Surabaya and Jakarta were demolished without any further ceremony in the late 1950s and the late 1970s respectively. Only a few graves have escaped these violent

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1. See Natacha Aveline-Dubach (sous la direction de), *La place des morts dans les mégapoles d'Asie Orientale*, Paris : Les Indes Savantes, 2013, p. 9.

waves of destruction, such as the tomb of the first captain of the Chinese in Batavia/Jakarta (So Beng Kong 苏鸣岗, ca. 1580-1644) and which remains as a landmark in the history of the Chinese in the Indonesian metropole. In the Philippines, their counterparts have so far managed to turn the Manila Chinese Cemetery into a kind of living open air museum which is famous at the international level. In the Malay Peninsula, since the mid-1980s, cemeteries have been endangered by urban expansion, legislative regulations, political decisions, and economic development. Consequently, the various Chinese communities are gradually losing control over their deathscapes.

In order to be in a position to preserve and maintain their ancient burial grounds (which for the most part are closed), some Southeast Asian Chinese communities have been led to think of their cemeteries as places embodying the history of their own ancestors—that is to say their own history. In so doing they have coined new concepts: from that of burial site (*yishan* 义山) they have moved to that of “place of cultural heritage” (*wenhua yichan gongyuan* 文化遗产公园 or “historic open space” [*lishi*] *guji gongyuan* [历史] 古迹公园) which is conceived as an essential community and public space (as in the case of Bukit Cina or Sanbao shan 三宝山 in Malacca,<sup>2</sup> or of the Guangdong *yishan* 广东义山 in Kuala Lumpur). They have also been constrained to embellish these new open places by planting greenery and plants, by opening new paths, and cleaning them more regularly. Furthermore, they took the step of having these historical vestiges or cultural heritage spaces be recognized by legislative enactments in order to protect them from any encroachment. Simultaneously some Malaysian Chinese scholars and journalists began to reflect on the importance of their cemeteries as historical landmarks, on their own funeral culture or *muzang wenhua* 墓葬文化; as well as on the concept—new to them—of *guji baocun* 古迹保存 or preservation of monuments. Since the early 1990s at least, they have produced various articles which have appeared in the local Chinese media and eventually in book form.<sup>3</sup> Last but not least,

2. See Carolyn L. Cartier, “Creating Historic Open Space in Melaka,” *The Geographical Review*, 83:4 (1993), pp. 359-373; the same, “The Dead, Place/Space and Social Activism: Constructing the Nationscape in Historic Melaka,” *Environment and Planning: Society and Space*, 15 (1997), pp. 555-586.

3. Such as Tan Ah Chai (Chen Yacai) 陈亚才, *Liu hen yu yihen, Wenhua guji yu huaren yishan* 留痕与遗恨。文化古迹与华人义山 (To preserve the roots or to regret. Cultural relics and cemeteries), Kuala Lumpur: Dajiang shiye chubanshe / Mentor Publishing, 2000; Ong Seng Hwat 王琛发, *Malaxiya huaren yishan yu muzang wenhua* 马来西亚华人义山与墓葬文化 (Chinese cemeteries in Malaysia and funeral culture), Selangor: Yinpin duomeiti chuanbo zhongxin, Yin Pin multimedia Communication Centre, 2001; Wong Wunbin 黄文斌, *Maliujia sanbaoshan mubei jilu* 马六甲三宝山墓碑集录 / *A Collection of Tombstone Inscriptions of Bukit China, Malacca (1614-1820)*, Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Chinese Research Centre, 2013; Gu Yanqiu bianzhu 古燕秋编著, *Sisheng qikuo: Jilongpo Guangdong yishan mubei yu tuwen jiyao* 死生契阔：吉隆坡广东义山墓碑与图文辑要 / *For Life or for death, however separated. Important tombs, Epigraphs, documents of Kwongtong cemetery Kuala Lumpur*, Kuala Lumpur, Centre for Malaysian Chinese Studies & The Association of Kwong Tong



in May 2013, the Malaysian Chinese Research Centre, University of Malaya, launched a two year-research project on Malaysian Chinese cemeteries, with a sub-project aimed at preparing a database of the tombs contained in the Kuala Lumpur Hokkien cemetery, which remains to be exploited.<sup>4</sup>

In Singapore, where the *mort des cimetières*, lit. “death of the cemeteries,” had been systematically planned by the authorities,<sup>5</sup> the local population was seemingly resigned to seeing its burial grounds disappear one after the other.<sup>6</sup> However some intellectuals linked to the National Heritage Board, organized a forum entitled “Spaces for the Dead: A Case of the Living” aimed at bringing the public’s attention to the importance of cemeteries as heritage sites and green spaces in 2001, the year when the order to exhume all the tombs of the Bidadari Cemetery was given. The forum was attended by more than 70 persons and the interest generated prompted some of the contributors to suggest putting together a book “with the speakers and others who had spent a lot of time investigating cemeteries.” The last article, “Bones of Contention: Chinese Burial Grounds in Colonial and Post-Colonial Singapore,” by Tan Boon Hui & Brenda SA Yeoh is aimed at explaining the spatial politics of nation-building in Post-War Singapore as regards the remains of the dead.<sup>7</sup> The editor, Kevin YL Tan states in the preface (p. 5) that when the manuscript was completed in 2004 he could find neither a person receptive to the idea of sponsoring such a book nor a publisher. The book finally came out in 2011, thanks to the financial support provided by the National Heritage Board and some private sponsors.<sup>8</sup>

The menace caused by the high-speed urban development and the speculation on land induced Chinese communities to reflect on their funerary practices in relation to the future. The poor had no other choice than to resort to cremation, the rather wealthy urban population did not renounce to the idea of

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Cemetery Management Kuala Lumpur, 2014; the Association of Kwong Tong Cemetery Management Kuala Lumpur (ed.), *Festschrift of The Founding of Kwong Tong Cemetery 119 Years* (吉隆坡广东义山古迹公园成立一百一十九周年纪念文集), Kuala Lumpur: The Association of Kwong Tong Cemetery Management Kuala Lumpur, 2014.

4. Previous attempts were made to collect Chinese epitaphs in the various cemeteries in Malaysia by laying the emphasis on the oldest ones. See Wolfgang Franke 傅吾康 & Chen Tieh Fan 陈铁凡, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia / Malaixiya huawen mingke cuibian* 马来西亚华文铭刻粹编, 3 vol., Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1983-1987.

5. The Choa Chu Kang Cemetery 蔡厝港坟场 is currently the last cemetery to remain in operation. It comprises the Chinese, Christian, Ahmadiyya Jama’at, Muslim, Parsi, Bahá’i, Jewish, Hindu and Lawn cemeteries, and is located in the west of the island in close proximity to the Tengah Air Base.

6. Except after the Singaporean government announced plans to build an eight-lane highway through the Bukit Brown cemetery in September 2011, when several groups campaigned to save the cemetery, but to no avail.

7. This article was originally published in *Human Ecology Review*, vol. 9: 1 (2002), pp. 1-13.

8. Kevin YL Tan (ed.), *Spaces of the Dead. A Case of the Living*, Singapore: Singapore Heritage Society, Ethos Books, 2011.

designing special places to shelter their dead, while some well-to-do Chinese are still preparing their graves during their lifetime.<sup>9</sup> In China incineration had been practised since remote times in relation to the introduction of Buddhism, but had never supplanted the burial practices strongly advocated by the court and the Confucian ideology.<sup>10</sup> Similarly in Insular Southeast Asia, cremation was restricted to Buddhist circles and practised in the precincts of Buddhist sanctuaries. In Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Surabaya the first crematoria were constructed in 1951, in Jakarta in 1958, and in Singapore in 1962.<sup>11</sup> In Manila in 1967 the Philippine Chinese Charitable Association had a modern crematorium (which had been ordered in Great Britain) erected on the grounds of the Chinese Cemetery,<sup>12</sup> close to the Chong Hok Tong 崇福堂 temple. For this purpose, about one hundred tombs had to be removed.<sup>13</sup> At the same time the private sector began to prospect and to consider the construction of lucrative private cemeteries on the outskirts of cities. These memorial parks, which borrow several features from foreign cultures and are deliberately organised as cultural landscapes, have opened a new era of deathscapes in Insular Southeast Asia. They also challenge the coexistence of the traditional non-profit cemeteries run either by secular Chinese associations or religious organisations, and the manner the Chinese communicate with their dead.

Cemeteries are evolving spatial, morphological and cultural constructions, or idealized microcosms, that serve functional and emotional purposes. They are witnesses to the evolution of mental attitudes, and to the manner the state tries to exert its control over all of them. Hence they are a good observation post for historians, economists, human geographers, architects, archaeologists, sociologists, and so forth. In relation to the problems that several Chinese communities of Insular Southeast Asia are facing, the historical approach is dominant here.

9. The entrepreneur Tommy Winata constructed a private cemetery close to Taman Makam Quiling, in *kabupaten* Bogor.

10. For modernist funerary reforms in China during the Republic and the Communist regime, see inter alia Ling Fang, Vincent Goossaert, "Les réformes funéraires et la politique religieuse de l'État chinois, 1900-2008," *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, 144 (Oct.-Nov. 2008), pp. 53-62; Rebecca Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes: Religion and the Politics of Chinese Modernity*, Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009.

11. For more details on the creation of crematoria in Malaysia and Indonesia, see Douglas J. Davies with Lewis H. Mates, *Encyclopedia of Cremation*, Aldershot, England & Burlington, USA: Ashgate, 2005, pp. 313-314.

12. *Philippine-Chinese Charitable Association 100th Anniversary Souvenir Book, 1877-1977 / Feilübin huaqiao shanjugongsuo bainian daqing jiniankan* 菲律賓華僑善舉公所百年大庆紀念刊, Manila: Philippine-Chinese Charitable Association, Yi 义, p. 7.

13. "In the case of the Philippines, where the majority of Chinese residents are Christian, cremation and columbaria started to be popular largely after 1998, when the Archbishop of Manila approved it"; cf. *The Philippine Daily Inquirer*, November 1, 2006.

In Malaysia, where the Chinese were and to some extent still are required to justify and defend their long-standing presence in the country, the study of cemeteries is mainly aimed at tracing the oldest tombs in each locality. In addition, considering the growing control of the state over cemeteries, historians also focused on the way in which the colonial authorities had intervened in the management of the former burial sites.

Conversely in Indonesia where the old burial sites were occasionally abandoned, and largely swept away in the turmoil that followed independence, the purpose was first to trace the history of the development of these funeral landscapes, then of their rare vestiges, and finally of the manner they were managed.

In the Philippines the situation is seemingly not so tense, and the successive Manila burial grounds still offer a window on the history of the Chinese community and of the colonial regimes. A first article on the creation of the Manila Chinese Cemetery and on the remains of the previous churchyards inside the city shows an evolution reminiscent of that to be found in Europe at the end of the 18th and early 19th centuries when the various authorities decreed that for sanitation reasons the old churchyards should be demolished and the new graveyards be built on the outskirts of the cities. A second article on the Manila Chinese Cemetery analyses the architectural styles of the mausoleums that are mainly Western, but also Chinese. The rapid stylistic changes of these mausoleums showcase the receptivity of the Filipino-Chinese to the outside world over decades, and reflect the society's evolution in terms of taste and of acculturation. A third article deals with the current professional mobility of the Chinese living in the province and its serious impact on the maintenance of the traditional mortuary territories.

The last piece deals with the new concept of the memorial park introduced in the Philippines in the early 1960s, in Malaysia in 1990-1991, and in Indonesia in 2002-2003. It looks at pioneers in the memorialization industry, development of memorial parks as gardens of dreams, new cemeteries as mirrors of cultural identities, legal frameworks, the memorialization industry, and so forth. Finally, it raises the question of the impact of the first wave of memorial parks on those which were created more recently, not only in the Malay Peninsula and Java, but also in Sabah and Sarawak.

*CLAUDINE SALMON*



# CHINESE DEATHSCAPES IN INSULINDIA

*Edited by Claudine Salmon*

## Sommaire

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- 3 Claudine Salmon  
*Introduction*
- 9 Danny Wong Tze Ken  
*Early Chinese Presence in Malaysia as Reflected by Three Cemeteries (17th-19th c.)*
- 23 Claudine Salmon  
*Ancient Chinese Cemeteries of Indonesia as Vanishing Landmarks of the Past (17th-20th c.)*
- 63 Richard T. Chu and Teresita Ang See  
*Toward a History of Chinese Burial Grounds in Manila during the Spanish Colonial Period*
- 91 Lee Kam Hing  
*State Policy, Community Identity, and Management of Chinese Cemeteries in Colonial Malaya*
- 111 Erik Akpedonu  
*The Manila Chinese Cemetery: A Repository of Tsinoy Culture and Identity*
- 155 Catherine Guéguen  
*The Chinese Cemeteries in the Philippines: Immobile Spaces?*
- 177 Claudine Salmon  
*From Cemeteries to Luxurious Memorial Parks  
With Special Reference to Malaysia and Indonesia*
- 213 RÉSUMÉS — ABSTRACTS

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En couverture : Chinese mausoleum in Batavia, drawing by Cornelis de Bruyn, from *Voyages de Corneille le Brun, par la Moscovie... et aux Indes Orientales*, 1718.

*Archipel* 92, Paris, 2016

DANNY WONG TZE KEN<sup>1</sup>

## Early Chinese Presence in Malaysia as Reflected by three Cemeteries (17th-19th c.)

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One of the important indicators of the existence of the Chinese community in Malaysia is the presence of cemeteries. These cemeteries, found in various locations, are like historical landmarks. By tracing the oldest graves they may be used to gauge the association between the Chinese with a particular locality. Such a consideration is important as the community was constantly required to justify and defend its long-standing presence in the country especially in the face of challenges from certain quarters of indigenous political groups which labelled the Chinese as *Pendatang*, or immigrants and questioned their claims to citizenship and political rights.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the idea of establishing the origins of Chinese cemeteries has been a recurrent theme in the activities of many Chinese organisations and individuals including those engaged in research. To date, several efforts are being carried out to document Chinese cemeteries, including their establishment, their actual condition, details of their size, and in some cases, the number of graves they contain. More recently, these activities have become more urgent in view of the decisions of several local governments to re-enter (or reclaim) the land allotted for burial sites where the land tenure of the cemeteries has come to an end.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Malaysian Chinese Research Centre, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.

2. This comment had been a point of contention often raised by certain groups who viewed the presence of the Chinese with less than friendly attitude, and has caused uneasiness amongst the latter. The issue surfaced once again recently and it elicited many reactions including those of prominent historians and later even the Prime Minister, to state that the Chinese were not *Pendatang*, but “Sons of Malaysia.” See *Malay Mail*, 2 October 2015 and 19 October 2015 and *The Star*, 3 June 2015 and 19 October 2015.

3. The case of the Chinese cemetery in Johor has increased this sense of urgency to document



If the study of cemeteries is considered important, the work produced thus far does not reflect the seriousness of the matter. Studies on the subject often have been selective and brief, often repetitive or reproductions of earlier works. Therefore, many of them do not help to answer some important questions which may be crucial for more comprehensive understanding of the development of cemeteries. One crucial question is, why does the earliest Chinese grave still in situ date back only to the early 17th century or later? If the links with China indeed date back to the era of the Ming voyages if not earlier, then what happened to the Chinese who passed away in Malacca? Where were they buried?

This article will set out to look at these questions by examining the three earliest cemeteries, namely, Bukit China in Malacca, Mount Erskine Guangdong (or Kuangtung) cemetery in Penang, and the Chinese cemetery of Terengganu. While the article may not be able to provide direct answers, it will hopefully raise additional questions for discussion.

### Existing Literature

Wolfgang Franke and Chen Tieh Fan's magnum corpus on the Chinese epigraphic materials in Malaysia is one of the earliest attempts to record the various Chinese epigraphic sources found in Malaysia. It covers materials from temples, guilds, schools, other institutions, and cemeteries which are the main source of information. As regards cemeteries, the compendium provides background information on some of the major cemeteries including a selection of the oldest tombstones.<sup>4</sup> As a pioneering work in this regard, Franke and Chen each wrote a very useful introduction which prepares the readers for a better understanding of the records found on tombstones (and other epigraphic materials). However, as the work was conceived as a corpus, further discussions on cemeteries were not pursued.

One of the earlier works produced by local researchers in 2000 emanated from the Federation of Chinese Associations of Malaysia 马来西亚中华大会堂总会.<sup>5</sup> The work, coordinated by Fan Liyan 范立言, provides a brief overview of the various Chinese cemeteries in the country. Even though the work is by no means exhaustive, it offers some useful basic information on the

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Chinese cemeteries. In this case, 3,400 Chinese graves from four Chinese cemeteries had to make way for the Pengerang Integrated Petroleum Complex. The graves will be relocated to a new site. See *Free Malaysia Today*, 20 November 2013; *The Star Online*, 18 April 2014 and *Zhongguo bao* 中国报 *China Press*, 7 March 2014.

4. Wolfgang Franke 傅吾康 & Chen Tieh Fan 陈铁凡, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia / Malaixiya huawen mingke cuibian* 马来西亚华文铭刻粹编, 3 vol., Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1983-1987.

5. Fan Liyan 范立言 (ed.), *Malaixiya huaren yishan ziliao huibian* 马来西亚华人义山资料汇编 / *Materials Pertaining to Chinese Cemeteries in Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Malaixiya zhonghua dahutang zonghui, 2000.

early Chinese burial grounds and oldest and unique graves. Though the volume is small compared to that of Franke and Chen, it brought some information not found in the former. The volume also includes some material on Chinese burial customs as well as a discussion of the various laws that governed the administration of burial grounds and cemeteries.

Tan Ah Chai 陈亚才's compilation of a series of newspaper articles on the many issues pertaining to Chinese cemeteries in Malaysia is a very interesting yet important contribution. It provides perspectives on the ongoing debates relating to Chinese cemeteries in Malaysia at the time their existence was endangered.<sup>6</sup> It deals with issues relating to the perils of losing burial grounds to development, insider stories on how certain graveyards were nearly lost to property developers; also included is a discussion on the long standing issue of Bukit China, Malacca.

More recently, Wong Wunbin 黄文斌 published a book on the Bukit China Cemetery, detailing a selection of the oldest graves said to cover the period 1614 to 1820.<sup>7</sup> This is a commendable effort which saw the inclusion of the graves of six Capitans China, to be followed by selected graves from the Ming period to the time of the reign of Qing Emperor Jiaqing 嘉庆 (1796-1820); and finally, the communal graves of the various dialect groups or organisations. Wong's effort, which was partially funded by the Malaysian Ministry of Culture and Heritage, suggests that the earliest grave on Bukit China dates to "1614." If accepted, it would be the earliest date of a Chinese surviving tombstone in Malaysia.

Apart from the works by Franke and Chen, the Federation of Chinese Association, and Wong, other studies on Chinese cemeteries remain centred on contemporary issues, and tend to repeat earlier works without necessarily offering new information. There has been a strong emphasis on challenges faced by Chinese organisations out to preserve their cemeteries, especially in the face of the lure of commercial considerations to let go of their burial grounds in return for financial gains, and the need to defend the heritage value of the cemeteries. It must be pointed out that when most of the Chinese cemeteries were started in the past, they were usually situated in the outskirts of the urban areas. After so many decades and even centuries, in some places of rapid urbanisation these cemeteries are now located in the heart of the cities. Therefore, their lands cost considerably more thus the on-going debate on whether to sell (or redevelop) or to preserve, as well as exploring the question of alternate ways of burying the dead. The questions on the earlier graveyards and on the need to identify the earliest tombs were largely left unanswered.

6. Tan Ah Chai 陈亚才, *Liu hen yu yihen, Wenhua guji yu huaren yishan* 留痕与遗憾。文化古迹与华人义山 / *To preserve the roots or to regret. Cultural relics and cemeteries*, Kuala Lumpur: Dajiang shiye chubanshe / Mentor Publishing, 2000.

7. Wong Wunbin 黄文斌, *Maliujia sanbaoshan mubei jilu* 马六甲三宝山墓碑辑录 / *A Collection of Tombstone Inscriptions of Bukit China, Malacca (1614-1820)*, Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Chinese Research Centre, 2013.

The next three sections will look into the three oldest Chinese cemeteries in Malaysia, namely, Bukit China of Malacca, the Chinese cemeteries in Terengganu and Mount Erskine in Penang, each detailing a certain period in the formation of Chinese cemeteries in Malaysia.

### **Bukit China in Malacca**

The Chinese cemetery on Bukit China is probably the oldest. Right in the heart of the Malacca City, it has been the subject of many academic (as well as political and commercial) interests. One of the recurrent questions has been whether or not it dates back to the time of the Malaccan Empire of the 15th and 16th centuries, when Chinese traders frequented the port. Where were they buried when they died in Malacca? We have no idea of this, perhaps on Bukit China? In his study of the voyages of Admiral Zheng He, especially the Ming ties with the Malaccan Sultanate, Geoff Wade suggested that there were Chinese military garrisons stationed in Malacca as well as several other strategic points on the Straits of Malacca, with the purpose of keeping the straits free from piracy and also from other threats. These garrisons were marked in an old Chinese map as *guanchang* 官厂, literally “depot,” and were in existence until the 1440s.<sup>8</sup> The question would be whether those who died in Malacca were also buried on Bukit China. Perhaps, but there are no traces left. It is likely that their humble graves, without stone structures, did not survive the test of time.

There was also the legendary marriage between the sixth Malaccan Sultan, Mansur Syah (1456-1477) with a princess from China named Han Libao 汉丽宝. While the authenticity of this event remains unascertained, the fact that it was mentioned in the *Sejarah Melayu*, or “The Malay Annals,”<sup>9</sup> captured the imagination of the public and historians alike. It was reported that the princess was accompanied by more than 500 men and women as her entourage, and perhaps it was through these men and women, when passing on, that the cemetery was established. The earliest surviving tombstones however, yielded a much later date, that of the 17th century. There could have been some tombs

8. Geoff Wade, “The Zheng He Voyages: A Reassessment,” *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, LXXVIII: 1 (2005), p. 47; see also Geoff Wade, “Melaka in Ming Dynasty Texts,” *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. LXX: 1 (1997), p. 49.

9. *Sejarah Melayu* or *Malay Annals*, also known as *Sulalatus Salatin* (Genealogy of Kings), is the literary and historical work on the history of the Malaccan sultanate. Attributed mainly to Tun Sri Lanang, the work was written around 1612. The arrival of the Princess Hang Li-Po (Han Libao) delegation is found in Chapter 15. See *Sejarah Melayu (The Malay Annals)*, Trans. John Leyden, Kuala Lumpur: Silverfish Books, 2012, pp. 105-109. Leyden’s version was first published by Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown in 1821. In another version, translated and annotated by C.C. Brown, however, the story about Hang Li-Po and Bukit China is dealt with in the ninth chapter. See *Sejarah Melayu (The Malay Annals)*, MS Raffles 18, Trans. & Arran. Abdul Rahman Bin Ismail, Comp. Cheah Boon Kheng, Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 2009.

from earlier periods, perhaps even from the time of the Malaccan Empire. However, they are now lost to history.

No one knows when Bukit China was first used as a burial ground. A stone inscription set up in 1795 by the monk Kunshan 昆山, mentions that at the time the Baoshan ting 宝山亭, or funerary temple was established at the foot of the Bukit China Cemetery, there were already many graves on the hill. According to Kunshan, it was more than 60 years since burials had been carried out on the hill, and a temple was needed to shelter the devotees from rain during their annual visit.<sup>10</sup> The earliest identified tomb however, predates even the sixty years mentioned by Kunshan by another 110 years. The husband and wife combined tomb of Huang Weihong 黄维弘 and his wife, Xie Shoujie 谢氏寿姐, was erected in the cyclical year *renxu* 壬戌 of the Ming dynasty arbitrarily equated to “1622.”<sup>11</sup> The tombstone was restored in 1933. Also from the 17th century is the tomb of Zheng Fangyang 郑芳扬, the first Capitan China of Malacca during the Dutch rule. His tomb was erected by his son, Zheng Wenxuan 郑文玄 in 1678. Another one is that of Li Weijing 李为经 (1614-1688) and his wife née Song 宋氏.<sup>12</sup> Li, who was the third Capitan of Malacca, along with the first two captains China, was also instrumental in the construction of the famous Cheng Hoon Teng (Qingyun ting) 清云亭 temple. Even though the grave (which is not the original one) has no information on the year it was first erected, it suffices to know that it dates to 1688.

The recent work by Wong Wunbin however, suggested that the earliest grave found on Bukit China dates to “1614,” eight years earlier than the tomb of Huang Weihong. This is the grave of a woman whose maiden name, *shi* 氏, is given as that of her place of origin, Brunei: Wenlaishi 汶来氏. (Plate 1) There are indeed in Malaysia as in Indonesia a certain number of tombs which were dedicated to native women who had married Chinese men.<sup>13</sup> The grave was erected in the cyclical year [*jia*]*yin* [甲]寅 of the Ming dynasty, arbitrarily equated to “1614,” by the son of the deceased called Hong Shi 洪世.<sup>14</sup> This tomb escaped the attention of Franke and Chen.

10. Franke & Chen Tieh Fan, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia*, I, p. 271.

11. Franke & Chen Tieh Fan, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia*, I, p. 367-369.

12. Li Weijing's life story was discussed in an article by Claudine Salmon, “Commemorating Chinese Merchant Benefactors in Malacca: The Case of Captain Li Weijing (1614-1688),” *Danjiang shixue* 淡江史学, 27 (2015), pp. 121-135.

13. For more detail see Salmon, “Women's Status as Reflected in Chinese Epitaphs from Insulinde (16th-20th Centuries),” *Archipel* 72 (2006), pp. 166-172.

14. The tomb was first reported in an article by D.K. Chng (Zhuang Qinyong) in 1998. See Zhuang Qinyong 庄钦永, “Maliujia, Xinjiapo huawen beiwen jilu 马六甲、新加坡华文碑文辑录 / A Collection of Epigraphical Materials from Malacca and Singapore,” *Minzuxue yanjiu ziliao huibian* 民族学研究所资料汇编, 12 (1998), p. 46. See also Wong Wunbin, *Maliujia sanbaoshan mubei jilu*, pp. 44-45.

If authenticated, these two tombs of “1614” and “1622,” would be among some of the earliest found in Southeast Asia. There is however, a need to consider their dates with caution. While it is tempting to set back the dates of the earliest Chinese graves to 1614 and 1622, one should not allow oneself to be blinded by the desire to find the most ancient tomb. Those two dates which are only given by two cyclical characters (a cycle comprising sixty years), without reference to any title of reign or *nianhao* 年号, the year [*jia*]yin could also be equated to 1674, and the cyclical year *renxu* 壬戌 to 1682. These two last dates coincide with the coming of Ming loyalists in Malacca after the fall of the dynasty, and this may also explain why these refugees could not use a Ming title reign anymore.

The question of the absence of other possible Ming Chinese tombs on Bukit China could perhaps be partly answered by the case of the Ming loyalist Li Weijing 李为经, who passed away in Malacca in 1688. The eulogy dedicated to Li by Lin Fangkai 林芳开 and thirty-six notables, mentioned that Li had purchased a plot of land in order to make a cemetery 捐金置地, 泽及幽冥.<sup>15</sup> In the same way, the eulogy for Li’s son-in-law, Zeng Qilu 曾其祿 (1643-1718), also alludes to the fact that he spent money purchasing land (a hill) for Chinese burial 买山为之葬, hence a noble deed remembered by others.<sup>16</sup> This suggests in both cases that the previous burial sites were already full. Similar situations took place in Batavia during the same period where Chinese community leaders had to purchase successive pieces of land from the Dutch Indies Company (VOC). It is likely that prior to the purchases of these burial grounds to the Dutch Company the Chinese were not bound by any regulations, and could bury their dead where they wanted. But traces of these graves have not yet been found.<sup>17</sup>

A Portuguese map attributed to the 17th century, detailing Malacca under Portuguese rule, provides reference to a place called “Buquet China” (i.e. Bukit China), to the northwest of Fort Santiago. The fact that the place was already named “Buquet China” suggests that there had been a Chinese burial ground even during Portuguese period. However, in the absence of concrete

15. Franke & Chen Tieh Fan, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia*, I, pp. 223-224.

16. Franke & Chen Tieh Fan, *Op. cit.*, I, pp. 228-230; See also Salmon, “Commemorating Chinese Merchant Benefactors in Malacca,” pp. 121-135.

17. Attempts to locate Dutch sources pertaining to such purchases have failed thus far. Reports from Malacca to the Dutch Governor General at Batavia also do not contain any such report. Radin Fernando suggests that it was probably because the issue was too trivial to warrant inclusion into the reports. The same could be applied to the earlier Portuguese era. I am grateful to Dr. Radin Fernando, formerly of Universiti Sains Malaysia & Professor Jorge Santos Alves of Universidad Catolica Portuguesa (Catholic University of Portugal) for generously sharing their knowledge and information on the Dutch and Portuguese sources.





**Plate 1** – Grave of Wenlaishi. (Source: Wong Wunbin, *Maliujia sanbaoshan mubei jilu*, p. 45)

information, one can only speculate on such a possibility. The accompanying materials simply mention that the Chinese were concentrated in Kampong China, which corresponds to the present day old township.<sup>18</sup>

The absence of tombs from the Ming period could also be attributed to the broken links between the first Ming immigrants and those who came later after the fall of the dynasty. There is definitely a break of several decades between those who came during the Ming times and those who arrived after the establishment of the Manchu dynasty. Between the fall of Ming dynasty and the consolidation of the Manchus, Ming loyalists who settled abroad used either cyclical characters plus the name of the Ming dynasty, or the expression Long fei 龙飞, "The flying dragon" plus the year in cyclical characters to signify their refusal to use the reign year of the ruling Qing emperor. Several inscriptions in the Cheng Hoon Teng use this expression. By the 1720s, the inscriptions in the temple have been more or less adjusted to use the Qing Dynasty calendar. This signifies the fading out of the earlier group, and the mass arrival of Chinese whose loyalty was no longer Ming, but associated with the new Manchu Dynasty. This situation inevitably resulted in leaving the majority of the Ming era tombs unattended and not visited, and they eventually became dilapidated and disappeared.

Several inscriptions gave some mention to the poor state of upkeep of graves on Bukit China. An inscription of Daoguang 道光 11 (1831) states that donations have been collected in order to clear the cemetery of unwanted weeds and trees.<sup>19</sup> Another inscription of Guangxu 光绪 14 (1888) mentioned the need for the trustees of the cemetery to raise money to clean up the cemetery, lest it be left to dilapidate, which would give the British authority reason for re-entering the cemetery to take over the land.<sup>20</sup> Once again, in 1924, the cemetery was reported to be in very poor shape and neglected. Weeds were everywhere, and had to be cleared. Again, there was an effort to raise money for the purpose.<sup>21</sup> It is obvious that efforts to maintain the cemetery were a constant struggle for the trustees of the Cheng Hoon Teng (Qingyun ting) which also looked after the cemetery. Over time, there had been different committees with varying efficacy, hence the cemetery suffered from constant lack of supervision, and most important of all, records and funds. The records of the graves are said to have been destroyed during the

18. Luis Filipe F. Reis Thomaz, *Early Portuguese Malacca*, Macau: Macau Territorial Commission for the Commemorations of the Portuguese Discoveries and the Polytechnic Institute of Macau, 2000, p. 48. For the map, see the map of Settlement of Malacca in the beginning of the 17th century according to a sketch from the Declaração de Malaca, by Maniel Godinho de Erédia, in Thomaz, *Op. cit.*, Map. 5.

19. Franke & Chen Tieh Fan, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia*, I, pp. 275-276.

20. Franke & Chen Tieh Fan, *Op. cit.*, I, p. 278.

21. Franke & Chen Tieh Fan, *Op. cit.*, I, p. 283.



Japanese occupation. There were no limitations set for the burial period. Each grave was meant to last forever. Hence it is obvious that graves no longer visited would degenerate and enter a state of dilapidation and later disappear, leaving no sign of their existence.

While it is not possible to determine when Bukit China was first used by the Chinese to bury their dead, it is reasonable to suppose that there were already graves in existence on the hill before the establishment of the Cheng Hoon Teng circa 1673 by the Ming loyalists.<sup>22</sup> This is in line with the usual practice of the Chinese who would bury their dead in different locations long before a cemetery could be regarded as “established.” Information prior to the coming of the Dutch was sketchy, and the fact that Malacca was in ruin at the time of its conquest further reinforces the view that information relating to Chinese burial in Malacca prior to the coming of the VOC was no longer available.

The three tombstones mentioned above are so far the earliest still in situ. The importance of this earliest cemetery is not confined to the fact that it was the oldest. Rather, it was the information found on the respective graves that provided us with invaluable information on the development of the Chinese community in Malacca, and the relationship the latter had with the local authorities. While Bukit China is no longer used as a cemetery, the site is a testimony of the continued existence of the Chinese community since at least the 17th century. Yet, the dates of the earliest tombs found in the cemetery do not tally with the existence of Chinese community in that city or its vicinity.

The work of Wolfgang Franke and Chen Tieh Fan on the discovery of a Chinese tomb in Brunei that predates even the Ming Dynasty, provides a clear evidence of the possibility of discovering earlier Chinese graves and even Chinese burial grounds in Malaysia earlier than 1614. The tombstone, that of a Chinese official who died while visiting Brunei, dated 1264, almost 350 years earlier than the earliest tomb in Malacca, was allegedly rediscovered when stones were collected from Kota Batu in 1933.<sup>23</sup> It is not excluded that other ancient tombstones may be rediscovered in connection with archaeological excavations or with the construction of new urban quarters.

### **Terengganu Bukit Datu Chinese Burial Places**

There seemed to have been a gap between the “establishment” of the Bukit China cemetery and the next oldest Chinese cemetery in Malaysia, namely, the Mount Erskine Guangdong cemetery in Penang. This gap however, is a

22. Claudine Salmon, *Ming Loyalists in Southeast Asia as Perceived through Various Asian and European Records*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014, p. 54.

23. Wolfgang Franke and Chen Tieh Fan, “A Chinese Tomb Inscription of A.D. 1264, Discovered Recently in Brunei: A Preliminary Report,” *The Brunei Museum Journal*, 5 (1973), pp. 91-99; Pengiran Karim bin Pengiran Haji Osman, “Further Notes on a Chinese Tombstone Inscription of A.D. 1264,” *Brunei Museum Journal*, 8: 1 (1993), p. 2.

reflection of the manner Chinese settlements were created in the country. The Chinese community on Penang Island was founded mainly after the coming of Captain Francis Light and his taking over of the island from the Sultan of Kedah in 1786. Therefore, the “establishment” of the Guangdong Cemetery with its earliest tombs dating back to 1795 should be acceptable as logical. However, Wang Yahao 王雅浩, in a report on the ancient graves and Chinese cemetery in Terengganu, provided some information on the possible existence of Ming tombs on Bukit Datu in Kuala Terengganu. According to Wang, when conducting exploratory work in that area in 1968, he noticed the existence of some ancient graves which were from the Ming period. However, when he began to carry out documentation work in 1996, those graves were no longer around as the area had made way for housing.<sup>24</sup>

One could still find the grave of a certain Zhu Qiwu 朱栖梧 on Bukit Datu that dates to Qianlong *bingwu* 乾隆丙午 (1743).<sup>25</sup> This is so far the oldest known tombstone outside of Malacca. The existence of this epitaph along with what was lost earlier, demonstrates the importance of Terengganu in the sequence of the presence of Chinese settlements in Malaysia. It also shows how often places like Terengganu were neglected in the study of the Chinese in Malaysia. Two ancestral tablets placed in the family home of the Wang family in Jalan Kampong China further support this notion of Terengganu being an early location for the Chinese to land and to settle. The ancestral tablet of Wang Guoxiong (1733-1778) reads:<sup>26</sup>

Tablet of our father Wang Guoxiong who was invited to take part in the official banquet<sup>27</sup>  
 Set up by his son Biguang  
 Born in Yongzheng 11, year *guixiu* (1733)  
 Died on the 26th day of the second month of Qianlong 43, year *wuxu* (1778)  
 (Name of the burial place and geomantic location of the grave).

显考饮宾国雄王公之神主  
 凡男碧光奉祀  
 生於雍正十一年岁次癸丑生  
 卒於乾隆四十三年岁次戊戌二月廿六日正寢而终  
 葬在内班山地名武吉巴吁杯坐寅向申庚寅庚申口金

Also within the Wang family was the ancestral tablet of Mrs. Wang née Huang 王门黄氏, who was born in 1754 and passed away in 1806. The tablet was set up by her son, Biguang 碧光, and the place of burial was given as the

24. Wang Yahao 王雅浩, “Dengjialou de gumu ji huaren yishan 登嘉楼的古墓及华人义山 (Ancient Graves and Chinese Cemeteries in Terengganu),” in Fan Liyan (ed.) *Malaixiya huaren yishan ziliao huibian*, pp. 88-89.

25. Wang Yahao, *Op. cit.*, p. 89.

26. Franke & Chen Tieh Fan (eds.), *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia*, III, pp. 1180-1181.

27. *Yinbin* or *xiangyinyinbin* 乡饮宾 was the title given to the old literati who had been invited to the official annual banquet given by the authorities at the district level.

same site as her husband's. The Wang family's information on the burial site suggests the existence of a very early Chinese cemetery in Kuala Terengganu. In addition, it also suggests that Terengganu's position at the north eastern part of the Peninsula, made it one of the entry points for Chinese traders who were plying their trade between southern China and the Malay Archipelago. Chinese presence in the state has been noticed by visitors such as Captain Alexander Hamilton, who visited Kuala Terengganu in 1719. According to the captain, there were more than 1,000 families in the town, half of them, Chinese, who were residing in "Trangano" (Terengganu).<sup>28</sup> A Dutch report also mentioned the sailing of two English ships from Malacca to Terengganu for trade in 1763, and their return the following year.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, it was reported that during the 18th century, there was no port comparable to that of Kuala Terengganu.<sup>30</sup>

Wang Yahao's account of the existence of Ming tombs in 1968 could very well be corroborated by the fact that Kuala Terengganu was indeed a thriving port as demonstrated by the several travellers' accounts mentioned above. The loss of these tombs to modern development has denied us the possibility of firmly establishing the earliest possible Chinese tombstone in the state.

### Mount Erskine Guangdong Cemetery

The next batch of early tombstones came from the Mount Erskine Guangdong and Tingzhou Prefecture (Fujian) Cemetery 广东暨汀州义山 in Penang. This is a rather strange combination. Normally, one would find GuangFu 广福 (Guangdong and Fujian) combined cemeteries in Malaysia, where the level of representation was at the provincial level. The Guangdong and Tingzhou representation was unequal as Guangdong is a province whereas Tingzhou was a prefecture. However, as there were many Hakkas 客家人 among those originated from Guangdong in early Penang, the Hakkas from Tingzhou (and Chaoan 潮安) also used this cemetery.<sup>31</sup> However, the Tingzhou element was not present in the original stone inscription on the occasion of the building of a road and a bridge leading to the cemetery and of donations

28. Alexander Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies, Volume 2, Being the Observations and Remarks of Captain Alexander Hamilton, who spent his Time from the Year 1688 to 1723, Trading and Traveling by Sea and Land, to Most of the Countries and Islands of Commerce and Navigation, Between the Cape of Good Hope, and the Island of Japan*, Tennessee: General Books, 2010 [reprint], pp. 60-62.

29. Mark S. Francis, "Captain Joseph Jackson's Report on Trengganu, 1764," *Journal of the Historical Society of University of Malaya*, VIII (1969/1970), pp. 73-76.

30. Khoo Kay Kim, "Kuala Terengganu: Pusat Perdagangan Antarabangsa," in Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, (ed.), *Terengganu: Dahulu dan Sekarang*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Muzium Malaysia, 1985, p. 70.

31. See Franke & Chen Tieh Fan, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia*, II, p. 682.

made for this purpose. The stone is dated Jiaqing 嘉庆 6 (1801/1802).<sup>32</sup> A new stone to commemorate the common grave of natives from all prefectures of Guangdong and Tingzhou, was erected in 1884. Judging from the three surviving earliest tombs, it is likely that the cemetery was established in the 1790s, or earlier. It must be remembered that Captain Francis Light first took over the island from the Sultan of Kedah in 1786. Prior to that there was no Chinese settlement on the island. The original name of the cemetery was Guangdong yizhong 广东义冢.

There are two tombstones from the late 18th and one from the early 19th century. The first is that of Zeng Tingxian 曾廷贤, who was from Xiangshan 香山, Guangzhou, dated Qianlong yimao 乾隆乙卯 (1795). The second, dated Jiaqing yuannian (1796), belonged to Wu Hao 吴浩, who was also from Xiangshan county, and his village was given as Cuiwei xiang 翠微乡. The third belonged to Li Yaliu 李亞六 of Jiayingzhou 嘉应州 (which means he was likely to be a Hakka) was dated Jiaqing 6 (1801/1802).<sup>33</sup> While these tombstones are few, they are still able to provide some useful information pertaining to the communities that were linked to these early Chinese cemeteries.

One curious question is the date for the establishment of the Hokkien Cemetery in Batu Lanchang. While the Mount Erskine Guangdong and Tingzhou Cemetery have been firmly established as dated from around 1790, the Hokkien cemetery in Batu Lanchang, Penang, could only trace its origin to 1805. It is inconceivable that the Hokkien cemetery should be established later than the Guangdong cemetery especially when some of the earliest Chinese immigrants were Hokkien from either Zhangzhou 漳州 or Quanzhou 泉州. Franke and Chen point out that prior to the Batu Lanchang cemetery, there was an earlier Hokkien cemetery in Ayer Itam Road. One may assume that when it was too crowded, the new one was opened in Batu Lanchang in 1805.<sup>34</sup> The cemetery was placed under the administration of the United Hokkien Association of Penang. It also has the graves of many notable earlier personalities including the first Capitan China, Gu Lihuan 辜礼欢 (1787-1826) and his wife, née Su.

The establishment of both the Mount Erskine Guangdong & Tingzhou cemetery and the Batu Lanchang (and earlier Ayer Itam Road) Hokkien cemetery, are accurate in relation to the earliest Chinese settlement on Penang Island. The discrepancy of the Guangdong preceding the Hokkien cemetery was more likely due to the fact that the original Hokkien cemetery in Ayer Itam Road did not survive.

32. Franke & Chen Tieh Fan, *Op. cit.*, II, pp. 687-689.

33. Franke & Chen Tieh Fan, *Op. cit.*, II, p. 685. All these stones came from China and they were used as ballast on the ships.

34. Franke & Chen Tieh Fan, *Op. cit.*, II, p. 713.

On important point to be gleaned from examining the two cemeteries is the existence in early Penang of Chinese from Guangdong province, including both Cantonese and Hakkas. This is contrary to the predominant Hokkien population of present day Penang.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The links between the establishment of burial grounds and the beginning of Chinese presence in Malaysia is crucial in an environment that often demands evidence of the early and long-standing existence of the community in the country, to lay claim to political legitimacy. The three cemeteries examined at Bukit China Malacca, Kuala Terengganu, and Mount Erskine, represent some of the earliest Chinese graveyards in the country. However, it is clear that while many of the cemeteries were older than the earliest dated tombs found so far in their vicinity, many of the earliest tombs are perhaps no longer available having been lost to the passage of time. There are also possibilities of earlier burial grounds as well, but discontinued and abandoned.

One of the obvious reasons for the want of further information on early Chinese cemeteries is the absence of records on the subject. The administration of the Cheng Hoon Teng for instance, has to rely on epigraphic materials for most of its information on the Bukit China cemetery. Even the Portuguese and Dutch sources seem to have very little to offer in this regard. In Terengganu, most of the information was lost. Any reconstruction of the history of the Chinese community cannot rely too much on the cemeteries or surviving tombstones as most of the earlier ones were lost as well. The want of actual documentation has dampened efforts to pin-point the years in which the Chinese communities were established in each of these three early localities.

In examining the case in Kuala Terengganu, the eventuality of early tombs dating back to the Ming dynasty provides a new insight into the role of that port in the past; as well as its links with the Chinese community. This surely warrants further investigation.



CLAUDINE SALMON<sup>1</sup>

## Ancient Chinese Cemeteries of Indonesia as Vanishing Landmarks of the Past (17th-20th c.)

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先人遗骨为我之身，先人本体封葬於窆，  
或生或没一体至亲。不能护守安用后人。

We are the product of the bones of our ancestors  
whose remains are buried under tumuli; alive or dead  
we all are cognates. If we can't protect the graves  
or our forefathers what's the point of having descendants?<sup>2</sup>

Chinese settlements in Indonesia may be traced back to the 15th century, and are rather well documented for the 17th century onwards, thanks to European and Chinese sources. However, much less is known regarding the burial grounds of these former communities.<sup>3</sup>

Apart from the tomb of the seagoing merchant and first Captain So Beng Kong 苏鸣岗 (ca. 1580-1644, native to Tong'an 同安, Fujian) (Plate 1),<sup>4</sup>

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1. CNRS, Paris.

2. Wang Heming 王鹤鸣, Ma Yuanliang 马远良, Wang Shiwei 王世伟 *zhubian* 主编, *Zhongguo pudie yanjiu* 中国谱牒研究. *Quanguo pudie kaifa yu liyong xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 全国谱牒开发与利用学术研讨会论文集, Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999, p. 174, quoting the family instructions, *jiaxun* 家训, regarding the protection of tombs, *bao fenmu* 保坟墓, contained in a genealogy.

3. For a general view of cemeteries, graves and geomancy, see J.W. Young, "De bergaafplaatsen der Chineezen zoo, in Nederlandsch-Indië als in China," *De Indische Gids*, 9:2 (1887), pp. 1522-1560.

4. Also written So Bing Kong. See inter alia B. Hoetink, "So Bing Kong. Het eerste hoofd der Chineezen te Batavia," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 75 (1917) – 79 (1923),



formerly located within the private cemetery of the So family (Map 1), in the densely crowded area of Mangga Dua<sup>5</sup> which has somehow remained as a landmark in the history of the Chinese in Batavia/Jakarta—it was repaired a first time in 1909<sup>6</sup> at the initiative of the heads of the Chinese, a second time in 1929 during the rule of the last major Khouw Kim An 许金安,<sup>7</sup> and a third time in 2008, at the initiative of the late Hendarmin Susilo (Su Sien Ming), Head of the association named Yayasan Kapitein Souw Beng Kong<sup>8</sup>—little attention has been paid to epitaphs of old. It was not until the late 1970s onwards that scattered tombs, remains of anciens cemeteries, started to draw the attention of historians and archaeologists. The first undertook to collect their inscriptions throughout the whole country, while the second excavated an old cemetery near Banten (West Java).

Despite the incessant expenditure over time, both individually and collectively, by the Chinese of Indonesia to conserve and secure their graveyards, the latter have never been really protected from destruction. As early as 1668, the community of Batavia lodged a complaint against a group of Ambonese who resided near the cemetery and had desecrated some four hundred graves.<sup>9</sup> During the next century, another danger came in addition to the risk of looting; by following the development of the towns of the northern coast of Java, some burial sites once plotted in the countryside were enveloped by settlements and gradually threatened with demolition. The first case for which we have historical records is the old cemetery of Semarang. A set of ancient tombs, which at the end of the 18th century was located close to the shopping district of Pekojan, was felt by the Dutch authorities to be an obstacle. In 1797, they asked the captain to move the graves outside the city, as we will see below.

The threats caused by urban development still increased at the end of the 19th and especially during the 20th century with the population growth.

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pp. 344-414; 1-44. The five other graves of the So family cemetery were destroyed during the second half of the 20th century.

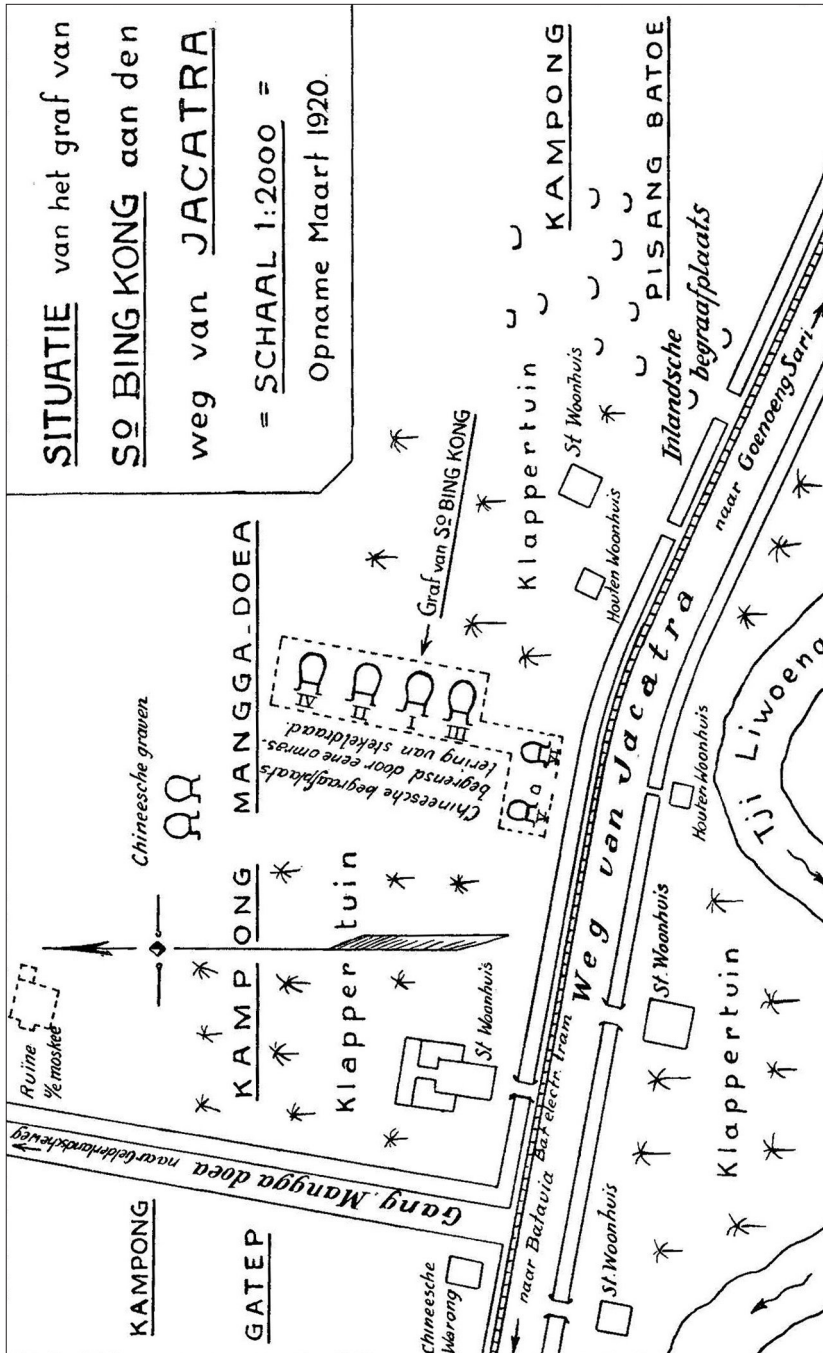
5. The tomb, surrounded by houses, is situated in Gang Taruna, Jalan Pangeran Jayakarta, Mangga Dua, in an area which has long been invested by squatters.

6. Cf. Hoetink, "So Bing Kong," plate opposite p. 34.

7. Next to the epitaph, Major Khouw Kim An erected a stele which retells So Beng Kong's life story, see W. Franke, C. Salmon & A. Siu (eds.), *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Indonesia / Yindunixiya huawen mingke huibian* 印度尼西亚华文铭刻汇编, vol. II. Part 1, Java, Singapore: South Seas Society, Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, Association Archipel, 1997, p. 112.

8. Cf. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgPXordYVBs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgPXordYVBs)

9. *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek, 1602-1811* (Collection of edicts of the Dutch Indies, hereafter *Plakaatboek*), edited by J.A. van der Chijs, Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 's Hage: M. Nijhoff, 1865-1897, vol. II, p. 465, 20 Nov. 1668. The Ambonese presumably intended to steal the coins which were usually placed in the graves, as we will see below. It should be noted that the ancient cemeteries were mostly without boundary fences.



**Map 1** – Map of the private cemetery of the So family in Mangga Dua, Batavia in the 1920s. (Source: B. Hoetink, “So Bing Kong. Het eerste hoofd der Chinezen te Batavia”)

Areas, often very extended, occupied by cemeteries on the outskirts of cities or even in the countryside were gradually squatted with the tacit consent of the authorities. The demolitions were very sudden so that the families of the deceased had no time to intervene; and it is probable that if they had the possibility of making a transfer, in the majority of cases, they would not have been in a position to assume it financially.

Here we intend to focus on the historical development of certain cemeteries in particular those of Batavia/Jakarta, and Banten, which date back to the 17th century, and have in a different manner been exposed to gradual demolition. We will also give attention to the rare old tombs which escaped destruction and have become the object of a genuine worship on the part of the population. Finally, we will cast a glance at the manner Chinese communities especially the one in Batavia, which is better documented, tried to maintain their cemeteries, and how they administrated them in regard to the state policy.



**Plate 1** – Epitaph of So Beng Kong (1644).  
(Photo: W. Franke)

## Rise and Fall of Chinese Cemeteries in Batavia/Jakarta

We will successively consider the foundations of burial grounds to the east and to the west of city, their systematic demolition, and in order to get an insight into these burial landscapes we will consider four descriptions emanating from contemporary European travelers.

### *First Expansion to the Southeast of the City (17th-18th c.)*

Apart from rich Chinese who used to be buried on their own land, the poor residing in Batavia had great difficulties in finding a place to entomb their dead, because they were not permitted to dig graves on the lands owned by the Dutch East India Company (hereafter VOC). However, according to de Haan a Chinese burial ground already existed in the 1620s which was located to the southeast of the city, north of Herrenweg.<sup>10</sup> The *Kai Ba lidai shiji* 开吧历代史记 or “Chronicle of the Chinese in Batavia,” states that the first collective cemetery, *yizhong* 义冢,<sup>11</sup> near Jakatraweg or Herrenweg, dates from 1650 (Map 3). The needed plot of land had been purchased by the heads of the community.<sup>12</sup> In its present state, the *Plakaatboek* of the year 1650 does not record this request, but a regulation dated 11 June 1660 stipulates that the Chinese have asked the permission to open a new burial ground near the fort of Jakatra, not far from the earliest cemetery, because the latter had become too small. Gradually, from the middle of the 17th century until the end of the 18th century, the Chinese officers tried to enlarge the cemetery southwards by buying plots of land along the river Ciliwong.<sup>13</sup> The *Plakaatboek* and the archives of the Kong Koan 公馆 or Council of the Chinese<sup>14</sup> record the successive concessions granted by the authorities of Batavia (1668, 1696/1697, 1728, 1745/1746, 1761).<sup>15</sup>

10. Frederik de Haan, *Oud Batavia. Gedenkboek uitgegeven ter gelegenheid van het 300 = jarig bestaan der stad Batavia in 1919*, Batavia, Weltevreden, Leiden: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen & G. Kolff & Co., vol. I, p. 504, paragraph 934.

11. The first meaning of *yizhong* is “charitable cemetery,” but in Batavia the term *yizhong* was understood as a burial place intended for all the Chinese of the city.

12. *Kai Ba lidai shiji*, edited by Hsü Yün-Ts’iao 许云樵, *Nanyang xuebao* 南洋学报, vol. XI:2 (Dec. 1955), p. 30. The cemetery was located not far from the tomb of Captain So Beng Kong.

13. *Plakaatboek*, vol. II, pp. 335-336.

14. Just after the 1740 revolt, the VOC reorganized the officers administrating the Chinese community and formed a College which was in charge of the registry office. This College called Gongtang 公堂 had its first office in a house in Roa Malaka. At the beginning of the 19th century the office was moved to Jalan Tongkongan and it later took the name of Kong Koan (or Gongguan). The Council of the Chinese was an influential element in the Chinese community. It also controlled the cemeteries on its own land and the temples. After the Pacific War, the Kong Koan lost its remaining social functions, and during the 1950s it was dissolved.

15. 1668: *Plakaatboek*, vol. II, decision of 20 Nov., p. 465; 1696-1697: *Plakaatboek*, vol. III, decision of August 1707, p. 583; 1728: *Kai Ba lidai shiji*, pp. 38-39; 1745/1746: *Kai Ba lidai shiji*, p. 47; *Realia, Register op de generale resolutiën van het kasteel Batavia, 1632-1805*, Leiden: Kolff & Nijhoff, 1882-1886, vol. I, 23 August 1746, p. 281; 1760/61: *Kai Ba lidai shiji*,

In 1761 the foundation of the “New Cemetery” or Sentiong 新冢, which reached as far as Kemayoran and Gunung Sari areas (Map 2),<sup>16</sup> and the donations made for that purpose, were commemorated in an inscription set up by a Buddhist monk and engraved on a stone tablet which was originally imbedded in the wall of the said cemetery (since demolished). This inscription, which is presently sheltered in the courtyard of the Vihara Tri Ratna, is not only the oldest known stele in Jakarta, but also the oldest recording the foundation of a cemetery in Insular Southeast Asia (see Plate 2). Its title reads “Wall narrative commemorating the construction project of the collective cemetery of Gunung Sari” or Changjian Niulangshali yizhong biji 倡建牛郎沙里义冢壁记 (see Appendix).<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, the Chinese captain had bought a house formerly belonging to the Governor-General Frederik Coyett,<sup>18</sup> to set up a funerary temple near this new cemetery, hence its name of Klenteng Sentiong or Temple of the New cemetery or also Vihara Buddhayana<sup>19</sup> (Chinese name: Wanjie si 完劫寺). During the last decades of the 18th century a small sanctuary later called Dizang yuan 地藏院 “Temple dedicated to the God of Hell,” also called Vihara Tri Ratna, was constructed at the rear of Klenteng Sentiong in order to shelter ancestral tablets. J.J. Vogelaar provided the best known description of the large *Qingming* 清明 festival which was celebrated in 1789 in both sanctuaries.<sup>20</sup>

p. 51; Netherlands National Archives, The Hague, K.A., 676, Oktober 6, 1761.

16. See here Map 2: Detail from the map entitled “Batavia und Umgebungen” (Masstab von 900 Rheini. Ruthen), in Eduard Selberg, *Reise nach Java und Ausflüge nach den Inseln Madura und St. Helena*, Idenburg: G. Stalling; Amsterdam: M.H. Schonekat, 1846.

17. See inter alia C. Salmon & D. Lombard, *Les Chinois de Jakarta. Temples et vie collective / The Chinese of Jakarta. Temples and Communal Life*, Paris: Études insulindiennes-Archipel 1, Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, 1980, pp. 245-247; Franke, Salmon & Siu (eds.), *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Indonesia*, vol. II. Part 1, pp. 36-37. The inscription is rather blurred and several characters are hardly decipherable.

18. Cf. “A travers le vieux Jakarta (2) : le Wihara Buddhayana,” *Archipel* 4 (1972), pp. 111-114.

19. See inter alia Frederik de Haan, *Oud Batavia*, vol. 1, pp. 504-505; Salmon & Lombard, *Les Chinois de Jakarta. Temples et vie collective*, pp. 110-115.

20. Jan Jacob Vogelaar, “Beschrijving van de Tjembing (doodenfest) der Chinezen,” in *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, vol. II, 1823, pp. 216-243. French translation in Salmon & Lombard, *Les Chinois de Jakarta*, pp. 271-174.





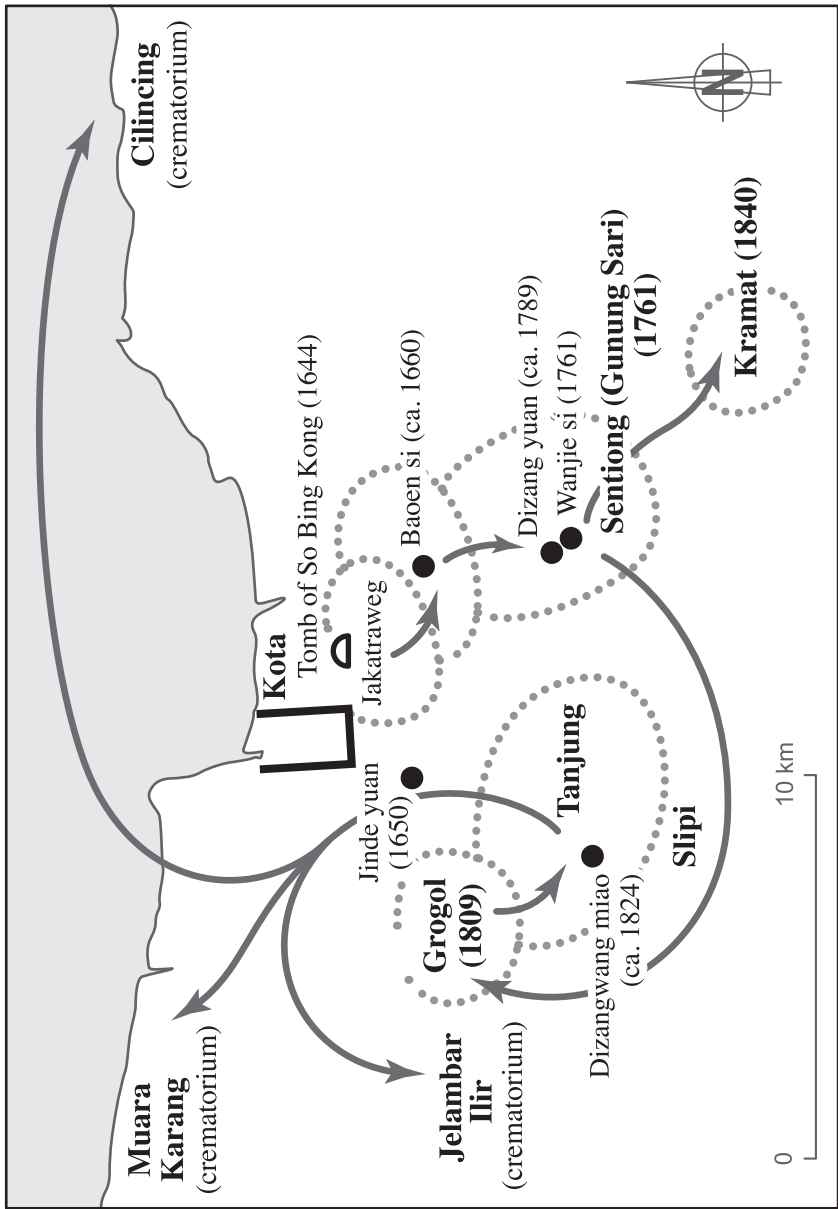
**Map 2** – Detail of a map of Batavia and its surroundings, showing the cemetery of Gunung Sari (Chinesische Gräber). (Source: Eduard Selberg, *Reise nach Java*, 1846)

### *Second Expansion to the Southwest of the City (19th c.)*

At the beginning of the 19th century, the Chinese were refused permission to dig new graves in the Gunung Sari region, probably in connection with Daendels' plan to establish the new town of Weltevreden (around Koningsplein, present Lapangan Merdeka or Independance Square).<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, in 1809 they were allowed to open a new cemetery in the western suburb, in the region of Ketting fort (now Grogol).<sup>22</sup> In the new site the graves also spread

21. Marshal Herman Willem Daendels was Governor-General in Batavia from 1808 to 1811.

22. *Plakaatboek*, vol. XV, pp. 906-909, 30 Sept. 1809.



**Map 3** – Map showing the chronological development of cemeteries in Batavia. (Adapted from C. Salmon & D. Lombard, *Les Chinois de Jakarta. Temples et vie collective / The Chinese of Jakarta. Temples and Communal Life*, Paris: *Études insulindiennes-Archipel* 1, Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l’Homme, 1980)





**Plate 2** – Stele commemorating the foundation of the Gunung Sari Cemetery in 1761. (Photo: C. Salmon, 2015)

southwards, into the Tanjung, and Slipi regions (Maps 3 and 4). As might be expected, the need arose for a new funerary temple and the Dizang wang miao 地藏王庙 or “Temple to the God of Hell” at Tanjung was built towards 1824. According to Li Minghuan in the 19th century, most of the burial plots were located in Tanjung and Slipi. Only after the 1870s were Jati and Jelambar mentioned; as for the name Cidang, it appeared in the early 20th century.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Li Minghuan, “A Portrait of Batavia’s Chinese Society Based on the Tanjung Cemetery Archives,” in Leonard Blussé & Chen Menghong (eds.), *The Archives of the Kong Koan of Batavia*, Leiden. Boston: Brill, 2003, p. 81.

Other cemeteries opened elsewhere too, in particular in the region of Kramat, where the German naturalist Junghuhn (1809-1864) reported the existence of Chinese graves towards 1840. He says:<sup>24</sup>

There are two Chinese cemeteries near Batavia. A small one close to Kramat, to the East of the road leading to Buitenzorg [now Bogor] and a bigger one between Batavia and Gunung Sari, in a region where walls of the old Jakarta<sup>25</sup> half hidden in the greenery are to be found.

The reason why Junghuhn and his contemporary Eduard Selberg<sup>26</sup> do not allude to the cemetery of Tanjung is perhaps that it was still off the beaten track.

In the 20th century other new sites were opened on the outskirts of the town, in particular at Bidara Cina (South of Jatinegara), near Bogor road, and at Kampung Dalam, south of Tebet.

### ***Demolition of the Old Chinese Graveyards after Independence***

After Independence, urban development was such that land became extremely expensive and the existence of graveyards within the city seriously threatened.<sup>27</sup> The Gunung Sari cemetery was gradually parcelled out and the stele of 1761, near the Dizang yuan is virtually the only reminder that this whole vast area was once filled with graves. The same thing happened to the West where the superficies occupied by Chinese tombs was even bigger, and new districts grew up, replacing the burial grounds.<sup>28</sup> In the Kota Bambu region (to the north of Slipi), we saw the last tombs being demolished by the inhabitants in 1975, but it was impossible to attempt any resistance against this rush on land. Absolutely nothing has been left to show what the former use of the area was, although the former cemeteries were characterised by impressive constructions influenced by the European architecture of that time. Land had become expensive everywhere, even in the suburbs, and it was no longer possible to buy burial ground in perpetuity.

Cremation has become virtually the sole solution for many Indonesian Chinese of small means. If in mainland China cremation started to be widely used by the population living in the capital and in the major cities of the

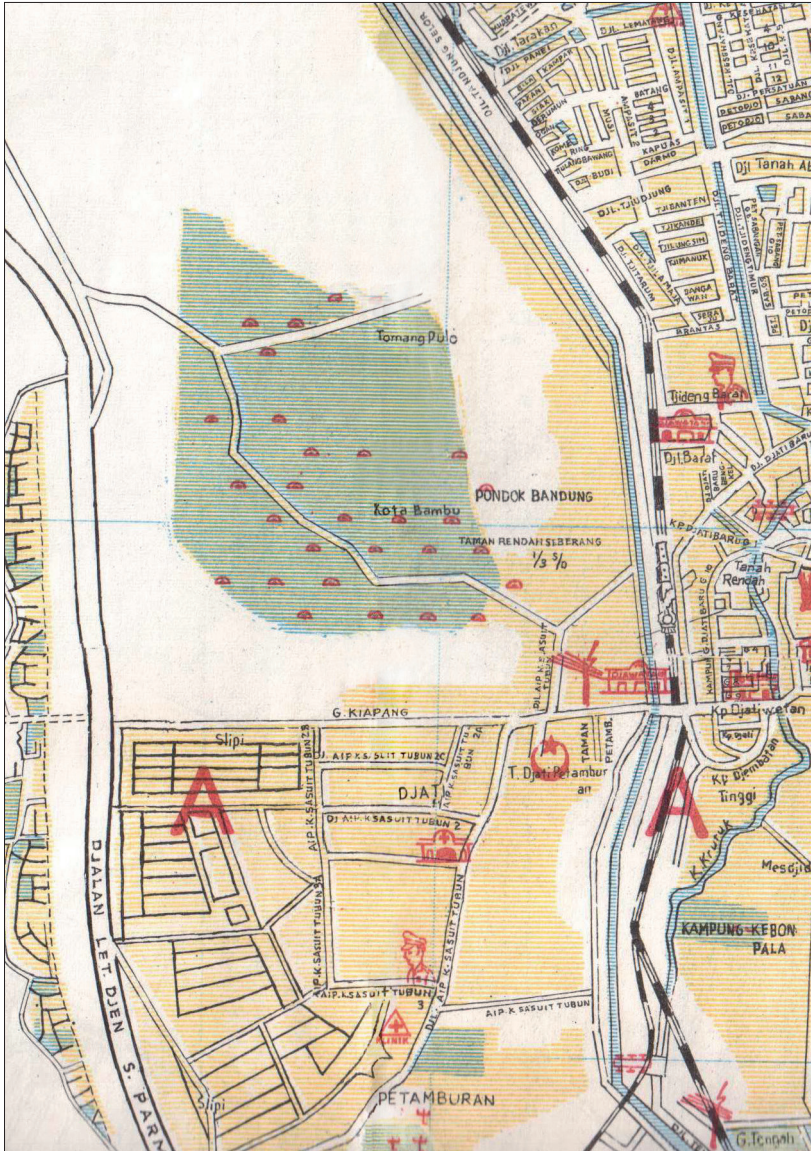
24. Friedrich Franz Wilhelm Junghuhn, *Topographische und naturwissenschaftliche Reisen durch Java*, Magdeburg: E. Baensch, 1845, p. 45.

25. This is in fact the Jakarta fort built by the Dutch to the South-East of the walled city.

26. See Map 2.

27. For a very good study of the closure of the Chinese cemeteries of Surabaya in 1958 by the municipal government, because they had become the refuge of homeless squatters, see Sarkawi B. Husain, "Chinese Cemeteries as a Symbol of Sacred Space. Control, Conflict, and Negotiating in Surabaya, Indonesia," in Freek Colombijn and Joost Coté (eds.), *Cars, Conduits, Kampongs: The Modernization of the Indonesian City, 1920-1960*, Leiden: Brill, 2014, pp. 323-340.

28. See the location of the Western cemetery on the map of Jakarta of 1968 (Map 4).



**Map 4** – Detail of a map of Jakarta showing the remnants of the western cemeteries in the late 1960s. (Source: Peta Djakarta, Djakarta – Surabaya : Pembina, Edisi 1968). Scale  $\pm 1 : 15\,000$



Song times where land was very expensive,<sup>29</sup> in Indonesia it is a fairly recent phenomenon which from a religious point of view is connected with the progress of Buddhism. The writer and theosopher Kwee Tek Hoay 郭德怀, who died in 1951, was apparently the first to ask to be cremated. Since then, thousands of Indonesian Chinese have followed his example. Two crematoria were built, one at Muara Karang (northwest of the city) in 1958, sponsored by two associations, Jajasan Shamsan Bumi and Gabungan Sam Kauw 三教 Indonesia, and the other, almost at the same time, at Jelambar Ilir (area of Grogol), sponsored by the Jajasan Krematorium which was linked with the Gongguan or Council of the Chinese. The first, which practised open-air cremation, was closed in 1973 by the authorities because of the disturbance it caused to the neighbouring inhabitants.<sup>30</sup> The second was also shut not long after, while a new cremation oven was founded in Cilincing in 1975 with improved facilities. A columbarium was added with special sections for Buddhists and Christians (see Map 3). Moreover Cilincing being close to the coast, the families could also easily disperse the ashes of the deceased into the sea. Since the early 2000s new crematoria were opened in relation to the crisis faced by municipal cemeteries inside the city.

### Chinese Burial Grounds in the Eyes of European Travelers

It is worthy of note that a great number of the Europeans who came to Batavia between the 17th and the mid-19th century were extremely keen to visit the Chinese cemeteries in order to enjoy the atmosphere emanating from these funerary landscapes, as they would have done in a public garden, and for some of them—ethnographers *avant-la-lettre*—also to observe the rituals practiced during the Feast of the Dead or *Qingming*,<sup>31</sup> as well as during funerals. Their records are highly valuable because they are the only testimonies of the manner the Chinese reshaped the landscapes in order to create a peculiar atmosphere and give the impression that death was a continuation of life, though in a separate realm. Here we will limit ourselves to four observers.<sup>32</sup>

One of the first was the French Jesuit Guy Tachard (1648-1712) who was in Batavia in 1684. He happened to visit the cemeteries near the Fort of Jakatra and left the following description which gives a good idea of the landscape

29. Cremation was almost universal in the capital Hangzhou 杭州 and the city crematory ovens (then called *hua ren chang* 化人场, a term which has been since superseded by that of *huozang chang* 火葬场) were inside Buddhist monasteries; cf. Jacques Gernet, *La vie quotidienne en Chine à la veille de l'invasion mongole 1250-1276*, Paris: Hachette, 1959, p. 190.

30. See *Sinar Harapan*, 19 August 1973, "Gubernur DKI Tutup Tempat Pengabuan di Muara Karang."

31. The *Qingming* was celebrated on the 5th of the 4th semilunar month.

32. For a fuller list, see Salmon & Lombard, *Les Chinois de Jakarta*, pp. 281-282.

and the space arrangement which provided altogether a beautiful perspective and a pleasant atmosphere.<sup>33</sup>

As we went out of *Batavia* we found three or four of these Walks, all which at their end, met at the chief Gate, by which we went out, we took the middlemost, which was our way to the place intended. (...) Within half a League we found the first burying Place of the *Chineses* in a Coppis Wood, where they had made several small Paths, which all led to several Sepulchres. There it is where the Chinese of mean Quality are buried, and indeed the Place is somewhat in disorder, and there is nothing of State in their Tombs: a few steps from thence stands the little Fort of *Jakarta*; (...) Beyond that Fort we entered into a Wood, or rather into a large Champian full of little Hills, covered over with Groves and Thickets on all sides, which yielded a pretty pleasant Prospect, and in that second Burying-place the *Chinese bonzes* interr the Persons of Quality of their Nation. Upon the top of one of those little hills I saw an Arbour very well made, and a Table standing in the middle of it, with Benches all around it, where nearly forty People might commodiously sit. There I saw a great many odd antick Idols hanging upon the Branches that covered this Arbour. They say that the *bonzes* make Feasts for the dead, and bring them thither for them to eat; most part of these Tombs are so many little Mausoleums, very neat and pretty; here is the figure of one of the loveliest of them made after (Plate 3), by which you judge of the rest, for they are all made after the same Fashion, with difference only, that some have Dragons in stead of Lyons upon the Gate, as you enter into them, and that they are more or fewer Steps high, according to their Magnificence.

Being come out of the Burying-Place, we heard the Noise of Cimbal and little Bells, and following the Sound, came to a little Temple of the *Chineses*, where their Priests were assembled to offer Sacrifice.

Tachard also provides the unique description of the ceremonies made by monks in a funerary temple, very likely the Baoen si 报恩寺 or “Temple of the Filial Gratitude” which is briefly mentioned in Cheng Xunwo 程逊我’s travelogue.<sup>34</sup> The temple has since been destroyed, perhaps during the troubles of 1740.

Cornelis de Bruyn (ca.1652-ca.1727), Dutch artist and traveler, who sojourned in *Batavia* in 1706, visited the Chinese cemetery at the time a deceased person was buried. After having described the coffin and the manner the tomb was prepared, he gives an interesting description of the funeral ceremony, which in the French version is accompanied by two rather accurate drawings (Plates 4 & 5).<sup>35</sup>

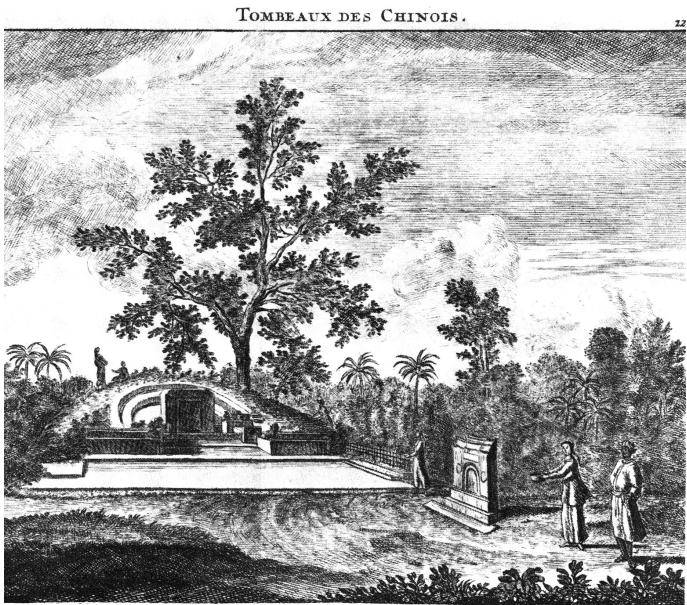
33. Guy Tachard, *A Relation of the Voyage to Siam Performed by Six Jesuits sent by the French King, to the Indies and China in the Year 1685* (first published at London in 1688, original in French, 1687), Reprint Bangkok: White Orchid Press, 1981, pp. 122-123.

34. Cf. Cheng Xunwo, *Gelaba jilüe* 葛喇吧纪略, in *Xunmintang congshu* 逊敏堂丛书, p. 4. Cheng Xunwo was in *Batavia* from 1729 to 1736 as preceptor in a Chinese family.

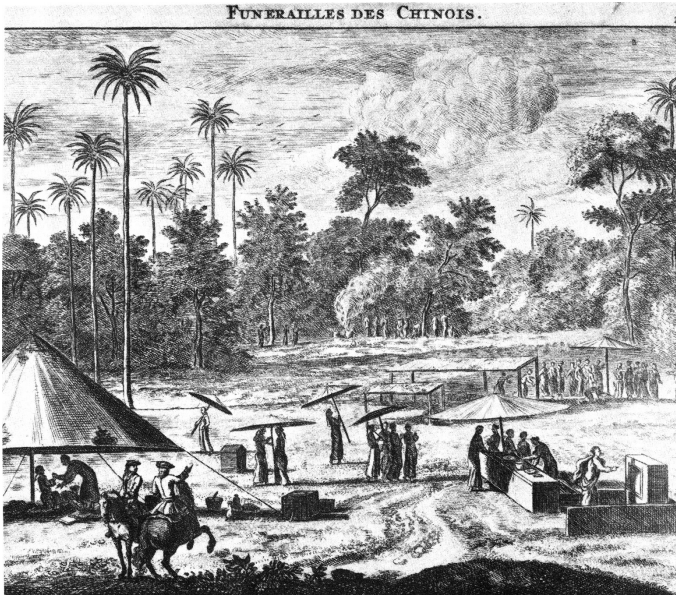
35. Cornelis de Bruyn, *Reizen over Moskovie, door Persie en Indie*, Amsterdam; translated from the French version: *Voyages de Corneille le Brun, par la Moscovie, en Perse et aux Indes Orientales*, Amsterdam: Wetstein, 1718, vol. II, pp. 370-371.



**Plate 3** – A sumptuous 17th-century Chinese grave in Batavia. (Source: Guy Tachard, *A Relation of a Voyage to Siam*, 1687)



**Plate 4** – Chinese mausoleum in Batavia, drawing by Cornelis de Bruyn. (Source: *Voyages de Corneille le Brun, par la Moscovie... et aux Indes Orientales*, 1718)



**Plate 5** – Funeral ceremony in Batavia, drawing by Cornelis de Bruyn. (Source: *Voyages de Corneille le Brun, par la Moscovie... et aux Indes Orientales*, 1718)

When I arrived in this place, some people were busy making one of these tombs for a person that they were going to bury. The convoy went there shortly after, & I saw several tents equipped with all necessary things for the kitchen and the tables set. I watched carefully all the ceremonies of the convoy, which resembled a procession, because of the large number of persons it was composed of, and the ornaments they wore, namely flags, parasols, and a canopy in which they carried one of their Saints known as Joosje.<sup>36</sup> I also heard the sound of a few things. When the body has come to the place where it was to be buried, everything was done quickly and in a very good order (...): They threw some coins into the grave and then put in the body. A priest who was standing near the grave, carried a book, in which he read; there was another priest next to him, with a silver dish filled with seeds which from time to time he threw to the audience, on the coffin and on the child of the woman who had just been put into the grave; the child standing on the other side of the tomb, was covered with a dress of raw canvas, passed over his head, after the manner of the ancients (...) This child, who was no more than ten years old did the same several times, and each time returned to his place according to the order he received from the onlookers, among whom was his father dressed in white. Then the priest ordered the said child to spread a few handfuls of earth on the coffin of his mother, and thus ended the ceremony. While people were busy preparing the cement, we started eating with more than five hundred persons among whom were several women dressed in white (...) We remained there under the trees, until the evening. One sees everywhere thousands of small circular hills of ten to thirty feet high, which are separated from each other by narrow depressions. Many line up side-by-side along the side.

**36.** *Joosje*, from the Portuguese *Deos*, Cf. *Hobson-Jobson. A glossary of Anglo-Indian colloquial words and phrases and of kindred terms*, by Henry Yule and A. Burnell (First edition 1886), New Edition edited by William Crooke, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968, reissued in 1969, pp. 463-464.



Charles François Tombe, a French combat engineer, who worked in Batavia for the Dutch Government in the early 1800s, left a description of the Gunung Sari Cemetery he visited on the occasion of the *Qingming* festival.<sup>37</sup>

On the fourth of April [1804], one of the Chinese merchants who brought my food supplies having informed me that the next day being their All Souls' Day, I went at the sunset in the middle of the tombs to be witness to the ceremony that I will describe:

As soon as the sun rose, an infinite multitude of Chinese of both sexes and all ages, some on foot, others on horseback or by car, went to Jakatra near the location of the capital of this former Kingdom,<sup>38</sup> where are all the tombs of this nation. These tombs were already decorated with strips of paper or silk of various colors, and on each of them burned three candles of red wax. Each Chinese brought or made his slaves bring different dishes which were deposited as an offering on these tombs. One could easily distinguish the opulence of some of them by the luxury of their dishes. There were some dishes garnished with all what the most splendidly served Eastern table could offer of meat, fish, desserts, sweets and drinks. After leaving these different dishes several hours on the tombs, they ate some, offered others to the foreigners who were spectators, and took the rest back. Several of them however left roasted poultry which were whole preserved for the purpose.

Women were crying on the tombs of their husbands, children deplored the loss of the authors of their days, old men groaned on those of their companions and seemed to regret their surviving (...).

The German Friedrich Franz Junghuhn (1809-1864), our fourth and last observer, was in Batavia from 1835 to 1845 as military doctor. Since he was also a naturalist, a botanist, and a painter, he was more attracted by the unusual beauty of the funerary landscape of Gunung Sari than by the religious atmosphere. He paid great attention to the colors, the smells, the richness of the vegetation, and his description is imbued with a romantic enthusiasm:

The Gunung Sari cemetery constitutes a stretch of land that one may cover in a quarter of an hour. It is surrounded by a high embankment planted with trees from which emerge slender Palm trees. It contains very notable tombs of a very remarkable nation and offers a spectacle quite worthy of attention. Their hemispheric summit is formed by the rounded part of the tomb which is in a peculiar masonry, the entry of which appears on one of the sides of the small hill. Usually these hills are surrounded by two or more concentric walls that leave in their centre a convex space that has the shape of a flattened dome. These walls are in a semicircle and stop on the front where the grave ends vertically and where the entrance is closed by one or two stones. Before this entry which is strictly speaking the façade of the tomb and has a height of 6 to 8 feet, lies a small space around the sides which are shaped like benches going up to the green edge of the hill that drops in this place to the plain. On the stone that closes the entrance are engraved very beautiful characters that are enhanced with black and Golden color. Everything is painted in a bright white which contrasts sharply with the clashing green of the hill. Many of these tombs are in ruins and their inscriptions erased; the entire area is covered with a very dense vegetation that covers these hills as a hair would do for many skulls (*wie die Haare eben so vieler Schädel*). When we contemplate the landscape, we can but be satisfied with this new and strange as much as beau spectacle. Thousands of round hills are covered by a head of hair of an inextricably beautiful vegetation, which plunges into every unevenness, and stands on the side of each hill, through the green of which the bright white of the graves burst here and there.

37. Charles-François Tombe, *Voyage aux Indes Orientales pendant les années 1802, 1803, 1804, 1805 et 1806*, Paris: Arthus Bertrand, 1811, vol. I, pp. 250-251.

38. See above note 23.



If one enters this thicket full of pleasant scents and sweet perfumes, one is stunned by the extraordinary variety of grasses and flowering bushes that grow there (the author enumerates more than a dozen plants).<sup>39</sup>

The fascination of the 18th and 19th centuries European travelers for the Chinese deathscapes of Batavia may be explained by the fact that they shared some similarities with the garden cemeteries which took several decades of French reform movements to take form, even if Europe had suffered from the overcrowding of urban churchyards since the late 1700s. The Cemetery of Père Lachaise, the first and most celebrated garden cemetery did not open until 1804.

### Fates of Abandoned Cemeteries in Banten

In contrast to Batavia/Jakarta which since the 17th century has preserved its status as the capital, Banten once the political and economic centre of the Sultanate of same name, has not ceased to decline after its conquest by the VOC in 1682. Since the 1630s the Chinese were involved in sugarcane plantations and sugar processing and they sold their production to European merchants until the latter were expelled by the Dutch. Indeed, their influence extended to all sectors of the economy but they gradually moved to Batavia. However, a small community remained there which was involved in local trade. According to a census of the Chinese in Banten in 1727/1728, it appears that the former China quarter population was only 128 inhabitants (women, children and slaves included); while that of the Karangantu Pecinan (to the East) amounted to 361 inhabitants, to which should be added those of an area more to the east and which amounted to 306 inhabitants, so all together 795 (Map 5).<sup>40</sup> Currently the Chinese community is almost non-existent. The three long-ago abandoned and almost forgotten cemeteries which have been traced so far reflect successive periods of the Chinese settlement spanning the second half of the 17th century to 1854. According to Edmund Scot who was in Banten on several occasions between 1602 and 1605 the rich Chinese merchants who happened to pass away in Banten had their ashes sent back to China: "When any of them that are wealthy die in Banten, their bodies are burnt to ashes, which ashes they put close in Iarres and carry it to China to their friends."<sup>41</sup> This may perhaps explain why no older tombstones have been found so far.

39. Translated from Junghuhn, *Topographische und naturwissenschaftliche Reisen nach Java*, pp. 45-46. See the list of plants in Salmon & Lombard, *Les Chinois de Jakarta. Temples et vie collective*, pp. 281-282.

40. C. Guillot, Nurhakim Lukman & C. Salmon, "Les sucriers chinois de Kelapadua, Banten, xvii<sup>e</sup> s. Textes et vestiges," *Archipel* 39 (1990), p. 143.

41. Edmund Scot, *A Discourse of Iava and of the first English factorie there with divers Indian English and Dutch occurents, written by Master Edmund Scot contayning a Historie of things done from the eleventh of Februarie 1602, till the sixt of October, 1605*, in Purchas, *His Pilgrimages*, London, 1625, Part III, chap. 4, vol. II, p. 165. This statement is corroborated by François Pyrard de Laval, *Discours du voyage de François aux Indes Orientales*, Paris, 1611, p. 248.

***Former Burial Ground of the Sugarcane Planters of Kelapadua (17th c.)***

Johan Peter Cortemünde (b. ca. 1618) a surgeon attached to the Danish East India Company who was in Banten in 1673,<sup>42</sup> states that some Chinese were also settled outside the city in a big village called “Clappadoa” (Kelapadua) where they owned an impressive sugarcane mill as well as several *arak* distilleries. This village could be reached by boat. As a matter of fact, Kelapadua which was located some 9 km to the south of the capital (and to the north of the present town of Serang), was like a little Chinese centre within the sultanate where the population was involved in sugarcane plantation, sugar processing and *arak* distilling (Map 5). The excavations made in 1998 revealed in five places (Sukalila, Kelapadua, Malangnengah, Beberan and Cantilan) the existence of scattered Chinese tombs datable to the second half of the 17th century ([1661] -1670s), as well as remnants of four brick walls, which were apparently the enclosure walls of some Chinese houses.<sup>43</sup> It is worth noting that these ruins, which are landmarks in the former Chinese village of Kelapadua, were still regarded as *kramat* or “Holy Buildings” by the population when we made our survey. The cemetery had a superficies of about 1 km<sup>2</sup>. The owners of the five tombs, which retain their epitaphs, were all men. Three of them were native to Zhangzhou 漳州 prefecture (Fujian) where the culture of sugarcane was practised extensively.<sup>44</sup> One may judge the social status of the deceased by the size of the graves—the biggest has a width of 4 m and is preceded by a grave court, *muting* 墓庭, built of masonry—, and the quality of the tablets. The latter were either in granite imported from Fujian province, for those who could afford the expense, or in local white madrepore for the others. The biggest size was 41x57 cm.<sup>45</sup> We know from other sources that after 1727 the name of the village disappeared from the list of Bantenese sugar mills established by the Dutch. The latter preferred to purchase the sugar they needed in Tanjung Kait and Sumurangsana on the northern coast, to the west of the river Ci Sedana, which were closer to Batavia.<sup>46</sup>

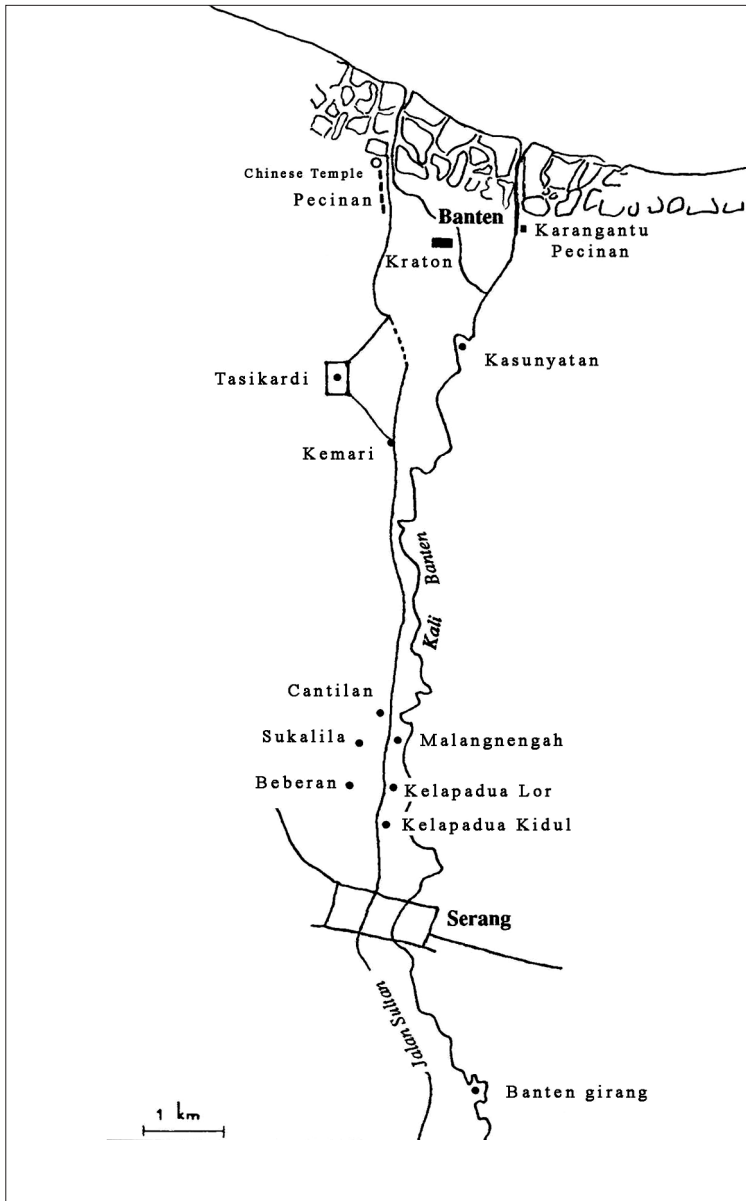
42. J.P. Cortemünde, *Dagbog fra en Ostindiefart 1672-75*, edited by Henning Henningsen, Søhistoriske Skrifter V, Kronborg: Handels- Og Søfartsmuseet, 1953, p. 126.

43. Guillot, Lukman & Salmon, “Les sucriers chinois de Kelapadua,” *Archipel* 39 (1990), p. 149. The grave containing one coin from the town of Kampen (Netherlands) dated from the period 1612-1619, the two cyclical characters *xinchou* 辛丑 engraved on the epitaph may be equated to 1661.

44. See inter alia Ng Chin-keong, “The Peasant Society of South Fukien 1506-1644,” *Nanyang University Journal*, 6 (1972), p. 211.

45. For their transcripts, see Guillot, Lukman & Salmon, “Les sucriers chinois de Kelapadua,” pp. 150-154, 158.

46. Guillot, Lukman & Salmon, “Les sucriers chinois de Kelapadua,” p. 143.



**Map 5** – Map showing the localization of the three cemeteries in Banten. (Adapted from C. Salmon, “Le cimetière chinois de Kasunyatan à Banten Lama”)



**Plate 6** – Overview of the graveyard of Kasunyatan, Banten. (Photo: Puslit Arkenas)

### ***Puzzling Graveyard of Kasunyatan (late 17th-early 18th c.)***

During a Franco-Indonesian archaeological campaign in Banten, between 1988 and 1992, the attention of the archaeologists was attracted by the presence, in the middle of the rice fields, of a strip of land slightly elevated and covered with trees (Plate 6). This plot of land, located on the left bank of the *kali* Banten, some two hundred meters from the Kasunyatan Mosque, and approximately 1 km south of the ancient walls of the city, was in effect a former Chinese cemetery which had been abandoned long ago.

Clearing away the undergrowth allowed us to count some 96 graves in Chinese style, to which should be added some twenty Muslim tombs located to the southwest for two of them and to the northeast for the others, among which two that are regarded as holy or *kramat*.<sup>47</sup> It is so far the biggest complex of ancient Chinese tombs ever found in Java, but it left no trace in the memory of the inhabitants. It is not until the 1960s that, under economic pressure, the local population had the idea of recovering this piece of land in order to plant productive trees. We were unable to find information regarding the legal status of this old cemetery which has never been claimed, although it is located at about 700 m to the west of the great *pesantren* (religious training centre) founded during the reign of Sultan Maulana Yusuf (d. in 1580) whose tomb is still in situ.

<sup>47</sup> C. Salmon, "Le cimetière chinois de Kasunyatan (Banten Lama) - fin XVII<sup>e</sup> - début XVIII<sup>e</sup> s.," *Archipel* 50 (1995), pp. 41-66.





**Plate 7** – Typical Minnan-style grave, the epitaph of which has disappeared, Kasunyatan cemetery. (Photo: C. Salmon, 1992)



**Plate 8** – Epitaph of Lian Qiangong, dated Kangxi wuyi (1698), Kasunyatan. (Photo: Puslit Arkenas)



**Plate 9** – Tomb of Guo Juguan, Kangxi *bingwu* (1706), Kasunyatan. (Photo: Puslit Arkenas)

In contrast to Kelapadua where the graves are largely scattered, in Kasunyatan they are instead tight against one another on a strip of land having a length of approximately 110 m and a maximum width of 40 m. The little space left between the tombs allows us to assume that either the land was very expensive, or that the area conceded to the Chinese had been poorly measured. However, in terms of geomancy the location was excellent.

The tombs are identifiable by small circular mounds at the soil surface. Their state of conservation varies. In a general way, the masonry which covers the top of these tombs is well preserved, but most steles have disappeared (Plate 7), for the simple reason that they have been used for any other purpose by the villagers. The tombstones which have survived are in granite, andesite, and madrepore, as are those in Kelapadua, while their sizes are very similar too. Of the eleven epitaphs, the oldest are datable to [1693] and [1697] (Plate 8) and the most recent to [1721], some are undated or their date is unreadable. As regards the owners of the graves, all men as in Kelapadua, they also come from Zhangzhou prefecture.

### ***Last Cemetery in the Western Pecinan***

When we visited the village of Banten in 1974, the former Western Pecinan had been invested by villagers some of whom lived in the ruined houses left by the Chinese. These new settlers saw in the abandoned cemetery a valuable



**Plate 10** – Old tombstone dated Qianlong 19 (1754), enshrined under a side altar of the Chinese temple, Banten.  
(Photo: C. Salmon)

reserve of stones and they quasi systematically dismantled the tombs of their steles in order to use the latter as gateways in rice fields or as stones for washing. Thanks to the Indonesian Archaeological Service, the oldest funerary steles (18 in all, ranging from 1759 to 1854) were collected and finally sheltered in the Museum Situs Banten Lama. Moreover the rather recent Chinese temple which is located to the north of the former Pecinan even shelters an older epitaph dated 1754 (Plate 10). This epitaph is enshrined under a side altar on which are placed four ancestral tablets that, when opened, indicate the dates of four people who respectively lived from 1737 to 1791, from 1748 to 1808, from 1757 to 1802 and finally from 1770 to 1816.<sup>48</sup> These relics which nowadays embody the history of the former community are worshipped by the pilgrims who come to visit the sanctuary.

These epitaphs and ancestral tablets allow us to cast a last glance at the Chinese community of Banten. The deceased men, one excepted (from Guangdong province), were native to Zhangzhou prefecture. Four tombs belonged to women: one dated 1812 housed the remains of a mother, the Lady

<sup>48</sup>. For more details, see C. Salmon & D. Lombard, “À propos de quelques stèles chinoises récemment retrouvées à Banten (Java ouest),” *Archipel* 9 (1975), pp. 99-127.





**Plate 11**– Tomb of the Balinese lady Huang Jinlian, dated Da Qing *bīngzhēn* (1676, 1736, 1796 or 1856), Western Pecinan, Banten. (Photo: C. Salmon)

Xie Quanniang 谢全娘, and her daughter; another, probably dating from 1796, belonged to Lady Huang 黄, who bears the personal name of Jinlian 金莲 or Golden lotus, but it is stated that she was of Balinese origin. We know from other sources that around this time the Chinese of Java gladly married Balinese women (Plate 11). This Lady Huang was even granted the title of *ruren* 孺人, which in China was conferred upon wives of subordinate dignitaries.<sup>49</sup> Moreover we find the names of three captains (who respectively passed away in 1759, 1791 and 1836) and one lieutenant who died in 1791. After Banten had come under the influence of Batavia, the harbour master or *shahbandar*, who also acted as head of the Chinese community, was replaced by a captain. From 1751 onwards and perhaps earlier, the captain, and the lieutenant under him had to be appointed by the VOC.<sup>50</sup>

49. For more details on Indonesian wives who were given tombs in Chinese style, and eventually Chinese names, see C. Salmon, “Women Status as Reflected in Chinese Épitaphs (16th-20th Centuries) in Insulinde,” *Archipel* 72 (2006), pp. 157-194.

50. Salmon & Lombard, “À propos de quelques stèles chinoises récemment retrouvées à Banten (Java ouest),” pp. 113-114.



**Plate 12** – Sacred tomb of a Bugis lady, dated Qianlong 12 (1747), formerly part of the Chinese cemetery of Tanjung Kait. (Photo: C. Salmon)

### Sacralisation of Ancient Graves

In the late 1970s one could still see some rare remains of former cemeteries. During our successive field works we discovered eight tombs whose owners were for the most part men native to South Fujian, and in one case the Indonesian wife of a Chinese settler.<sup>51</sup> The oldest dates back to 1664 and the most recent to 1801. Seven were found on the north coast of Java, and the eighth in Ambon (Moluccas). From West to East:

#### *Tanjung Kait*

Cape located 40 km north of Tangerang famous by its Chinese temple which is the object of pilgrimages.

A funerary stele of 1747 (Plate 12) located on the left side of the road leading to the temple, not far from it, in a place called Kebon Baru, which formerly was part of a Chinese cemetery. During the second half of the 18th century Tanjung Kait was a centre of sugar production (as we have seen above). It started to decline towards the end of the 18th century in relation to the sugar crisis that shook West Java. This very fact may explain why the Chinese sugarcane growers gradually moved elsewhere, leaving behind an abandoned cemetery.

<sup>51</sup>. See C. Salmon, “À propos de quelques tombes chinoises d’Indonésie,” *Archipel* 12 (1976), pp. 207-218.



**Plate 13** – Tomb of Tumanggung ... dated [1701] located behind the market of Pasar Pagi, Cirebon. (Photo: C. Salmon)

### *Cirebon*

Four graves which are the leftovers of a former cemetery whose location was still indicated on a map of Cirebon from the early 1940s. Two respectively dating from [1701] (Plate 13), one from 1702, and the last from 1765. The two, dating from [1701], are extremely interesting and little-known by the population because they are situated in the backyard of a midwifery school founded in 1922 and whose buildings are at a distance of about 400 m from Sukalila. The owner of one of these tombs is “Tumenggung 淡版公,” a title given to high ranking civil servants. The epitaph is erased and the name of its owner illegible. The two latter tombs are located behind the market of Pasar Pagi, in a closed park, near the street of Sukalila North bordered by the canal of same name. As for the second Tumenggung, Chen Sancai 陈三才 (or Tan Sam Tjay in Hokkien), it is difficult to know if his title appeared on the original stone inscription or not. The dates of Qianlong *yiyou* 乾隆乙酉 (1765) and Guangxu 光绪 30 (1904) seem to be the dates of two successive repairs (Plates 14, 15). On the new tablet engraved when the tomb was repaired in 1904, the title does not appear in the central column but curiously on the right side and is followed by that of Adipati 二把 or “Regent”, after the date. According to the commemorative inscription of 1923 (in Chinese, Malay and Javanese) Chen Sancai was also granted the title of Aria Wira Tjoela by Sultan Sepuh and he was also granted a piece of land in Sukalila.<sup>52</sup> Anyway these two tombs confirm the tradition according to which the Chinese were very influential in Cirebon.

<sup>52</sup>. There are some discrepancies concerning the date of death of Chen Sancai. The modern inscription in Malay states that Chen Sancai passed away in 1739 of the Javanese calendar, which should be equated to the year 1812 of the Gregorian calendar.





**Plate 14** – Overview of the sacred grave of Chen Sancai dated 1765, Cirebon.  
(Photo: C. Salmon)



**Plate 15** – Epitaph of Chen Sancai.  
(Photo: C. Salmon)

## Semarang

Three steles, two of them dating from 1797 (Plate 16) and the third from 1804. They are located south of the city, in a place called Gergaji, on the western side of Jalan Gajah Mada and at the foot of the Hill of Candi.

## Ambon

A tombstone of 1664, repaired in 1913 (Plate 17) located opposite the city across the Bay, in a place called Rumah Tiga that was easily accessed by boat.

An interesting fact is that at least six of these tombs became the object of genuine worship on the part of the inhabitants—newcomers, local born Chinese and even other Indonesians—who do not hesitate to spend money to maintain these historical sites nowadays regarded as sacred—*kramat* in Indonesian. The way in which the cult was formed is not always very clear. The only dates that could give us information about the emergence of the cult are the restorations of monuments: 1904 and 1923 for the tomb of Tumenggung Chen Sancai in Cirebon, 1932 for the tomb of Ambon. One would think that these cults are not very old; they probably appeared at a time when the old burials were beginning to be rare and when ancient cemeteries were disappearing gradually. The contact with the ancestors then crystallized on a few privileged graves in front of which the fervent worshippers questioned the oracle with the use of *beijao* 杯筊 or “divination blocks.”

At Ambon, the encountered devotees told us that it was the grave “of the first Chinese to settle in the island and of his wife”, but in fact the implantation of the Chinese goes back to the Ming.<sup>53</sup> The first Chinese captain appointed by the Dutch in 1625 at Ambon was a Christian named Herman. In Tanjung Kait, the cult took a native form; the tomb bears the name of Kramat Embah Dato Kebon Baru or “Holy Tomb of the Grandmother of Kebon Baru.” There is in effect a set of three large tombs, and two small ones, all considered as *kramat* and visited by pilgrims who come to spend the night nearby and ask the deceased’s help. Sticks of incense and an oil lamp are burning continuously before the graves. Only the largest preserves its stele, which shows that the tomb owner is a woman, presumably a Bugis (transcribed in Hokkien as Bu-git 武吃)<sup>54</sup> whose husband’s surname is Lu 卢 (Plate 12). In Cirebon, the cult rendered to Chen Sancai by the Sino-Indonesians of the place is explained, according to the inscription of 1923, by the fact that during his lifetime this great character had done much to aid his compatriots. The effectiveness of

53. Cf. the excellent study by Seiichi Iwao, “On the Chinese Quarter at Amboyna in the Early Ming,” in *The Tōyō Gakuhō / Reports of the Oriental Society*, vol. XXXIII: 3-4 (Oct. 1950), pp. 1-43 (in Japanese).

54. Wang Dahai 王大海 in his travelogue used the same transcription; cf. *Haidao yizhi* 海岛逸志, ed. Yao Nan 姚楠 & Wu Langxuan 吴琅璇, Xianggang, Xianggang xuejin shudian, 1992, p. 64.

Chen Sancai seems to have affected the neighboring tomb dated 1702 which belongs to a certain Chen Kuanguan 陈宽官. As the two deceased bear the same surname and are native to the same district, the story goes that it is the tomb of the father of Chan Sancai, which is likely.

In Semarang the worship of the two tombs appeared in a different way. When in 1797 (as we saw above) the rather dilapidated tombs of the former cemetery had to be transferred outside of the city, Captain Tan Yok Sing 陈煜生 entrusted the matter to his assistants who asked a master in geomancy to find a suitable location, and the bones contained in jars were placed into two mass graves on which was erected a stele each. The first bearing the characters *Diling tonggui suomu* 地灵同归所墓 “Collective tomb located in an efficacious place” (Plate 16), and the second, a commemorative inscription entitled *Yingxiu tonggui* 营修同归 “Construction of a place where [the deceased] return together,” which briefly retells the transfer process.<sup>55</sup> At the same time, to protect the population from the evil influence of the dead who had been disturbed, a stone bearing the invocation “*Namah Amitâbha* [Honor to the Amitabha Buddha] 南无阿弥陀佛 [Auspicious Peace] *ji'an* 吉安” was fixed into the wall of a house in *Jalan Petolongan* close to the location of the displaced tombs, by fear of the unsettled spirits.<sup>56</sup> After Captain Tan Yok Sing passed away in 1800, his eldest son, Tan Liong Djoe 陈隆裕, replaced him as head of the community. Having seemingly a great compassion for the dead whose remains had been disturbed, he appealed to all notables, including the captains of *Pekalongan* and *Tegal*, to whom he was probably related since they share the same surname. In 1804 he erected a building intended for the cult of the dead (since destroyed). The event was commemorated by a third stele that could still be seen lying on the ground next to the mass graves. The introductory text shows the affliction of the captain and his desire to worship the deceased:

It is distressing to attend a funeral, but to worship the dead is even more distressing. In order to perpetuate the sacrifices, we erected a building of four intercolumnations [dedicated to the souls of the dead]. The faithful, according to their means, secretly make donations that are transmitted to the Nine Sources. Each year, during the Feast of the 3rd day of the 3rd month, all together we offer a banquet. Everyone approved this, and we did erect a stele so that these facts do not fall into oblivion.<sup>57</sup>

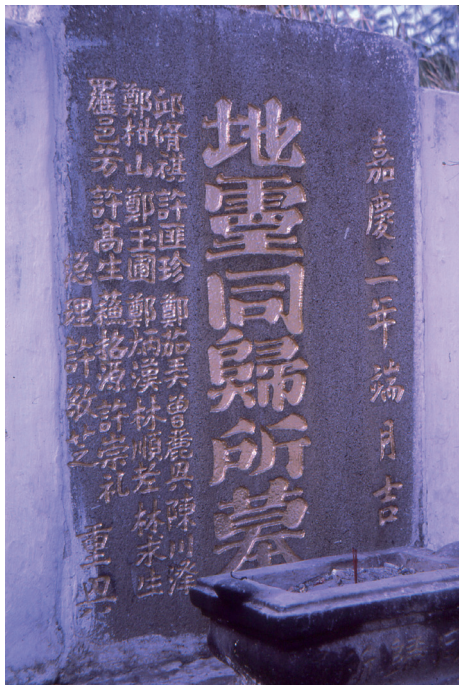
序曰：埋固艰，祭更艰，欲垂祀事於千古，爰建缘屋之四间，同归灵感，士人向前丰约，随其善愿，阴隲施及九泉。每届上巳，共钦奠筵。仝曰：然勒碑不湮。

55. Liem Thian Joe [林天佑], *Riwajat Bangsa Tionghoa di Indonesia. Riwayat Semarang*, Semarang: Kamadjoean, [ca. 1933], pp. 57-58.

56. Liem Thian Joe, *Riwajat Bangsa Tionghoa di Indonesia*, pp. 60-61. The inscription is still *in situ*.

57. See Salmon, “À propos de quelques tombes chinoises d’Indonésie,” pp. 214-218; Franke, Salmon & Siu (eds.), *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Indonesia*, vol. II. Part 1, pp. 405-407.





**Plate 16** – Sacred collective tombstone erected after the transfer of a former cemetery in Semarang, 1797. (Photo: C. Salmon)



**Plate 17** – Sacred tomb said to be of “the first settler in Ambon and of his wife,” dated 1664. (Photo: C. Salmon)

We ignore what happened after Captain Tan Liong Djoe passed away in 1811. However, according to Liem Thian Joe, in the early 1930s the Chinese population of Semarang still used to burn incense at the graves and seek advice from the deceased when they participated in games of chance,<sup>58</sup> and in the 1990s freshly consumed incense sticks could still often be seen in front of the tombs.

The examples presented above show enough that the owners of the graves may be a menace for the living, but also a source of power which may be manipulated. They are also a link between the first settlers whose history is often forgotten and the present communities; this very fact explains why some graves may become the centre of ritual activity emanating from people who are not related to their owners.

### Control and Management of Burial Grounds

We intend to end this essay by reflecting on the way burial grounds were granted in concession by the political authorities, either local or colonial, the manner the Chinese community leaders administrated cemeteries, and made profits from them.

To the best of our knowledge no written sources concerning the cemeteries of the sultanates of Banten and Cirebon have surfaced so far. From what has been said above, one may infer that, as regards Banten, the Chinese based in Kelapadua were rather free to bury their dead within the compound which was at their disposal. It seems that their counterparts residing in town did not enjoy such a free scope. The superficies allotted to burial grounds in Kasunyatan and the Western Pecinan give the impression that either for financial or political reasons the land for cemeteries was given sparingly.

As for Cirebon, the situation seems to have been rather different. If we judge from the huge superficies of the *kramat* of Chen Sancai, and the space occupied by the two tombs of 1701, which are now all in the heart of the city, one may assume that land for cemeteries was granted more generously.

In Batavia the Dutch tried to control Chinese funerary practices and limit the spaces occupied by public cemeteries within the city by implementing a series of taxes and by setting fines to offenders, the amounts of which were supposed to be used for the maintenance of the Chinese Hospital (founded in 1640). For the period 1602-1811, the *Plakaatboek* records a series of rules. A tax on funerals (*graff gelt*), graduated according to the quality of the deceased, was first issued in 1641.<sup>59</sup> Nineteen years later its amount was increased from 2 to 3 rixdollars; while a new tax was added for the engraving of an epitaph which amounted to 12 rixdollars.<sup>60</sup>

58. Liem Thian Joe, *Riwayat Bangsa Tionghoa di Indonesia*, p. 58. The two tombstones are still in situ.

59. *Plakaatboek*, vol. I, pp. 454-455, 2 Dec.- 2 Feb. 1641.

60. *Plakaatboek*, vol. II, pp. 335-336, 11 June 1660.

Further rules were added which concerned the size of the tombs: "It was decided so because it is the habit of this nation to bury only one body in each tomb, which has the consequence of very quickly filling the cemeteries."<sup>61</sup> James Cook who was in Batavia ca. 1771 also insists on this singular use which results in the fact that the Chinese cemeteries around Batavia occupy huge superficies and he says that it is the reason why the Dutch are angry to see such a waste, and sell burial lands to the Chinese at the most exorbitant prices.<sup>62</sup> In 1791 the VOC added a new rule concerning the size of the tombs of the heads of the Chinese. Henceforth their graves shall not exceed a width of 24 feet, a length of 36 and a maximum height of 8 feet, with the possibility to raise the latter to 10 and 11 feet, provided that the earth necessary to this extra height is not taken from the cemetery. As for the tombs of other members of this nation, they should be limited to a width of 8 feet, a length of 12 and a height of 6. The captain is requested to ensure that no one transgresses these new limitations under penalty of a fine of 500 rixdollars.<sup>63</sup>

Further rules were issued that deal with the manner the Chinese must run their graveyards. In particular, they should get rid of all the brushwood twice a year, and dig drainage channels to avoid that water stagnates there.<sup>64</sup> As for rich merchants who wanted to create private graveyards, they also had to obtain a special permission from the VOC.

For the 19th and 20th centuries Dutch regulations are more difficult to come by, but we have an incomplete collection of the records for the Tanjung cemetery<sup>65</sup> owned by the Kong Kuan and entitled *Danrong yizhong bu* 丹绒义冢簿.<sup>66</sup> These archives provide an insight into the manner the Chinese officers administrated the said graveyard and made profit by selling burial grounds in perpetuity.<sup>67</sup> They may be divided into two parts: twenty-three volumes make up the Funeral registers or *Danrong ping'an zongri qingbu* 丹绒平安总日清

61. *Plakaatboek*, vol. X, p. 174, 31 Dec. 1778.

62. James Cook, *A Journal of a Voyage round the World in the "Endeavour,"* 1771, published in *Hawkesworth's Voyages*, 1773; French translation: *Relations des Voyages entrepris par ordre de sa Majesté Britannique act. Régante; pour faire des découvertes dans l'Hémisphère Méridional, et successivement exécutés par le commodore Byron, le cap. Carteret, le cap. Wallis & le cap. Cook*, Paris, 1774, vol. IV, p. 286.

63. *Plakaatboek*, vol. XI, pp. 283-284, 9 August 1791. For more details, see C. Salmon & Myra Sidharta, "The Manufacture of Chinese Gravestones in Indonesia – A Preliminary Survey," *Archipel* 72 (2006), pp. 195-220.

64. *Plakaatboek*, vol. IX, 1766, pp. 503 and following.

65. The common appellation of Tanjung cemetery in fact encompassed five burial grounds: Tanjung, Selipi, Jati, Jelambar and Cidang.

66. These archives, formerly kept in the Chinese Council, are now sheltered in Netherlands at the Leiden University Library (Sinologisch Instituut). Worth of note: The digital version of the Kong Koan Archive of Batavia is online on the website of the Leiden University Library: <http://catalogue.leidenuniv.nl> (Type "Kong Koan" and click "view online," then all links to the archive in the Collection Guide appear).

67. This paragraph is based on the study made by Li Minghuan mentioned above, footnote 23.

簿; the others, called *Zhongdi fengshui bu* 冢地風水簿 or in Malay *Buku Hongsui*<sup>68</sup> are records of purchasing burial grounds. The funeral registers, which cover the period 1811-1896,<sup>69</sup> list all deceased people who belonged to the Chinese community of Batavia of those times regardless of whether they were rich or poor, and regardless in which of the five cemeteries they were buried. They also gathered information about the names and addresses of the dead, birthplace and residence during their youth, their property, sex, and in some cases ethnic origin, their age, and testament, and the size of the tomb. They were Chinese for the great majority, but non-Chinese wives are included. The second registers dealing with purchasing of burial grounds, which are the most voluminous, provide interesting insight into this lucrative trade, and into the manner the deals were made. They cover the period 1812-1944, but are rather complete for the years 1860-1865 and 1872-1878.

According to Li Minghuan the available book accounts reveal “that selling of burial grounds and collecting of land rents formed two stable and long-term revenues for the Batavia Kong Koan of the times.” More precisely, between 1861 and 1906 there are three years for which the revenues gained from selling burial grounds were more than ten thousand guilders per year. “Making use of its surplus fund, the Batavia Kong Koan, for the first time in 1883, could invest 105,850 guilders to buy stocks. However, it should be noted that fifty percent of the revenues gained from selling of burial grounds were used to cover the expenses of the *weeskamer* or Orphan Chamber.<sup>70</sup> Moreover it appears that the Kong Koan acted as the VOC did as regards the privileges granted to certain persons the Company wanted to reward by conceding plots of lands. The relevant records show that the Kong Koan could also give burial plots as a reward to certain persons including the high ranking Chinese officers, employees working for the Dutch, the Kong Koan, as well as the heads of Chinese temples.<sup>71</sup>

## Conclusion

This diachronic overview, even if far from being comprehensive, shows the importance of cemeteries in Chinese *mentalités*, and highlights all the sacrifices that families have been prepared to make in order to give their dead a place to rest in peace, in a pleasant landscape located close to the urban areas where they may easily come to visit the graves and communicate with their deceased. In Indonesia the 20th century saw practically the death of

68. *Hongsui* or *fengshui* 風水, literally “wind and water” is here an euphemism for burial ground.

69. With a few years missing between 1811 and 1852.

70. Li Minghuan, “A Portrait of Batavia’s Chinese Society Based on the Tanjung Cemetery Archives,” pp. 91-93.

71. Li Minghuan, *Op. Cit.*, p. 89.

the big Chinese urban cemeteries in which *burial lots were typically sold in perpetuity*. Temporarily still surviving are the burial grounds inside Christian and public urban cemeteries for which the families of the deceased have to renew the lease every three years or so if they don't want to see the tombs of the latter disappear and the remains of their owners put into mass graves.

The records left by European travelers also reveal the fact that these deathscapes designed by the Chinese of Batavia were to some extent the forerunner of the future cemetery garden and memorial park. Western travelers enjoyed walking in these deathscapes as they did first in the public gardens and later in garden cemeteries of their respective countries.<sup>72</sup>

Cremation, practiced for a long time in some China's Buddhist milieu, which, in the Jakarta of the 1950s-1960s, was for many a choice dictated by the constraints of urban development, has gradually become more acceptable with the emergence of columbaria and gardens of remembrance.

If now the dead have less and less their place within the megacities and metropolitan areas of Indonesia and other Southeast Asian countries,<sup>73</sup> the idea of designing places to shelter the deceased has not disappeared so far. The 21st century is characterised by the creation of private memorial parks located far outside the limits of cities, but in areas which can easily be accessed by road and by air (and which may also have a crematorium and a columbarium). These cemetery gardens, which cater to a rather rich urban population are initiated by great developers: such as Taman Makam Quiling located in Jonggol, in the area of Bogor (2002/2003), funded by Naga Sakti Group;<sup>74</sup> Lestari Memorial Park/Fugui shanzhuang 富贵山庄, in Krawang Barat Km. 46 (2003), managed by a joint venture between PT. Alam Hijau Lestari and the funeral company from Malaysia NV. Multi Corporation Berhad, a subsidiary of Nirvana Asia Ltd which is one of the biggest in the world; it runs memorial parks in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, etc.; Taman Memorial Graha Sentosa/Taigong lingyuan 泰宫陵园, in Kampung Kali Gandu, Teluk Jambé, Karawang (2003), operated by PT. Permata Bumi Kencana, a subsidiary of

72. See for instance the description of La Madeleine Cemetery founded in Amiens in 1811 in Stéphane Conte, *Promenades au cimetière de la Madeleine, précédées d'un précis historique*, Amiens: Imprimerie de Duval et Herment, 1847 (BNF, Gallica), p. 8: "On serait loin de se douter, en passant devant le cimetière de la Madeleine, qu'on est en présence d'un établissement de cette nature, tellement il est gracieux au premier aspect, avec des allées ombrées, ornées de dahlias, des rosiers aux riches couleurs et de vigoureux tilleuls aux troncs desquels s'enroulent les chèvrefeuilles grimpants, et dont le tout forme plutôt l'entrée d'un magnifique parc que d'un lieu destiné aux sépultures."

73. About the planned death of cemeteries in Singapore, see Kevin YL Tan (ed.), *Spaces of the Dead. A Case of the Living*, Singapore: Singapore Heritage Society, Ethos Books, 2011.

74. The Memorial Park has a superficies of 123 hectares. The founder of this group is Suwito Muliadi whose family formerly ran the coffin shop Hiap Djie Hoo in Toko Tiga (Jakarta, Kota); see "Suwito Muliadi: Tidak boleh tamak" 2/5/2012, online: <http://entrepreneur.bisnis.com/read/20120502/267/75177/suwito-muliadi-tidak-boleh-tamak>

Grup Artha Graha which is involved in real estate business. Last but not least, San Diego Hills Memorial Park and Funeral Homes (2007) managed by PT Lippo Karawaci Karawang, and which is based on the renowned Forest Lawn cemetery in Glendale California. San Diego Hills cemetery is said to have “a total area of 500 hectares, which is greater than all public cemeteries owned and operated by the municipality of Jakarta” and where up to five millions people could be buried.<sup>75</sup>

These memorial parks, that have tremendous financial and economic implications, modify the cultural landscape of the surroundings of the cities, and may to some extent transform the mentalities by marketing death and managing all the funeral rituals.

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75. Tom Wright, “Death takes a holiday: a recreational cemetery,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 14 February 2007.



## Appendix

### Changjian Gunung Sari Yishan Biji 倡建牛郎沙里义冢壁记 [1761]

#### Introduction

The text that was conceived by a certain Chen Liyi 陈立义 and composed by the Buddhist monk Gan Jiang 干江, is interesting for three reasons.

First, it shows the great importance of the dead for the living. It also reveals the fear of the Chinese at the idea of not being in a position to handle decent burials of their deceased, as their forefathers did, and their desire to ensure that no abandoned souls will roam the paths.

Second, it highlights the fact that the author of the stele presents the project and the realization of the cemetery as if everything occurred within the Chinese world, without any allusion to the fact that Captain Lim Tjipko 林缉官 (in office 1756-1774, year of his death)<sup>1</sup> had first to obtain the permission of the VOC; in other words, as if the Chinese of Batavia were their own masters, and lived their own lives without interference.

Third, it exposes the willingness of the leaders of the community to engage themselves to enlarge the burial ground by purchasing a new plot of land, and collecting the money for the purpose among the Chinese in Batavia. In effect, apart from the captain, the list includes the four lieutenants (*leizhenlan* 雷珍兰) in office: Khouw Hong Liang 许弘良 appointed in 1756,<sup>2</sup> Lim Kienko 林健官 appointed in 1751, Lim Theecko 林钗官 appointed in 1754,<sup>3</sup> and Thee Ponko 戴牟官 appointed in 1759.<sup>4</sup> It also lists the names of three *boedelmeesters* (*wuzhimi* 武直迷) or “inheritance curators”.<sup>5</sup> Among the donors (74 names) are listed Lian Musheng 连木生, who was portrayed as a literatus in Wang Dahai 王大海’s account,<sup>6</sup> Cheng Guoshi 陈国使 who donated a tablet to the temple of Ancol (in the vicinity of Batavia) in 1755,<sup>7</sup> and a lady, called *Nhai* Jian Shou 翦寿.<sup>8</sup> The list also contains the names of two other captains:

1. Hoetink, “Chineesche officieren te Batavia onder de Compagnie”, p. 54.

2. In the list of lieutenants published by Hoetink, “Chineesche officieren te Batavia onder de Compagnie”, p. 90, the character 弘 is replaced by its Hokkien homophone 芳. Wang Dahai 王大海, *Haidao yizhi* 海岛逸志, Yao Nan 姚楠 & Wu Langxuan 吴琅璇 (ed.), Xianggang, Xianggang xuejin shudian, 1992, p. 45, provides a biography sketch of the lieutenant whose personal name is written as on the stone inscription.

3. In the list of lieutenants published by Hoetink, “Chineesche officieren te Batavia onder de Compagnie”, p. 90, the character *jiao* 钗 stands for *chai* 钗.

4. The captain and his associates formed a Chinese Council, called *gongguan* 公館, that administrated the community under the control of the VOC.

5. Namely Chen Qiaolang 陈巧郎 and Shi Huaguan 施华官 whose names appear in the list of *boedelmeesters* which precedes the *Kai Ba lidai shiji*, p. 19, and a third one, Lin ?chunshe 林口椿舍, unidentified.

6. Wang Dahai, *Haidao yizhi*, pp. 42-43.

7. W. Franke, C. Salmon and Anthony Siu (eds.), *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Indonesia / Yindunxiya huawen mingke huibian* 印度尼西亚华文铭刻汇编, Singapore: The South Seas Society, vol. II, 1 (1997), p. 24.

8. The Malay term of address *Nyai*, which means “Madam”, is transcribed in the inscription with the character 雅 and the radical *nü* 女 that is added below the character.

Huang Jingguan 黄井官 formerly in office in Semarang (Central Java),<sup>9</sup> and Yang Xuanguan 楊璇官, as well as Lieutenant Chen Jingguan 陈静官. These two latter names appear neither in the Chinese lists of captains and lieutenants, nor in the Dutch one.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps Yang and Chen had been simply awarded honorary titles.<sup>11</sup> The main text reads:

9. Huang Jingguan's biography also appears in Wang Dahai, *Haidao yizhi*, pp. 47-49.

10. Cf. Hoetink, "Chineesche officieren te Batavia onder de Compagnie," pp. 8-9; Franke, Salmon and Siu (eds.), *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Indonesia Yindunxiya huawen mingke huibian*, II, 1, pp. 115-116.

11. The text of the inscription was first published by Hibino Takeo 日比野丈夫, "Jakaruta no gyûrôsari gichôhi ni tsuite ジャカルタの牛郎沙里义冢碑について" (About the stele of Gunung Sari in Jakarta), *Nampô bunka* 南方文化 (The Tenri Bulletin of South Asian Studies), June 1974, pp. 41-55. At that time, the stele was embedded in a wall, and its lower part was buried in the earth, so that several characters were missing in each line. Since it has been relocated in the temple courtyard, all the characters are visible, but some are blurred beyond recognition. Moreover, the inscription was recently repainted, sometimes awkwardly. Our gratitude to Mau Chuanhui 毛传慧 who helped us to decipher some characters.

### Wall narrative of the Construction Project of the Collective Cemetery of Gunung Sari

Since we have been trading in Batavia, four cemeteries have been erected.<sup>12</sup> We have buried skeletons for one hundred years.<sup>13</sup> The number of inhumed carcasses [is not less than] ten thousand. This generous action which consisted of gathering the dead bodies and burying them was due to our Chinese forefathers. When [in the past] the people saw an opportunity for doing the right, they did it; as for us, how could we not to accomplish our own duty? The current captain has the heart to rescue the living and is preoccupied to relieve the dead, he endorses the [...] sufferings of others, and accomplishes achievements benefiting [the population].

He assembled like-minded people who in great number promptly took part in the project. Each contributed [...] in order to develop the cemetery of Gunung Sari. Thereupon we can close the tombs, and select lucky spots for the graves. During the cold waves of moonlight nights there are no more souls roaming the paths. When strange birds are weeping in the autumn wind, they reveal that the spirits of the dead have no place to return. Thanks to the support of all the travelers they have escaped the physical sufferings of floods,<sup>14</sup> this is great. Together we plan to celebrate the event and have engraved the names of the donors on a tablet. This is a great action. On the one hand, it equates those of the past by its excellence, and on the other, it brings relief to the deceased. Isn't like the achievements of our forebears who founded four cemeteries? We implore the gods so that this action will not fall into oblivion. Hence this brief outline to inform the future generations so that they may know the origin of this praise.

[The text is appended by a list of 74 Chinese who contributed money for the purchase of the plot of land; each name is followed by the amount of his donation]

Great Qing, Qianlong 26, year *xinsi*, autumn, 8th month.  
Composed by the monk Gan Jiang on an auspicious day.

12. If we except the first burial ground mentioned by de Haan, with the purchases of 1650, 1660/1668, 1696, 1728, and 1746, we reach the figure of five cemeteries.

13. The chronology of cemetery purchases given above shows that the Chinese had been burying their dead for more than one hundred years.

14. Presumably an allusion to the formation of swamps and mires between tombs during the rainy season.

## 倡建牛郎沙里義塚壁記

義塚之建，販吧以來，四定厥基矣。掩骼已經百年，埋髒[奚][啻]萬骨。此我唐先世瘞旅之盛事也。在[昔]人既見義而必為，於吾儕豈當仁而獨讓。現任列位甲百丹濟明為心，賑幽在念，口飢溺，由己之痛，行立建，及人之方[眾]。鳩同志，勛勳勝參，各捐口口口口，復建牛郎沙里，於是馬鬣可封，牛眠是卜。寒潮衝夜月，不作歧路之魂。怪鳥泣秋風，鳴有無家之鬼。免水潦之肌淪髓浹，成旅襯之地厚天高。僉謀告慶，勒石紀名，此盛事也。上以媲美前徽，下而垂澤枯骨，豈不與先世四定厥基之舉，共尸祝於不朽哉，故為略而敘之，以昭後人，知歌頌之所由來云爾。峨峰陳立義謹議。

甲百丹林諱緝官捐金壹千文  
 雷珍蘭林諱健官捐金陸百文  
 雷珍蘭許諱弘良捐金陸百文  
 雷珍蘭林諱釵官捐金肆百文  
 唐恩官 許燦官 陳順官 上各捐金叁百文  
 雷珍蘭戴諱牟官 甲百丹楊諱璇官 雷珍蘭陳諱靜官  
 劉廉使 戴潺官 上各捐金貳佰文  
 武直迷陳諱巧郎 戴旺蘭 鄭尚勳 陳國使 林森官 蔡陽官  
 黃恆官 陳敬官 陳讚官 連金生 連木生 上各捐金壹佰伍拾文  
 甘卓官捐金壹佰壹拾文  
 甲百丹黃諱井官 朱紹官 盧郎官 謝華珍 陳褒官 鄒來官 蔡鎮官  
 雍茂官 陳雙秋 盧甫官 蔣勳官 林廣官 林賢官 陳籍生  
 魏漢官 郭挺官 鄒岱官 黃芳官 王倚郎 魏瑞官 郭榔官 莊蔚官  
 黃詣官 林祥官 上各捐金壹百文  
 林亞官 捐金陸拾文  
 武直迷林口椿舍 陳預官 余[施]官 吳隨官 李桓公 雍養官  
 林理官 楊性官 王乾官 林英官 上各捐金伍拾文  
 林光官 王編官 以上各捐金叁拾貳文貳  
 王嘉官 黃傳官 蔣元官 吳鉢官 許蓬萊 郭錫官 陳訓官 黃州官  
 楊木官 林亨官 盧爻官 王課官 上各捐金叁拾文  
 蔡貴官 吳倪官 林施官 王好官 雍科官 陳貞官 陳漸官 雙翦壽  
 上各捐金貳拾伍文  
 林德郎 黃文官 上俱捐金貳拾文  
 武直迷施諱華官 捐金壹拾文

昔大清乾隆貳拾陸年歲次辛巳秋八月 穀旦立石零頂僧干江敘書





*RICHARD T. CHU<sup>1</sup> AND TERESITA ANG SEE<sup>2</sup>*

## Toward a History of Chinese Burial Grounds in Manila during the Spanish Colonial Period

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### Introduction

In Manila, the Chinese cemetery at La Loma, Huaqiao yishan 華僑義山, built in the nineteenth century, is a sight to behold. Spanning more than fifty hectares, it is “home” to thousands of Chinese buried there. But their tombs are not ordinary tombs. Some are grand mausoleums that appear like a Catholic chapel or a three-story structure with combined architectural styles from the West and the East. Inside one can find stained glass windows, large canvasses of oil paintings of the deceased, marbled floors and tombs, incense holders, chandeliers, or altars bearing both Catholic and Buddhist deities, and—in many cases—a toilet.

A few kilometers away from this cemetery, in different parts of Manila, are still found tombstones bearing the names of Christianized Chinese. Dating back to the eighteenth century, some of these tombstones are used as pavements for the old walled city of Manila, or were excavated from burial sites near or around churches. These remnants invite us to study where the Chinese in Manila buried their dead during the Spanish colonial times. Previous studies have largely focused on examining how the living and colonial authorities interacted, but did not pay enough attention to what happened when and after they died. This essay seeks to fill that gap in our knowledge by focusing on previously unused or underutilized primary source materials to offer a broader history of the Chinese burial grounds in Manila and, in the process, provide a better understanding of the Chinese community in Manila as well as the Spanish colonial regime.

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2. Kaisa Heritage Foundation, Manila.

### Chinese Burial Grounds during the Early 1700s to the Early 1800s

The Chinese, especially from the province of Fujian, had been traveling to the different islands of what now constitutes the Philippines centuries before the Spaniards colonized them in 1565. When the Spaniards settled in the country, the number of immigrants increased, participating in the colonial economy by bringing goods from China that were then shipped via the galleons bound for Acapulco and then traded for silver. In response to the increase in the number of immigrants, the Spanish colonial government in Manila relegated them to a place called the Parián, a place that was relocated nine times between 1582 and 1860.<sup>3</sup> In 1592, the Spanish Governor General bought the island of Binondo and gave it as a residence for the baptized Chinese and their families, while the Parián remained as the primary abode for non-Christian Chinese.<sup>4</sup>

Most Chinese immigrants wished to be buried in their home villages. A large number returned to China before dying to be buried there, or, if they died elsewhere, their bodies were eventually transported back to China for proper burial.<sup>5</sup> But for those who, for some reason, could not be or were not buried in China, they were buried in the “church pavements, walls and atriums.”<sup>6</sup>

Prior to the eighteenth century, in both the Parián and Binondo the Dominican friars had constructed a church and convent for the task of evangelization. Hence, baptized Chinese in these two parishes<sup>7</sup> were buried either inside the churches or in the church grounds. For burial in or around the churches, the arrangement was divided according to class, with the wealthier people being buried inside the church while “commoners” in the

3. See Teresita Ang See and Richard T. Chu, “An Overview of Binondo History,” in Marya Svetlana T. Camacho (ed.), *Manila: Selected Papers of the 20th Annual Manila Studies Conference July 28-29, 2011*, Manila: Manila Studies Association, 2012, pp. 206-228. According to Xavier Huetz de Lempz, there is some confusion on whether to consider the Alcaicería de San José, a Chinese “ghetto” built within the walled city of Intramuros in 1783, a “Parián,” since it was not technically a designated residence for non-Catholic Chinese to reside in. Instead, it was a place where only a limited number of Chinese was authorized to work and live in. Following this line of reasoning, the existence of the last Parián ended in the 1780s, when it was destroyed. Email communication 11 February 2016.

4. However, this division in abode was not strictly adhered to, in that non-baptized Chinese could live in Binondo too.

5. See Terry Abraham and Priscilla Wegars, “Urns, bones and burners: overseas Chinese cemeteries,” *Australasian Historical Archaeology*, 21 (2009), pp. 58-69. The case of a person dying and temporarily buried while awaiting being shipped back to China is another question that needs to be looked into. Where were the bodies temporarily placed?

6. See Lorelei D.C. De Viana, *Three Centuries of Binondo Architecture 1594-1898*, Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 2001, p. 158.

7. Binondo was first placed under the patronage of San Gabriel, and its church was named after its patron saint. Later on in the seventeenth century, its patroness became the Nuestra Señora de Santísimo Rosario (Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary). When the Parián Church was demolished in 1784 it was annexed to the San Gabriel Church in Binondo. See Ang See and Chu, “An Overview,” p. 211.

“simple graves in the adjoining graveyard.” According to some authors,<sup>8</sup> non-Catholics were cremated in the grounds of a Buddhist temple in the town named Bancousay (Bankusay) near the San Lazaro Hospital for lepers. It seems that there existed special cemeteries for infidels.<sup>9</sup> Here we will focus on the remnants of Christian Chinese burial grounds in Binondo, Santa Cruz, Santa Ana, and University of Santo Tomas.

### **Binondo**

Beside the Binondo Church was a cemetery where the Chinese were buried and which existed up to the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>10</sup> Due to differences with the Dominican priests, Binondo Church became a “Filipino” Church and the Chinese tombstones were removed. Some broken pieces with visible Chinese inscriptions existed up to the 1980s. Some pavements are remnants of dismantled Chinese tombs hence the name *piedra china*. These *piedra china* pavements were cemented over during the renovation of the church and a valuable piece of Binondo’s history was regrettably lost then. Aside from a few fragments with Chinese characters, there is only one large piece of tombstone dated 1722 left at the front entrance of the church and belonging to a deceased named Dionicio Coqua. The Chinese characters were apparently deliberately erased. Some Binondo elders surmised that when the Dominicans asked for the removal of the Chinese tombs around the church, the Coqua family (most probably a prominent one), must have asked permission to have the patriarch’s grave remain in the Church and as a concession, the Chinese characters were erased (Plate 1).

Its epitaph in Spanish reads:

AQUI YAZE/	Here lies
JVAN DIONICIO/COQVA.	Juan Dionicio Coqua
FALLEC. EN 27 DE F.DE 1722 AÑ.	who died on February 27 year 1722

The deceased Coqua would most definitely be a Christian Chinese, as shown by the vertical Chinese inscription at the middle of the tombstone and most probably the hometown or province of origins on top.

8. See Michaelangelo E. Dakudao, “The Development of Cemeteries in Manila Before 1941,” *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, 20 (1992), p. 140; Jean Mallat, *The Philippines. History, Geography, Customs, Agriculture, Industry and Commerce of the Spanish Colonies in Oceania*. Trans. Pura Santillan-Castrence. Manila: Historical Institute, 1994 (Orig. pub. 1846), pp. 143-144; and Lorelei D.C. De Viana, *Three Centuries of Binondo Architecture 1594-1898*, p. 158.

9. The provincial superior of the Dominican Order Fray Pedro de Yre, in reporting to the Audiencia why the Christian Chinese who participated in supporting the British against Spain in the Seven Years War of 1756-1763 should be expelled, wrote that they were untrustworthy converts who “burned their dead and buried them in cemeteries designated for infidels.” Cited in Salvador P. Escoto, “Expulsion of the Chinese and Readmission to the Philippines: 1764-1779,” *Philippine Studies* 47 (1999), p. 52.

10. See Chinben See, *The Chinese Immigrants: Selected Writings of Prof. Chinben See*, in Teresita Ang See (ed.), Manila: Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran, Inc., 1992, pp. 288-290.



**Plate 1** – Tombstone of Dionicio Coqua, 1722. Source: Harper, Ana Maria L., *Sta. Cruz Church: A Living Heritage*. Manila: Sta. Cruz Parish Pastoral Council, 2004, Fig. 7.

### *Santa Cruz*

The Santa Cruz Church likewise has a few pieces of tombstones along its perimeters. One of them only records the cyclical year *jiawu* 甲午 (which coincides either with 1714 or 1774) of the Chinese calendar, while the inscription in Spanish gives the year 1719 leaving us with a puzzle. Its inscription reads (Plate 2):

[清]鄧富官墓  
唐甲午歲孟冬穀旦立

ESTA SEPULTURA ES DE/  
IVAN IVGO FA/LLECIO EN 9 DE/  
NOBIEMBRE/DE 1719

Tomb of Deng Fuguan, Qing Dynasty  
erected during the first winter month of the year *jiawu*

This is the sepulture of  
Ivan Iugo who died on  
November 9, 1719

Another inscription, undated, is that of a head of a Chinese community or *capitan* native to Huanggan, Longxi district, Fujian who had what seems to be a local name, transcribed in Chinese characters, and a Chinese name (Plate 3).



**Plate 2** – Tombstone of Deng Fuguan, 1719  
(Photo: C. Salmon, 2015)



**Plate 3** – Tombstone of Cap[itan] Fr[anci]co  
(undated) (Photo: C. Salmon, 2015)



The inscription reads:

龍溪 黃柑	Longxi Huanggan
甲必丹吧蘭絲昔果	Tomb of <i>Capitan</i> Ba-lan-si-guo
三胃勝張賢官之墓	San-wei-lao, Zhang Xianguan <sup>9</sup>
SEPULTURA/DEL. CAP. FR.CO <sup>12</sup>	Sepulture of <i>Cap[itan]</i> Fr[ancis]co

The history of Santa Cruz Church coincides almost with the formation of the Chinese community in the Philippines. In 1590, when the Jesuit Rector, Antonio Sedeño, searched for arable land outside Intramuros to support the College of Manila, he found the swamps and marshes beside Binondo. He leased the land to Christian Chinese and Tagalogs who worked the fields planting rice, corn, and sugarcane. Named after the Holy Cross by the Jesuits, the entire area became a mission village with one or two priests ministering to four hundred Chinese and a hundred natives. The Jesuits' facility with the Chinese language enabled them to help a Chinese Christian community flourish. In just forty years, a prosperous and growing class of *mestizo de sangleyes* emerged who contributed heavily to the Santa Cruz parish.<sup>13</sup>

### *Santa Ana*

Two other eighteenth century tombstones were unearthed nearby the Santa Ana Church in Manila. The *pedra china* tombstones used to hang at the basement of the church.

Santa Ana was one of the oldest residential districts in Manila located at the banks of the Pasig River. It used to be a busy marketplace, where *cascoes* (small wooden boats) traversed the Pasig River to sail all the way to the Laguna de Bay. In 1966, a pre-hispanic graveyard and an extensive array of Chinese ceramics and trade wares were unearthed in the inner patio of the church and surrounding areas by a team of archaeologists of the National Museum led by Robert Fox. It is not surprising that two large pieces of intact tombstones were uncovered in the area. One was dated 1744 (Qianlong 乾隆 9), the other piece had no reign of the emperor, only the cyclical characters *xinhai nian* 辛亥年 which may be equated to 1731 (Yongzheng 9) or 1791 (Qianlong 56). Whether it was 1731 or 1791, together with the 1744 piece, these two items are among the oldest existing tombstones in the Philippines. The artifacts and tombstones were said to have been moved to the National Museum of the Philippines.

11. 吧蘭絲昔果三胃勝 may be identified as the Hokkien transcription of Francisco Samuel.

12. Our thanks to professors José de Encarnação, Pedro Pinto, and Luis Filipe F. Reis Thomaz who kindly transcribed and ascertained the inscriptions in Spanish.

13. See Anna Maria L. Harper, *Sta. Cruz Church: A Living Heritage*, Manila: Sta. Cruz Parish Pastoral Council, 2004, pp. 9-10.

The inscription of the first one which was published<sup>14</sup> reads:

海澄 東厝	District of Haicheng, village of Dongcuo
乾隆九年	9th year of Qianlong
雷示陳貴官墓	Tomb of Luizo, Chen Guiguan
男范孫	erected by his two filial sons
孝男英	同立 Fansun and Ying
女珍娘	and his daughter Zhenniang
AQUI YAZE LUIZO	Here lies Luizo

The Santa Ana district in Manila is unique in that aside from the tombstones and Chinese ceramics unearthed in the area, the district also has the Chinese shrine for the Santa Ana Lao Ma, also known as the Virgen de los Desamparados (Our Lady of the Abandoned). This figure is worshipped as the Catholic Virgin Mary, and at the same time is also the Lao Ma or the Chinese goddess Mazu and worshipped as the Chinese Goddess of Mercy, Guanyin. While religious syncretism is a prevalent practice in the Philippines, this Santa Ana deity is probably the only one worshipped as a Catholic, Buddhist, and Daoist figure at the same time.<sup>15</sup> The presence of this figure in Santa Ana attests further to the strong presence of a Chinese community in the area and the Chinese tombstones found in the church is therefore expected.

### *University of Santo Tomas*

The biggest tombstone still extant, which dates back to 1818, is located as center piece on a pocket garden at the main entrance of the University of Santo Tomas (UST) in Sampaloc district, Manila. It measures 67 cm x 130 cm (26.5 in x 51 in), with flower designs at the four corners. The bottom part is blank, which could be the part that was buried on the ground. Its inscription is rather blurred and the names of the deceased children are illegible.

甫山	Fushan (village of origin)
嘉慶歲次戊寅年桐月吉旦	Jiaqing wuyin by an auspicious day of the 3rd month
顯妣甲必丹娘微沓吳氏之城	Tomb of our beloved mother Vita, wife of <i>capitan</i> Uy
孝男.....	
同立	Erected by her five filial sons and five daughters...
孝女.....	

14. Go Bon Juan 吳文煥 and Teresita Ang See 洪玉華 (eds.), *Heritage: A Pictorial History of the Chinese in the Philippines*. *Wenhua chuan tong* 文化傳統 *FeiHua lishi tupian* 菲華歷史圖片, Manila: Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran, Inc., 1987, p. 54.

15. Teresita Ang See, "Culture, Tradition or Religion," *Tulay Fortnightly*, Vol. XXIV, No. 3, July 5-18, 2011, p. 15. Also Aristotle C. Dy and Teresita Ang See "Syncretism as Religious Identity: Chinese Religious Culture in the Philippines," in Tan Chee Beng (ed.), *After Migration and Religious Affiliation: Religions, Chinese Identities and Transnational Networks*, World Scientific, 2013, Chapter 5, pp. 103-145.

What these tombstones, mostly bilingual, in Binondo, Santa Cruz, and Santa Ana, and UST have in common is the presence of Christian names. As mentioned earlier, during the Spanish occupation, the Chinese were forced to live within the Parián and only those baptized as Christians could live outside. That those tombstones were found in the churches showed that the families were baptized Christians. The sons and daughters likely were Christianized and products of mixed marriages. The presence of the village or place of origin in China and the Chinese dates (using the reign of the Qing dynasty emperor) were concessions to the Chinese origins of the deceased or the surviving immediate relatives.

### The Move Toward Extramural Burial Grounds

The Enlightenment in Europe resulted in new ways of thinking about hygiene and the public management of health and sanitation. A Royal Ordinance from the king of Spain issued on 27 March 1789 decreed that cemeteries in Spain should be built in the outskirts of the cities.<sup>16</sup> This provision was applied to the colonies, including the Philippines, in another royal decree issued on 15 May 1804. The dead were not to be interred in parishes; and instead be buried in cemeteries located at some distance from the city and that were “well-ventilated, enclosed by a wall or a fence and marked by a cross.”<sup>17</sup> The first “extramural” cemetery to be built in Manila was the Paco Cemetery. Built in 1823<sup>18</sup> after a cholera epidemic struck Manila and its environs, this cemetery became the “resting place of...Spaniards, indios, and mestizos who came from the different parishes [of] Ynamuros, Binondo, Quiapo, San Miguel, Santa Cruz, Sampaloc, Tondo, Ermita, and Malate.”<sup>19</sup> Circular in shape, the Paco Cemetery had two concentric walls containing three levels of niches for the dead. In between the walls was a walkway and an elliptical chapel stood in the center of the cemetery.<sup>20</sup> Here, burial also was stratified, with Spanish

16. Dakudao, “The Development of Cemeteries,” p. 140.

17. See Xavier Huetz de Lemp, “La controversia de las sepulturas en Filipinas. El cementerio, escenario de tensiones entre el poder colonial y el clero (finales del s. XVIII – finales del s. XIX),” in Gonzalo Álvarez Chillida, María Dolores Elizalde and Xavier Huetz de Lemp (eds), *Misión Católica y Poder Colonial. Cooperación y Conflicto en la Renovación de los Imperios Ibéricos (1808-1930)*, Madrid, Casa de Velázquez, Collection de la Casa de Velázquez, 2016 (forthcoming book chapter).

18. A Royal Ordinance was issued in 1807 for this cemetery to be built, but it took years before “Manila’s faithful” stopped opposing its construction. A Chinese contractor built the outer portion of the cemetery for the sum of 19,000 pesos. Dakudao, “The Development of Cemeteries,” p. 143.

19. See Lorelei De Viana, “The World of the Necropolis: Public Sanitation and Cemeteries in 19th Century Manila,” *Unitas* 77 (2004), p. 93. See also Dakudao, “The Development of Cemeteries,” p. 263.

20. See Paul A. Rodell, *Culture and Customs of the Philippines*, Westport, CT; London: Greenwood Press, 2002, p. 93; and Fred Atkinson, *The Philippine Islands*. Boston, Chicago, New York, London: Ginn and Company, 1905, p. 223.

governors and bishops buried inside the chapel, and the Spanish *insulares* or *peninsulares*, as well as influential mestizos in the inner circular wall niches.<sup>21</sup> Natives were buried in the outer circular walls, although they were buried between the “other and the inner circles” and were “interred without coffins.”<sup>22</sup> The cemetery was closed in 1912 during the American occupation and was left uncared for years.<sup>23</sup> It was formally declared as a National Park in 1966 (Plate 4).

However, it should be noted that before the Chinese cemetery was built, the Catholic Chinese were also interred in this cemetery.<sup>24</sup> With the coming of many British merchants in the nineteenth century, an English cemetery was established in San Pedro, Macati, in the 1860s.<sup>25</sup> Other cemeteries include those in Santa Cruz, Balic-Balic (Sampaloc), Tondo, Maytubig, Malate, Pandacan, and Santa Ana, which were all closed by 1913.<sup>26</sup>

21. Atkinson, *The Philippine Islands*, 1905, p. 224, describes the cemetery as follows: “On the thick, solid walls are three parallel rows of horizontal recesses or niches, each capable of admitting a good-sized coffin, and here are deposited the bodies of those whose relatives are able to pay. After the funeral ceremonies and interment in one of these spaces the entrance is bricked up and a plate fixed outside stating the name and age of the lonely occupant. He is thus left undisturbed for a period of years, at the expiration of which time the bones of the deceased are either buried in one of the churches or else taken from the coffin and thrown upon a bone pile in the rear of the cemetery.”

22. Atkinson, *The Philippine Islands*, pp. 223-4. Mallat, *The Philippines*, pp. 342-43, describes that the body “is enclosed in a bier made of hard wood or molave, with sufficient food, *sipit*, paper, candles and some other objects, and it is inhumed at ground level in Bancousay... and the spot is covered with stones. As a sign of mourning, during the ceremony they wear a black silk band around the neck. In China mourning is in white....”

23. According to the report made by the Philippine Commission, the Paco and La Loma cemeteries were placed under the city department and that niches or vaults in the former had been increased to 1,760, or “which 1,259 are reserved for adults and 501 for children.” See Bureau of Insular Affairs, War Department, *Fifth Annual Report of the Philippine Commission. Fourth Annual Report of the Philippine Commission, Part I*, Washington: Government Printing Office, 3 parts, 1904, p. 594.

24. Mallat, *The Philippines*, p. 341. In 1859, “as a result of [another] cholera epidemic that ravaged Manila,” Governor General Fernando de Norzagaray expanded the cemetery to 4,500 square yards. See Ramón Ma. Zaragoza, *Old Manila*, p. 71. James, quoting Bantug, writes that the earliest outbreak of cholera in the Philippines dates back to 1628. In the nineteenth century, the “properly documented” cases of cholera include the years 1820, 1821, 1822, 1823, 1830, 1842, 1854, 1863-1865, 1882-1885, 1889-1889, while other dates were mentioned by Dean Worcester; namely, 1812, 1843, 1887, 1890, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1896 and 1897, though these were “not properly documented.” See Saliba James, “Cholera Epidemic and Evolution of Control Policy: A Look at the Spanish Era in the Philippines,” in Bernardita Reyes Churchill (ed.), *Selected Papers of the Annual Conferences of the Manila Studies Association 1989-1993*, Manila Studies Association, Philippine National Historical Society, and National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 1994, p. 130. Note that the year 1859 is not listed as neither one of the “documented” nor “improperly documented” case of cholera as listed in James’ study. Other cemeteries were subsequently built in a number of prominent towns.

25. Dakudao, “The Development of Cemeteries,” p. 143.

26. Dakudao, *Op. cit.*, p. 144.



**Plate 4** – Niches inside the desecrated Paco Cemetery (Photo: C. Salmon, 2015)

### *Foundation of the Chinese Cemetery of La Loma*

On 25 November 1843, the Governor General of the Philippines issued a decree that authorized the establishment of a Chinese cemetery in La Loma.<sup>27</sup> The reason for the creation of this cemetery may have been connected to the cholera epidemic that struck Manila and its environs in the same year.<sup>28</sup> In line with the specific recommendation that extramural cemeteries be built on land not only far enough from a populous place but that it also be built at an elevated place so that the wind could blow away the miasma, which was thought to spread the disease,<sup>29</sup> the choice of La Loma in the district of Santa Cruz as the burial ground was ideal. The cemetery is situated two kilometers north of Manila and sits on hilly land. Moreover, the cemetery was established initially for Catholic Chinese due to one of the provisions of the decree that prohibited the burial of the Christian Chinese in Paco.<sup>30</sup>

27. See Sanidad de Cementerios, SDS 5758, National Archives of the Philippines, Manila, folio S581. It was under the governorship of Francisco de Paula Alcalá de la Torre, who held the position from 17 June 1843–16 July 1844, that this decree was issued. On 31 March 1875, José Segui, who was the Roman Catholic archbishop of Manila from 1830–1845, gave his blessing to this decree. See Exhumaciones 1850–1878, Genealogical Society at Utah, Reel 1357033.

28. In the nineteenth century, the “properly documented” cases of cholera include the years 1820, 1821, 1822, 1823, 1830, 1842, 1854, 1863–1865, 1882–1885, 1889–1889, while other dates were mentioned by Dean Worcester; namely, 1812, 1843, 1887, 1890, 1892, 1893, 1894, 1896 and 1897, though these were “not properly documented.” James, “Cholera Epidemic,” p. 130.

29. Huetz de Lempis, “La controversia de las sepulturas en Filipinas.”

30. See Exhumaciones 1850–1878, Genealogical Society at Utah, Reel 1357033. Why this was



In the 1850s, Lim Ong 林旺,<sup>31</sup> running for *gobernadorcillo* of the Chinese, (called *capitan* 甲必丹 by the latter), promised in his campaign to buy more land for the cemetery.<sup>32</sup> The reason for this expansion was the need for more space to bury victims of the “Chinese epidemic,” i.e., cholera, that struck the Islands in 1854. Lim fulfilled his promise upon being elected to the position.<sup>33</sup> This expanded plot of land in the cemetery was called “dian chuy” 沾水 or *zhanshui* in Mandarin which literally means “dabbed with water” but refers to the act of being baptized.<sup>34</sup> The reason for this monicker was that Lim Ong as *capitan* of the Chinese community of Manila had to be baptized, i.e. with holy water.<sup>35</sup> In time, this section was called as such in order to distinguish it from the area where non-Catholic Chinese were buried.

In 1876, *gobernadorcillo* Mariano Fernando Yu Chingco (or Yang Zunqin) 楊尊親<sup>36</sup> and the leaders of the *gremio de sangleyes* (guild of the Chinese) sent a petition to the Governor General seeking permission yet to further expand the cemetery.<sup>37</sup> As in Malaya and in other European colonies in Southeast Asia, the number of Chinese settling in the colonies began to grow in the latter part of the nineteenth century.<sup>38</sup> In 1864, the total number of Chinese in the Philippines was placed at 18,000. Twelve years later, the number was up to 30,797, half of whom lived in Manila.<sup>39</sup> On 19 June 1877, the Spanish Governor General approved the petition but imposed certain conditions, as will be described in some detail below.

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so could not be ascertained in the absence of an extant copy of the decree.

31. Lim was from “Liang Kui, Cheong Chiew 龍溪, 漳州” in Fujian. See *Philippine-Chinese Charitable Association 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*, Manila: Philippine-Chinese Charitable Association, 1968, p. 5; and *Feilubin huaqiao shanju gongsuo: jiushi zhounian jinian kan* 菲律賓華僑善舉公所：九十週年紀念刊, Manila: Philippine-Chinese Charitable Association, 1968, 甲, p. 56.

32. See Edgar B. Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898*, Quezon City, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University, 2000 (Orig. pub. 1965), p. 185.

33. Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life*, p. 185, writes that in the mid-1850s, the Chinese *gobernadorcillo* and the principales requested permission to improve the road leading to the cemetery. However, this was not approved because “it involved the transfer of some land, which the Spanish were unwilling to allow.” Whether this request was made before or after Lim purchased more land for the cemetery is not clear.

34. See *Philippine-Chinese Charitable Association*, p. 5.

35. See *Philippine-Chinese Charitable Association*, p. 5.

36. His Chinese name is “楊君尊親” and his full name is Mariano Fernandez Yu-Chingco (sic). See Feilubin huaqiao, Genealogical Society at Utah, 1939, Reel 1407489, 45. He was from Nan’an 南安. *Philippine-Chinese Charitable Association 90th Anniversary*, p. 5. A photo of Yu Chingco can also be found in De Viana, *Three Centuries of Binondo architecture 1594–1898*, p. 185.

37. See Sanidad de Cementerios, SDS 5758, folio S581.

38. See, for example, the Chinese in Malaya in Lee Kam Hing, “State Policy, Community Identity, and Management of Chinese Cemeteries in Colonial Malaya” in this issue.

39. See Richard T. Chu, *Chinese and Chinese Mestizos of Manila: Family, Identity, and Culture*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010, p. 66.

In early 1878, Yu Chingco “bought a tract adjacent to the previous cemetery from the Provincial of the Dominican Order” at a cost of 14,000 pesos.<sup>40</sup> This lot with its improvement was commonly known as the Chinese cemetery and hospital on the “Sin Sien Sua” 新仙山<sup>41</sup> or the “new cemetery”.<sup>42</sup> Hence, the earlier plot of land in the cemetery became the “old cemetery” or “Ku Sien Sua 舊仙山”.<sup>43</sup> The division of the Chinese cemetery into the “old” and “new” can also be seen in a document dated 7 June 1878 stating that the provincial of the Dominican order José Hevia Campomanes received the sum of money to sell east of the “old Chinese cemetery” (*antiguo Cementerio de Chinos*).<sup>44</sup>

According to Edgar Wickberg, by 1880 the “Chinese of Manila had a community cemetery” and the major function of this cemetery was to provide a place to “bury the poor.”<sup>45</sup> However, this statement by Wickberg needs to be qualified. As seen in the previous paragraphs, the cemetery was first established to bury the Catholic Chinese, and historical records demonstrate that they, who were mostly well-to-do, continued to be buried in the “old” section of the cemetery. For example, in May 1872, Adriano Chio-Sontiang, a Catholic Chinese living in Binondo, declared that he wished to transfer the mortal remains of his “very beloved father” the Chinese Christian Don Antonio Alberto Chio-Gosiang found in a niche of the General Cemetery of Paco to a “tomb that (he) was constructing in the Christian Cemetery of La Loma.”<sup>46</sup> Francisco Ong Machi made on 5 May 1874 a similar request to have his father José Castro Ong Chengco’s body exhumed and transferred from the “Cementerio general de Manila” [i.e., Paco] to the “Cementerio de Loma.”<sup>47</sup> Visiting this section of the cemetery today, one can find the tombs of other Catholic Chinese such as Vicente Romero Sy Quia (Plate 9) and Ignacio Sy Jao Boncan (Plate 10).<sup>48</sup> Thus, to qualify Wickberg’s statement, by 1880, the Chinese of Manila indeed had a community cemetery for both the wealthy and the poor, the Catholic and non-Catholic.<sup>49</sup>

40. See Wickberg, *Chinese in Philippine Life*, p. 185. According to *Philippine-Chinese Charitable Association 90th Anniversary*, p. 5, the date of purchase was 27 April 1878.

41. The term 仙山, which literally means “Mountain of the Immortals,” is presumably an euphemism for “cemetery.”

42. See *Philippine-Chinese Charitable Association*, p. 5; and *Feilubin huaqiao*, 甲, p. 56.

43. *Philippine-Chinese Charitable Association*, 甲, p. 56.

44. Sanidad de Cementerios, SDS 20269, folio S666B.

45. Wickberg, *Chinese in Philippine Life*, p. 185.

46. See *Exhumaciones 1850–1878*, Reel 1357033.

47. See *Exhumaciones 1850–1878*, Reel 1357033. While it is not explicitly stated in this case that the cemetery in La Loma was the Chinese cemetery, the other “La Loma” cemetery, which was formerly known as the Binondo cemetery, was not built until 1884.

48. Ignacio Sy Jao Boncan died on 23 May 1889, at the age of fifty-five, while Vicente Romero Sy Quia on 9 January 1884. For more information about Boncan and Sy Quia, see Chu, *Chinese and Chinese Mestizos*, pp. 157–158 and p. 306, respectively. Today, the place is deserted and many tombs are neglected or deteriorating.

49. Another source mentions that the Chinese cemetery was also a place where “(v)ictims



**Plate 5** – Overview of the Chong Hok Tong as it stood in 2011. (Photo: Anson Yu)



**Plate 6** – Interior of the Chong Hok Tong in 2011. (Photo: Anson Yu)

### ***Erection of a Cemetery Temple, the Chong Hok Tong***

The Chong Hok Tong 崇福堂 or “Lofty Fortune Temple” was built for worshipping purposes (Plates 5-6). Its interior sheltered Buddhist and Daoist as well as Christian deities, while ancestral tablets were displayed on lateral altars. Gobernadorcillo Carlos Palanca Tan Quien-sien 陳謙善 (d. 1901) is credited for financing and building the temple. It was built at a cost of 33,980 pesos,<sup>50</sup> and was fashioned after South Fujian-style temples as well as those found in Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, and Taiwan. However, it was appended by two lateral syncretic structures for the hanging of two European style bells, as recorded in the stele of 1879 enlisting the expenses related to the development of both the cemetery and the building the sanctuary (see Appendix 1). This stele, along with two other, one recording the names of donors and the amounts they donated (broken and hardly decipherable), and the other the rules and regulations of the cemetery, also erected in 1879 (see Appendix 2), were sheltered inside the temple. During the demolition of the sanctuary on 12 March 2015 to give way to a new structure, these three tablets were badly damaged, and for one even broken into several pieces (see Plates 7 and 8), and are presently locked inside a temporary edifice at the back of the former sanctuary.<sup>51</sup>

### **The Cemetery Complex as Mirror of Chinese Unity<sup>52</sup>**

Although the stele recording the names of some 890 donors and entitled *Chuangjian xin xianshan juanti fangming* 創建新仙山捐題芳名 is damaged, and difficult to read (plate 7), one may nevertheless glean some insights into the structure of the Chinese community of that time. The fact that since the development of the old cemetery Christian and non-Christian may be buried inside a common burial ground, even if inside separate sections existed, allows us to perceive within the community a certain number of groupings, of leaders, and of individuals.

As regards the groupings they are related to the place of origin in China. The migrants fall into two main groups: the people from Fujian, and those from Guangdong. The first were in turn divided according to their districts of

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of the numerous cholera outbreaks were also buried” here. See Ivan Man Dy and Go Bon Juan, “Cemetery tales,” in Teresita Ang See et al. (Eds.), *Tsinoy: The Story of the Chinese in Philippine Life*, Manila: Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran, Inc., 2005, p. 226. However, it should be noted that the Paco Cemetery was also built specifically for this purpose. Was there a shift in colonial policy that designated the Chinese cemetery as the burial site for the deceased who died from communicable diseases? See Zaragoza, *Old Manila*, p. 71. And if so, why?

50. See Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life*, p. 185; *Philippine-Chinese Charitable Association*, p. 6.

51. The officers of the Chinese Charitable Association said an exact replica of the steles was ordered from Huian, Fujian. Our thanks to Claudine Salmon for assisting in the translation of these steles.

52. Our thanks to Claudine Salmon for contributing this section of the essay.





Plate 7 – Two steles recording the lists of expenses for the New cemetery and the temple, and of the donations, 1879. Source: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/wv7eypgfi69w8od/AADvzlr8le9zuvywAlkDWHEa?dl=0>

origin: Jinjiang 晉江, Nan'an 南安, Tongan 同安, Longhai 龍海, Yongtai 永泰, Huian 惠安, Haicheng 海澄, and Anxi 安溪 which allows us to presume that they had in Manila their respective associations which collected the contributions made by their members. The migrants from Guangdong, far less numerous, were regrouped into a single association named Guangdong huiguan 廣東會館.

Among the biggest donors we notice also the names of three firms big enough (perhaps wholesalers involved in import export) to contribute independently, namely Shunfa hang 順發行, Shangjia hang 上架行, and Changhe gongsi 長合公司, the *cabecillas* (or *towkays* 頭家) of which remain unknown.

More difficult is the question of the community leaders. If the names of Tan Quien-sien Carlos Palanca, and that of Yu Chingco appear (without their title of *capitan*) in good position among the board founding members, we find







**Plate 10** – Tomb of Ignacio Sy Jao Boncan at the Chinese cemetery in La Loma, 1889. (Photo: Richard Chu, 2015)

amidst donors the names of five *capitans* (with their titles). Only two can be identified: the first Tan Chuey-liong 陳最良 who, according to Wickberg is no other than *Capitan* Carlos Palanca,<sup>53</sup> the second, Yu Cing 楊親 or Yu Chingco. As for three others, Huang Bang 黃邦, Zeng Zhu 曾祝, and Ye Dan 葉丹 (who is listed among the administrators as Ye Naidan 葉迺丹), they do not appear in other sources. The composition of this elite group whose members for the most part were recent immigrants may explain why the cemetery regulations they formulated were so Chinese group oriented.

The rest of the list records a great majority of male individuals who appear under their Chinese names so that it is impossible to differentiate the Christians from the non-Christians.

### Administration of the Chinese Cemetery

As in British Malaya, the responsibilities of managing the cemeteries fell under the responsibility of municipalities or sanitation boards, and who in turn “were responsible to the state governments.”<sup>54</sup> The Chinese cemetery of La Loma was under the jurisdiction of the district of Santa Cruz, which was answerable to the *Ayuntamiento de Manila* (Municipal Government of Manila).

53. Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life*, pp. 200, 249.

54. See the article of Lee Kam Hing in this issue.

In terms of the governance, the Spanish colonial government assigned the Chinese *gobernadorcillo* or the *capitan* to take charge of the Chinese cemetery of La Loma. In 1870, the *gremio* established the *Shanju gongsuo* 善舉公所 or the Chinese Charitable Association.<sup>55</sup> In the stele of 1879 concerning the regulations (Appendix 2) the term used to refer to this association seems to be *Gongli suo* 功力所 or Hall of the Merits. Through this association, the Chinese leaders oversaw the operations not only of the Chinese cemetery but also the Chinese hospital, and later on, the Anglo-Chinese school.

A closer examination of the new rules and regulations set forth in 1879 gives us an idea of how the association was supposed to run the cemetery. For instance, specific dimensions were provided in terms of the size of each burial plot. Another set of rules pertains to who could be buried in the land of the Hall of Merits, including the prohibition of burying anyone who was *indio* (Appendix 2, Paragraph 6). However an exception was made for the brother-in-law of *Capitan Ongpin*,<sup>56</sup> namely Doroteo Ricafort (and his close family) who facilitated the establishment of the cemetery (Appendix 2, Paragraph 8). The burial plot of the *gongli suo* was also divided into two, one for the Christians and another for non-Christians (Appendix 2, Paragraph 7). A map from the “General Report of the Chinese Community for the Years 1933-1937” demonstrates where exactly these two plots were located, i.e., just west of the Chong Hok Tong.<sup>57</sup> Finally, the new guidelines also outlined the duties of the cemetery watchman, as well as of the *capitan* and the other administrators (see Appendixes 1 and 2).

As other studies have pointed out, the Catholic Church never stopped being involved in the administration of these “secular” cemeteries.<sup>58</sup> This also was true in the case of the Chinese cemetery. When in 1877 *gobernadorcillo* Yu Chingco petitioned the Spanish authorities to allow the expansion of the Chinese cemetery of La Loma, the Spanish government approved the petition but attached certain conditions. These conditions included the creation of a board to assist the Chinese *capitan*, and whose members consisted of not only the Governor General and other important members of the Spanish community but also Dominican priests who were to be designated by their provincial

55. Chu, *Chinese and Chinese Mestizos*, p. 109.

56. The donors' list includes the names of Ong Yek Pin (Wang Yibin 王翼彬), identified as Simon Ongpin, who was in the board of members who supervised the construction and running of the cemetery and Chong Hok Tong. Doroteo Ricafort was the husband of Raymunda Ongpin, sister of Roman Ongpin. Ongpin's great grandson, Rafael Ongpin provided the above information.

57. The division on this map consisted of an “old plot of land belonging to the *gongli suo*” or *jiu gongli di* 舊功力地 and next to it a new one or *xin gongli di* 新功力地, both being located close to the Chong Hok Tong, on the left side. See “General Report of the Chinese Community for the Years 1933-1937,” Genealogical Society at Utah, Reel no. 1407489, item 8.

58. Huetz de Lempis, “La controversia de las sepulturas en Filipinas.”

superior.<sup>59</sup> As Huetz de Lempis points out,<sup>60</sup> even with the transference of the administration and maintenance of cemeteries from the hands of the Catholic Church to the civil administration, the civilian authorities, wary of handing total control of cemeteries over to the natives, and recognizing still that cemeteries could not be divorced from religious practices, accommodated church demands and involvement in the running of cemeteries. Hence, it is not surprising that directives sent by the civilian government to the leadership of the Chinese *gremio* contained matters of concern belonging to the realm of the Catholic Church.

### **Record Keeping**

An archival document from 1870 shows a report from the district that listed the number of the dead, according to ethnicity (Spaniards, Spanish mestizos, *indios*, Chinese mestizos, Christian Chinese), interred daily in its cemeteries.<sup>61</sup> Various reports were collected and tabulated by the Beneficencia Municipal de Manila (Municipal Charity of Manila) under the office of the Governor General.<sup>62</sup> Records show that by 1889 a General Inspector of Welfare and Health, a division of the Civil Administration, had already been established to check compliance by municipalities or sanitation boards with local ordinances or decrees.<sup>63</sup>

In mid-1889, the General Inspector of Welfare and Health proposed that the burial of the Chinese (and of Protestant foreigners) could only be conducted with proper medical certification that would attest, among other things, to the cause of the person's death.<sup>64</sup> Such a practice was mandatory for those buried in other Catholic cemeteries and was being enforced so that the government could collect "demographic and health statistics...with the 'greatest accuracy'."<sup>65</sup> Hence, upon the death of a certain Chinese individual, the following documents were submitted to the city government: 1) the *cedula*

59. See *Philippine-Chinese Charitable Association*, pp. 5-7.

60. Huetz de Lempis, "La controversia de las sepulturas en Filipinas."

61. See Defunciones de Chinos, Genealogical Society at Utah, Reel no. 1213058, item 3.

62. Defunciones de Chinos, Reel 1213058, item 3. In the Genealogical Society at Utah, under the index heading "Binondo-Civ. Reg." can be found an index of deceased individuals from various places, including those from Binondo. See Reel 1717420. These were microfilmed from the National Archives of the Philippines, and in each index can be found the name of the deceased; the year the person died; place and date of death; and record locator, i.e., where the record of the death is found. The records are found in a file named "Registro de Defunciones en todos distritos de Manila, 1856-1894." These index cards are arranged alphabetically by name.

63. De Viana mentions a Junta Superior de Sanidad or Bureau of Health that acted in conjunction with the Municipal Government to oversee the health and sanitation situation in Manila. See De Viana, "The World of the Necropolis," p. 106.

64. It should be noted that the Protestant foreigners were buried in San Pedro Macati.

65. See Sanidad de Cementerios, SDS 5758, folio S961. The department also stipulated that the government should fix the amount that doctors could charge for such service.



*de capitacion personal* or head tax certificate of the deceased; 2) a signed document from the Chinese *gobernadorcillo* certifying the death of the person; and 3) the medical certification from a doctor citing the cause of death.

The head tax certificate of the person contains his place of birth, age, marital status, profession, and address.<sup>66</sup> The *gobernadorcillo*'s certification of death includes a statement from the Chinese *gobernadorcillo* certifying the death of a certain person; date of death; number of the deceased in the Chinese register; his head tax certificate number along with his tax classification and the date of issue of the tax certificate; and his burial place.<sup>67</sup>

As for the doctor's certificate, the following information are found: name of the Chinese doctor; name of the deceased; age; street address; *patente personal* number; time of death; cause of death (in both scientific name and "equivalent"); signature of the Chinese doctor (in both Chinese and Roman alphabet); signature of the Chinese *gobernadorcillo*; and signature of two "principales."<sup>68</sup>

The Chinese *gremio* kept its own records. An item from 1898 shows that the list kept by the *gremio* contains the name of the deceased, date of death (both in Chinese and Western calendar), whether they were buried in the old (舊義山) or the new cemetery (新義山), where the burial plot is located; and place of birth (including some that indicate "unknown" or *buzhi* 不知).<sup>69</sup>

### *Issues in Running the Chinese Cemetery*

But even with the civil administration and the Catholic Church closely watching over the administration of the Chinese cemetery and making sure its operation conformed to civic and moral norms, problems were bound to arise. Some of these issues could be found in the records found under "Sanidad de Cementerios". Below is a description of some.

One of the conditions that Spanish civil authorities provided for the setting up of an extramural cemetery was its proper fencing. This was to prevent people from considering it as a public space or from animals digging up the remains of the dead.<sup>70</sup> However, it seems that the fence was not always maintained. On 5

66. See Defunciones de Chinos, 1890-1897, Genealogical Society at Utah, Reel no. 1716604, item 3. It seems that these documents were collected at the Beneficencia Municipal de Manila, as seen in [http://www.werelate.org/wiki/Source:Manila\\_\(Filipinas:\\_Provincia\).Servicio\\_M%C3%A9dico\\_Defunciones\\_1885-1895](http://www.werelate.org/wiki/Source:Manila_(Filipinas:_Provincia).Servicio_M%C3%A9dico_Defunciones_1885-1895). For the digitized records pertaining to births, index to births, index to marriages, deaths, index of deaths, and number of those buried by cemetery, see <https://familysearch.org/search/image/index#uri=https%3A%2F%2Ffamilysearch.org%2Frecapi%2Fsord%2Fwaypoint%2F3L72-HZ9%3A233582501%2C233937601%3Fcc%3D1935452>. It is also indicated in the Genealogical Society at Utah website that the documents belong to Bundle #6 from 1890-1897.

67. See Defunciones de Chinos, 1890-1897, Genealogical Society at Utah, Reel no. 1716604, item 3.

68. See Defunciones de Chinos, Genealogical Society at Utah, Reel no. 1213058, item 2.

69. See The Chinese Cemetery, Genealogical Society at Utah, Reel no. 1407481.

70. Huetz de Lemp, "La controversia de las sepulturas en Filipinas."



April 1889, the alderman designated as inspector of cemeteries reported to the *corregidor* (mayor) of Manila that on the previous day some Chinese had set fire around the premises of the cemetery and burned down most of the bamboo fencing encircling the cemetery. One of those who set the fire was detained but was released the following day after the Chinese *gobernadorcillo* paid a fine of ten pesos. The *gobernadorcillo* was cited for failing “to exercise due vigilance” over these individuals and ordered to rebuild the fence.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, in 1895 the archbishop of Manila pointed out to the Governor General that the administration of the Chinese cemetery was “extremely irregular” and that the Chinese cemetery should “not be exempted from having an enclosure, as this was prescribed by both canonical and civil law, in order to observe hygiene, create a better view, and to avoid the desecration of graves [by animals].”<sup>72</sup>

Apart from considerations for hygiene, issues related to public morality and religious beliefs directed the running of the Chinese cemetery. As mentioned above, even though extramural cemeteries in the nineteenth century fell under the jurisdiction of the civilian government, the Catholic Church continued to play a role in the administration of the cemeteries.<sup>73</sup> The observance of proper conduct within the premises of the Chinese cemetery was naturally a concern of the Catholic Church which was troubled by the observance of Buddhist or non-Christian rituals in the cemetery. Studies have shown that even Catholic Chinese observed such “paganistic” practices.<sup>74</sup> Hence, the Catholic Church made valiant efforts to make sure that its converts were not “contaminated” by the “infidels” by keeping the two separate, not only in life but also in death. When the Governor General of the Philippines in 1877 approved *gobernadorcillo* Yu Chingco’s request to expand the Chinese cemetery, he, voicing out the concern of the Catholic Church, reminded the *gobernadorcillo* that—as had been instructed in the Superior Decree of 25 November 1843—Christians and “heathens” should be buried separately. The governor also reminded the *gobernadorcillo* that the latter should ensure compliance with

71. See Sanidad de Cementerios 1814-1898, National Archives of the Philippines, folios S278-S278B. It could be surmised from the date of the event that the fire could have been caused by people celebrating a Buddhist holiday by setting off some fireworks.

72. See Sanidad de Cementerios, SDS 5758, folio S722.

73. Huetz de Lemp, “La controversia de las sepulturas en Filipinas.”

74. It has been noted by other studies that Spanish missionaries often complained about the sincerity of Chinese converts, pointing out the numerous times when the latter continued to practice non-Christian rituals after conversion. For instance, the provincial superior of the Dominican Order Fray Pedro de Yre, in reporting to the Audiencia why the Christian Chinese who participated in supporting the British against Spain in the Seven Years War of 1756-1763 should be expelled, wrote that they were untrustworthy converts who “burned their dead and buried them in cemeteries designated for infidels” (cited in Escoto, “Expulsion of the Chinese,” p. 52). For more information on the practice of Catholic Chinese in the Philippines during the Spanish colonial period, see Chu, *Chinese and Chinese Mestizos*, pp. 145-178.

this instruction.<sup>75</sup> Eighteen years later, in an apparent non-compliance with the directive of the civil administration by the Chinese administrators of the cemetery, the archbishop of Manila was again calling for an “adequate separation [to be] maintained between the two sides of the cemetery, i.e., one for the Catholic and the other for non-Catholics, with separate entrances.”<sup>76</sup>

## Conclusion

The aim of this essay is to provide a historical overview of the different Chinese burial grounds in Manila during the Spanish colonial period. Prior to the nineteenth century, baptized Chinese were buried in various cemeteries located within church premises. But as the population of Chinese immigrants and their families increased, and as civil authorities grew more concerned with observing and promoting proper sanitation and hygiene within the colony, extramural cemeteries were created.

An examination of these burial grounds during the Spanish colonial period leads us to certain conclusions about the Chinese community in Manila and its individuals, as well as the Spanish colonial regime. For one, it can be seen that the Chinese, especially the Christian converts, managed to combine both Hispanic/Catholic and Chinese practices when burying their dead. This is a precursor of the East-West architectural styles and hybrid religious practices seen in the Chinese cemetery today. Furthermore, a look into the set up of the Chinese cemetery, including its rules and regulations, points to how the Chinese community’s leadership exercised control over its members in life and death. Donating money for charitable works and working closely with the Spanish authorities on behalf of their constituents provided these leaders with status and authority, as can be seen in not only their designation as administrators of the cemetery but also their privileges in deciding where to bury their dead.

Today, this combined concern for the worshipping of their dead and demonstrating their status within the Chinese community could help explain the often ostentatious or opulent display of wealth in the mausoleums of today. This is especially true in the days when the Chinese in the Philippines could not even own land due to lack of citizenship. The only way to demonstrate filial piety and raise their public status is to build opulent mausoleums as a way of showing gratitude to their forebears who sacrificed so much to lead to their successes today.

Another observation that can be made about the Chinese burial practices of the Manila Chinese is that when it comes to burial grounds, they do not have the same divisions based on ethno-linguistic and regional differences as seen in Malaysia. This can be explained by the predominantly Hokkien population of the Chinese community. The relatively fewer number of people from Guangdong

75. See *Philippine-Chinese Charitable Association*, p. 6.

76. See *Sanidad de Cementerios*, SDS 5758, folio S729.

and other areas were subsumed under the Hokkien leadership. While ethno-linguistic and regional differences did not produce a distinct separation in burial practices, the Spanish colonial regime, through the Catholic Church, tried to maintain a division as a way to exercise control over its subjects, by continuously insisting on the separation of the burial grounds between converts and non-converts, as it had done in terms of their settlement.<sup>77</sup> But having to rely on its Chinese colonial subjects who, while converts to Catholicism, did not necessarily share its concern about upholding Catholic teachings and had their own agenda, weakened its capacity to ensure that non-converts would not “contaminate” its Christian subjects. Studies have shown that Spanish missionaries often complained about the lack of sincerity of Chinese converts in practicing Catholicism while alive. In the end, these converts and their families continued to defy Church authorities in observing familial and religious practices that they themselves considered meaningful and important, even in death.

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77. For a study of Spanish policy toward non-Catholics and their burial sites, see Xavier Huetz de Lemp, “L’invisibilisation des sépultures non-catholiques dans les Philippines sous domination espagnole,” in Michel Lauwers et Aurélie Zémour (éds.), *Qu’est-ce qu’une sépulture? Humanités et systèmes funéraires de la Préhistoire à nos jours*, XXXVI<sup>e</sup> Rencontres Internationales d’Archéologie et d’Histoire d’Antibes, Antibes, Éditions APDCA, 2016 (to be published).

## Appendix 1

### 新仙山開用條目

#### Expenses for the New Cemetery and Chong Hok Tong

Purchase of a piece of agricultural land of Luo Mingjiao, for road-building	14,000.00
Purchase of Chinese stones for boundary lines	341.00
Water removal and small works on boundaries	169.00
Hiring of workers to repair the old road(s)	705.00
Hiring of workers to cut trees and clearing of the plot of land	1,300.00
Building of new roads and stone bridge(s)	1,300.00
Purchase of stones and hiring of workers	1,000.00
Construction of earthen walls and sewers	1,100.00
Construction of Chong Hok Tong	8,060.00
Construction of a house at the rear of Chong Hok Tong	850.00
Construction of arched structures in bricks on both sides of Chong Hok Tong	655.00
Construction of a fence in bamboo and nipa or thatch palm	558.00
Cutting of six stone steles <sup>78</sup>	112.60
Training of the foremen and purchase of rice and condiments	2,060.00
Decoration work for Chong Hok Tong	285.00
Hanging of inscribed horizontal tablets and introduction of furniture	107.00
Altar candle holders & paraphernalia	163.00
Altar lamps	44.00
Engraving of the 6 steles	183.00
4 pieces of glass mirrors	50.00
Digging of a well and construction of a stone margin	178.00
Levelling of farm lands and removing of stagnant water	342.00
Water for Chong Hok Tong	326.00
Wine, calesa fare and gift for compadre	84.20
Cold water for dinner	126.00

<sup>78</sup>. Only three steles have come to us. The original photo from the 90th anniversary Souvenir Program of the Chinese Charitable Association (1968) showed four steles. The fourth was a general description on filial piety and the need to bury the dead properly.

Decorative painting by Su Feng	63.60
Two bells	75.00
Flower pots and plants for the garden	151.00
Planting of trees around the perimeter	250.00
Transport of the steles	311.00
Coconut oil [for lamps]	24.40
Erection of further inscribed tablets and addition of furniture	60.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	33,980.00
TOTAL DONATIONS	31,302.00
OTHER ADVANCES from Carlos Palanca & Yap Longkim	2,678.30 <sup>79</sup>

Chinese [calendar] Fifth year of Guangxu, year *yimao*, third extra month, Sixth day.

Spanish [calendar] 27 April 1879.

(Stone erected by the board of administrators. For the complete list of names, see Appendix 2)

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<sup>79</sup>. Note the slight discrepancy in the total numbers because of some indecipherable items.



## Appendix 2

### 新仙山條規章程

#### *New Cemetery Rules and Regulations*

The Chinese upon completion of the New cemetery set strict rules and regulations so that order and procedures followed to avoid chaos.

1. The new burial site is a public cemetery, *gongzhong* 公塚, hence the graves, *xue* 穴, which will be numerous, should not exceed 5 *miao* 描,<sup>80</sup> in length and 4 in width. If a filial son or grandson finds the size small and narrow, he can buy one more site, but the grave construction must follow the rule of making it quadrilateral. Two pesos, *yin* 銀, must be paid to the *capitan*, *jia-bi-dan* 甲必丹, who should issue a receipt.

2. The construction of the mound, *dui* 堆, should be as customary i.e., high structure is not allowed so that it does not obstruct other graves. Those who violate the rule will be denounced by the public. If the family of a deceased try to use their connections to violate the rule and make an illicit transfer, their children and grandchildren will be cursed.

3. The guard or administrator of the cemetery should always listen to the *capitan* and discuss resolutions among trustees. He must not transact with outsiders. The *capitan* and trustees should not use their position or authority to make illicit transfers [of graves] lest they be denounced by the public.

4. The trustees, the *capitan*, the two officials in charge of the treasury *kuguan* 庫官, and those who donate 100 pesos, *yuan* 元, are allowed to be buried at the land belonging to the Hall of Merits, *Gongli suo* 功力所.<sup>81</sup>

5. As for the *capitan*, two trustees, and two officials are in charge of the treasury, their parents, brothers, wife, parents-in-law, children, and grandchildren are also allowed to be buried at land of the Hall of Merits. For those who donate 100 pesos and above, parents, wife, children, and grandchildren can be buried there too.

6. The burial land belonging to the Hall of Merits can be used by trustees, past and present *capitans*, two old treasurers, and those who donated 100 pesos

<sup>80</sup>. The character 描, which in Hokkien reads *biau* or *ba*, may be a transcription for the Spanish *vara*, which means “yard.”

<sup>81</sup>. See footnote 57.

and above; but for their daughters, both husband and wife can be buried there if they are documented as Chinese or Chinese mestizo. Natives, *fanren* 番人, cannot be buried there. If a person uses influence or connection to force the issue, he will be publicly denounced.

7. The burial land belonging to the Hall of the Merits comprises two separate sections: one for those who are baptized, which is called *zhanshui di* 沾水地 or “burial land for Christians” and another one for non-Christians, for the two groups should not be mixed together.

8. The process of establishing the new cemetery was very complicated. The son-in-law of Capitan Ongpin 王彬, Lang Lo-lo-tiu Le-ka-po 郎羅羅紬黎咖頗,<sup>82</sup> contributed a lot. In gratitude, his mother, himself, his brother, wife, children, and grandchildren will be allowed burial here.

9. The cemetery guard cannot sell land belonging to the Hall of Merits or the public land and break rules by allowing illegal constructions indiscriminately. If discovered to be receiving bribes, he will be dismissed.

10. The new cemetery burial allows use of funeral carriage, *Guanche* 棺車; if pulled by six horses, the fee for each grave is 6 pesos, if pulled by four horses, 4 pesos, if two horses, 2 pesos. If carried by humans, only 1 peso. No one can break this rule. If one is found to charge extra, he will be dismissed.

11. The new cemetery guard should guard and patrol the trees and the vicinity within the stone walls. If there are natives who cut trees and change the stone boundaries; or cows or horses that have been allowed to enter the grounds trampling the tombs, the matter should be reported to the authorities. If the guard is found lazy and does not do his job to rove around the cemetery, he should be dismissed.

12. If a dead body is found abandoned by the roadside or if the hospital announces an unclaimed deceased body, the cemetery guard must immediately do the burial. If the caretaker is irresponsible and fails to do his job and the body starts to decompose and smell, so that the deceased cannot rest in peace, the guard will be fined 5 pesos (original not clear).

13. The mortar, *huifen* 灰分, used in burial will be charged four centavos, *ba* 发 [Hokkien: *poat*] per *dou* 斗 [10 liters]. As for water, it will be half centavo for one *dan* 担 [50 kgs]. If the family of the deceased needs more, the guard should just

82. This Hokkien transcription refers to Don Doroteo Ricafort, the son-in-law of Simon Ongpin (Ong Yek Pin); for more detail, see footnote 56.

provide. No need to charge more money so no quarrel will ensue. If the family members prepare or bring the materials themselves, they should be allowed to do so.

14. The land of the Hall of Merits does not allow outsiders, *wairen* 外人, to be buried. But if filial sons and grandsons want their parents to be buried there, we must understand their sentiments and burial can be allowed if they donate 120 pesos per grave.

15. The Chong Hok Tong 崇福堂 or “Lofty Fortune Temple” is an important place and it is fenced on four sides. Cows and horses are not allowed to be tied to the fence. The guard is responsible for the furniture and devices inside the temple and he shall be held accountable for any loss.

16. If a family wants a funeral coffin to be placed at the Chong Hok Tong, they shall be charged two pesos for each coffin, and the guards must prepare tables, chairs, water and tea for [members of the family and their guests].

The above rules were discussed before they were adopted and a stele erected in the hope that the Chinese obey them forever. Hence, those who use connections to avoid obeying or change the rules will be punished by heaven.

Chinese [calendar] Fifth year of Guangxu 光緒, year *yimao* 己卯, third extra month, seventh day.

Spanish [calendar] 27 April 1879.

Stele erected by the board of trustees whose names are:

Huang Guangpin 黃光凜, Chen Qianshan 陳謙善 (Tan Quien-sien or Carlos Palanca), Xu Zhilei 許志螺 (Co Chi-lui), Cai Yingzong 蔡迎宗 (Mariano Velasco Chuachengco), Wang Yipin 王翼彬 (Ong Yekpin or Simon Ongpin), Yang Zhaoji 楊肇基 (Yu Tiaoki or Yu Tiaoqui),<sup>83</sup> Ye Naidan 葉迺丹, Ye Shangfang 葉上芳, Zeng Ruijue 曾瑞爵, Huang Dangbang 黃當邦, Yu Chingco 楊尊親 (Mariano Yuchingco), Ye Longqin 葉龍欽 (Yap Liong-quin), Lin Guanghe 林光合 (Lim Kong-hap or Limjap), Lin Zhangnai 林章獺 (Lim Chiong Nua, Limtuaco), Huang Zampo 黃讚坡, Wu Kengguan 巫坑觀, Shi Taishan 石泰山, Su Zanfeng 蘇讚楓,

Lang Lo-lo-tiu Le-ka-po 郎罗罗紬黎加頗 [Don Doroteo Ricafort],

Se[or sai]-bi[or be]-lin-lo ka-li-ia 西未憐洛 加里也 [reads somewhat like Severino Sacaria].

<sup>83</sup>. Yang Zhaoji is the grandfather of Alfonso Yuchengco.

LEE KAM HING<sup>1</sup>

## State Policy, Community Identity, and Management of Chinese Cemeteries in Colonial Malaya

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### Introduction

This article looks at how the Chinese community in Malaya negotiated with the state on the control and management of Chinese cemeteries during the colonial period. Only with the establishment of colonial administration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries did burial grounds and cemeteries in Malaya come to be regulated. Regulations were introduced when public lands were set aside for cemeteries, and public health and urban planning were the prime reasons for such state action. There were also social, religious, cultural and historical concerns that required the attention of the state, as well as the community. The article examines why these different issues became matters of concern at particular periods in time.

The article also discusses the extent to which cemeteries were a marker of identity of the community. Within cemeteries are gravestones which provide some details of the people buried such as their dates of birth and death as well as their ethnic background or place of origin.<sup>2</sup> Each gravestone is a record of the identity of an individual and collectively the cemetery is a marker of the community. Thus the remains of old Chinese cemeteries found in different parts of Southeast Asia serve as evidence that there had once been a Chinese population in those early settlements even though today none from the

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1. Institute of China Studies, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.

2. Julie Rugg, "Defining the place of burial: what makes a cemetery?" *Mortality*, vol. 5:3 (2000), pp. 259-275. Also, Catherine Guéguen, "Chinese cemeteries: symbols of heritage," *Tulay: Chinese Heritage Digest*, vol. XXIII: 11 (Nov. 02-15, 2010), pp. 8-11.

community are to be found there.<sup>3</sup> In other cases, an early Chinese cemetery stands as a reminder of the historical presence of the community such as the Bukit China cemetery in Malacca.<sup>4</sup>

Cemeteries were also a marker of dialect distinctives. In the colonial period the Chinese had three types of burial grounds. One was community cemeteries managed by the various dialect associations, second, those managed by clan associations, and finally privately-owned burial plots. The early Chinese cemeteries were opened only to members of the trustees or managements' dialect groups. And although dialect divisions began to blur in social, economic and political activities, the demarcation of cemeteries along dialect lines persisted.

Finally the article touches on how procedures of burials and cemeteries allowed the state to further involve itself administratively in Chinese affairs. The end of the 19th century when the state introduced regulations on burials and cemeteries was also a time when the colonial government proscribed secret societies and the phasing out of the revenue farm system. Secret societies and the revenue system had enabled the Chinese to dominate the tin-mining industry and other economic activities during this period.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the implementation of various colonial regulations demonstrated clearly to the Chinese that the state decided not only the affairs of the living but also of their dead.

## The State

The matter of burial grounds had attracted for some time the attention of the colonial state. This was partly because with the arrival of large number of Chinese migrants, some measures were necessary to deal with deaths and burials. Initially, many of the Chinese saw their stay in Malaya as temporary, hoping to return to China when they had made enough money. For those who could not return, the practice for many, if they were to die overseas, was to have their bodies taken back to their home village.<sup>6</sup> Over time, as more Chinese settled in Malaya, they buried their dead in small dialect-organized cemeteries within the settlements. The dialect associations offered social and even economic support, and so it was natural that this care extended to burial. The wealthier Chinese buried their dead in private plots.

In a period when there was weak enforcement of regulations governing burials, there was concern at the haphazard way the Chinese community in

3. Claudine Salmon, "Ancient Chinese Cemeteries of Indonesia as Vanishing Landmarks of the Past (17th-20th centuries)," in this issue.

4. Carolyn L. Cartier, "Creating Historical Open Space in Melaka," *The Geographic Review*, Vol. 83:4 (October, 1993), pp. 359-373.

5. Yen Ching-hwang, "Historical background," in Lee Kam Hing and Tan Chee Beng (Eds.), *The Chinese in Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 1-36.

6. Terry Abraham and Priscilla Wegars, "Urns, Bones and Burners: Overseas Chinese Cemeteries," *Australasian Historical Archaeology*, 21 (2009), pp. 58-69.



colonial Singapore and Malaya buried its dead. This was surprising considering that the overseas Chinese had for long kept their cemeteries well-maintained. The most well-known of these is in Bukit China, Malacca where a cemetery said to date back to the Ming period is located. Spread over 250,000 square metres, Bukit China contains 12,500 graves.<sup>7</sup> There are reportedly other cemeteries of early Chinese settlements in the Malay Peninsula, many undocumented and others destroyed as development took place.

There were also those Chinese in Malaya and Singapore who buried their dead in private plots of land. These were mostly wealthy Chinese. One such private mausoleum and probably the last and most well-known belongs to the Loke Yew 陸佑 family. Buried in this private mausoleum are Loke Yew and a few of his family members. Loke died in 1917 and the private mausoleum was part of a rubber plantation, the Hawthornden Estate, which he owned, by now located inside the Ministry of Defense Malaysia compound.<sup>8</sup>

The impression of haphazardness of Chinese burial places towards the end of the 19th century was due to the fact there were a large number of unregistered Chinese burial grounds in Singapore. The matter was raised in the Singapore Municipal Council in 1889. One of the council members, Major H.E McCallum, the colonial engineer, displayed a map showing the distribution of unregistered burial grounds on the island. The map showed in particular a large number of registered and unregistered burial grounds lying to the north of Mount Faber. The concern over unregistered private burial lots had to do with the question of sanitation. Major McCallum claimed that the Chinese “could see the amount of sickness springing up in their midst”.<sup>9</sup> Many of the unregistered burial grounds were within the town itself. Furthermore, the council was told that most of the desirable building sites in Singapore such as those on top of hills were being occupied by Chinese burial grounds.

The colonial administration had earlier taken steps to address the issue of burial grounds. The most important had been the setting up of municipality authorities in the Straits Settlements of Penang, Malacca and Singapore.<sup>10</sup> In other non-Straits Settlements territories that later came under British administration, Sanitary Boards took over the responsibilities similar to the municipal councils. This was part of a larger move to delegate power to a local authority to look after the diverse responsibilities of managing sanitation and health, fire prevention, and water supply. Burial grounds came under the

7. Carolyn L. Cartier, “Creating Historical Open Space in Melaka,” pp. 359-373.

8. Lee Kam Hing, “Loke Yew,” in Leo Suryadinata (ed.), *Southeast Asian Personalities of Chinese Descent: A Biographical Dictionary*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2012, pp. 697-700.

9. *Straits Times Weekly Issue*, “Municipal Commission,” 19 July 1889, p. 11.

10. C. Mary Turnbull, *The Straits Settlements, 1826-67: Indian Presidency to Crown Colony*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1972.

municipalities or sanitation boards, and these in turn were responsible to the state governments.

The first local authority in Malaya was established in George Town in Penang in 1801. A Committee of Assessors was established and in 1857, the power of local government in George Town was exercised by five Municipal Commissioners, three of whom were elected by a limited franchise. These elections were abolished in 1913. The municipality came under the state government. In 1951, as part of the move towards independence for Malaya, the British colonial authorities reintroduced local elections for nine of the fifteen municipal commissioners for George Town. In Kuala Lumpur the Sanitary Board was established in 1890. It was entrusted with public health, sanitation, drainage, street lighting, and urban development. The board consisted of officials and representations from prominent local and European businessmen and professionals.

To empower the local authorities in controlling burials and burial grounds, two Ordinances were introduced. These were first, the Ordinance for the Registration of Births and Deaths and second, the Ordinance to regulate the use of Burial and Burning Grounds outside the limits of municipalities. Provisions for the registration of births and deaths were first introduced in the Straits Settlements of Singapore, Penang and Malacca. This followed the transfer of the Straits Settlements from India to Colonial Office on 1 April 1867. A Births and Deaths Registration Ordinance was passed (XVIII of 1868) and the first registration of birth began on 7 May 1869 and that of death on 1 May 1869. The registers of death were kept by the municipality.<sup>11</sup> The Ordinance required the Deputy Registrar to be informed of every birth and death in his district and he was to forward the particulars to the Registrar.<sup>12</sup> When death occurs, the Deputy Registrar was required, where practicable, to personally inspect the body and make inquiries among the people present at death of the circumstances surrounding the occurrence. Police officers and *penghulus* (village headmen) were to collect all births and deaths in their districts and to forward the data to the Deputy Registrar or Registrar. The Ordinance required that where it was suspected that death was caused by infectious diseases such as plagues, cholera or small pox this was to be ascertained and reported. All details of birth and death were sent to the Registrar, and reports regularly compiled. The Registrar-general was to prepare a general report to establish if there had been an increase or decrease of the population and on the factors that led to the particular trend.

The Ordinance to regulate the use of burial and burning grounds outside the limits of municipalities was introduced in 1887. Ordinance XI of 1887

11. Walter Makepeace et al. (Eds.), *One hundred years of Singapore*, London: J. Murray, 1921, p. 507.

12. Ordinance No 59: Registration of Births and Deaths, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

placed the power of approving burial grounds with the Governor.<sup>13</sup> Under the 1887 Ordinance, trustees of public and private burial places were required to obtain a license for use of the burial grounds within three months of the Ordinance coming into force.<sup>14</sup> The Ordinance gave the authorities extensive powers to regulate burial and cremation grounds. The Governor may make rules for the registration, inspection and regulation of burial and burning grounds, prescribe the depth of graves and places of interment, determine the fees to be levied in burial and burning grounds, provide for the registration of particulars concerning persons whose bodies are brought to burial or burning grounds, prescribe the mode of making and keeping the registers of burial and burning ground, and prescribe the form and manner of issue of licenses for burial and burning ground.<sup>15</sup>

The Ordinance ruled that no place outside the limits of any municipality should be used for the interment or burning of a body except under a license from the authorities. This authority could be the Colonial Secretary in Singapore or the Resident Councilor in Penang or the Chief Civil Officer in any other settlements. They had the power to grant or refuse such approvals for interment or cremation or to impose such conditions as were thought necessary. License was granted to those in charge of the places for burial. A fee was levied for the license. The granting of license for burial grounds did not imply or establish right to the individual or institution managing burial or cremation ground the title of land. Those who bury or burn any corpse in a place not licensed as a burial or cremation ground were liable to imprisonment of one year or a fine not exceeding a hundred dollars. There was also a provision for those who exhume a body buried in any place outside the limits of any municipality without the order of the authorities such as a magistrate, coroner or chief police office. Such contravention was liable to a severe fine not exceeding two hundred and fifty dollars.

A key regulation in the Ordinance provided the authorities the power to make available a place suitable for burial or cremation as well as funds to maintain the place. The authorities, however, retained the right to close any burial or cremation ground if its continued use endangered public health or comfort. The authorities could also revoke the license if there had been a contravention of the conditions of the license. A fee of \$25 was levied on existing burial grounds and \$50 for future private grounds. Whenever required the government would out of funds from the Legislative Council provide

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13. This replaced Ordinance XIV of 1856. Ordinance 1887 itself was replaced by Ordinance No 58 of 1896.

14. Ordinance No 58: To regulate the use of Burials and Burning Grounds outside the limits of Municipalities, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

15. For regulations similar to this, see Claudine Salmon, "Ancient Chinese Cemeteries ...," in this issue.

public burial grounds. Such burial grounds would be for the use of different nationalities and religious communities. In laying down the rules the authorities were mindful of the multi-ethnic character of the various settlements under its administration. Hence, the Ordinance added a concluding provision that "...in carrying out this Ordinance due regard shall be had to the nationalities and to the religious usages of the several classes of the community".<sup>16</sup>

The two Ordinances enabled the authorities to monitor death and disease in Malaya. They set out the proper procedure by which burial or cremation of the dead was carried out. Thus, before a burial in the cemetery could be carried out, a death certificate providing details of the deceased as well as the cause and circumstances of death had to be produced.<sup>17</sup> Through this the state could ensure that all deaths were reported and could keep track of trends related to health and mortality. In this respect, the management of cemeteries by the Chinese community was important to the state mechanism in its monitoring of health and mortality.

### **Issue of Chinese Burial Grounds in Singapore**

When Major McCallum brought up to the Singapore Municipal Council the concern about unregistered Chinese burial grounds found scattered within and near the city, the two regulations relating to registration of death and of burial grounds had not the time to be implemented. But even without the two regulations, the burial grounds of the small European communities in the settlements were, by comparison, better managed. The oldest known cemetery is the Protestant Cemetery in Penang where the first burial was reportedly made in 1789 and subsequently became the resting place for many of colonial administrators. They included Francis Light who took over the island for the English East India Company from the Sultan of Kedah in 1786. In Singapore, early reports referred to the moving of some early European graves to be reburied in Fort Canning in 1823, just four years after the British landed on the island.<sup>18</sup> In 1865 the old Fort Canning cemetery was closed and a new one opened in Bukit Timah Road. The Municipality bought the ground for \$10,000 and a new grant issued on 22 Jan 1864. The site was consecrated by Bishop McDougal of Sarawak on 15 November and the first burial took place on 2 April 1864. In 1907 a new cemetery was open on 15 December by the

16. Ordinance No 58: To regulate the use of Burials and Burning Grounds outside the limits of Municipalities, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur. Also, No. 199. Rules for Burial and Burning Grounds within the state of Selangor made by the British Resident under Section 8 Regulation VII 1895 in letter from Chairman of Sanitary Board Kuala Lumpur "Requests a translation of the Rules for Burial and Burning, 12. February 1898," National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

17. Acting chairman, Sanitary Board, Kuala Lumpur, "Licensed burial and burning grounds in the Kuala Lumpur district, 8.3.1900," Selangor Secretariat Files, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

18. Walter Makepeace, *One hundred years of Singapore*, p. 587.

Municipality at Bidadari, replacing the one in Bukit Timah Road which was being closed.<sup>19</sup>

On 19 July 1889, when the subject of regulating Chinese burial grounds was brought before the Municipal Commission a motion was moved by several members calling on the government to deal, “effectually with the important question of burial grounds of both descriptions”.<sup>20</sup> This referred to registered and unregistered burial grounds. The motion followed the presentation made by Major McCallum who using a map (not yet recovered) showed the uncontrolled spread of unregistered burial grounds. The Chinese members of the Municipality, in reacting to the motion, spoke up for private burial grounds. Tan Beng Wan 陈明远, a Chinese member, argued that the Chinese were very careful about interments.<sup>21</sup> Coffins were made of hard and durable wood and the graves were constructed of brick and other hard and strong materials. There was, therefore, no sanitation or other health risks. Tan Jiak Kim 陈若锦, another member, urged the government to leave existing unregistered graves alone and instead to deal with future cases.<sup>22</sup> He acknowledged that with population growth the indiscriminate use of land for burials was a risk to public health. However, the government should take steps to deal with the question of future Chinese burial grounds.

In August 1895 the subject of Chinese burial grounds was brought before the Municipal Commission again. Attention was given to Sections 238 and 239 of the proposed Municipal Consolidation and Amending Ordinance which entrusted the Municipal to provide and maintain, out its own funds, proper public burial grounds. The proposed Ordinance prohibited burials except in public municipal burying grounds or places registered under Section 105-69 of Ordinance XIV of 1856. Two issues were raised during the proceedings. First, the new Bill did not vest or entrust Chinese burial ground with the Municipal Commissioners. Rather these were handed to the trustees including those in the Chinese community. In reaction to this, government members called for the Municipality to be given the authority over every Chinese burial

19. Walter Makepeace, *One hundred years of Singapore*, p. 491.

20. *Straits Times Weekly Issue*, “Municipal Commission”, 19 July 1889, p. 1.

21. Tan Beng Wan was born in Annam in 1850, educated at Singapore’s Raffles Institution and became partner of Kim Tian and Company. He was elected Municipal Commissioner in December 1888 and re-elected again in 1889 for a three-year term. He was also a director of the Straits Insurance Company. Song Ong Siang, *One Hundred Years’ History of the Chinese in Singapore* (First ed., 1923), Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1957, pp. 263-264.

22. Tan Jiak Kim (b. 29 April 1859, Singapore - d. 22 Oct. 1917, Singapore) took over the family firm of Kim Seng and Company and was also involved in the Singapore banking and insurance industry. He represented the Hokkiens in the Chinese Advisory Board, was one of the founders of the Straits Chinese British Association, and following the passing of the Municipal Ordinance Act in 1887, was elected Municipal Commissioner from 1888 to 1892 and from 1894 to 1897. Song Ong Siang, *One Hundred Years’ History of the Chinese in Singapore*, pp. 194-195.



ground. Second, government members called for the prohibition of private burial land. The time has come, a member declared, that 'the land is made for the living, not for the dead and instead of every pretty hill spot being occupied by a grave; they would rather see a hut there.'<sup>23</sup>

In the debate, the Chinese members, all of whom were wealthy businessmen, seemed more concerned about the right to maintain private burial grounds. Thus, Seah Liang Seah 余连城, a leader of the Teochiu, contended that it was not true that Singapore would be taken up entirely by private burial ground because only the wealthy could afford to buy such lots.<sup>24</sup> And there were not, according to Seah, many wealthy Chinese in Singapore. Seah claimed that land bought for such burial purposes were usually of poor soil condition. Seah further argued that if private burial grounds were not allowed, many Chinese might move elsewhere where private burial was permitted, and Singapore would not be able to attract Chinese migrants.<sup>25</sup> Tan Jiak Kim, another member, in arguing for private burial sites called for greater sensitivity to Chinese customs and beliefs. He explained that it was the community's custom to choose 'the most suitable site – geomancy, and it was necessary to decide long before a rich man died, the site of his grave'.<sup>26</sup> Geomancy was the Chinese science of selecting favourable sites that would bring much blessing for the family. For the Chinese, only with private burial sites was it possible to allow selection to be determined by geomancy. Tan further explained that private cemeteries were necessary for the convenience of ladies especially from rich families. It was then not the custom for Chinese ladies to appear in public, and in the Straits Settlements during this period females were not allowed to venture out of their homes. Private burial grounds therefore allowed them to visit graves of family members without having to venture far from their homes.

But it was very clear that as colonial power consolidated in Malaya and Singapore, the state was determined to exercise greater control over burial grounds. With growth of population and resulting competition for land as well as of health concern, it could not allow unregulated burials grounds. The Chinese population recognized that increasing state control was inevitable. They therefore appealed that all existing graves be maintained and that unregistered burial grounds and cemeteries be given a grace period to be registered.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, they wanted the right to have private burials ground.

23. *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser* (1884-1942), 20 August 1895, p. 104.

24. Seah Liang Seah (b. 1850, Singapore–d. 14 Sept. 1925, Singapore) studied at St Joseph's Institution and later took over the family's firm of Eu Chin and Company. He was leader of the Teochiu organization Ngee Ann Kongsí 义安公司 and served as Municipal Commissioner and later as member of the Legislative Council. Song Ong Siang, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore*, pp. 212-213.

25. *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser* (1884-1942) 20 August 1895, p. 104.

26. *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser* (1884-1942) 20 August 1895, p. 104.

27. *The Eastern Daily Mail*, "The Chinese Cemeteries," 18 December 1906.

On this the Chinese members managed to defeat an amendment to a Bill that prohibited the creation of private burials grounds within the Municipality unless licensed by the Municipal Commissioners. The amendment was moved by government members in the council who wanted such discretionary power to be withdrawn from the Municipal Commissioners. Arguing against this, Dr Lim Boon Keng 林文庆, a leader of the Straits Chinese, contended that the Municipal Commissioners was a competent body which should have the independence and the power to decide on application for new private burial grounds<sup>28</sup>. The *Straits Times* in an editorial on 24 July 1896 supported Dr Lim's position. The *Straits Times* commented:

The truth is that while we must not allow Chinese ideas to override the interests of a British colony, neither must we allow the opinions of a rapidly changing community of Europeans to override entirely the old prejudices of Asia.

Dr Lim Boon Keng remains the successful champion of the privileges of dead Chinamen and of the discretion of living Commissioners.<sup>29</sup>

The *Straits Times* at this time represented the business community and took a position against expanding state power. In the end, the state decided that outside municipal limits, the responsibility of licensing and controlling burial grounds was passed to the colonial Government under the Burial Ordinance [XIX] of 1896 while within municipal limits the control of burial grounds was entrusted to the Municipal Commission under sections 232 to 238 of the Municipal Ordinance [XV] of 1896.<sup>30</sup>

### Hokkien Cemeteries in Penang

The issue of unregulated private cemeteries did not appear to be a problem in early peninsular Malaya. There the Chinese community took an early and active part with arranging proper sites for burial of its dead. Indeed in Penang with its large Hokkien population, the Hokkien associations came together to acquire land for cemeteries and to organize their use for burials. Certainly, the first Chinese cemetery in colonial Malaya was in Penang and over the years, the Hokkien associations looked after some five cemeteries.

The earliest of the Hokkien cemeteries is the Batu Lanchang Chinese Cemetery that dates back to 1805 and is located to the southwest of George Town (see map).<sup>31</sup> Penang was established in 1786 and a Chinese community

28. Dr Lim Boon Keng (1867, Penang - 1957, Singapore) studied medicine at Edinburgh University. He helped set up the Straits Chinese British Association and was involved in banking and insurance business. He was a member of the Singapore Municipal and the Legislative Council. Song Ong Siang, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore*, p. 407.

29. *The Straits Times*, "The Chinese Dead," 24 July 1896, p. 2.

30. Brenda S.A. Yeoh, "The Control of 'Sacred' Space: Conflicts Over the Chinese Burial Grounds in Colonial Singapore, 1880-1930," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 22:2 (Sept. 1991), pp. 282-311.

31. Map of Penang, from Survey Dept Federation of Malaya, *Map of the Municipality of*

had begun to settle there. In that same year the British appointed Koh Lay Huan 辜礼欢 as the first Kapitan China of the settlement. It was in Batu Lanchang cemetery that Koh Lay Huan was buried. When the grounds of Batu Lanchang began to fill up a second cemetery of the Hokkiens was opened in 1842 in Mount Erskine to the northwest of the city (see map).<sup>32</sup> After that there were the Batu Gantong Chinese Cemetery, located opposite the Race Course (see map), that opened in 1884, the Paya Terubong Chinese Cemetery that began in 1941, and the Teluk Bahang Chinese Cemetery that started in 1965. All these cemeteries are today managed by the United Hokkien Association.

There are other Chinese cemeteries on the island. There is a very old and large cemetery for the Cantonese located just north of the Mount Erskine Hokkien cemetery. Managed by the Kwantung and Teochiu Association, this cemetery was divided into separate sections for Cantonese and Teochius. Two other cemeteries are burial grounds reserved only for clan members. These are the 17-acre Khoo 邱 clan cemetery (located in Farlim) opened in 1920 and the 30-acre cemetery for the Cheah 谢 clan (Mt. Erskine area) opened in 1901.

The Batu Gantong cemetery illustrates the early initiative of Chinese in Malaya in organizing their burial ground. It started when in 1884 a group of Hokkien leaders decided to open a new cemetery as the old one was filling up. The initiative came from Lee Phee Yeow 李丕耀, chairman of Chong Moh 崇茂 and Company, then the largest shipping company in Penang. Chong Moh and Co traded in rice and other commodities within the region.<sup>33</sup> Lee and several other Hokkien leaders in 1884 became trustees for the new cemetery. Subscriptions were invited of which Chong Moh contributed \$20,000.<sup>34</sup> With over \$87,000 collected they bought several plantations located about 3 miles from the then city centre. They paid \$23,000 for the plantations and these were merged into one piece of 84 acres. The rest of the money was used to develop the cemetery. The higher grounds of 20 acres surrounded by coconut trees became the first phase marked out for burials. A set of buildings directly in front of the burials sites was erected for the use of the public. Constructed with quality materials, there were facilities like bathrooms and kitchens. The facilities could accommodate about a thousand people. The burial site was connected to the public highway by a metalled road constructed out of

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*George Town*, Penang, probably Kuala Lumpur, 1951, Map No.152, reproduced in Frédéric Durand & Richard Curtis, *Maps of Malaysia and Borneo: Discovery, Statehood and Progress*, Kuala Lumpur: Editions Didier Millet, 2013, p. 231.

32. W. Franke 傅吾康 & Chen Tieh Fan 陈铁凡, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia / Malaixiya huawen mingke cuibian* 马来西亚华文铭刻粹编, 3 vols, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, 1982-1987, II, p. 713.

33. Franke & Chen Tieh Fan, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia*, II, p. 724. Wu Xiao An, *Chinese Business in the Making of a Malay State, 1882-1941: Kedah and Penang*, Singapore: NUS Press, 2010, pp. 48-49.

34. Franke & Chen Tieh Fan, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia*, II, p. 738.



the trustees' expenses. The place was looked after by a custodian and four workmen.

The cemetery was maintained and supported entirely by a management under the trustees. After the initial funds were spent, operating expenses came from proceeds through the leasing of coconut and other fruit trees in the land surrounding the burial sites. Revenue also came from the sale of burial plots. The raising of money to purchase the land, development of facilities and maintenance of the place came under the charge of the trustees.<sup>35</sup> There was minimal state involvement in the Batu Gantong Hokkien cemetery. The only obligation of the cemetery management to the state was the need to ensure that all burials be preceded by the presentation of a certificate of death issued by the police. The certificate allowed the informant of death to select a grave. After the selection was made, a permit was obtained from the cemetery manager to proceed with the burial.

How did the Batu Gantong cemetery see itself as serving the Hokkien community? The rules drafted in 1884 provide some insight into the concerns of the trustees and the Hokkien elders.<sup>36</sup> First, the trustees provided burial facilities for members of the Hokkien community. Even destitute members were taken care of. Graves in the cemetery had three different rows differentiated by the size of the burial lots. The rows are arranged alternately. The first row consisted of single graves followed by a second row of double graves. The third row of much smaller size burial lots was for paupers. Fees are levied for the first two rows which went towards the maintenance of the cemetery. No fee was charged for the pauper's row of graves. In this way, the burial needs of all members of the Hokkien community were met. No member of the community was denied a burial lot in a period when immigrant life was tough and there were many poor among them.

Second, the early trustees were strict as to who could be buried in the cemetery. Women of other nationalities who were wives or concubines of Hokkien men and who embraced the religious practices of the Hokkiens were allowed to be buried in the cemetery. However, "such of our people as have embraced other religions are not allowed to be buried here." It is not clear whether this applied to both Hokkien men and women. So particular were the trustee to ensure that the character of the Hokkien cemetery be safeguarded that the rules provided for the disinterment of those buried where false information had been given and removed to a cemetery assigned for the burial of people of the deceased's actual faith.

35. Report on the Hokkien burial ground at Batu Gantong, Penang, 2 September 1896, Chinese Secretariat Files, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

36. "Rules for the Hokkien Burial Ground, Batu Gantong, Penang," in Report on the Hokkien burial ground at Batu Gantong, Penang, 2 September 1896, Chinese Secretariat Files, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur. Also, Franke & Chen Tieh Fan, *Chinese Epigraphic Materials in Malaysia*, II, pp. 751-752.



Finally, the trustees were strict about re-burials. Those already buried elsewhere in Penang were not permitted to be placed in Batu Gantong. Coffined bodies from other countries or those temporarily buried elsewhere but had the intention of final interment in Batu Gantong were allowed. This ruling reflects the strong trading feature of the Hokkien community in Penang. Penang was an entrepôt centre with traders and shippers, principally Hokkiens, travelling throughout the region that included Burma, Indonesia, and Thailand. Thus, whenever death occurred overseas, bodies were temporarily interred there and subsequent brought back for burial in Penang.

### **Kuala Lumpur: State Grants Land for New Chinese Cemetery**

It was in Kuala Lumpur that the state involved itself in Chinese cemetery matters to a greater extent than in the cases discussed. There was an old Chinese cemetery, probably the earliest in the town, used first by Hakka settlers and later by Cantonese and Hokkien. Located on Petaling Hill just about a kilometre from Sultan Street, the cemetery soon filled up and a new one was needed. In 1895, the state government of Selangor approved the leasing of more than 500 acres of land for use as a general cemetery for the Chinese community in Kuala Lumpur. This represented a major project of cooperation between the state and the community. The offer was generous and the land was just outside the growing town. The new one was located almost adjacent to the old cemetery.<sup>37</sup>

The initiative to open a new cemetery for the community came from a group of wealthy Chinese merchants led by the Captain China of Kuala Lumpur Yap Kwan Seng 叶观盛 (1846-1901). In his letter to the Acting Secretary of the Chinese Secretariat, Yap asked for 650 acres of land for the proposed cemetery of which 500 acres were for the Kwangtung Association and 150 acres for the Hokkien.<sup>38</sup> A Hakka, he was supported in his request by Loke Yew, a Cantonese and one of the richest businessmen in the country. Prominent within the Chinese community, these leaders were also close to British officials and merchants. As such their request for such a large piece of land for a general cemetery was sympathetically received.<sup>39</sup> In June 1896 the government approved the granting of 500 acres of land.<sup>40</sup> The Secretary of

37. The Chief Surveyor, Selangor to Government Secretary, Selangor, 8 May 1893, Selangor Secretariat Files, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

38. Captain China's Office, Kuala Lumpur to Acting Chinese Secretary, Kuala Lumpur, 9 April 1895C, Selangor Secretariat Files, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

39. Acting Chinese Secretary to the Government Secretary, Kuala Lumpur, 19 April 1895, Selangor Secretariat Files, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

40. Secretary to Government, Kuala Lumpur, to Chairman of Sanitary Board Kuala Lumpur, "Chinese Cemetery," 17 December 1895; Selangor Secretariat Files, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur; Acting Collector Land Revenue, Kuala Lumpur, Reservation of land for Chinese cemetery: Reports completion of survey and enclosed notice for Gazette, 29 June 1896,

Chinese affairs, who worked well with Chinese leaders, subsequently appealed but unsuccessfully to the state to grant the 650 acres originally asked.<sup>41</sup> The land granted was to be shared by the Hokkien and the large Cantonese community. A road built and maintained by the state served as a boundary separating the 150 acres Hokkien cemetery from the larger Cantonese section. In addition, the state provided and maintained approach roads to the cemetery. Furthermore, the licensee had exclusive rights to all timber and jungle produce on the land subject to payment of such government duties as were liable. However the use of the land as a cemetery did not entitle the trustees to ownership of the land.

The granting of land was clearly a move by the colonial administration to regulate the functioning of a large Chinese cemetery. By 1895, the British had consolidated its administrative control of the Malay states. Kuala Lumpur in 1890 was made not only the capital of the state of Selangor but also the administrative centre of the newly established Federated Malay States. It was also fast growing as a commercial centre. That led to population growth particularly of the Chinese. There was therefore concern that unregulated Chinese burials posed health hazards as well as hindering an orderly and planned development of a capital city.

Indeed, the Acting Secretary of the Selangor Chinese Secretariat in writing to the Yap Kwan Seng explained the purpose of the granting of land for a Chinese cemetery:

The Government proposes to grant for this purpose an area of about 500 acres and to pass legislation making it penal to bury the body of any Chinese dying in Kuala Lumpur within Town limits or dying anywhere within 2 miles of any boundary of the new cemetery.

In approving the opening the new Chinese cemetery, the British administration in Selangor set the terms for its use. Failure to fulfil or meet some of the conditions could result in the land taken back.<sup>42</sup> Earlier, Yap Kwan Seng, the Captain China, requested that the Chinese community be allowed to control the new cemetery:

The Chinese community pray that they may be allowed to control their own cemetery; their rules being of course subject to the approval of the Resident.<sup>43</sup>

The Acting Chinese Secretary wrote that the government would appoint a Board of Management consisting of twelve of the leading merchants. The board

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Selangor Secretariat Files, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

41. Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Kuala Lumpur, "New Chinese Cemetery." Recommends that additional land be reserved. 13 December 1898, Selangor Secretariat Files, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

42. Chairman, Sanitary Board, "Rules for burial and burning grounds, 19.10.1896," Selangor Secretariat Files, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

43. Captain China's Office, Kuala Lumpur to the Acting Chinese Secretary, Kuala Lumpur 27 August 1895, Selangor Secretariat Files, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

of management was held responsible for the proper upkeep of the cemetery.<sup>44</sup> Later, it was decided that there would be two boards of management following the division of the cemetery into a Hokkien and Cantonese section. Each board would appoint two of its members to be trustees subject to the approval by the government.<sup>45</sup> The cemetery license was granted to the trustees. The boards of managements were tasked with drafting guidelines for the functioning of the cemetery. These guidelines had to be submitted to the Resident, the colonial head of the state.

The government rules allowed for the cemetery to be supported by voluntary contribution. The annual accounts of all funds collected were to be signed by the trustees and forwarded to the Secretary of Chinese Affairs. One member of the board would be elected to serve as manager of the cemetery. The Resident reserved the right to close the cemetery if it was found that it could not be further used without endangering public health or that the cemetery had contravened the conditions of the license. Government rules for the two cemetery boards provided the allotments of grave lots for paupers. Expenses for burials were to be borne by the Tung Shin 同善 Institution, a voluntary Chinese social welfare organization in Kuala Lumpur. The managers and trustees of the cemetery were responsible for the upkeep of the cemetery and it was subject to inspection by authorized government officer. If found that the conditions were not complied with, the district officer could serve an order to have the surrounding area or the cemetery cleared and cleaned up.<sup>46</sup>

The occupier of every house in which a death happened or the principal person concerned in the burial of any corpse was to produce to the manager a certified extract from the register of deaths to show that the death had been duly registered under Section 10 of Regulation II of 1892. No burial could take place until such certified extract had been produced to the manager or caretaker. No interment could take place without the presence and permission of the caretakers who would be legally bound to be present at every interment or to be represented by some duly authorized person as his deputy. Every burial ground shall be fenced in or otherwise closed, and kept in decent and proper order.<sup>47</sup>

The decision to provide a site for the new Chinese cemetery was carried out not without some initial unhappiness all around.<sup>48</sup> The old Petaling Hill

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44. F. Fox, Acting Chinese Secretary to the Captain China, 13 March 1895, Selangor Secretariat Files, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

45. Chinese Secretary, Kuala Lumpur, "Draft rules for the management of Chinese cemeteries, 22 August 1896," Selangor Secretariat Files, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

46. Chinese Secretary, Kuala Lumpur, "Draft rules for the management of Chinese cemeteries, 22 August 1896," Selangor Secretariat Files, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

47. Chairman, Sanitary Board, Kuala Lumpur, "Requests a translation of the rules for burials and burning ground, 12.2.1898," Selangor Secretariat Files, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

48. Minutes, Secretary to Government, 10 January 1899, Selangor Secretariat Files, National

Cantonese cemetery was given up to the Selangor Golf Club which was formed in 1895 and some of the graves there were relocated to the new cemetery. Many Chinese, however, had wanted the old Petaling Hill to be included as part of the new cemetery. This was because, according to the Secretary of Chinese Affairs, the Chinese considered the geomancy of the old Cantonese cemetery as favourable. It was also closer to the city centre. There was therefore considerable unhappiness among some Chinese when members of the Selangor Gold Club started using the golf link even before the old graves had been removed and re-located to the new cemetery. On the new Chinese cemetery, the Secretary of Chinese Affairs reported that 25 acres had been set aside for the Kwongsai 广西 sub-dialect group and this had reduced the original size of the cemetery for the larger Cantonese community. He also pointed out that parts of the new site, some 125 acres, were swampy and therefore unsuitable for burial. Finally, there were squatters in the new site and they had to be compensated and cleared.<sup>49</sup>

### **The Cemetery of the Kwangtung and Hokkien Associations**

Since then, the Kuala Lumpur Chinese Cemetery came to be managed by the associations representing the Selangor Cantonese and the Selangor Hokkien communities. Each of the associations had a committee dealing with the section of the cemetery under its administration. Matters related to the cemetery were routinely brought before the main committees during the regular meetings.<sup>50</sup> Over the years as the cemetery began to be used, there was a need for additional facilities such as a pavilion, rest rooms, car park and resting places for bereaved family members and visitors. Decisions had also to be made about suitability of some of the religious statues and shrines as well as temples before approval was granted for their construction.<sup>51</sup>

More frequent were cases concerning the size of grave tombs which had exceeded the specifications allowed. The Hokkien section of the cemetery had three classes of graves, each differentiated by the size permitted and therefore the fee charged. Most cases of violation of the regulations related to permissible specification involved those in Category A where wealthier people were willing to pay for larger lots.<sup>52</sup> The number of such cases of outsized graves was not large and the committee, when faced with such cases, called

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Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

49. Secretary for Chinese Affairs to Secretary to Government, 13 December 1898, Selangor Secretariat Files, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

50. Minutes of meeting of the Kuala Lumpur Hokkien Association, 18 February 1955, Kuala Lumpur.

51. Minutes of meeting of the Kuala Lumpur Hokkien Association, 13 August 1954, 30 August 1955, 27 October 1955, Kuala Lumpur.

52. Minutes of meeting of the Kuala Lumpur Hokkien Association, 31 January 1958, Kuala Lumpur.

upon the maintenance staff to be vigilant. The staff was to monitor when work on tombstones was in progress to ensure that this kept to the specifications. In cases where specifications had been exceeded, the offending party was required to re-do the gravestone or to pay a fee for the additional land taken up.<sup>53</sup> Even as late as 1954 there was no concern that outsized graves could lead to rapid filling of the cemetery. Although smaller than the Kwangtung part, the Hokkien committee believed that its side of the cemetery had sufficient land for another 30 years of continued use. Indeed, requests made by the Municipal Council (formerly Sanitary Board) and a Chinese school board in 1954 to the Hokkien committee to cede small plots of land for the building of a female dormitory for a government training centre and for a Chinese girls' school, were positively considered.<sup>54</sup> The Hokkien committee was willing to give up the sub-plot for the female dormitory in exchange for a similar size plot of land nearby along Klang Road.

In contrast, the Kwantung committee in 1954 was starting to look for additional land as its section was filling up. In that year it wrote to the Hokkien committee asking if part of its land could be used for the burial use of Cantonese. The Kwantung committee request is interesting. First, it indicates that communication between the two dialect associations was mostly through correspondence. The minutes of the Hokkien Association did not report of regular meetings between representations of the two associations to discuss cemetery matters even though they shared a common location and encountered similar issues. Although the Chinese community was beginning to develop some social cohesion and an evolving common identity, dialect demarcation remained strong. Indeed, the minutes of the Hokkien Association showed that more of the association's meetings and regular correspondence were with Hokkien associations elsewhere in Malaya as well as with organizations back in the Fujian province.<sup>55</sup> Second, the Kwantung committee request underlined the fact that the Cantonese population in Kuala Lumpur was larger as well as a growing one compared to the Hokkien counterpart. Hence by 1954 the Kwantung committee was looking for additional space for burials while the Hokkiens were confident that its part of the cemetery could be in continued use for another 30 years.<sup>56</sup>

Therefore, when the colonial government in 1954 offered the Kwantung and Hokkien Associations two new pieces of land in exchange for the existing

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53. Minutes of meeting of the Kuala Lumpur Hokkien Association, 19 July 1954, 16 March 1957, Kuala Lumpur.

54. Minutes of meeting of the Kuala Lumpur Hokkien Association, 19 January 1954, Kuala Lumpur.

55. Minutes of meeting of the Kuala Lumpur Hokkien Association, 6 August, 1956, Kuala Lumpur.

56. Minutes of meeting of the Kuala Lumpur Hokkien Association, 24 April, 1955, Kuala Lumpur.



cemetery land, the Hokkien committee turned down the offer. The government's offer of sites for new cemeteries was made following reports that the Kwantung part of the Chinese cemetery had almost filled up. At the same time, with the expansion of the city, the land used by the existing Chinese cemetery had appreciated greatly in value and the government was keen to take it back for its own development. Significantly, in its offer of new sites, the government set four conditions. First, the new cemeteries were to be opened to all Chinese. This meant that no sections were to be reserved for particular dialect groups. This indicated that increasingly, the state regarded the Chinese community as undifferentiated. This could partly be an outcome of its continuing experience in the Malayan Emergency combating a largely Chinese-led insurgency. And in settling nearly 500,000 Chinese in newly created New Villages in this period of the 1950s, dialect differentiation was not a key consideration. Second, the size of the grave lots was now to be smaller. Third, the government proposed the practice of second burials in the new cemeteries as in Hong Kong. Burial was for seven years after which the body would be exhumed and interred in urns. The grave could then be re-used for new burials. Finally, the government indicated that the lease for the new cemetery land was only for 30 years. It wanted the association to indicate how much land they needed for the new cemetery.<sup>57</sup>

The offer was first made to the Kwantung Association as its section of the Kuala Lumpur cemetery was fast running out of space. The new cemeteries were to be in Salak South New Village to the south and Jinjiang New Village to the north.<sup>58</sup>

In January 1956 the Secretary of Chinese Affairs invited management representatives of cemeteries belonging to the Hokkien, Cantonese, and Kwongsai associations for a meeting.<sup>59</sup> In the meeting, the Hokkien association rejected the government's offer of a new site. Its delegation argued:

We oppose the plan and refuse to accept the offer from the government as the burial grounds in the Hokkien Cemetery can be used for another 30 years. According to Chinese custom, we always respect tombs and do not allow them to be destroyed. Our fellow countrymen have already spent a lot of money on the Hokkien cemetery. Further plans will only be made when the burial grounds are full. We strongly oppose the proposal made by the government as they ruled that present cemeteries would be discontinued and relocated for the purpose of development. Many old cemeteries belonging to various other ethnic communities are still situated in the city area. So there is no reason to put an end to cemeteries that are still usable.<sup>60</sup>

57. Minutes of meeting of the Kuala Lumpur Hokkien Association, 7 October 1954, 23 February 1956, Kuala Lumpur.

58. Minutes of meeting of the Kuala Lumpur Hokkien Association, 19 March 1956, Kuala Lumpur.

59. Minutes of meeting of the Kuala Lumpur Hokkien Association, 2 February 1956, Kuala Lumpur.

60. Minutes of meeting of the Kuala Lumpur Hokkien Association, 21 February 1956, Kuala Lumpur.

The Hokkien Association was referring to the fact that in Kuala Lumpur at that time, there were some twelve cemeteries belonging to different communities. These included those described by the Kuala Lumpur Sanitary Board as belonging to the Chinese, Christians, Malays, Sikhs, Japanese, and Hindus.<sup>61</sup> The fact that the Hokkien cemetery still had unused lots and that it had spent money to develop and upkeep the place was an important argument. Association members were happy with the existing location and were not keen to disturb the graves through relocation. But it was also evident that even in the years after the war and just before the country's independence and where there had been much changes within the Chinese community and in the larger society, the Hokkien association as well as other associations were not willing to have a cemetery where their dialect identity and distinctive could not be maintained.

## **Conclusion**

This article looks at how the burial grounds of the Chinese community came to be developed and managed over the years.<sup>62</sup> The process involved both the community and the state on policies and procedures for the management of Chinese cemeteries. For the state, allowing the Chinese community to manage its cemeteries was part of the process in regulating the broad area of health and sanitation. Through its Ordinances on birth and death as well as the Ordinance on burial grounds, the colonial state kept track of demographic changes.<sup>63</sup> More importantly, through mandatory registration it monitored trends in death and disease. Chinese cemeteries, as with all cemeteries, enforced the regulation that no burial could be carried without a death certificate being produced. Indirectly too, regulating burials and cemeteries allowed the state to extend some influence over the Chinese community.

Generally, the state and the Chinese community understood the need for some regulation and control of cemeteries. There were some initial resistance by the Chinese community to state efforts at regulating burial grounds. The wealthier Chinese, particularly, objected to moves by some European members in the Singapore Municipal Council to prohibit private burial grounds. But overall, the Chinese accepted the arguments that cemeteries had to be regulated for health and land-use reasons.

Finally, Chinese cemeteries were important markers of identity for the immigrant Chinese community. They served as monuments to those early

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61. Minutes of Acting Chairman of Sanitary Board, Kuala Lumpur on Licensed Burial and Burning Grounds in the Kuala Lumpur District, 8 March 1900, Selangor Secretariat Files, National Archives, Kuala Lumpur.

62. Ministry of Housing and Local Government Malaysia, Planning Guidelines: Burial Grounds for Muslims and Non-Muslims, Kuala Lumpur, 1997.

63. Norman Owen (Ed.), *Death and Disease in Southeast Asia*, Singapore: Oxford University Press for Asian Studies Association of Australia, 1987, pp. 3-30.

Chinese, many of whom were migrants, who came to work and to die in the new land they had settled in. They were indicators that the Chinese community was no longer transient. Fewer were returning to China with the intention of retiring and dying there. These were monuments reserved for particular dialect groups. The demarcation was clear as in the Kuala Lumpur Chinese cemetery where an access road separated the Kwantung and the Hokkien part of the burial ground. Within the Kwangtung cemetery, a separate section of about 25 acres served as the burial ground for the Kwongsai people. In the Batu Gantong Hokkien Cemetery in Penang, the rules forbade those who had married out of the Hokkien cultural practices to be buried there. When the state in 1954 proposed a new cemetery to replace the existing Kuala Lumpur Kwantung and Hokkien cemetery, there was strong objection that it should be open to all Chinese.

But such dialect-based cemeteries as they filled up are being replaced by larger community-based burial grounds. Land is scarce and expensive, and the dialect associations no longer can afford or have the resources to start their own cemeteries. The Chinese cemeteries in Penang and Kuala Lumpur represent a phase in the community's history that soon would pass into history.

*ERIK AKPEDONU*<sup>1</sup>

## The Manila Chinese Cemetery: A Repository of Tsinoy Culture and Identity

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### Introduction

Cemeteries are fascinating places. Reflections of the society which created them, they signify its identity, its secular values and worldviews, spiritual and religious beliefs, and not least its wealth and technical and artistic achievements. They make visible a society's evolution, its history and past achievements, but also its social stratification, contradictions, and class and/or ethnic divide. It is no coincidence that most of what we know about long vanished civilizations such as the old Egyptians and Mayas, or ancient China, we know from their vast necropolises.

Cemeteries are also like art museums; showcases of a society's artistic prowess, skills and tastes and their evolution over time. In remembering departed loved ones, humankind at all times spared no costs and efforts to honor them and hold up their memory and remembrance. It is such devotion that explains masterpieces of human creativity and vision such as the Taj Mahal in India, embodiment of a great love chiseled into white marble over decades. Elaborate tombs also serve to showcase the deceased or his/her family's social status during earthly life, or, in some religions, to carry it over into the afterlife. In short, the cemeteries of the past have a lot to tell us who live in the present, if only we care to know and to listen. Especially in the fast developing megacities of Asia-Pacific, where history, art and beauty are all too readily sacrificed in the name of rapid "development" and unreflected "progress," cemeteries, now rare oases of quiet and greenery, have become precious repositories of the past, be it history, art, or architecture.

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1. Ateneo de Manila University, Manila.

This applies in particular to Manila, where a destructive tropical climate, war and overcrowding, but especially massive re-development, has since 1945 erased much of its built heritage. As the frenzy to demolish and rebuilt “bigger and better” (and more profitable) continues unabated, Manila’s vast necropolis in the north of the Sta. Cruz district has become a veritable museum of the artistic and architectural styles that shaped the face of the surrounding city over the past 150 years. It spans from the Spanish colonial period (until 1898), the American interlude (1899-1946), and the post-colonial era (since 1946) until the present.

This article, after a general introduction of the cemetery, its Tsinoy mausoleum patrons, and their architects and builders, will give an overview of the architectural evolution of the often elaborate mausoleums that can be found throughout the Chinese Cemetery. It will explore the different art styles, Western and Chinese, that inspired their architecture over the course of time, and will show that the builders of these tombs did not merely copy Western or Eastern models, but in an eclectic way often combined both, and sometimes merged various traditions into one. Many of these mausoleums are a synthesis of East and West, reflective of the *Tsinoy* (Filipino with Chinese roots) community.

## Overview

The vast necropolis in the north of Manila actually consists of three distinct and separate cemeteries, namely the Cementerio del Norte (North Cemetery), the La Loma Cemetery, and the Chinese Cemetery. While superficially the three may look similar to the casual observer, there are important differences in origin, layout, and above all, cultural and religious characteristics.

The North Cemetery is the youngest among them, having been founded in 1905 by the new US-American administration to provide a modern, healthy and sanitary burial ground laid out to the latest trends in cemetery design then en vogue in Europe and North America. Non-sectarian in nature and municipal-owned, its generous park-like layout, complete with carefully planted sumptuous vegetation and shade trees quickly made it the resting place of choice for the Manila elite.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast, the Catholic La Loma Cemetery dates back to the late Spanish era. In 1882 the Cementerio General de La Loma, built in old-fashioned Spanish-Mediterranean style, was laid out to accommodate victims of the devastating cholera epidemic of the same year. It later merged with the new Cementerio de Binondo (originally founded around 1850, but rebuilt in 1884) immediately adjacent to it.<sup>3</sup> Here, too, can be found the tombs of many leading families, politicians and businessmen of their time.

2. See Paulo Alcazaren, “Cities of Remembrance,” *Philippine Star*, October 30, 1999.

3. See Lorelei de Viana, “The World of the Necropolis: Public Sanitation and Cemeteries in 19th Century Manila”. *Unitas* vol. 77, no. 1 (2004), Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, p. 117.



The Chinese Cemetery, finally, is multi-denominational and includes Christian, Buddhist and Taoist burials. Its history dates back to 1843, when the Governor General authorized the Chinese to establish a cemetery in La Loma.<sup>4</sup> It was founded or enlarged on the present site in 1863 when Lim Ong, *gobernadorcillo* (mayor) of the Chinese community in Binondo bought land in La Loma to provide a decent burial ground for Catholic and non-Catholic Chinese.<sup>5</sup>

The layout of the cemetery, a vaguely trapezoidal area of about 54 hectares with an extension at the southern tip, is rather irregular, especially its old pre-war part along Rizal Avenue Extension, reflecting its gradual evolution and expansion. Its post-war portions show more regularity, with a network of three major roads more or less parallel from NW to SE and bisected by a series of minor roads at right angles. Street names honor the founders of the cemetery (Lim Ong), a number of former Chinese Consuls-General, such as Clarence Kwangson Young (murdered in April 1942 inside the neighboring North Cemetery by the Japanese), prominent Chinese businessmen and philanthropists (Kong Lim, Suy Chiok), and heroes of the Philippine Revolution (1896-1902)<sup>6</sup> such as Apolinario Mabini (initially buried here) and Melchora Aquino de Ramos (also known as Tandang Sora, “Elder Sora”). The main road today is Matandang Sora, which leads from the main entrance to the Chong Hock Temple, where the Administration Building, a columbarium, and the crematory can be found. Nearby and along Consul-General Young Road can be found various memorials and a museum dedicated to Chinese martyrs who lost their life during the Japanese occupation from 1942 to 1945.

The evolution of funerary architecture also visualizes how the cemetery itself has expanded over the past 150 years. What started out in the mid-19th century as today’s Chinese Cemetery was initially much smaller than the vast necropolis which we see today. The first extension already took place in 1878, when additional land was purchased from the adjacent Dominican Hacienda de Loma and the Chong Hock Tong Temple was built.<sup>7</sup> Before the Pacific War the two main entrances faced Avenida Rizal, which connects Manila with the fertile plains of Bulacan and Pampanga to the north. This northwestern portion of the cemetery between Rizal Avenue and Lim Ong Street, north of the Chong Hock Tong, is the oldest and historically most significant part of the cemetery. Here in the vicinity of the old main gate can be found in a somewhat

4. See Richard T. Chu and Teresita Ang See, “Towards a History of Chinese Burial Grounds in Manila during the Spanish Rule”, in this issue.

5. See Edgar Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life, 1850-1898*, Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2000, p. 185.

6. Including the Philippine-American War of 1898-1902.

7. See Lorelei de Viana, *Three Centuries of Binondo Architecture, 1594-1898*, Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2001, p. 158.

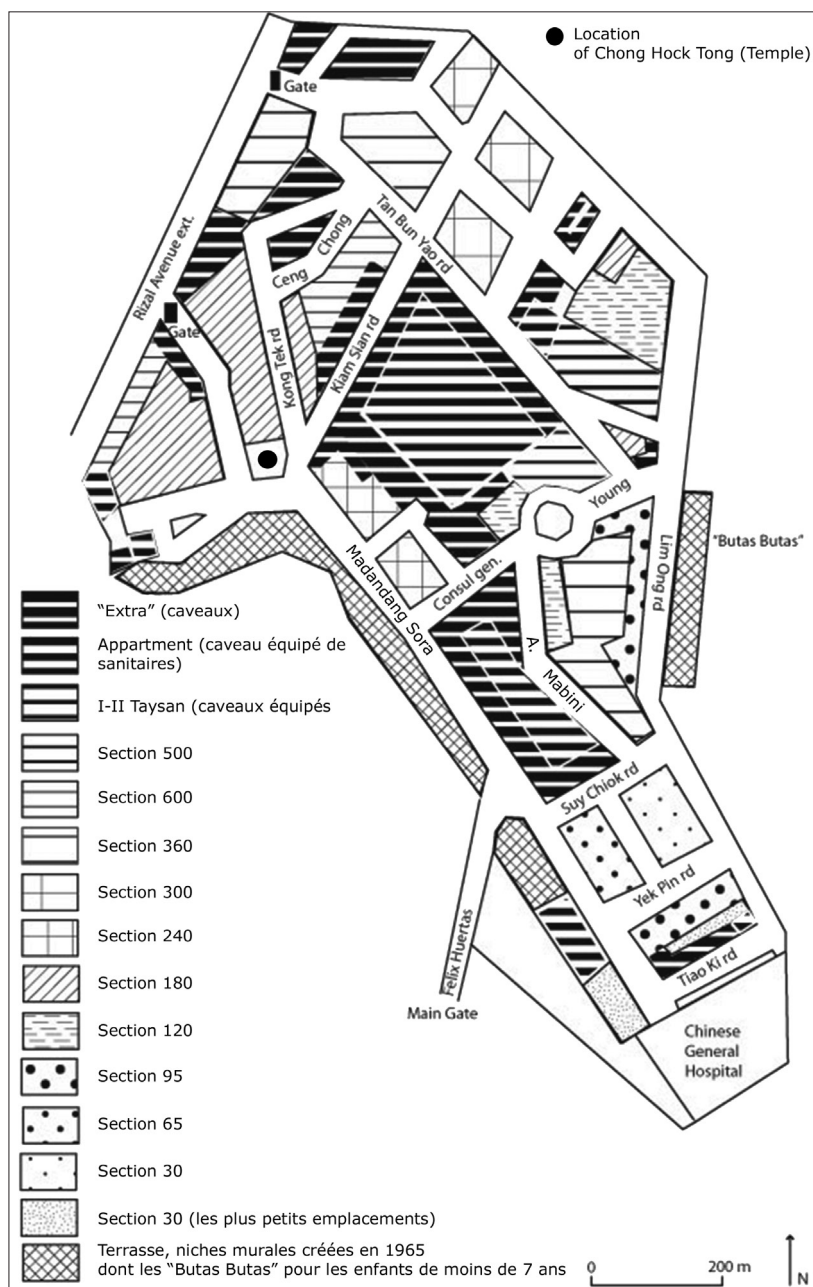
irregular fashion the oldest and grandest pre-war mausoleums in the Art Deco and Revivalist styles of the 1920s to 1940s.

Another extension of the cemetery in the 1950s saw the main entrance relegated towards the south along F. Huertas Street, where it remains today. Construction likewise spread southwards, into the vicinity of the Chong Hock Temple, where modernist and space-age designs of the 1950s and 1960s now dominate. In recent decades building activity spread further south- and eastwards, as illustrated by postmodern forms and elements which characterize these portions of the cemetery. Remarkably, Chinese-style mausoleums can be found almost equally distributed over all portions of the cemetery, old and new. More recent designs, of course, also exist in the older parts, as happens, for example, when aged mausoleums are rebuilt in more contemporary styles or when old leases expire and are sold to a new owner. However, the vast majority of tombs are of rather ordinary and simple design, and form the backdrop of the more elaborate ones.

The most elaborate postwar and contemporary mausoleums of the “Rich and Famous” face the main streets, such as Tandang Sora, Lim Ong, Young, and Tan Bun Yao. Inside those thus defined inner blocks can be found neatly arranged row-mausoleums of more modest means, or even unroofed open-air tombs. On the peripheral blocks can be found smaller, albeit more individualistically built “middle-class” mausoleums and open-air tombs, while some areas at the extreme periphery are reserved for low-income concrete burial niches, as well as simple terrace-style open-air tombs. (see Map)

The erection of grand mausoleums continues to this day, although apparently on a much lesser scale than in previous decades: With stiff competition from newly-opened, space-saving columbaria in the inner cities and sprawling memorial parks in the new suburbs, and everless available space in the old sites, the days of grand mausoleums may ultimately be numbered. Worse, with the continuing out-migration of Manila’s elite to the new posh subdivisions in the south and east (Forbes Park, Makati; Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa; La Vista, Quezon City) since the 1960s, together with their departed ancestors, many old mausoleums have been abandoned and fallen into decay. Luckily, the Manila Chinese Cemetery has so far escaped the fate that has befallen large sections of its neighbors, whose perimeters are now overrun by informal settlers, while many of their mausoleums are deteriorating or have been taken over by the homeless after their original “inhabitants” have been exhumed and transferred to new cemeteries in the suburbs, in proximity to their descendants’ new residences.

With squatters and “caretakers” proliferating, many public cemeteries have started to resemble the metropolis around them, including advancing ‘cobwebs’ of electric cables and wires, piles of uncollected waste and refuse, up to the opening of small-scale businesses, including the offering of rather questionable “services” to visitors and tourists. Overcrowding of cemeteries



Map of the Manila Chinese Cemetery. (Adapted from C. Guéguen, "Le rôle des morts dans la localisation et les actes sociaux des Chinois aux Philippines," *Les espaces de la mort et les morts dans l'espace*, Cahiers de l'ADES, Bordeaux III, 2010, pp. 117-130.)

with dead and alive has given rise to veritable “condominiums of the dead” to accommodate the not-so-wealthy deceased, where row upon row of concrete burial niches is piled on top of each other just like the condominium high-rises for the living that now mushroom all over Metro Manila. For financially better-situated middle-class families, as in “real life,” more spacious row/town houses or mausoleums, respectively, can be leased. And for those very wealthy Chinese who still bury their dead here, new and fully-air-conditioned mansions of mausoleums in the latest domestic architectural fashion guided by *fengshui* or geomantic principles are still being built on large sprawling lots. At the extreme other end of the scale, in many urban cemeteries (albeit not in the Chinese Cemetery) lack of space has necessitated the burial of the extremely poor below the walkways of the cemetery, where they continue “living on the streets” even in the afterlife.<sup>8</sup> (Plates 1-3)

The Chinese cemetery is owned and managed by the Philippine-Chinese Charitable Association, the *Comunidad de Chinos* (which also operates the adjacent Chinese General Hospital) founded in the 1870s by Lim Ong and Tan Quien Sien, better known under his Christian name Carlos Palanca.<sup>9</sup> The association leases out lots (and row mausoleums developed by it) for a span of 25 years, with the option of renewal for another 25 years, although members of the community who significantly contributed to its welfare may be granted a burial plot for free. In case of failure of lease renewal, no eviction will take place, but maintenance works on the mausoleums and tombs will no longer be permitted.

### Sino-Filipinos or Tsinoyas as Mausoleum Patrons

Intermarriages of Chinese migrants with local Malay women gave birth to a new class of Chinese *mestizos* in the mid-18th century who would dominate the economic life of the country in the following 19th century. With the opening of the Philippines to international trade in 1834 a thriving plantation economy developed based on the export of cash crops such as abaca (Manila hemp), sugar, tobacco, indigo, coffee and copra. Soon the owners or lessees of these agricultural estates, mainly wealthy *mestizos* of mixed Filipino, Chinese, and Spanish ancestry, grew immensely rich and formed a new elite known as *ilustrados* (the “educated ones”).<sup>10</sup> Towards the end of the 19th century they would merge with wealthy *Indios* and Spanish *mestizos* into *Filipinos*, defined by a common Hispanic culture and cosmopolitan outlook, rather than ethnic origin.<sup>11</sup> This wealthy elite, together with rich Chinese, would form the

8. Jerome Aning, “Cemeteries are a Time Capsule of RP History, Culture,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, November 01, 2005.

9. Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life*, p. 200.

10. Wickberg, *Op. cit.*, pp. 25-30.

11. Wickberg, *Op. cit.*, pp. 131-133, 141.

social, political and economic elite of the Philippines until today. Wickberg notes the high degree of Hispanization of this (usually land-owning) mestizo class, who were devout Catholics, and their near-complete adoption of a highly sophisticated Filipino-Hispanic material culture, including an apparent tendency towards ostentatious display of wealth and loyalty towards Spain.<sup>12</sup> Apparently social status played an important role for many of its members, and the need to affirm their elevated status and prestige vis-à-vis the *indios* as well as the *Chinos*.<sup>13</sup> However, despite their newfound wealth, their social status in the colonial hierarchy, and especially their political influence remained curtailed, as described in the writings of the Propaganda Movement and of Jose Rizal, which ultimately led to the Philippine Revolution of 1896.

At the time the Americans took over from the Spaniards, a wave of cultural and technological innovations introduced by the new colonizers swept the country. These innovations were quickly adopted by Filipinos in general, and by the mestizo elite and the nascent middle-class in particular, as it allowed them to manifest and demonstrate their new-found economic, social and political status, as from their ranks were chosen candidates for political positions of (albeit limited) power and influence. It was thus only logical that this immensely wealthy class would seek to assert itself as the new leading caste and to legitimize its elevated societal status and political power. This found expression in built form, ranging from impressive mansions to often no less ostentatious funerary architecture and—sculpture, as the newly-minted politicians, statesmen, lawyers, professionals and businessmen sought visible validation of their success. Thoroughly Hispanized and Westernized in culture and outlook, they were open-minded towards Western concepts, in dress as much as in architecture.<sup>14</sup> Thus, especially during the 1920s and 1930s new expensive mausoleums proliferated in all three cemeteries of the northern necropolis.

Unlike the Chinese *mestizos* in the Philippines, as Wickberg points out, the *Baba Nyonya* in Malaya, and the *Peranakan* of Java, although ethically and culturally likewise hybrid, were not considered natives by the colonial authorities, but Chinese, thus hindering their assimilation into the host culture.<sup>15</sup> And unlike nationalism in the Philippines, which culturally was solidly oriented towards Spanish and Western culture, in the Dutch Indies (Indonesia) nationalism sought “a refurbished version of their own, emotionally valued indigenous tradition.”<sup>16</sup> Hence, even though there developed a kind of mestizo culture in the Dutch Indies, it failed to break inter-group barriers: “Though

12. Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life*, pp. 33-34, 128-129, 136.

13. Wickberg, *Op. cit.*, pp. 34-36.

14. Wickberg, *Op. cit.*, p. 131.

15. Wickberg, *Op. cit.*, p. 31.

16. Wickberg, *Op. cit.*, p. 132.

Indo-Europeans, Indonesian Chinese and modern urban Indonesians were all of them equally imbued with the mestizo culture, they saw themselves as bearers par excellence of European, Chinese, and Indonesian cultural values.”<sup>17</sup> That is because, while in the Philippines the Spanish successfully and thoroughly Hispanized the country with a single, all-encompassing religion and relatively uniform Hispanic culture, the Dutch in their colonies tried as much as possible not to intervene into the local cultures.<sup>18</sup> This in turn may have made the Peranakan Chinese more conservative and less receptive to the religious culture of their host communities, although since the 14th-15th centuries there already existed small communities of Muslim Chinese in different cities of Java.<sup>19</sup>

### **Mausoleum Architects and Builders**

Not much is known about the architects and builders of most of these tombs and mausoleums; this awaits further research. During the Spanish era, ecclesiastical structures were usually designed by (mostly European) parish priests, and in the 19th century increasingly by Spanish military and civil engineers. The execution of such projects typically lay in the hands of “maestro de obras,” that is, local master masons and master carpenters, while larger projects were often entrusted to Chinese contractors. In the second half of the 19th century the first professionally-trained Filipino architects such as Felix Roxas y Arroyo (born ca. 1820, called the “first Filipino architect”) and Arcadio Arellano (1872-1920) began to leave their mark, the latter designing the “Mausoleum for the Heroes of the Revolution” in neighboring North Cemetery in 1915. With the American take-over in 1898 US-American architects and engineers entered the scene, such as William Parsons, Francis Mandelbaum, William James Odom, and Welton Becket. It thus stands to reason that many of the first Western-style mausoleums and tombs may have been designed by Spanish or American practitioners or companies, following western models. However, over time they were increasingly replaced by first- and second-generation Filipino architects, such as Pablo Antonio and Juan Nakpil, who alone designed more than a dozen pre-war mausoleums, tombs, and monuments in neighboring La Loma Cemetery and North Cemetery, as well as in the provinces, among them Art Deco masterpieces such as the 1927 Nakpil-Bautista pylon. Meanwhile, Andres Luna de San Pedro designed the Chinese-style Sy Cong Bieng Mausoleum in North Cemetery. With

17. W. F. Wertheim, *Indonesian Society in Transition. A Study of Social Change*, The Hague and Bandung: W. van Hoeve, 1956, as cited by Wickberg, *Op. cit.*, p. 133.

18. Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life*, p. 241.

19. See inter alia Denys Lombard and Claudine Salmon, “Islam and Chineseness,” in Alijah Gordon (ed.), *The Propagation of Islam in the Indonesian-Malay Archipelago*, Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute (MSRI), 2001, pp. 181-208.



the *jiannian* 剪黏 technique (literally “shear and paste,” see below) rather uncommon in the Philippines it is very likely that many artisans for Chinese-style tombs may have come from Fujian and Guangdong where this technique developed at the end of the Ming or early Qing dynasty. Here were situated local ceramics kilns where huge quantities of shards could be found, which were especially used to decorate temple roofs.

### **Mausoleums in Western Architectural Styles**

The development of this Western-style mausoleum culture emerged with and as a result of a new revolutionary type of cemetery, which originated in post-revolutionary France in the early 19th century in response to the overcrowding of the old medieval cemeteries in the midst of densely-populated urban centers.<sup>20</sup> These new cemeteries, carefully planned and laid out far away from the city centers, were landscaped and planted with lush vegetation along the lines of a public park or garden, and carefully maintained. They thus not only served as places of mourning, but in themselves invited promenades and recreation and ultimately gave rise to the emergence of much-needed public parks in the now fast-growing cities of the nascent age of industrialization.<sup>21</sup> Importantly, the new cemeteries were non-denominational and municipal-owned, thus considerably reducing the influence and role of the church in funerary culture and making burials more secular in nature. Most significant for the development of a mausoleum culture, however, was the fact that the land within these new cemeteries could now be bought or leased long-term, thus enabling the erection of elaborate tombs and sepulchers of commemoration at the discretion of the owners. This in turn allowed individual commemoration and led to an erosion of class barriers.<sup>22</sup>

Along with the new cemetery design came a fundamentally new way of seeing death: not as the end, but merely as an intermezzo, during which the departed is temporarily separated from the living loved ones, soon to be reunited with them in heaven.<sup>23</sup> Hence art sought to replace the grizzly medieval image of the “terrible death,” symbolized by crossed bones, skulls, Danse Macabre and “grim reaper,” with a new vision of the “beautiful death,” embodied in statues of angels, putties, mourning women, laurels, and religious imagery. Thus, a new form of architecture arose that celebrated death and mourning in a veritable “death-cult” expressed in architecture, sculpture, painting and literature, and elaborate tombs and mausoleums.<sup>24</sup>

20. See David Robinson and Dean Koontz, *Beautiful Death: Art of the Cemetery*, New York: Penguin Books USA Inc., 1996.

21. Alcazaren, “Cities of Remembrance.”

22. Robinson and Koontz, *Beautiful Death*.

23. Robinson and Koontz, *Op. cit.*

24. Robinson and Koontz, *Op. cit.*

The time period from the 1870s to the present is one of the most interesting in architectural history, having seen in a span of less than 200 years the resurrection of various historic styles, followed by the emergence of revolutionary new forms such as Art Nouveau and later Art Deco. This culminated in the global triumphant of classic Modernism/Bauhaus and the International Style since World War II with its myriad of sub-forms and regional variations, just to be challenged by Post-Modernism after only a few decades. The Manila's northern necropolis is a virtual architectural museum of the evolution of Philippine (and global) architecture, for nowhere else in the country can samples of all of the styles en vogue during this short time span be experienced in such close proximity, often with an interesting local twist.

During the Spanish colonial era mausoleums did not exist in the Philippines; instead, the dead of high rank were interred inside churches or in cemeteries in close proximity to the church.<sup>25</sup> Starting in the 19th century, with increasing scarcity of space and sanitary concerns about burial practices, interment inside churches was banned, and cemeteries relegated to sites far from urban centers. The dead were then commonly interred inside masonry niches or ground burials within these newly-built cemeteries complete with mortuary chapels.<sup>26</sup> A prime example is the Paco Cemetery of 1822, the oldest still existing (albeit now longer used as such) cemetery in Manila.

The oldest still extant burial in the Chinese Cemetery is the tomb of Pilar Tiaoqui de Lim-Tuaco, which dates from 1895, set in an open small plot of ca. 4 x 6 meters enclosed by a low wrought iron fence. The sarcophagus in the center is covered with an engraved marble slab, similar to those found embedded into the walls and floors of ancient churches. (Plate 4)

Judging from vintage photos of the necropolis from the turn of the previous century, the first roofs over tombs seem to have appeared during the first two decades of the 20th century. One of the oldest still existent, roofed-over tombs is the one of a woman named Tiu, an immigrant from Kaiping, Canton who was interred here in the 1900s. A simple sloping roof is carried by four concrete posts in between which stretches open fretwork called *calado*, which are carried by ornately carved wooden brackets in floral design. Such brackets and *calados* are typical design elements of the "Floral Style" of the Filipino-Hispanic *Bahay na bato* or "stone house."<sup>27</sup> Hence, the Tiu tomb combines Chinese and Fil-Hispanic design elements into a coherent one. (Plate 5)

Most of today's mausoleums inside the Chinese Cemetery still follow this basic model of a covered tomb, albeit usually in concrete construction, with the roof carried by columns in all imaginable shapes and styles, and low side

25. De Viana, *Three Centuries of Binondo Architecture, 1594-1898*, p. 88.

26. De Viana, *Op. cit.*, p. 121.

27. See Fernando N. Zialcita and Martin I. Tinio, *Ancestral Houses of the Philippines, 1810-1930*, Quezon City: GCF Books, 1980, pp. 149-152.

walls in between enclosing the inscribed stele and the tomb behind it (see, for example, the mid-1930s Yu Chan Seh Mausoleum with its neoclassical Tuscan columns. (Plate 6)

### ***Historism***

The first fully-enclosed mausoleums seem to have emerged in the 1910s in the neighboring North Cemetery, and also began to appear in the Chinese cemetery in the 1920s.<sup>28</sup> This was the high-time of all kinds of revivalist styles, such as Neo-Romanesque, Neo-Renaissance, and Neo-Baroque, which emerged in Europe in the 18th and 19th century and found their way to the Philippines either directly or filtered through the USA and Spain.

### ***Neo-Classicism***

A Revivalist style particularly popular for funerary architecture was (and still is) Neo-Classicism. It emerged in the mid-18th century as a reaction to the frivolity and decadence of the absolutist courts then ruling in Europe and embodied in the flamboyant and luxurious Baroque. Arising from the era of the Enlightenment as espoused by Rousseau and his ideals of rationality and reason Neo-classicism is closely associated with the ideals of republicanism and democracy which was then seen embodied in the ancient Greek city states and the Roman Republic of Antiquity. Consequently, it became the preferred architectural style of the newly-independent United States of America and revolutionary France, and soon spread throughout the globe. The formal canon employs elements of classic Greco-Roman architecture, such as the classical orders (Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite), colonnades, porticos, pediments, acroteria, etc. as described in the writings of Vitruvius' *De Architectura*. The style also incorporates forms of the Renaissance and 16th-century Palladian architecture. Due to its association with enlightenment, democracy, and education it quickly became the popular style for museums, libraries, schools and academic institutions (in Manila best exemplified by UP Manila and De La Salle College), but also government offices and courts buildings.<sup>29</sup> Its close affinity with state institutions, hence "stateliness," also made it a preferred style for the mausoleums of politicians, statesmen, or judges.

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28. Based on vintage photographs and dates of Interment. Although a number of mausoleums carry *oriels* (marble plates) at their base indicating their actual year of construction, in the majority of tombs that is not the case. However, interment dates can only serve as one of several clues in determining the age of a structure: mausoleums may have been built over the grave only long after burial, or mortal remains may have been transferred from another, original burial site (secondary burial). It is even possible that a mausoleum was built already during the lifetime of its future "occupant," as is sometimes still the case today.

29. See Gerard Lico, *Arkitekturang Filipino: A History of Architecture and Urbanism in the Philippines*, Quezon City: The University of the Philippines Press, 2008, pp. 272-314.

A beautiful example within the Chinese Cemetery, albeit in a somewhat modernist idiom, is the Sy Mausoleum from the mid-1950s. It is a Greek temple in miniature, complete with (abstracted) columns, a wreaths-and-swags frieze around the architrave, and a dentil frieze above, topped by acroteria on the corners and on the pediment. (Plate 7)

A close replica of a famous Italian Renaissance building is the pre-war Tambunting Mausoleum. Just outside the walls of the Chinese Cemetery, this tomb of a famous family of Chinese businessmen replicates Donato Bramante's Tempietto di San Pietro, built 1502 in Rome, an exquisite commemorative chapel. The Tempietto, in turn, is based on the famous Temple of Vesta of Roman Antiquity. The round mausoleum is surrounded by a colonnade of Tuscan columns which carry a plain architrave with laurel wreaths. The drum of the circular chamber rises above the colonnade and is crowned by a dome, capped by a lantern with cross. (Plate 8)

### *Neo-Gothic*

Also widely applied for funerary architecture was the Neo-Gothic, a revival of the daring Gothic style of medieval times which began in 1140 on the Île de France with the basilica of St. Denis. Its revival began in 18th-century England, and the style became immensely popular during the 19th century as a reaction to the negative social effects of the Industrial Revolution and Manchester capitalism, which was perceived as dehumanizing and miserable. At its core lies a notion of romanticism, which idealized the Middle Ages as a past "Golden Age" in literature (see Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris*), painting, sculpture and especially architecture (see Karl Friedrich Schinkel, George Gilbert Scott, Eugène Viollet-Le-Duc). Well-known examples of the style are the House of Parliament in London, Cologne Cathedral, or St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York. With its emphasis on verticality and heaven-orientedness Neo-Gothic espoused mysticism and spirituality, and is thus seen as a conservative reaction to the republican and democratic rationalism represented by Neo-Classicism. In Europe, especially Germany, it was the preferred style of the emerging national "awakening" after the Napoleonic Liberation Wars,<sup>30</sup> and quickly spread throughout the British Empire, North America, and thence globally. In the USA it quickly became the preferred style for religious and academic institutions (Yale, Harvard), and likewise in the Philippines after the American takeover in 1898 (San Beda College, Centro Escolar College, La Consolacion College). Its mystic and spiritual associations also made it an immensely popular style for funerary architecture. One of the oldest mausoleums in the Chinese Cemetery, the Dijiongco Mausoleum, probably from the mid-1920s, is executed in the Neo-

30. See Norbert Huse (Hrsg.), *Denkmalpflege: Deutsche Texte aus drei Jahrhunderten*, München: C.H. Beck Verlag, 2006, pp. 39-47.

Gothic idiom, albeit in a somewhat eclectic manner, complete with “classic” Gothic spires, gargoyles, and statuary of angels (plate 9).

An interesting “Chinese” variation of the Gothic style is the twin mausoleums of the Benching and Machuca-Gotanco families from the early 1930s. Here the classic Gothic canon of lancet windows, spires, and crabs is eclectically combined not only with neoclassical elements, but also with classic Chinese motifs, such as *Foo Dogs* guarding the entrance, a colorful frieze in *jiannian* cutwork technique that wraps around each building showing birds, and large truncated medallions in the pediments which depict trees, birds, and Chinese dragons. (Plate 10)

### ***Art Deco***

In the 1930s the construction of elaborate mausoleums went into full swing, fueled by technological and economic progress and a massive construction boom in Manila and the rest of the country. This was the time when Art Deco replaced Historism not only in the Philippines, but worldwide. Following the disaster of World War I in Europe, the old imperial dynasties of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia had collapsed, and with them the revivalist styles that embodied their rule. Social transformation and revolutions in Europe demanded a more egalitarian society, which also meant a more egalitarian architecture expressed in new and forward-looking forms. Art Deco, which emerged in the 1910s, saw its debut at the 1925 *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris. Unlike Historism, which reveled in the past, and Art Nouveau which emphasized handicrafts, Art Deco celebrates the nascent machine age and embraces technological progress and mass production. Hence its industrial-looking decor such as stylized floral ornamentation with sharp edges as if machine cut, large plain surfaces, and a high degree of abstraction. The machine age imagery is also reflected in the use of geometric forms, like trapezoids, polygons, zigzags, chevrons, and boldly staggered volumes. Other popular motifs are frozen fountains, sunbursts, and lightning. Art Deco intends to portray an ambience of luxury and glamour through the use of novel and expensive materials such as chrome, marble, plastics, and stained glass, using bright and vibrant colors. For this is also the Jazz age, with its now widespread use of electricity, radio, and neon lights.<sup>31</sup>

### ***Zigzag Moderne***

The early form of Art Deco is also referred to as Zigzag Moderne, named after its predominant design motif, zigzag bands and ziggurat forms inspired by ancient Sumer. Instead of copying historic styles as did Historism, Art Deco borrows freely from past “exotic” civilizations, like ancient Egypt,

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31. See Lico, *Arkitekturang Filipino*, pp. 318-327.

Mesopotamia, and pre-Columbian America, as well as from vernacular and “primitive” art of Africa, Oceania and elsewhere, combining them in an eclectic mix.<sup>32</sup>

Such influence is visible in the Li Chay Too Mausoleum from 1948, which is modeled after an Egyptian temple, complete with pylons guarding the main entrance with its Egyptian-style portico. Beyond it, a vestibule leads to the inner sanctuary (in this case, the burial chamber), as in an ancient temples. For the discovery of the tomb of Tut-Ankh-Amun in 1923 sparked worldwide attention and renewed interest in the ancient culture along the Nile, which had not seen so much scientific and popular interest since Napoleon Bonaparte’s failed campaign there in 1798. Henceforth Egyptian motifs became a mainstay especially in Art Deco funerary architecture, quite appropriate given the importance ancient Egyptians attached to the afterlife. (Plate 11)

Zigzag and chevron motives, on the other hand, dominate the marvelous Dy Buncio Mausoleum erected in 1930 for a famous businessman from Jinjiang, Fujian. It consists of a monolithic cube raised on a small platform and topped by a frieze depicting birds, which seem to carry the heavy flattened dome on their wings. The façade shows the interplay of horizontal and vertical lines typical of Art Deco: Two bands of zigzag and chevron bas-relief emphasize verticality, while grooves structure the block horizontally. Very Art Deco are the stylized urns that flank the building, and the perimeter fence made of artfully crafted grill works. (Plate 12)

### *Streamline Moderne*

In the 1930s the Zigzag Modern style was gradually taken over by another Art Deco variation, the Streamline Moderne. It was likewise inspired by the new age of technology, but emphasized primarily speed and motion, the characteristics of the new age dawning at the horizon, when new speed records on road and rail, at sea and in the air were celebrated, and technological progress seemed unstoppable. Subsequently, designers and architects applied the forms of aerodynamics and streamlining even on buildings, using smooth wall surfaces, speed stripes, rounded corners, long horizontal lines and grooves, as well as flat roofs, all intended to express speed and movement. Also popular were maritime motifs, inspired by the huge ocean liner of the era: porthole windows, railings, nautical bridges, etc. As ornamentation largely disappeared, materials became simpler: steel, concrete, and glass, particularly glass brick walls, while colors became more monochrome: whites and beiges contrasting with dark or black tones. Art Deco quickly gained ground in the Philippines, popularized by such prolific architects as Juan Arellano (Metropolitan Theater, 1931), Andres Luna de San Pedro (Crystal Arcade, 1932), and Tomas Mapua.<sup>33</sup>

32. Lico, *Arkitekturang Filipino*, pp. 329-340.

33. Lico, *Arkitekturang Filipino*, pp. 341-352.



However, in funerary architecture the style took on a more formal, somber and heavy mood more appropriate to the culture of mourning, as can be seen in the Go Sun Mausoleum ca. 1940. Said to have been designed by Pablo Antonio (unconfirmed) it employs the characteristic vocabulary of Art Deco: engaged columns flanking the entrance, horizontal grooves structuring the cube, and rounded niches with horizontal window bands protruding on both sides, expressing, while not exactly speed and motion, but sleekness and modernity. In front of the building and picking up its design, curving concrete bands mold into benches and tables, forming a remarkable *Gesamtkunstwerk*. (Plate 13)

As with other styles “imported” from the West, Chinese motifs sometimes found their way into Art Deco. The Lim Kong Sui Mausoleum, built around 1938, is capped by an abstracted modern version of a traditional Chinese roof with upturned edges (*dougong* 斗拱 or corbel). The stylized *dougong* is repeated atop the pilasters which flank the main entrance, creating a vertical ceremonial approach to the entrance door. The innovative design may have been copied from the former (now demolished) King’s or Asia Theater on Onping Street in Sta. Cruz (part of old Manila’s “Chinatown”) built the year before, which had a very similar façade.<sup>34</sup> While the overall material vocabulary of the mausoleum is pure Art Deco, as expressed in smooth white wall surfaces with rounded corners, extensive use of glass bricks and horizontal window bands on the sides, the *dougong* gives it a distinct Chinese touch without resorting to superficial pastiche. (Plate 14)

### **Modernism**

The building boom of the 1930s, in the Philippines fondly remembered as “Peacetime”, was abruptly ended by World War II. Luckily, despite some fighting in the area, the northern necropolis was spared destruction during the Battle of Manila in February 1945, which reduced large parts of Manila to rubble. The erection of sophisticated mausoleums resumed in the late 1940s and 1950s. At this time Art Deco, associated with the optimism, exuberance and abundance of the pre-war era, gave way to a new and more spartan and frugal architecture more in line with the needs of a war-torn country. At the same time Modernism offered a way to leave the traumas of the past, such as colonialism, war and occupation, behind and offered a clean slate for the newly independent Philippine nation state in search of a national identity expressed in architectural terms untainted by the colonial experience.<sup>35</sup>

Modernism covers a wide spectrum of architectural developments, particularly in Europe and North America starting at the beginning of the 20th century and partially running parallel to or overlapping with Art Nouveau

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34. Lico, *Arkitekturang Filipino*, p. 352.

35. Lico, *Arkitekturang Filipino*, p. 365.

and Art Deco and other design trends. It gained strength and influence in the 1920s and 1930s (Bauhaus). Following the end of World War II Modernism and the closely related International Style would start their triumphant march around the globe. Some of its main protagonists were Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe and Walter Gropius in Europe, and Frank Lloyd Wright and Louis Sullivan in the USA.

Like Art Deco, to which it is closely related, Modernism grew out of the critique of the many forms of revivalism and its “pastiche” architecture, and sought new forms of architectural expression in line with modern developments in construction technology, industrial production, and social change towards a more equitable society. It sought to completely break with traditional forms of architecture and urban planning, replacing them with radical new approaches. Architecture was supposed to be “honest,” that is, its structural design was to be easily readable, and the natural appearance of materials was to be visible instead of being clad or concealed. Forms were to be simple, straightforward and clear, albeit both rectangular “box-shaped” and highly organic designs were common.<sup>36</sup>

The new architectural paradigm is evident in the Chinese cemetery: All revivalist styles abruptly disappeared after the war, and Art Deco merged into Modernism in the 1950s, as evident in the mausoleum of the Gochecos, a family engaged in real estate construction, where the aerodynamic forms of Streamline Moderne now blended with the more plain wall surfaces and the thin concrete roofs inspired by classic Modernism in a transitional style typical of the 1950s. (Plate 15)

### *Space-Age Design*

The 1950s and 1960s were an immensely optimistic age. Having left the ruins of war behind, people looked expectantly towards the future, when breakthrough achievements in science promised a brave new world. This was the space age, when rocket science enabled space travel; man raced to the moon; and the power of the atom was unleashed. Airplanes replaced ocean-liners and an all-encompassing car culture emerged. The new age found artistic and architectural expression in innovative and exciting new structures employing space age imagery, such as paraboloid shapes (as seen in Cesar Concio’s Chapel of the Risen Lord, UP Diliman, 1956), ultra-thin concrete shells (masterly executed in Leandro Locsin’s UFO-like Chapel of the Holy Sacrifice, UP Diliman, built in 1955), folded plates, curvilinear forms, boomerang shapes, starbursts, and dramatically upsweeping concrete roofs.<sup>37</sup> The new idiom must have inspired the design of funerary architecture

36. Lico, *Arkitekturang Filipino*, pp. 371-374.

37. Lico, *Arkitekturang Filipino*, pp. 406-420.

in the Chinese Cemetery as a number of futuristic mausoleums exhibit or at least hint at similar adaptations, albeit more restrained in line with the solemn nature of the building. (Plates 16-18)

### *Classic Modernism/Bauhaus*

Classic Modernism at its best: The Saez-Coguanco Mausoleum is a rectangular box, devoid of any ornamentation and accentuated by a similarly minimalist tower structured only by black and white vertical planes and a simple cross. It espouses Modernist dogma that famously decried the use of any kind of ornamentation (“Ornament is Crime,” Adolf Loos) and imposed the dictum of “Form Follows Function” (Louis Sullivan) and “Less is More” (Mies van der Rohe). (Plate 19) “Tropical Modernism” best describes this mausoleum with a curving plain façade structured only by vertical sun-breakers called *brise-soleil*.<sup>38</sup> (Plate 20) This Modernist design, with purist white walls flanking a steel-and-glass curtain-wall façade and topped by a massive protruding canopy is in line with the age of mass production, when preferred materials such as glass, steel and concrete were to be industrially and cheaply mass-produced. (Plate 21) As espoused by Modernism, the beauty of these structures lies solely in their well-balanced proportions and careful composition.

Again in some cases designers managed to give classic Modernist a distinct Chinese twist. In this mausoleum a plain modernist design is crowned by an abstract version of a *dougong* roof of the kind previously seen in the Art Deco Lim Kong Sui Mausoleum, thus successfully merging Western and Eastern design ideas into a harmonious whole. (Plate 22)

An interesting approach was chosen by the architect of this mausoleum: while formally applying modernist purity he turned the whole building into a giant version of the Chinese character “lín”/ “lín 林,” a popular Chinese family name, and the name of the mausoleum. (Plate 23)

Apparently inspired by Leandro Locsin’s Cultural Center of the Philippines (1966-1969) is this interesting mausoleum, another example of how artistic developments outside the cemetery, in this case Brutalism, a variation of Modernism popular from the 1950s to the 1970s, have profound influence on those inside it, and how they are interpreted and adapted to the spacial and functional requirements of funerary architecture. (Plate 24)

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38. Lico, *Arkitekturang Filipino*, p. 429.

### **Post-Modernism**

In reaction to the supposed banality and monotony of Modernist doctrine<sup>39</sup> Post-Modernism emerged in the 1960s and gained ground globally in the 1980s. At that time, the great optimistic utopias of Modernism (Socialism, Rationality) of the 50s and 60s had given way to disillusionment, while the postindustrial society and Globalization started to take hold. Devoid of rigid dogma, Postmodernism promoted artistic plurality and freedom, where architectural ornamentation and symbols made a glorious return. But unlike Historism, Postmodernism does not dictate the catalogue-like academic application of historical styles, but is a free-for-all, joy- and colorful and often loud eclectic mix, a combination of a wide variety of past styles and forms from all over the globe with various subcurrents, such as Critical Regionalism and Neo-vernacular. Architectural tradition is not to be overcome, as in Modernist dogma, but to be freely and sometimes ironically cited at will, with or without actual function. In celebrating the “decorated shed” as hailed by Venturi-Scott-Brown, “form follows fiction” (Bernard Tschumi). The new style quickly found favor in the Philippines, where the notion of *horror vacui* (Zialcita) led to the ready and generous application of *décor* in everyday architecture.<sup>40</sup> Funerary architecture is no exception, as seen in more recent mausoleums within the Chinese cemetery. (Plates 25-26)

### **Mausoleums Inspired by Chinese Traditional Architecture**

Apart from Western models, the Chinese Cemetery is characterized by a large number of mausoleums in a variety of forms inspired by traditional Chinese architecture, whose origins date back four millennia. It is guided by cosmological principles and geomancy, commonly known as *fengshui*. Based on the belief in immanence (the divine being manifested in the material world), great importance is attached to the cardinal directions, natural formations (e.g., mountains, lakes, the sea), and overall harmony and balance in order to reflect the cosmic order. This importance attached to universal harmony is seen in the “Hall of Supreme Harmony,” which together with the neighboring “Hall of Central Harmony” and “Hall of Preserving Harmony,” forms the heart of the Imperial Palace in Beijing. It symbolizes the natural, irrevocable, and strictly hierarchical cosmic order of society with the emperor at the helm, as proclaimed by the teachings of Chinese philosopher Confucius (551 – 479 BC). Hence, urban layout, size and form of buildings were regulated according to class and social status.<sup>41</sup>

39. See Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, New York: Vintage Books, 1961.

40. See Lico, *Arkitekturang Filipino*, pp. 495-504.

41. See Laurence G. Liu, *Chinese Architecture*, New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1989, pp. 27-39.

Buildings are typically rectangular and erected on raised platforms. Wood is commonly used as building material, but brick and stone as well as compacted earth are likewise widespread. Wooden post-and-lintel systems in particular are commonly used due to their good earthquake-resistant properties, and, prominently displayed and emphasized, are an important element of artistic expression.

Architecturally, emphasis is on the roof, rather than walls. The massive floating tile roofs are carried by a sophisticated system of wooden corbels (*dougong*). Characteristic are the sweeping curvatures of the often multi-tiered and multi-inclined roof, while the distinctive up-bent ridges are often elaborately decorated with ceramic figures such as stylized dragons, animals, birds and foliage.

Decorative elements such as guardian statues, *foo dogs* (actually lions), and dragons also have important symbolic meaning, as do symbols of good luck, such as certain fruits and animals. Finally, there is the important significance of numbers (especially “lucky numbers”), and of basic colors such as (imperial) yellow, red (vitality and wealth, but also power and fortune), green (longevity), and blue (heaven).

This formal canon of traditional Chinese architecture has remained largely unchanged until the end of the empire in 1911, and had much influence on the architectural evolution in Vietnam, Korea, and Japan. It is not only applied to Buddhist and Taoist temples, but occasionally also for mosques and even Christian churches.

Given the vastness of China and its many, very different landscapes, geologies, and climates, there are many regional styles and local variations, such as the *tulou* 土樓 (round residential fortress of the Hakka people). With the emergence of a significant diaspora especially in Southeast Asia, contact with the West led to newly built forms during the colonial era, such as the Chinese shop house of the Baba Nyonya in the Malacca Straits settlements.<sup>42</sup>

### ***Courtyard-style***

Some or all of the above characteristics have been adopted for funerary design and are present in Chinese-style tombs inside the Manila Chinese Cemetery. A good example of the courtyard-type is the Ongche Mausoleum, probably from around 1936. Following the construction principles of wooden structures, but actually executed in concrete, it is an ensemble of three buildings in an axial, processional order: an entrance gate at the front, an open pavilion in the center, and the enclosed burial chamber at the end. The latter is decorated in Fujian style with a swallowtail roof and circular and rectangular windows with stylized Chinese characters as grills. The sharply bent roof eaves of the clay tile roofs are adorned with elaborate scrolls in filigree, multicolored

42. See Khoo Su Nin, *Streets of Georgetown, Penang*, Penang: Janus Print & Resources, 2001, pp. 18-20.

cutwork. (Plate 27) Also noteworthy is the Go Kong Wee Mausoleum from the same era. Likewise executed in concrete it is accessed by a “Moon Gate,” a popular motif in Chinese landscape architecture. The one-story cube is crowned by a curved tile roof, whose edges are marked by concrete dragon heads. Curved steps leading to the grilled gate echo the curved shape of the gate. The compound is surrounded by a highly ornate fence made of concrete posts with artfully crafted metal grills in between depicting a radiating sun. (Plate 28)

### ***Pagoda-style***

Another traditional building type popularly used for funerary architecture is the pagoda. Many small versions have sprung up, such as the Dy Her Chan Mausoleum from 1933: a pagoda “en miniature,” with a three-tiered tile roof above the burial chamber. Unlike most pagodas in China, whose footprint is octagonal, this one is square, as common in older Chinese towers. Like most Chinese-style mausoleums, ornamentation is elaborate: ornate brackets, between which stretch painted filigree reliefs, carry sharply bent roof edges where stylized dragons wind up and down. The small foo dogs guarding the entrance to the mausoleum symbolize strength and power. (Plate 29) A more recent and monumental version of the “tower style” is the Yu Chu Mausoleum (also known as Regal Mausoleum) in a newer part of the cemetery, one of its largest.

An interesting blend between “East” and “West” can be observed in the monumental Dee Ching Chuan Mausoleum built in 1941, and arguably the grandest of the many elaborate mausoleums in the Chinese Cemetery. It is the final resting place of Dee Cheng Chuan (1888-1940), born in Fujian, co-founder of China Banking Corporation (commonly called China Bank), and a leading anti-Japanese activist. Here is an interesting combination of Art Deco, as seen in the massing and corner and window articulation of the three-story tower, and Chinese motifs, such as the crowning two-tiered tile roof with traditional ornamentation and detailing. Imperial China appears to have been the guiding design motif, as many elements of the series of terraces forming the forecourt resemble those of the Forbidden City in Beijing. Chinese symbols proliferate, such as carps (prosperity), dragons (imperial power), and elephants (strength). The allusion to imperial China continues inside, where a three-story-high mural depicts dragons, clouds, and the Temple of Heaven in Beijing. (Plate 30)

### ***Turtle Tombs***

More in line with the tombs of other Chinese cemeteries in Southeast Asia are the turtleback tombs, of which a handful can be found along the western edge of the cemetery. Unlike Indonesia and Malaysia where they are common in the Philippines, they are the exception.



Turtle tombs which originate from South Fujian Province consist of an unroofed burial mound in the shape of a tortoise back, enclosed by a low omega-shaped wall with a stele in the center. While the turtle-shaped tumulus at the back symbolizes longevity and the shape of the universe, the surrounding wall forms an artificial ridge, to protect the grave from dangerous winds, as prescribed by *fengshui* principles.<sup>43</sup> (Plates 31)

However, even this very traditional type of tomb can be given an unexpected twist in line with the syncretism which so much characterizes Tsinoym religious beliefs, as seen in the case of the Go Mausoleum from the 1950s. Here, a Christian basilica, complete with dome and twin tower façade, has been superimposed on a traditional turtleback tomb. The eclectic, but principally neo-baroque chapel thus combines design elements of the Baroque (curving balcony, niches, scrolls, twin columns), the Greco-Roman world (meander frieze, ionic capitals, pediment), and even the Islamic realm (Moorish windows) with those from mainland China, representative of the adaptability of the Tsinoys to their new chosen homeland and their ready willingness to follow new fads and fashions, while still holding on to cherished beliefs and rituals brought along from their Chinese homeland. (Plate 32)

### ***South Fujian-Style***

With almost all the ancestors of today's Tsinoys having originally migrated from South Fujian Province (through the port of Xiamen, known as Amoy in Minnan dialect), a few mausoleums in Manila adopted the traditional architecture of their places of origin. A particularly beautiful example is the Basa Mausoleum, dating from the 1940s, which resembles a 19th-century South Fujian temple "en miniature." Apart from its characteristic swallowtail roof, the mausoleum is outstanding for its artful *jiannian* ceramic cutworks on the front façade. Made of multi-colored glazed shards cut to shape and carefully inserted into a filigree and colorful mosaic, they depict flowers, trees, birds, animals, and human figures. Apart from Southern China and Taiwan, *jiannian* art is commonly found in the Chinese communities in the Straits Settlements, namely Malacca, Penang and Singapore, where they adorn elaborately decorated temples, clan halls (Khoo Kongsi, Penang) and even private residences (Cheong Fatt Tze Mansion, Penang). As pointed out by Claudine Salmon, epigraphic records indicate that the craftsmen executing these craftworks were generally hired in China. (Plate 33)

Another example of the South Fujian-style was the Chong Hock Tong temple erected in 1878<sup>44</sup>, a small building with a central sky well surrounded by open galleries and covered with a swallowtail roof crowned by dragons.

43. See Jan Jacob M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China*, Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1892, III, p. 941.

44. De Viana, *Three Centuries of Binondo Architecture, 1594-1898*, p. 100.

Here again is an outstanding example of the synthesis of East and West so characteristic of Tsinoy syncretic religious belief and practice: a combination of a Catholic chapel with a Chinese temple. The Christian denomination was evident by the cross atop the two stone *campanarios* (bell towers) built in the Baroque style, which flanked the main hall. Inside the temple, Christian *santos* and crucifixes stand on the central altar side-by-side with the Taoist God of Death and Buddhist images. At the same time the temple honors outstanding deceased members of the Chinese community, such as Don Carlos Palanca, and serves the last rites for the dead.<sup>45</sup> Most important is its role in ancestor worship so central to Chinese identity, as expressed in prayer and the burning of incense and of paper-made objects (cars, appliances, money) for use by the ancestors in the otherworld.

The eclectic architecture of the temple, expressive of its ecumenical and syncretic nature, was already diminished in the 1950s, when the bell towers were replaced with more “Chinese-looking” ones along the lines of traditional Chinese architecture. In February 2015 the temple was demolished, to be replaced by a stronger and larger one, supposedly to be built by artisans from Taiwan. Hopefully the new temple will retain what has made the old one so unique, namely its peculiar Filipino-Chinese eclecticism and multi-denominationalism, instead of becoming an ordinary and interchangeable “Chinese-style” temple as many others in the worldwide Chinese diaspora. (Plate 34)

A similar concern was voiced by Teresita Ang See, founder of the Tsinoy civic organisation “Kaisa Foundation” in connection with the new Filipino-Chinese Friendship Arch which was opened with great fanfare in July the same year in Binondo. The arch’s inscription reads *Zhongguo cheng* (lit. “Chinatown”) rather than *huaren qu* (“Chinese people district”), implying that Binondo is “just” an outpost of mainland China, rather than a Filipino-Chinese district with a distinct culture, identity and history. As Ang See explains: “Where else can you see *hopia* [bean paste-filled pastry] that is *ube* [purple yam] in flavor or chiffon cakes sold side by side Chinese steam buns? Binondo is unique in its blending and that is what should be celebrated instead.” And “cultural street worker” Ivan Man Dy adds: “Binondo was born out of 400 years of interaction between Chinese, Filipino, Spanish and other culture that have touch [sic] our shores in the last 400 years.”<sup>46</sup>

45. *100 Anniversary Souvenir Book 1877–1977*, Manila: Philippine-Chinese Charitable Association Inc., 1978, pp. 23–25.

46. Anson Yu, “Manila unveils world’s largest Chinatown arch in Binondo, but local Chinese Filipinos are not happy,” *Coconuts Manila*, June 24, 2015, <http://manila.coconuts.co/2015/06/24/manila-unveils-worlds-largest-chinatown-arch-binondo-local-chinese-are-not-happy>

## Syncretism and Hybridization

The hybridity seen in Manila Chinese Cemetery architecture and especially the Chong Hock Tong temple exemplifies an underlying syncretism of religious beliefs. Hybridity refers to the separation of forms from existing practices and the recombination with new forms into new practices.<sup>47</sup> The definition of the concept of hybridity includes “borrowing,” “mixing,” and “translating.” It first developed from a biological model focusing on miscegenation and then shifted to a linguistic model stressing the potential of a hybrid counter-culture.<sup>48</sup> Pieterse (1995) argues that hybridity involves a wide-ranging, profound historical process of cultural intermingling so that what is being hybridized was already hybrid, and therefore there are no pure, authentic, uncontaminated cultures. Since no culture remains unaffected by the global flows of people, ideas, and products, the notion of cultural hybridity is significant for the cultural evolution of the Chinese in the Philippines, for it is through this process of borrowings and appropriations that cultures evolve over time.

As Kristine A. Muñoz and Catherine C. Reodique point out,<sup>49</sup> Chinese polytheism and Philippine-style Catholicism have quite a number of elements in common, such as the belief in an afterlife, the tradition of visiting the graves on certain days of the year and offering or consuming food there (All Souls Day, *Qingming* Festival), or the similarity between the Virgin Mary and the Chinese goddess Mazu and Guan Yin.<sup>50</sup> Also common are the belief in omnipresent spirits, superstition, and the intercession of saints or deities in heaven.<sup>51</sup> Conversion and religious syncretism was facilitated by the relative tolerance and receptiveness of Philippine culture in combination with Chinese adaptability and religious beliefs where Chinese religious concepts and practices and foreign ones can easily co-exist side-by-side, overlay, or even blend effortlessly with one another.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, Chinese pragmatism facilitated

47. See Jan Nederveen Pieterse, “Globalization as Hybridization,” in: M. Featherstone, S. Lash and R. Robertson (eds.), *Global Modernities*, London: Sage, 1995, pp. 45-68.

48. See Andreas Ackermann, “Cultural Hybridity: Between Metaphor and Empiricism,” in: P.W. Stockhammer (ed.), *Conceptualizing Cultural Hybridization*, Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 2012, pp. 5-25.

49. See Kristine A. Muñoz and Catherine C. Reodique, “Buhay Chinoy, Bahay Chinoy: A study on Religious Acculturation in Contemporary Filipino-Chinese Homes,” in: *Espasyó: Journal of Philippine Architecture and Allied Arts*, vol. 2 (2010), Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, pp. 99-105.

50. See Teresita Ang See and Go Bon Juan, “Religious Syncretism among the Chinese in the Philippines,” in Teresita Ang See (ed.), *The Chinese in the Philippines: Problems and Perspectives*, vol. 1, Manila: Kaisa Para Sa Kaunlaran Inc., 1997, as cited by Muñoz and Reodique, “Buhay Chinoy, Bahay Chinoy,” p. 102.

51. See J.B. Yu, 2000, “Inculturation of Filipino-Chinese Culture Mentality” as cited by Muñoz and Reodique, *Op. cit.*, p. 101.

52. See Ira Hubert Reynolds, “Acculturation of Chinese in Ilocos,” as cited by Muñoz and Reodique, *Op. cit.*, p. 102.

such assimilation and integration, especially conversion to Catholicism, to seek social, political, and especially economic advantages within the colonial society.<sup>53</sup> Hence, as Muñoz and Reodique observe, it is common for Tsinoy to visit both Catholic church and Chinese temple, to consult *fengshui* masters and Catholic priests, to observe both Catholic and Chinese holidays, to marry in Western-style but be buried with Chinese rites, and above all, to retain the all-important ancestor worship.<sup>54</sup> Thus, Christian *santos* (saints) and Chinese deities, surrounded by incense stick, candles and good-luck symbols, can be found co-existing side-by-side, not only in temples and chapels, as the Chong Hock temple inside the Chinese cemetery or the Chinese temple in Sta. Ana, Manila, but also in the private homes of many, if not most Filipino-Chinese.<sup>55</sup>

Given that most cultures of Southeast Asia are characterized by a high degree of cultural fusion/hybridity and cultural influences (primarily from China, the Indian subcontinent, and a series of Western colonial powers), why has a Western-style mausoleum culture developed in the Philippines, but apparently not in the rest of the Chinese diaspora in Southeast Asia? As explained by Ivan Man Dy during his 'Old Manila Walks' on the cemetery, for once, this may have to do with the hot tropical climate and torrential rains in the Philippines, which necessitated the protection by roofs during All Souls Day (the Chinese equivalent of All Souls day is the *Qingming* Festival/Ancestors Day) when the family would spend the whole day at the graves of their deceased loved ones. And indeed, photos of the cemetery during the early 20th century show many of the tombs covered with simple roof structures. From here, it was only a relatively short step to adopting a full mausoleum style. However, apart from purely practical considerations, there may have been a number of other reasons.

The mausoleum culture of the Chinese Cemetery does not stand in isolation, but can be found in similar form on the neighboring La Loma Cemetery and Cementerio del Norte. Here too can be found the grandiose tombs of the former (and current) political, social and economical elite of Philippine society, typically made up of mestizo families with combined Chinese, Malay, and Spanish ancestry.

As noted scholar Fernando Zialcita points out, contrary to popular prejudice which likes to accuse them of being reclusive and separate from Philippine mainstream society, the Chinese in the Philippines actually appear to be far better integrated into their host society than other Chinese diasporas in Southeast Asia. Zialcita attributes this to the policy of the early Spanish colonial administration, which, contrary to commonly-held belief (which assumes a colonial policy of racial segregation), actually encouraged mixed

53. Wickberg, *The Chinese in Philippine Life*, p. 16.

54. Muñoz and Reodique, "Buhay Chinoy, Bahay Chinoy," p. 102.

55. Muñoz and Reodique, *Op. cit.*, pp. 102-103.

marriages, in the Philippines as much as in their “New-World” possessions of Mexico and Peru. What really mattered to Spain was first and foremost the conversion of the natives to the Catholic faith.<sup>56</sup> This deeper integration into the colonial host society is visible in Filipino-Chinese material culture, which not only more easily integrated into mainstream society, but in turn also heavily influenced it. In architecture this influence is best exemplified by the *bahay na bato* (lit. “House of Stone”), the quintessential Filipino-Hispanic urban house during the colonial era, which developed in the 17th century on Philippine soil and integrates Austronesian, Spanish, and Chinese and Japanese building traditions.<sup>57</sup>

## Conclusion

The Chinese Cemetery in Manila is unusual in Southeast Asia in that here developed a distinct mausoleum architecture uncommon in other Southeast Asian countries where large Chinese diasporas exist. There, Chinese funeral architecture follows traditional mainland China models such as closely spaced memorial steles, tumulus tombs, and/or Fujian-style turtleback tombs, often built into a slope for better protection.<sup>58</sup> Such can be found in cities like Jakarta, Indonesia, where the Petamburan Christian Cemetery contains many Chinese tombs, but only a handful of mausoleums (like that of Khouw Oen Giok), while the Chinese cemetery of Lasem in Java contains excellent examples of turtleback tombs. Chinese cemeteries in Thailand follow the same pattern, as seen in Bangkok’s Teochew, Tae Chio, and Silom Road cemeteries or on the island of Phuket. In the Straits Settlements Chinese cemeteries likewise follow mainland China models, as seen in the historic Bukit China in Malacca, the 19th-century cemeteries of Batu Lanchang (1805) and Mount Erskine (1842) in Penang, and Singapore’s Bukit Brown Chinese Cemetery (before 1833). Other examples are the old Kwong Tong Cemetery in Kuala Lumpur, founded in 1895, or the more recent Cheras Cemetery.<sup>59</sup>

In contrast, in Manila emerged a well-developed mausoleum architecture at the beginning of the 20th century, executed in a variety of Western and Chinese styles. Such mausoleums are not confined to the Manila Chinese

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56. Personal communication with F. N. Zialcita. See also Wickberg *The Chinese in Philippine Life*, pp. 8, 15, 18, 41.

57. See Fernando N. Zialcita, *Authentic but Not Exotic: Essays on Filipino Identity*, Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2005, pp. 283-294.

58. De Groot, *The Religious System of China*, p. 941.

59. On the former Hawthornden Plantation (now part of the Ministry of Defense compound) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, can be found an unusual mausoleum in the form of a pagoda, containing the tomb of Loke Yew (1845-1917), a business magnate and philanthropist. However, such mausoleums are apparently the exception, rather than the rule, in both Malaysia and Indonesia.

Cemetery, but can also be found in neighboring Norte and La Loma and in provincial cemeteries.

With the emergence of a new type of cemetery design came a new way of commemorating and honoring the dead in sumptuous and elaborate mausoleums in all architectural styles of the past two centuries. The mausoleums that arose were as much an expression of the hybrid and syncretic nature of the Philippine's Tsinoy culture as they embodied the desire of mestizos and Chinese to express newfound wealth and status in Philippine society. The differing paths of the Chinese diaporas in Insular Southeast Asia shaped by fundamentally different colonial policies and the decisive role of the resulting mestizo community led to a specific Tsinoy culture in the Philippines noticeably different from those in Malaysia and Indonesia.

The history of Manila's cemeteries, like that of its elite and middle-class, is characterized by an ever-continuing out-migration further and further away from the heart of the city, prompted by an ever expanding and densifying metropolis. Where during Spanish times burials were right in the center of the community, namely inside the parish churches and the churchyards surrounding them, since the 18th and 19th century they were relegated for sanitary reasons to more remote sites at safe distance from human settlements, such as Paco Cemetery, Balic-Balic Cemetery in Sampaloc, or Cementerio de Binondo in La Loma. When at the turn of the previous century the rapidly growing city had caught up with these new cemeteries, they again were closed in the 1910s and 1920s for the same sanitary concerns, this time by the new US-colonial administration, and again moved outwards, giving rise to the North Cemetery in La Loma and its equivalent, the South Cemetery in Makati. A hundred years later, the ever-sprawling city has long engulfed even these then far-away sites and spilled their living human load into them. With continuing population growth and development pressure in the La Loma area, it is foreseeable that economic pressure and sanitary concerns (or pretexts) may again push for the closure and relocation of the three cemeteries that form the northern necropolis. As elaborated in the preceding paragraphs, this would spell a tremendous loss for the architectural heritage not only of Manila, but the whole Philippines in general, and, with regard to the Filipino-Chinese community, its Tsinoy heritage and identity in particular. Experiences in other Southeast Asian megacities, such as Jakarta, and Bangkok where the historic value of the recently demolished Silom Road Cemetery proved no obstacle to infrastructure development (in this case a new highway)<sup>60</sup>, and Manila's own history over the past 150 years have shown that this is indeed a very possible scenario. As experience has also shown, even declaration as a historic site by government agencies is not always a guarantee for sustained preservation.

60. "Removing the Silom cemeteries 2000-2004," June 20, 2004, *2Bangkok.com*, <http://2bangkok.com/2bangkok-buildings-cemetery-cemetery.html>



Especially when a site is perceived by the general public to be decayed and neglected, public support for its preservation quickly dwindle. In this regard, the Chinese Cemetery administration's policy of not allowing maintenance of tombs if association dues are not paid, as sound as it may be in economic terms, is risky with regard to the cemetery's overall public perception, and potentially problematic with regard to its built heritage, moreover as none of the historic mausoleums inside are currently declared as a protected site by any national agency such as the NHCP, NCCA, or National Museum.

However, the cemetery administration must be praised for so far having managed to keep the cemetery very clean and orderly, and above all, accessible and safe for visitors and tourists alike due to tight security and supervision. With regard to its architectural heritage and the Tsinoy identity embedded in it, it is to be hoped that newly growing wider public interest in historic sites may extend to this irreplaceable repository of the Philippines' past. Recently emerged and fast-growing facebook groups such as "Manila Nostalgia," "Pearl of the Orient: Discover Old Philippines;" and especially "Sementeryo: Heritage Cemeteries of the Philippines" which for a few years has aimed to spread interest in Philippine funerary architecture, nowadays quickly spread heritage awareness and advocacy at the click of a mouse, and give hope for the future. So do the regular heritage walking tours conducted by dedicated cultural workers such as Ivan Man Dy and his "Old Manila Walks,"<sup>61</sup> who among others frequently organizes tours of the Chinese Cemetery and Binondo. For his/her built heritage, be they houses, temples, churches or mausoleums, is witness to and evidence of the Tsinoy's firm rootedness in Philippine soil.

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61. See [www.oldmanilawalks.com](http://www.oldmanilawalks.com)



**Plates 1-3** – “Mansions” for the elite (top), “townhouses” for the middle class (middle), and “condominiums” for the less fortunate (bottom). (Photos: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plate 4** – Spanish-colonial: Tomb of Pilar Tiaoqui de Lim-Tuaco. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plate 5** – Bahay na bato – inspired: Tomb of Tiu. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)





**Plate 6** – Neo-Classicism: Yu Chan Seh Mausoleum. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plate 7** – Modern Neo-Classicism: Sy Mausoleum. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plate 8** – Neo-Renaissance: Tambunting Mausoleum. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plate 9** – Neo-Gothic/Eclectic: Dijiongco Mausoleum. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plate 10** – Chinese Neo-Gothic: Benching Mausoleum. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plate 11** – Art Deco/Egyptian: Li Chay Too Mausoleum. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)





**Plate 12** – Art Deco/Ziggurat: Dy Buncio Mausoleum. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plate 13** – Art Deco/Streamline Moderne: Go Sun Mausoleum. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plate 14** – Chinese Art Deco: Lim Kong Sui Mausoleum. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plate 15** – Art Deco/Modernism: Gocheco Mausoleum. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)





**Plates 16-18** – Space-age Design: (Photos: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plate 19** – Chinese” Modernism. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plate 20** – Tropical Modernism: Tan Tiong Mausoleum. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)





**Plate 21** – Classic Modernism. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plate 22** – Bauhaus Modernism: Saez Co Cuanco Mausoleum. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)





**Plate 23** – Architectural writing: Lin Mausoleum. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plate 24** – Brutalism: Cultural Center of the Philippines "en miniature." (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plates 25-26** – Post-Modernism. (Photos: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)





**Plate 27** – Courtyard-style: Ongche Mausoleum. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plate 28** – Courtyard-style: Go Kong Wee Mausoleum. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plate 29** – Pagoda-style: Dy Her Chan Mausoleum. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plate 30** – Chinese Art Deco: Dee Cheng Chuan Mausoleum. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plates 31** – Turtle Tombs. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plate 32** – Architectural Syncretism: Go Mausoleum. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)





**Plate 33** – South Fujian-Style: Basa Mausoleum. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



**Plate 34** – South Fujian-Style: Chong Hock Tong Temple. (Photo: Institute of Philippine Culture (IPC), Ateneo de Manila University)



CATHERINE GUÉGUEN<sup>1</sup>

## The Chinese Cemeteries in the Philippines: Immobile Spaces?

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The relation of the Overseas Chinese to death takes multiple forms. These migrants permanently settled abroad, were constrained (politically or economically) to locate and organize the burial places for their dead in their host country. For them, the cemetery is a constitutive element of their community's cultural landmarks, which in turn influence the way the living settle. The practices surrounding death show various syncretisms as seen in the features of the cemeteries, the characteristics of the tombs, etc. These are practices largely inherited from China but they have been modified; they have become hybrid in the host countries, away from mainland influence.

In everyone's imagination cemeteries represent stability, or furthermore, immobility. Yet the notion of "mobility" which incorporates both the capacity of people to move around and the phenomenon itself of moving, interacts with the evolution of cemeteries specifically in the case of the Chinese community. In the new economic context of the Philippines based on services activities, geographic mobility is particularly appreciated. Only the big cities tend to attract professionals involved in this field of activities, young professionals from the Chinese community are concerned: they left their home city to reach Manila, Cebu or Davao. This mobility brings new challenges for the maintenance of the graveyards located in the province.

The cemetery could also be examined in terms of mobility. The old Chinese burial grounds are progressively pushed away from the city-centers. Because of urban sprawl, these cemeteries find themselves situated in strategic areas

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1. UMR 8586 (PRODIG), Paris.

much sought after in the heart of the city, although they were far away from the centre when they were created. The notion of space is critical as graves eat up surface areas, and in towns in full expansion and economic growth, the existence of such cemeteries are at stake given the real estate development. The mobility of the Chinese and the spatial evolution of the cemetery allow us to question burial practices in the recent context. In which way are these cemeteries elements of a territorial marking by Chinese populations, and what are the strategies deployed at the city level and at a regional level, to maintain these cemeteries?

This study is based mainly on field research done in several provincial cities where interviews could be conducted with organizations and structures concerned with Chinese cemeteries, particularly in cities located in Luzon: Dagupan, San Fernando-La Union, Naga and Legazpi.

## **Mobility, Urban Context and the Multiplication of Burial Spaces**

### ***General Features***

The grave is one of the main physical references for remembering: it indicates the location of the deceased and it is the main container, the shell for the dead body. The first location of a tomb is symbolically important for the Chinese. Geomancy plays a great role in the preferred location of graves; these preferences often stir up conflicts between clans, as M. Freedman mentions in his writings.<sup>2</sup> However, in Overseas Chinese burial grounds some measures make it possible for a layout that allows everyone to be located under the best auspices, just as in the Chinese cemetery of Manila.<sup>3</sup> The size of the plot and the embellishment of the site (the building of a mausoleum, the exuberance of the architecture...) are markers of social and material distinctions. In provinces, Chinese graveyards are generally formed, organized according to different plans, no similar organizations are found from one cemetery to another.

The need to find burial places is relatively recent. Before the 1950s, it was still very common for well-to-do families, including those living in the province, to bury their dead in China: it explains why Chinese cemeteries are relatively recent and date from after the Second World War, and also at the time of the beginnings of Maoism, as this implied a break in the diplomatic relations between the countries. The tombs of the grandparents of elderly people aged from 75 to 80 today are located therefore in the motherland.

2. See Maurice Freedman, *Chinese Lineage and Society (Fukien and Kwantung)*, London: The Athlone Press, New York: Humanities Press, 1966.

3. Catherine Guéguen, "Le rôle des morts dans la localisation et les actes sociaux des Chinois aux Philippines," *Les espaces de la mort et les morts dans l'espace*, Cahiers de l'ADES, Bordeaux III, 2010, pp. 117-130.

Those grandparents usually returned to the motherland once their children became independent individuals: they had kept ties with the mother country and their trips made it certain for them to have a place of burial. Once the Communist regime was instituted, it was no longer possible to shuttle easily between China and the Philippines, except through Hong Kong, hence the flow of people considerably decreased. Those elderly aged 75 to 80 today, have visited at least once the graves of their grandparents in China. As to their parents, they died and were buried in the province where they had settled. The children of immigrants who were born in the Philippines just like their own children, maintain very loose ties with the mother country.

Several general trends should be noticed: first, cremation tends to be more and more popular in the Chinese community whatever the traditional practice of the burial (less costly and less maintenance). Another consideration is related to the organization of the cemetery that takes into consideration the design (inspired by the suburban American cemeteries) and easy access by car. These cemeteries are not especially built for the Chinese population but many families find there the auspicious conditions for burial of their dead. Those two elements are part of the spatial and social integration of the Chinese in the Philippines: the graves are spread over various sites and with the evolution of the burial practices, the materials of understanding the Chinese community may disappear.

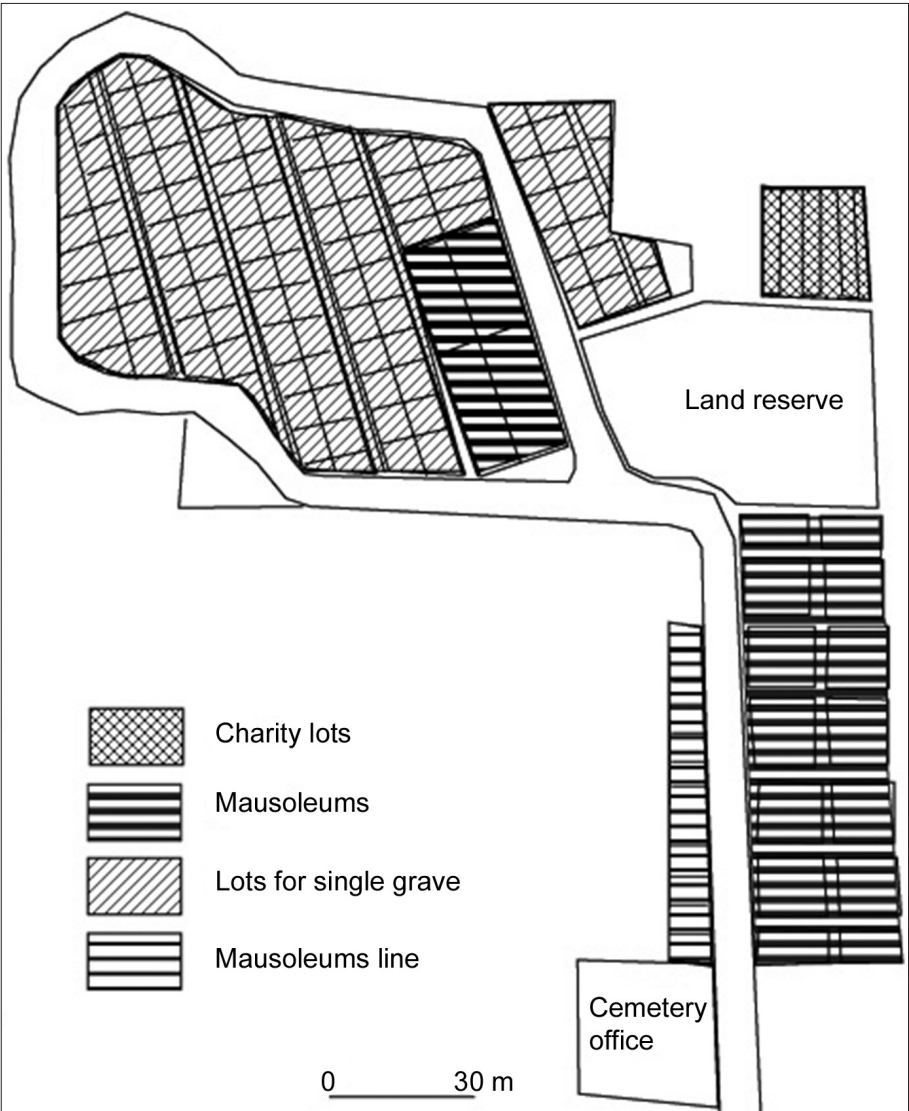
### ***Building another Cemetery to Cope with the Community's Demand***

In the city of Dagupan (province of Pangasinan, Luzon), there are two Chinese cemeteries placed under a kind of management quite typical of communal burial spaces. (Map 1) In the older cemetery (Plate 1) the last burial took place in the spring of 2011. The “new” cemetery is the result of a five-year endeavor. Both burial grounds are under the care of a committee formed by members of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce. The old cemetery is located in Pérez Street near the old commercial center of Dagupan (at the heart of an area with warehouses and bus terminals), and the new one is in Amado Street situated in the city's suburbs. (Plate 2) On the very busy commercial Pérez Street, there is no sign, even on the grilled gate, that indicates the presence of a cemetery, and neither is there one at its back entrance which remains always open contrary to the front gate opened only on All Saints' Day.

The old cemetery (also called “the Pérez Street cemetery”) is in a general state of degradation: the tombs encroach on the alleys for lack of strict management, they are badly kept, particularly those at the far end of the burial ground; and some have been abandoned since the bones they contained have been transferred elsewhere. When we visited the cemetery in August 2011, it was partly under water and invaded by weed. Indeed, half of it gets



flooded during the rainy season. There is no map of the old cemetery, only one zone is distinct in the middle of it, where the tombs of children are located. An old Chinese man who lives in a shack at the entrance has the task of the maintenance of the cemetery.



**Map 1** – The new Chinese cemetery, Fernandez Street in Dagupan. (C. Guéguen, Enquêtes de terrain, 2016)

The new cemetery was built at the city periphery; no specific sign identifies it except for the red entrance gate in the shape of a pagoda. The development work for this cemetery was awarded to an urban planner who planned the vehicular access roads and the location of the buildings (the administration office, the chapel, and the lavatories). The cemetery is divided into plots that have almost all been pre-sold as acquisitions anticipating deaths. Only a few families have already built mausoleums. Two areas of the cemetery are reserved for indigents: plots here are called “charity lots” and they can be acquired for the amount of 10,000 pesos, one part of which is paid by the family and the other part is taken care of by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. These plots are the smallest, their size can only accommodate one tomb. The value of the locations in the cemetery depends on the size of the plot; the bigger lots can cost up to 350,000 pesos. Families build the tomb first, then the mausoleum. There is no columbarium to keep the urns of ashes. The caretaker of the cemetery is a family who lives modestly in the building of the administration office

This new cemetery is surrounded by three other burial grounds: one that is Catholic, another for the independent Christians, and a private one called Eternal Garden. The latter accommodated many burials from Chinese families while the new Chinese cemetery had yet to open. The presence of the Eternal Garden Cemetery in the area was a deciding factor in choosing a location for the new Chinese cemetery. A gate was built to allow movement from one cemetery to the other on All Saints’ Day. Because the new cemetery was not yet completed and the old cemetery was saturated and deteriorated, burying their dead in the Eternal Garden Cemetery constituted a temporary solution for the Chinese. However, they would definitely not move out the remains of bones from one cemetery to the other. The Chinese in Dagupan have no choice now but to bury their dead in the new cemetery, for since the spring of 2011 it is prohibited to have a burial in the old Chinese cemetery. The last one was performed there in June 2011, in a family plot: a daughter’s tomb on top of that of her parents. This piling up of tombs is extremely rare in Chinese cemeteries, but very common in Philippine cemeteries where for lack of space the tombs are placed one on top of the other in a family plot. In the old Chinese cemetery, very few tombs are arranged that way, a proof of mortuary overpopulation in this cemetery. This practice in Dagupan is perceived as that of the poor families. The spaces in the old cemetery are no longer dynamic as in the Manila Chinese Cemetery. Actually many tombs and mausoleums are empty as the bones have been transferred to the new cemetery, leaving places that could be re-used. In the Manila Chinese Cemetery, families who no longer pay the dues for the lease and the upkeep are requested to move the bones of their dead so others can occupy the plot. It should be added that in Manila the Chinese Charitable Association has assigned two persons to

manage the cemetery and the use of the crematorium. Indeed, a cemetery is a space that is supervised and developed.

In his monograph on the Chinese community in Dagupan City, Dannhaeuser writes about how their cemetery is managed by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce that has opened the right for burial only to its members.<sup>4</sup> In this matter, the author speaks of discrimination against the Chinese born in continental China who are made members. Yet, because the old Chinese cemetery on Pérez Street is full, there has been a moratorium for a few years now on accepting new members of the association until a new burial space can be found. This search for a new space was not easy and concurrently, several Chinese families have acquired plots in Eternal Garden, a new private cemetery where wealthy Filipinos are buried. The Chamber of Commerce eventually bought a piece of land in a place called Santa Barbara, but the local residents protested. The land was then sold to the San Miguel Corporation. Another area near the seaside was found, but again the local population opposed the project. In the end, the association bought agricultural land adjoining the Eternal Garden cemetery. While burial in the old cemetery was free for its members, the association now demands payment in the new cemetery. The original plan was to transfer what remained of the old cemetery to the new one as the old cemetery was to be demolished to give way to a mall.

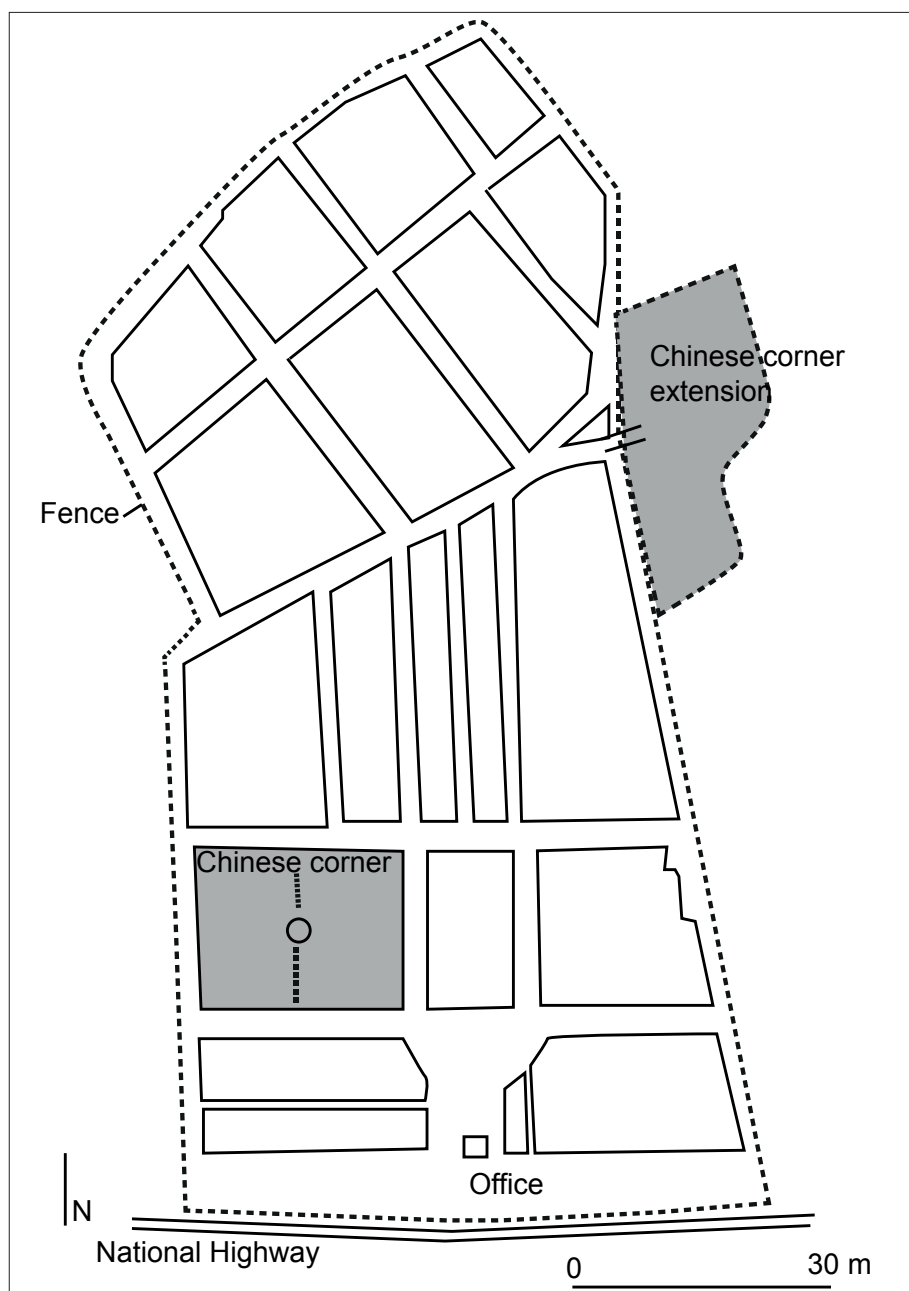
Mobility is thus made visible as it is related to the extension of the cemeteries' land area (the space is doubled). However, certain practices aimed at making room in a plot for the burial of another member of the same family, leave us thinking that the practice of double interment has not disappeared... This could be an excuse for not spending on another burial plot.

### ***Integrating Chinese Graves into Another Cemetery***

In San Fernando (province of La Union, Luzon) the Chinese cemetery is in fact within a public cemetery. Until the end of the 1940s, there was a Chinese cemetery located near what is today the city center of San Fernando. (Map 2) Urban sprawl, and more particularly the construction of a school, led to the disappearance of this cemetery. There is no trace of it today. Those Chinese families who wished to do so moved out the bones of their dead and transferred them to the new cemetery inside the public cemetery of Lingsat, a place situated outside the city proper of San Fernando. A committee bought the site of this new cemetery from the municipality in 1949 and sold plots to families. This site specifically reserved for Chinese tombs is located in the middle of the public cemetery: it is not enclosed, there is no barrier separating it from

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4. Norbert Dannhaeuser, *Chinese traders in a Philippine town (Dagupan)*, Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2004, p. 232.



**Map 2** – The Chinese corner and its extension in the Lingsat cemetery, San Fernando-La Union. (C. Guéguen, 2016)

the other tombs unlike in other cemeteries. There seems to be no pre-planned layout of the plots according to the sizes of tombs or mausoleums. Management of the cemetery and attribution of plots is the task of a committee. To date, this Chinese section is full, and so the committee of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce acquired land adjoining the public cemetery of Lingsat. To gain access to it from the latter, a wall had to be opened and some arrangements are still ongoing.

Because this project took a certain time, the Chinese families in need of burying their dead had to look for other burial plots in the new private cemeteries. Some families have for instance turned to the Fresh Lake y Cielo cemetery where they say that burying their family members is less costly than in the Chinese cemetery. The management of the Chinese cemeteries is different in each city. Here in the Chinese cemetery of Lingsat they do not offer “charity lots” to the poorer families, contrary to the one in Dagupan City. A single plot with a marker costs 10,000 pesos; two long tombs amount to 100,000 pesos, three tombs to 250,000 pesos, and four tombs to 400,000 pesos.

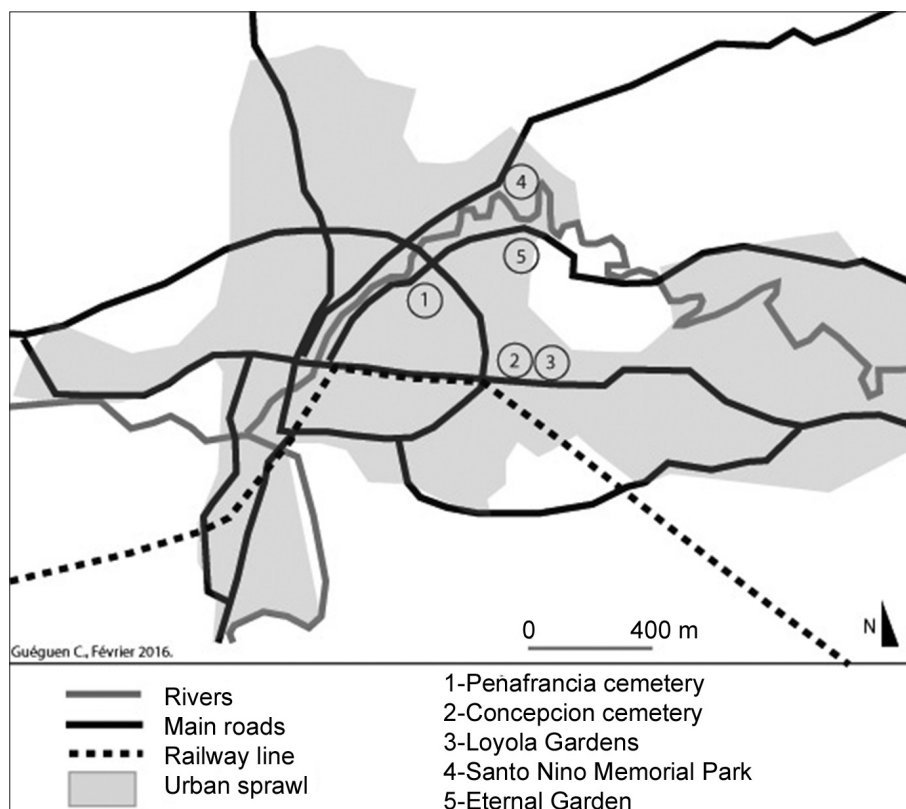
In choosing the site for the new cemetery in Lingsat next to the public cemetery, *fengshui* principles were followed. The general configuration of the cemetery is favorable, as the site faces the ocean. Some families call on *fengshui* masters for advice on the orientation of the tombs. Mr. So, who manages the cemetery, says that since 2009 there has been a resurgence in the demand for *fengshui* (Interview, August 2011). The Chinese section in the public cemetery of Lingsat, San Fernando, truly stands as an exception because it is not physically separated from the other tombs, as generally done elsewhere.

The permanence and maintenance of one or two cemeteries can be part of the preoccupations of the local Chinese communities as we see in Dagupan. In some places, the non-existence of a Chinese cemetery allows us to question the relations between the community and the space dedicated to the dead.

### **Informal Regroupings of Chinese Tombs in Other Cemeteries**

In Naga, it is commonly said that the population in the cemetery is ‘halo-halo’, that the Chinese graves are found among the other graves. What the persons interviewed referred to as “Chinese cemeteries” in the city are the different cemeteries where their ancestors are buried, regardless of the kind of burial ground. (Map 3) The Chinese graves are scattered among the following five cemeteries in Naga City: the Concepcion Pequeña Public Cemetery, the Peñafrancia Catholic Cemetery, the Santo Niño Memorial Park (1974), the Loyola Memorial Park and the Eternal Gardens (2011). These last two cemeteries are on the Balatas site, located at the periphery of the city where there were vacant spaces. It should be noted that these two cemeteries are facing each other.





**Map 3** – Location of the different cemeteries in Naga, Bicol. (C. Guéguen, 2016)

### ***First Regrouping in the Pequeña Public Cemetery and the Loyola Memorial Park***

The Concepcion Pequeña Public Cemetery is one of the oldest cemeteries of the city where the Chinese are buried, just like the one in Peñafrancia. In the family plots particularly, some regrouping can be observed. Behind this cemetery is the Loyola Memorial Park, a private cemetery with a regulated and planned layout. Two kinds of plots can be seen there: 1) those at the border of the cemetery where mausoleums are built; 2) those with the usual rectangular raised tombs or with tombstones on the ground. Raising tombs avoids digging the ground. The Loyola Memorial Park is not completely developed, which does not mean that plots have not been sold. Some mausoleums are built but are vacant. There is one case of overcrowding a plot where inside a mausoleum (of parents) a typical rectangular tomb has been built.

Between the public and private cemeteries, some housing lots seem to have been bought and mausoleums built on them. This could be a case of mortuary spaces encroaching on space for the living. The sides of the small street separating the two cemeteries are occupied differently: on one side is working-class housing, and on the other side is a series of Chinese mausoleums with some lots partially filled with construction materials or used for parking bicycles or as playing grounds (basketball court). On the road leading to the private cemetery, the tombs situated at the border of the public cemetery are sometimes occupied by neighboring residents who use the space (of the tomb or the mausoleum) for daily activities: as a small eatery, as an annex to their house, as a space for their dog... (Plates 3-5)

Except for the main alleys that allow access to the graves, there is no actual layout for the public cemetery. The mausoleums stand out like landmarks as they occupy the wider properties (hence the more expensive ones), and mainly Chinese families own them. This is actually the case in both cemeteries. Several interviewees described the Loyola Memorial Park as a “Chinese cemetery”: it is significantly adjacent to the public cemetery and this proximity is what has determined its creation. Indeed, the company of undertakers was prompted to set up near the public cemetery because of the need for more burial plots and because families were looking for the convenience of making visits within close proximity. Another reason why the Loyola Memorial Park is likened to a Chinese cemetery is perhaps because it is not as easy to draw its boundaries: it may be surrounded by a wall but entrance to it is not controlled, though a family is in charge of the place and stays there. The boundaries between these two cemeteries are not easy to determine as well: I have mentioned earlier that only a single row of houses are fronting the Chinese mausoleums and generally the Concepcion Pequeña Public Cemetery. It could be said that in the people’s mind, these tombs form a whole, given that the percentage of Chinese graves in a small perimeter is very high, so that the number of dead exceeds the number of living. The blurring of the boundaries is due to physical interactions: the living take over the places for the dead in a more or less permanent way, namely the very many Chinese tombs on the eastern side of the cemetery, as these offer elements such as benches, walls, roofs which the neighboring residents can easily make their own (study of micro-geography).

There are a few facts that can be put forward to explain why, in the case of Naga City, there has been no action taken to establish a graveyard only for the Chinese residents:

- In the 1950s and 1960s there was a problem in organizing the acquisition of land, though at that time the Chinese Chamber of Commerce was strongly encouraging the creation of Chinese cemeteries all throughout the archipelago. Some cemeteries were created much earlier, during the Spanish colonial period; others were later expanded, as in Cebu.

- Up to a recent time, the need for a cemetery was not felt. Some attribute this to the long-time presence of the Chinese in Naga.

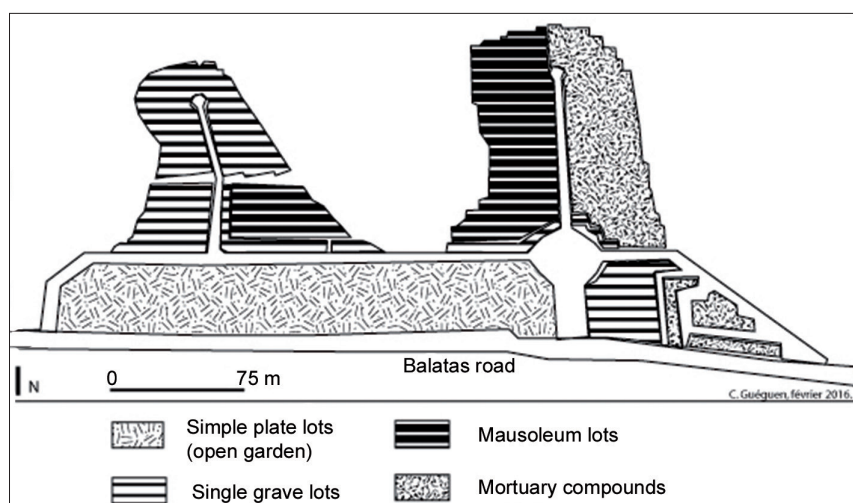
- In the Concepcion Pequeña Public Cemetery, the oldest graves apparently still remain but quite a lot of tombs have been removed and replaced by others, more so when no one is there to care for the tombs. It is quite certain that one part of the Chinese graves has disappeared. One should also take into consideration that the dead are materialized in different forms: if the tomb disappears, the tablet survives it and allows the continuous presence of the dead among the living.

In the Chinese community of Naga City, managing the dead is a strictly family matter. A person is free to choose where he/she would like to be buried.

### ***Visible Informal Regroupings in the Santo Niño Memorial Park***

As in all cemeteries at the city periphery, the plots are divided by size; nothing indicates the ethnic characterization of a zone. The Chinese tombs occupy in majority the medium size and large plots. (Map 4)

What we describe as medium-sized are the rectangular and raised Chinese tombs, topped by a metallic frame that can be covered by a tarpaulin. This installation can accommodate the close family and friends who would join the funerals or commemorative ceremonies for the dead. The tomb can also be surrounded by a low fence and a gate, to protect it from the exterior, even though this concrete separation is just symbolical. In the zone where the mausoleums are, a tomb is really a reproduction of a house. At the entrance of



**Map 4** – Organization of the Santo Niño Memorial Park. (C. Guéguen, adapted from Santo Nino Memorial Park Office, 2014)

many mausoleums is a vestibule, a space that welcomes the living before they enter the actual space for the dead. This is like the vestibule that traditionally exists in Chinese houses. This arrangement inside the mausoleum can easily be identified in the general layout of this kind of tombs. The space for the dead can be compared to his domestic space and the spatial codes of Chinese houses are in a way reproduced here. Also, the paths and access roads inside the cemetery resemble streets. The cemeteries are like cities for the dead. (Plate 6)

In the Santo Niño Memorial Park, most of the large plots are taken by Chinese families and there are many more medium-size plots situated near the zone of the “big plots.” The Chinese tombs are far from being scattered all over this private cemetery. We can almost speak of a Chinese district created spontaneously by the fact that these expensive large plots were bought by the wealthiest families of Naga. The proximity of the medium-sized Chinese tombs just in the neighboring zone is part of the families’ wanting to bring their members closer. Gatherings and visits to the dead happen in a restricted perimeter inside a wide cemetery.

### ***Transferring of Remains to Create a Chinese Cemetery?***

Eternal Gardens (on Balatas Road) was created in 2011. Here too, Chinese families are the main occupants of the bigger plots, those allotted to mausoleums. Today, these mausoleums receive the bodies of the dead but also the remains, the bones, that have been transferred from one cemetery to another, and particularly from the cemetery located just across the Santo Niño Memorial Park. The families take charge of the exhumation of the remains, whether those are bones or ashes. Eternal Gardens does not have a columbarium either, but a space that serves as a crypt, at the foot of a monument in honor of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, the patron of Naga/Nueva Caceres. The administration office of the cemetery says that eighty percent of the plots for mausoleums were pre-sold to Chinese families. However some mausoleums are built on plots for simple tombs, and one can be found in the space of the crypt.

A plan to create a Chinese cemetery next to Eternal Gardens under the supervision of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry is under discussion. Negotiations are open with Eternal Gardens on the matter of managing the cemetery (the project is to be completed three years from now). The number one reason for the creation of a Chinese only cemetery is to regroup in one place, the bones or ashes of Chinese families’ deceased members buried in the different cemeteries of the city. These cemeteries, judging by visits made to them, are sometimes far from being well maintained. This situation in Naga is interesting in more than one way. There was no Chinese cemetery in the city or a plan to establish one, until very recently. The dead were buried in scattered locations, in wider cemeteries located at the city’s periphery or on

the contrary in plots not very easily accessible (in the Concepcion Pequeña Public Cemetery, one has to step on other graves in order to get to some tombs, as the secondary alleys of the cemetery no longer exist and are themselves spaces for graves). This is very different from today's situation in many cities in the Philippines where, after Chinese cemeteries were established, the predominant trend now is to bury the dead in dispersed locations, in bigger private memorial parks. Hence the community's management of the dead is abandoned: such management is taken over by the big private memorial parks' administrations that provide all the necessary amenities for the deceased and their families in terms of the burial arrangements and the comfort of the families. For instance, pagodas or spaces laid out according to *fengshui* have become elements of marketing to attract wealthy Chinese families who are looking for burial places presenting traditional features.

It is often because of the will of a few important people, who feel the need for the community to have its own burial ground, that a cemetery is built. Some unprecedented negotiations take place regarding these burial spaces.

In Naga, *fengshui* is called upon after a burial plot is acquired, to determine an auspicious date, the sunrise and sunset, the light, etc. Families can apparently avail themselves of the services of a *Fengshui* Master who lives in the city.

Questioning the location of the Chinese graves at the scale of Naga city would require various elements of understanding including the variety of actors involved in this process. Elsewhere, regional to national strategies take shape to link Chinese families to their dead.

## **From a Regional Strategy for the Dead to a National Program**

### ***Sharing Resources between two Adjacent Municipalities***

The oldest Chinese cemetery found in Daraga (an adjacent municipality situated 7.5 kilometers south of Legazpi City) is located on a slope at the edge of the city and is surrounded today by medium-sized houses. The "new Chinese cemetery" was opened in 2002; it is situated on the Bugtong site, a flat area facing the Mount Mayon and near a river. The land was acquired in 1998 from a businessman who went bankrupt and who owned several agricultural plots (400,000 pesos for 3.5 hectares). One has to be a member of an association to be allowed to bury a family member in this cemetery: a one thousand peso fee entitles one to the possibility of acquiring a plot measuring three meters by five meters for an amount of 25,000 pesos, where one can build a mausoleum or another kind of tomb. The one criterion to meet in terms of architectural regulations is the height of the tomb because the cemetery is situated behind the airport. The association plays its traditional role of support: it reserves at the back of the cemetery seven plots for the poor (only urns containing the ashes can be placed here; the cost of cremation is 4,500 pesos).



Formerly, the Chinese could also be interred in the public cemetery of Bagnot/Pawa, but it is full today. Now, the Chinese can choose between the new Chinese cemetery and other memorial establishments such as the Pristine Memorial Gardens that offers quality care services, or the Bicol Memorial Park (these two are in Legazpi City).

It is also possible to transfer bone remains in the case of reuniting a couple, particularly when one of the spouses died prematurely; at the death of the other spouse the configuration of the burial plots has changed, resulting in the couple being separated. In numerous cases what happens is that one spouse is buried in Daraga and the other in the new Chinese cemetery. The families would or would not bring together their dead, more often in the cemetery of Bugtong which is more spacious and easier to get to. The families would then consult for an appropriate date according to the lunar calendar to transfer the remains. The tombstones, etched with inscriptions in Chinese, are made in Manila.

The Chinese cemetery of Legazpi received little damage in 2006 from two major events that struck the city: a typhoon and the eruption of the Mount Mayon. The flow of mud only touched on the cemetery's wall which was just slightly damaged, but on the other side of the road, the factory that used to stand there was destroyed. The lands on both sides of the road belong to the Legazpi Charitable Association. The cemetery's plotting is strictly structured and translates a certain hierarchy in the local Chinese community: it is not the size of the burial plot that determines a family's standing in the community but the plot's location in the cemetery. The first two rows of plots are reserved for the members of the association: these plots face the Mount Mayon and the river, which make them the most favorable sites according to the rules of *Fengshui*. The other families acquire the other plots. The cemetery is not much used; only fifty-two plots are developed. No distinction is made between people of Cantonese or Hokkien origin. On the other hand, the cemetery of Daraga (created in the 1950s) is still in use despite its congestion. The family plots are crowded; some graves are destroyed to give way to others. Actually there are not yet many transfers of remains; a few tombs are opened and left bare. (Plate 7)

Reuniting families causes the mobility of populations within the archipelago bringing about a number of territorial re-compositions especially in Metro Manila where many Filipino-Chinese families are brought together again. Because of the distance to the province where they live, the elderly (parents who have remained in the province and who visit their children who are settled elsewhere) tend to want to be buried in a metropolitan-capital city near their close family. The older ones, whose children have settled in Manila or Cebu, spend part of their time in their city of origin and the other part in the metropolitan cities of the country. Those who had to be buried in the Philippines when it was possible to return to China were too poor to take that step. As they were Catholic converts, they were interred in the Catholic

cemeteries. But the simplicity of their tombs, the passing of time, and the lack of space often led to the disappearance of these tombs. The period of the Second World War could also have contributed to the destruction of those tombs, as well as the looting of cemeteries to recover construction materials for the building of roads or houses.

The management of the Chinese cemeteries in Legazpi and Daraga reflects that of a community network functioning at the regional level. It can be likened to a pooling of resources, a sharing of services and community properties in the matter of burials. Indeed, the cemetery is open to anyone who is a member of an association. Perhaps this is because the community is small and tightly knit. Thus for example, members of the Long Se association (the Lee family) can be buried in Daraga or Legazpi.

Despite its coastal location, Legazpi is not much of a sea-oriented city. Only one pier has been built recently. Hence the city has maintained relations with Luzon exclusively through the continent. Other port cities nearby were more active like Tabaco which early on only carried out liaisons with Manila and overseas for the export of agricultural products (abaca). Bacacay was another port used by some small Chinese communities, but it was eventually taken over by Tabaco as it did not have a deep water port. The first Chinese settlements in the region were in Bacacay.

### ***From the Extension of the Cemetery to Repatriation of Remains to Manila***

The Chinese cemetery of Tabaco is situated at the western entrance of the city, where there are many other cemeteries, along the road going to Legazpi. It is easily recognizable as the entrance is typically in the shape of a Chinese pagoda and bears the inscription "Chinese cemetery." It is surrounded by a wall shared with the adjoining Catholic cemetery. The Chinese cemetery of Tabaco was created in 1896 following a demand by the Chinese living in the city, and under the aegis of the Bishop of the province of Albay. (Plates 8-9)

The layout of the cemetery is notable: three layers can be distinguished which seem to define the different stages of development of the cemetery. From the road and entrance door of the cemetery, these succeeding layers are strips of land measuring approximately 40 meters each delineated by a threshold or even doors bearing different kinds of symbols. In the first layer are mausoleums built in the 1950s, forming a homogenous group from the viewpoint of structure and size of the family plots. Then a second layer follows, comprising a group of tombs looking quite heterogeneous due to the form of the tombs and of the allocated plots. The oldest tombs are found here, they are simple casings of convex shape lying on the ground, with inscriptions that have often faded away. Many tombs were most certainly demolished to make room. The bones could have been placed in a crypt where the niches are covered by clay slabs bearing inscriptions in Chinese. The crypt is topped by a cross. To reach this part of

the cemetery, one goes through a porch where the commemorative plaque on the creation of the cemetery (etched in Spanish) is found. This part is enclosed with a wall. The front of the porch shows a modern development of the pagoda form, but seen from the back what is visible is the original architecture of the porch which is a simple awning with a cross on top. Being the oldest section of the cemetery, it was hence located considerably far from the road and it has since been reached by the first extension of the cemetery. After crossing this "old section," the visitor gains access to the newest section of the cemetery (the one farthest from the road today) where the plots are wider and the pathways are indicated. The back of the cemetery remains vacant. The cemetery could still extend on its southern side, with a path leading to it.

The local Chinese community describes itself as close knit, which explains why the cemetery is well preserved, and moreover, that some old tombs are maintained. Fund raising within the community, and particularly the profits from product imports as well as the export of abaca and coconut, are the sources that enable the community to care for the places specific to them, namely the cemetery. The commercial successes that originated in this small port city of Tabaco are what made certain businesses thrive in the entire region of Bicol, as for example the business of the Tan family who comes from Tabaco, and who launched their first supermarket there, the Liberty Commercial Center. This mall is now present in all the cities of the region. Despite the small size of the city and of its Chinese community, one Chinese school still exists in Tabaco (the Pei Ching School that counted 600 students in the 1960s but is now down to 200, 10% of which are Chinese, and with one volunteer teacher from China). The Chamber of Commerce is in charge of the cemetery. It is said that transfers of bone remains to cemeteries in Manila are done, as families have by now regrouped there. The only burials admitted are of members of the community and of their descendants. Before, members could be buried there gratis, but it no longer is the case. The community takes care too of two small Taoist temples (located on private grounds) dedicated to the native regions of its members: Jinjiang 晉江 and Shishi 石獅, Fujian province. The Chinese community in Tabaco slowly grew by batches, often prior to a more or less long stay in Manila.

Before the 1950s there were few interments. For those who were born in China and who had the means, a burial in China was still preferred. Today, the parents of the present Chinese living in Tabaco, are the only ones interred in China. However, it all depends on how anchored the Chinese are in the Philippines and on the degree of relations they entertain with mother country.

## **Conclusion**

As the urban context evolves, the old Chinese cemeteries are situated today in areas that are prized by real estate investors. Indirectly, the extension of the urban space and the mobility of populations is the reason for recomposed

cemeteries to be moved to second-generation cemeteries (like in San Fernando-La Union or Dagupan). The demand in burial spaces is such that it has to be accommodated by other cemeteries. Consequently, this situation can result in a split of mobility for the practice of the rituals for the dead, especially on All Saints' Day. The dispersion of graves in different memorial places may cause families to regroup their dead in certain cemeteries (that are not necessarily Chinese) so it is easier for them to manage (in this case, the bones are regrouped in one tomb). Human mobility and the impossibility for some families to maintain the tombs, cause the transfer of remains to other cities, sometimes from one province to another.

Until recently the cemeteries were managed by the community but now the question is what to do with these old Chinese cemeteries inserted in the urban fabric, of difficult access, often badly maintained, considered by the city's residents as infamous places, and where burials are no longer held? To date, there seems to be no project underway regarding the preservation of these memorial places. In provincial towns, what matters to the Chinese Chambers of Commerce who manage these cemeteries is organizing a dignified meeting of the dead and the living on All Saints' Day. There are many rumors speculating that real estate development projects will replace these burial spaces. In the Philippines, the Chinese cemeteries are still much present and are maintained by the community. The general organization of the present Chinese cemeteries and the configuration of the tombs reflect mainly Christian practices. Yet, the urban families aspire to new configurations of space for their cemeteries. In this matter, the American influence can be seen in the organization of the memorial parks away in the peripheries of the city. There are many of these cemeteries, and competition is tough.

The mortuary practices are still mainly interments, and in the Philippines as of today, they are not subjected to administrative restrictions. The evolution of these practices can also be observed in the cemeteries by the addition of a columbarium adjoining the crematorium. Interments have always been part of the Chinese community's mortuary practices and cremation has been gradually increasing due to the cost of an interment and the maintenance of a tomb. Hence, taking a census of the tombs of the Chinese community would not just be about counting their number in the Chinese cemeteries, but in almost all the cemeteries in the country. The concrete references to the sacred and to the dead of the Chinese community in the Philippines are increasing, keeping to traditional forms which have sometimes been reshaped.

Therefore, beyond the strategies that reflect how a community is anchored in a city or a region, one must take into consideration the individual strategies of the families who are the primary actors in the mobility and transformation of mortuary territories.



**Plate 1** – The old Chinese cemetery, Perez street, Dagupan. (Photo: C. Guéguen, 2011)



**Plate 2** – The new Chinese cemetery in Dagupan. (Photo: C. Guéguen, 2011)





**Plate 3** – Single Chinese grave in the old Concepcion cemetery.  
(Photo: C. Guéguen, 2014)



**Plate 4** – Excavated tombs in the Concepcion cemetery: signs of mobility. (Photo: C. Guéguen, 2014)



**Plate 5** – Extension of the Chinese mausoleums near the Conception cemetery, facing the neighborhood.  
(Photo: C. Guéguen, 2014)



**Plate 6** – Chinese mausoleum as a “Chinese compound” in the Santo Niño Memorial Park.  
(Photo: C. Guéguen, 2014)





**Plate 7** – The Legazpi Chinese cemetery. (Photo: C. Guéguen, 2014)



**Plate 8** – The entrance of the Tabaco Chinese cemetery. (Photo: C. Guéguen, 2014)



**Plate 9** – The founding plate of the Tabaco Chinese cemetery, 1896.  
(Photo: C. Guéguen, 2014)

CLAUDINE SALMON<sup>1</sup>

## From Cemeteries to Luxurious Memorial Parks With Special Reference to Malaysia and Indonesia<sup>2</sup>

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The second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries were characterized by high-speed urban development that resulted in the encircling of the old Chinese cemeteries by new settlements. In many cities, especially in Manila, Jakarta and Surabaya, incoming migrants squatted on cemetery land. Some municipal authorities issued new regulations intended to close old Chinese burial sites and eventually to demolish them and the process is still going on. In certain cities, ancient Chinese cemeteries were transformed into “heritage parks” or *guji wenhua gongyuan* 古蹟文化公園, which combine the significance of a historic landscape and the need for open space. The two most famous examples are: first, the cemetery of Bukit Cina “China Hill” in Melaka, created in 1984 (after an urban development plan and a private sector plan had attempted to destroy it).<sup>3</sup> Second, was the Kwong Tong Cemetery—the biggest of all the cemeteries in Kuala Lumpur constructed in 1895 and the resting place of prominent city pioneers—.<sup>4</sup> After several removal plans, the last in 2000, the cemetery was finally transformed

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1. CNRS, Paris.

2. Our thanks to Ong Siew Kian, Ardi Halim and Yerri Wirawan who accompanied us during our visits of certain memorial parks, and to the personnel of these cemeteries. We are also grateful to Mary Somers Heidhues who read this article with care and insight.

3. See Carolyn L. Cartier, “Creating Historic Open Space in Melaka,” *The Geographical Review*, 83:4 (1993), pp. 359-373.

4. For a list of names, see Gu Yanqiu *bianzhu* 古燕秋編主, *Sisheng qikuo—Jilongpo Guangdong yishan mubei yu tuwen jiyao* 死生契闊—吉隆坡廣東義山墓碑與圖文輯要 / *For Life or for death, however separated. Important tombs, epigraphs, documents of Kwongtong cemetery Kuala Lumpur*, Kuala Lumpur, Centre for Malaysian Chinese Studies & The Association of Kwong Tong Cemetery Management Kuala Lumpur, 2014, pp. 1-4.



into a cultural park, thanks to the strong resistance of the Cantonese community.<sup>5</sup> As for public cemeteries, run by municipalities and religious institutions, their capacities are very limited, many of them are not far from being full,<sup>6</sup> and burial plots are no longer available within the cities.

Various measures aimed at reducing the length of burial tenure, or at encouraging what is called “reburying,” that is interring one body over another several years later, or even cremating the remains of the third and subsequent persons in a family and placing their urns in the same burial plot.<sup>7</sup> Simultaneously people started to resort to cremation and the placing of the ashes in private columbaria. Years ago, at a higher level, the Malaysian government issued directives on burial lands according to which developers must allocate lands for cemeteries, but the latter “have been constantly asking for exemptions because they are reluctant to have part of their land turned into burial land.”<sup>8</sup> In a 2011 report, the Selangor Land and Minerals Department confirmed that the lack of burial grounds is one of the major problems the state is facing.<sup>9</sup> Nirwono Joga (Chairman Indonesian Landscape Architecture Study Group, Jakarta) on the “Urgency of burial ground for Jakarta” (*Jakarta Post*, Dec. 3, 2002) reached a similar conclusion, saying: “The lack of seriousness in the management of cemeteries on the part of the Jakarta city administration has led the developers and planners of new satellite cities around Jakarta to be similarly negligent. None of them have allocated land for public cemeteries.” On March 12, 2011, the same newspaper stated that there was “no more space in C. Jakarta cemeteries.”

It is in the context of this grave burial crisis that the private sector came in. The private-led initiative into the memorial park business first started in the 1960s in the Philippines, when the multinational Castle and Cooke, “upon witnessing the congested and unpleasant sights of public cemeteries” and

5. Chen Yacai (Tan Ah Chai) 陳亞才, *Liu hen yu yihen, Wenhua guji yu huaren yishan* 留痕與遺恨。文化古蹟與華人義山 (To preserve the roots or to regret. Cultural relics and cemeteries), Kuala Lumpur: Dajiang shiye chubanshe, 2000; Ong Seng Hwat 王琛發, *Malaixiya huaren yishan yu muzang wenhua* 馬來西亞華人義山與墓葬文化 (Chinese cemeteries in Malaysia and funeral culture), Selayang: Yinpin duomeiti chuanbo zhongxin, Yin Pin multimedia Communication Centre, 2001, pp. 61-86; Yat Ming Loo, *Architecture and Urban Form in Kuala Lumpur: Race and Chinese Spaces in a Postcolonial City*, Farnham, England & Burlington, USA: Ashgate, 2012, chap. 6. “Landscape of the Non-Descript: Kuala Lumpur Chinese Cemeteries”, pp. 145-178. See also the Kwong Tong cemetery site online: <http://ktc.org.my>

6. The Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) told the *Malay Mail online* that the public cemeteries in the city are now 80 per cent full; cf. Boo Su-lyn, “Even in death no escape from rising prices,” Kuala Lumpur, April 11, 2014: <http://www.themalaymailonline.com/malaysia/article/even-in-death-no-escape-from-rising-prices>

7. Cf. “No more Space in C. Jakarta Cemeteries,” *Jakarta Post*, March 12, 2011.

8. Vanitha Nadaraj, “Grave Situation as KL and Selangor Run out of Burial Land” (Dec. 10, 2014), online: <http://www.establishmentpost.com/grave-situation-kl-selangor-run-burial-land/>

9. Vanitha Nadaraj, “Grave Situation as KL and Selangor Run out of Burial Land.”

taking advantage of American models, conducted a study of the business for local consumption which turned out to be feasible. Manila Memorial Park (MMP) was born in 1964, after Castle and Cooke “approached some names of society.”<sup>10</sup> That very year opened the era of a new concept of a deathscape in insular Southeast Asia. MMP was to become the largest memorial park company of the country in terms of numbers of parks and development. The first local real estate investor to venture into the memorial park business was apparently the TDC or Teresa Development Corporation (named after Teresa Cuaycong Lacson, grand matriarch of the Lacson family, large real estate owner of Bacolod city, Negros)<sup>11</sup> which in 1966 simultaneously opened the Bacolod Memorial Park and the funeral home Acropolis Garden, the building of which displays Greek-inspired designs.<sup>12</sup> In Malaysia, the concept of memorial park was not introduced until 1990-1991, and in Indonesia not until 2002-2003. In both cases, the initiative came from local entrepreneurs.

Initially, the new burial sites were patterned after traditional cemeteries, especially in the Philippines, but gradually they developed into luxurious parks that look more like public gardens, microcosms of China, mini-worlds, and recreational parks. This change in nature gave rise to the coining of neologisms in local languages. In Chinese, the terms *yishan* 義山, *yizhong* 義塚, *fendi* 墳地, *gongmu* 公墓, *mudi* 墓地, *musuo* 墓所, *muyu* 墓域, *gongmudi* 公墓, *zhongdi* 塚地, etc., used to designate a traditional collective cemetery, were progressively replaced by those of *fengjing muyuan* 風景墓園, *yuanlin fengjing muyuan* 園林風景墓園 “garden cemetery,” *shanzhuang* 山莊, literally “home in the hills,” *shanzhuang gongmu* 山莊公墓 “cemetery in the hills.” Euphemisms such as *huayuan* 花園 “flower garden,” *renshenghou huayuan* 人生後花園 “flower garden of the afterlife,” which all convey a concept of cultural landscape. In Malay/Indonesian, the terms *tempat kuburan*, *perkuburan*, and *permakaman* were superseded by those of *taman makam* and *taman pemakaman* which are renditions of the English “cemetery garden,” and of *taman peringatan*, or “garden of remembrance,” by the composite expressions *taman memorial*, and the loanwords *memorial park*, *memorial garden*.

The sites themselves have appellations that evoke pleasant symbolic landscaped deathscapes, such as Taigong lingyuan 泰宮陵園 or “Peaceful Palace Cemetery,” Taman Memorial Graha Sentosa “Great Peace Memorial Park,” Fugui shanzhuang 富貴山莊 “Domain of Riches and Honour” / Nirvana

10. This is a quotation from MMP official website : [www.manilamemorial.com/index.php/about-us/48-history](http://www.manilamemorial.com/index.php/about-us/48-history)

11. See Acropolis Garden site: <http://www.acropolis-gardens.com/component/content/article/83-terms-and-conditions>

12. See “Bacolod Trade Expo and Conference 2014 MassKara City SMX Bacolod Convention Centre October 17-19, 2014. Teresa Development Corporation”: <http://www.masskaracity.com/business/teresa-development-corporation>

Memorial Park, Tiantang huayuan 天堂花園 / Heaven Memorial Garden, and others. Some refer to real landscapes in Asia such as Taman Makam Quilin(g) / Guilin mushanzhuang 桂林墓山庄,<sup>13</sup> Nilai Memorial Park, or to symbolic places in the West, such as San Diego Hills. Some others, such as Rulai Xiaoen yuan 汝萊孝恩園 “Nilai Garden of Filial Piety and Gratitude,” embody current perceptions of the traditional Chinese family rules bonding the living with the departed.

These appellations, which address a wide range of complicated dreams, show that the new cemeteries mirror the contemporary aspirations of certain developers of Chinese origin in their host countries and the relationships they entertain at the local and international level. Simultaneously, they inform us of the expectations of a wealthy urban population that is: willing to spend money so that the deceased should find peace in the afterlife and eventually realize their dream and return to greatness.

In the following, we will look at pioneers in the memorialization industry, then the development of memorial parks as gardens of dreams, new cemeteries as mirrors of cultural identities, the legal frameworks, the memorialization industry, and finally marketing strategies.

### **Profiles of Local Pioneers of the Memorialization Industry**

Although the biographies of most of the pioneers in the memorialization industry in Insular Southeast Asia are difficult to document, we may however get an insight into the way some of them came into this sector. Since the memorial parks were foreign in their conception, the developers who ventured into this field had, for the great majority, benefited from familiarity with Asian and Western cultures, and had undertaken several visits abroad to study the feasibility of similar projects.

#### ***Philippines***

As regards the Philippines, the founder of the first private memorial park outside Manila in 1966, Bacolod Memorial Park, is Ramon C. Lacson Jr., Chief Executive Officer of Teresa Development Corporation (TDC), a real estate development company in Bacolod City (Negros Island), that has been in existence for several decades. In the same year, he also ventured into offering cremation and mortuary services by constructing Acropolis Gardens. Having a De La Salle University (Manila) and a U.S. education in accounting and economics along with his various experiences in sales, Lacson Jr. was able to realize his aspirations. In 1980, the corporation developed Rose Lawns Memorial Park, which was designed to meet the needs of average income

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13. Quiling should be understood as Quilin or Guilin 桂林, a city of Guangxi 廣西 Autonomous Region, famous for its beautiful landscapes.

earners. The park, now adjacent to Acropolis Gardens is a vast 20 hectare property. In 1988, TDC opened Goldcrest Village and in 1994 Octagon Village. The corporation also owns several commercial properties in the city. One may get an insight into its various development activities by consulting its official sites online.<sup>14</sup>

### Malaysia

In Malaysia since the mid-1980s, two developers, the late Datuk Choo Ching Hwa 拿督朱正華 (1931-1996), and Datuk Tan Sri Kong Hon Kong 拿督丹斯里鄭漢光 (born in 1954) felt the need to create modern cemeteries, but it took them several years of research to accomplish their projects. The first founded Xiaoen yuan and the second Nirvana Memorial Park.

Datuk Choo Ching Hwa was a Hakka born in Terengganu. When he was 16 years old, he went to Meizhou 梅州, Guangdong, his family's place of origin, to continue his secondary schooling, but was obliged to return to Malaya due to the political situation in China. He was successively a school teacher and headmaster. Then he went to Australia to further his studies and came back to Terengganu as a certified accountant. He started an accountancy practice in partnership with his wife and his brother under the firm name Choo Brothers Properties Sdn Bhd. He was also the general secretary of Koperatif Serbaguna Malaysia Bhd, which was the major shareholder in MPH B (now known as Magnum Berhad) engaged in underwriting all classes of general insurance. His personal interests also included a substantial shareholding in Kesang Holdings Bhd, of which he was Chairman. He was active in politics when he was Chairman of the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) Terengganu liaison committee.<sup>15</sup>

In 1971, he was shocked when he saw "the unkempt condition, the eerie atmosphere of the cemetery" in which his father was buried.<sup>16</sup> By the mid-1980s, with his wife, he undertook several visits to Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines and the United States in order to study all facets of modern memorial park planning, development, management and operations. He founded Xiao En jituan 孝恩集團, which is "a multicultural group built on the philosophy of filial piety," and on April 26, 1991, the Nilai Memorial Park (or Rulai Xiaoen yuan) held its ground breaking ceremony, and the cemetery was to open to the public in 1993.<sup>17</sup> A few years later Xiao En Group developed Melaka Memorial Park in a joint project with the local

14. See <http://teresadevelopmentcorp.com/> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Zm8hp3Ck-s>

15. *The Straits Times*, 13 October 1982, p. 22.

16. Cf. Nilai Memorial Park official site: <http://www.nilaimemorialpark.com/profile.phtml>

17. "Han Chunjin zhuchi Xiaoen yuan dong tu li cheng Xiaochu renmen yinsen ganjue, zhengfu guli fenmu huayuanhua 韓春錦主持孝恩院動土禮稱消除人們陰森感覺，政府鼓勵墳墓花園化", *Nanyang shangbao* 南洋商報, 27.4.1991.

Chinese Chamber of Commerce. The new cemetery was completed in 2005. Today the group which has more than 20 subsidiary companies with a wide array of activities is headed by Datuk Choo's widow and children.

Datuk Sri Kong Hon Kong whose ancestors were native to Nanhai 南海, Guangdong, was born in Kuala Lipis, Pahang. When he was 18, he started to work, first in a pawnshop and then an insurance company, and became interested in finance. Later he became the manager of a credit company and earned a lot of money, but he went bankrupt when he was in his early 30s. In 1990, his financial situation restored, he founded Nirvana Asia Limited of which he became managing director, and bought a huge piece of land in Seminyih in the state of Selangor on which he was to build the Nirvana Memorial Park called in Chinese Fugui shanzhuang 富貴山莊. In 1999, he expanded into the funeral care business becoming "Asia's largest integrated bereavement care provider." In 2003, jointly with the Indonesian Company P.T. Alam Hijau Lestari, he developed Lestari Memorial Park in Karawang Barat (to the east of Jakarta).<sup>18</sup> In 2008, Nirvana Asia Ltd set up the Nirvana Memorial Park in Shah Alam, and the following year opened Nirvana Memorial Garden in Singapore. In December 2014 Nirvana was successfully listed on the main board of the Hong Kong Stock Exchange Limited (HKEx). Today Nirvana Asia Ltd has thirteen branches all over Asia, and a fourteenth in Huizhou 惠州, Guangdong province, PRC, is currently under construction, in cooperation with Huizhou Longyan Art Cemetery Development Co. to provide services in management, operation and sales of no less than 30,000 double niches in its columbarium, as well as a non-exclusive right to provide other death services. In an interview given to Ho Wan Foon,<sup>19</sup> Datuk Sri Kong said he wanted to be the global "funeral leader":

I am very ambitious. In the long term I want to be No. 1 in the world in the funeral service sector. I am planning and positioning my team. Organic growth is too slow. The quickest way is to go through M & A [merger and acquisition].

### **Indonesia**

In Indonesia, the first developer to invest in the memorial industry, Suwito Muliadi (Chinese name: Li Weiqing 李圍慶), comes from a family that was involved in bereavement services. Those who followed in his footsteps were

18. The group intends to open another memorial park in 2016 in the area of Tangerang, and has entered into an agreement with landowners to acquire parcels of land located at Desa Bongkawan, *kecamatan* Sibolangit, *kabupaten* Deli Serdang, Sumatra Utara. The land is located adjacent to the main road, about 25 km away from Medan, the third largest city in Indonesia with a population of about 4,100,000.

19. See Ho Wan Foon, "Aiming to be global 'funeral' leader," *The Star Online*, 26 Sept. 2015: [www.thestar.com.my/.../Aiming-to-be-global-funeral-](http://www.thestar.com.my/.../Aiming-to-be-global-funeral-)



apparently engaged in the real estate business. As for Mochtar Riady (Lie Mo Tie, Li Wenzheng 李文正, born in 1929), the founder of San Diego Hills, the biggest memorial park in Indonesia, he is chairman of the Lippo 立寶 Group.

In an interview given to a journalist from *Bisnis.com*,<sup>20</sup> Suwito Muliadi said that his parents had had a business in coffins named Hiap Djie Hoo [協二]號,<sup>21</sup> located in Toko Tiga, Pancoran Kota, Jakarta. After his parents passed away, in 1990 he founded Yayasan Pemakaman Pluit, an association aimed at managing the first funeral home or *rumah duka* in Jakarta with his brother. He parted from his brother, opened four other funeral homes, and in 2002 constructed Taman Makam Quiling (later also called Heaven Memorial Park), in the mountainous area of Bogor in Buana Jaya on a property he acquired in 1995, when the value of land in this area was still low. The five funeral enterprises and the cemetery garden are now under the umbrella of the limited company, PT Naga Sakti or Shenlong jituan 神龍集團, that Suwito Muliadi founded in 2002. In August 2015, he opened a landscaped cemetery in a scenic place in the area of Tangerang (to the west of Jakarta) named Heaven Memorial Garden / Tiantang huayuan 天堂花園.<sup>22</sup>

Mochtar Riady, was born in Batu near Malang (East Java) into a family of batik traders. His ambition to become a banker began when he was 10 years old. He received a Chinese education and was an anti-colonial activist during his school days in Java, participating in anti-Dutch demonstrations. He was arrested and deported to Nanjing, China, and took this opportunity to study philosophy at Nanjing University. He returned to Indonesia in 1950. After having run a small store in Jember (East Java) that became the largest in town, in 1954 he moved to Jakarta where he took his first steps in banking management. In 1971-1975 he successfully developed Panin Bank (by merging four banks) into one of the largest banks in Indonesia. He is known as a specialist in helping ailing banks. Then he worked for Bank Central Asia (BCA), leaving in 1990 to focus on expanding the Lippo Group which he founded. By now “Lippo Group has become a multinational group of companies spanning the Pacific Basin with interests in financial investment, property and infrastructure development, retail, education and media.”<sup>23</sup>

The story goes that San Diego Hills Memorial Park and Funeral Homes was developed where a memorial monument for the ashes of Mochtar Riady’s

20. “Suwito Muliadi: Tidak Boleh Tamak” (Rabu, 02/05/2012) online: <http://entrepreneur.bisnis.com/read/20120502/267/75177/suwito-muliadi-tidak-boleh-tamak>

21. Our thanks to Zhou Nanjing 周南京 for this interpretation.

22. *Yinni Xingzhou ribao* 印尼星洲日報, May 11, 2015.

23. Cf. Mochtar Riady’s biography by Hoon Chang Yau, in Leo Suryadinata (ed.), *Southeast Asian Personalities of Chinese Descent. A Biographical Dictionary*, Singapore: ISEAS Press, 2012, vol. I, pp. 926-927.

parents had been located, a specific place in Cikarang Barat, some 15 km from Jakarta.<sup>24</sup> The project was initiated in 2006 and launched the following year.

### **New Cemeteries as Gardens of Dreams and Greatness**

In the Philippines, the memorial park developers cater to Catholics of Chinese and Filipino origins who are quite westernized, whereas in Malaysia their counterparts have to deal essentially with Chinese customers who exhibit a wide array of cultural and religious facets. In Indonesia the clientele may include Sino-Indonesians, and other Indonesians without distinction of religion. To some extent the new cemeteries reflect the aspirations and dreams of the living, whether developers or customers. Here we present two memorial parks set in Selangor, West Malaysia that exhibit more or less adapted Chinese features, namely Rulai Xiaoen yuan and Nirvana Memorial Park, and two in Indonesia: Taman Makam Quiling closer to the traditional Chinese cemetery, and San Diego Hills, which displays multicultural and cross-religious characteristics.

#### ***Rulai Xiaoen yuan / Nilai Memorial Park***

In the preface to a book by Ong Seng Hwat (one of the tank thinkers of Nilai Memorial Park) on “Chinese cemeteries and funeral culture” published with the financial support of Xiao En Group,<sup>25</sup> Datin Choo Lim Sei Keng 拿汀朱林秀琴 presents the way her late husband conceived Xiaoen yuan, saying:

His original aim was not to make a profitable cemetery business, his main concern was to know how to realise a cemetery that could really embody the traditional rules regarding the manner one should attend to funeral rites for one’s parents and follow them when gone with due sacrifices. Such a cemetery, according to him, should combine the geographical layout with a forest garden design plan, *yuanlin shiji* 園林設計, so that the departed may rest in peace and dignity, and the living may enjoy a quiet atmosphere when they recall their dead and express their filial thoughts.

Datin Choo continues with her own views, that the cemeteries erected with much suffering by Malaysian Chinese, are symbols of their native places, and like their funeral culture itself, embody the priceless notions of *ren* 仁 “benevolence,” *xiao* 孝 “filial piety” and *yi* 義 “public duty,” and constitute “the traces of their history,” *lishi de zuji* 歷史的足跡. She adds that during the construction of the cemetery, Xiao En Group stressed the fact that the

24. Cf. Kemas, Ridwan Kurniawan and Lianita, Marketing Graves ; changing the paradigm of a burial ground from a city of death to city of amusement in San Diego Hill cemetery in Cikarang West Java. Paper presented in ARTEPOLIS 2 – International Conference and Workshop on Creative Communities and the Making of Place in Bandung, 8-10 August 2008, pp. 1-2 (accessed online in PDF, hereafter “Managing graves”). This paper is based on Lianita, “San Diego Hills Memorial Park & Funeral Homes Hiperrealitas pada arsitektur makam,” MA, Departemen Arsitektur. Fakultas Teknik, Universitas Indonesia, 2008.

25. Ong Seng Hwat, *Malaixiya huaren yishan yu muzang wenhua*, mentioned above note 5.



emphasis given to the present should not be at the expense of the past. Worthy of note is that to commemorate the 880th Anniversary of the birth of the Song philosopher and moralist Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), which was celebrated worldwide in 2010, his “Family Precepts” or *Zhuzi jiaxun* 朱子家訓, were engraved on a stele shaped as a wall which was dedicated on July 3, 2010.<sup>26</sup>

The memorial garden, occupying a surface of some 44,5 hectares, was conceived by a foreign landscape architect in cooperation with local Chinese designers. (Plan 1) Developed partly on the site of a former hilly plantation it has preserved a small stand of rubber trees. The northeast side of the garden is planted with greenery. It encloses the reception hall, the columbarium garden including the Court of Faith, Xinde ge 信德閣, in a minimalist, subtle architecture, a meeting place that may be used by people of all cultures and beliefs. Slightly further on, the Court of Tranquillity, Jingtu ge 淨土閣, in an innovative bungalow-style columbarium, was designed for Buddhist believers. On the opposite side of the road and on a hill slope stand two Buddhist temples: Xiaoen si 孝恩寺, in Tang style, where funeral celebrations take place, which has a covered reception area, and Dizang dian 地藏殿, another sanctuary dedicated to the King of Hell, where ancestral tablets are kept and worshipped. Beyond these is a set of columbaria in Western-style houses, then others shaped like Chinese courtyard houses or *siheyuan* 四合院. Next, in front of the watercourse is the Peace Memorial Garden with a monument to peace, Heping jinianpai 和平紀念牌, in memory of all those who perished during the resistance against the Japanese Occupation (1941-1945). A third set of columbaria called Xiaoen shuixiang 孝恩水鄉, the layout of which is based on the traditions of “water village” architecture of Jiangsu province (Plate 1), remind visitors of little China of old. Inside this complex is the stele engraved with the “Family Precepts” of Zhu Xi accompanied by a rather loose English translation. (Plate 3) Apart from Buddhist and Christian Garden niche walls, greenery areas, a lake planted with lotus, and a few pieces of land that await further development, the rest of the park is divided into various sections with burial plots of different sizes and prices, separated from each other by lanes occasionally planted with trees. (Plate 2) They include the Terrace of Honour, Jiazu moqu 家族墓區, a specially designed luxury family burial plots; the Garden of Eternal Compassion, Renshou yuan 仁壽苑, for standard double burial plots; the Terrace of Merits, Changle yuan 長樂園, for single burial plots, the design of which is based on Buddhist teachings of *Pāramitā* or *Liudu* 六度, literally the “six means of passing [to Nirvana]”, and last, the Garden

26. Maguo shouxian shubuzhang Xu Zigen boshi zhuchi shijie zuida “Zhuzi jiaxun” bei gemu 馬國首相署部長許子根博士主持世界最大朱子家訓碑揭幕 (Dr Koh Tsu Koon, Minister in the Prime Minister Department, unveiled the world’s largest stele engraved with Zhu’s family precepts), <http://www.xiao-en.org/cultural/magazine.asp?cat=35&loc=zh&id=1879>

of Benevolence, Cixin yuan 慈心苑, a burial ground for urns designed in accordance with *fengshui* 風水 principles. On the slope of an artificial mound are the collective tombs of the forebears of Choo Ching Hwa and of those of the Lins 林 whose roots are also in Guangdong province and with whom they are related by intermarriages. The third collective tomb, not yet occupied, was constructed by a certain Liu 劉 family from Johor. (Plates 4 a-b)

One peculiarity of Nilai Memorial Park is that it maintains a didactic and cultural site online entitled Xiao En Cultural (sic) or Xiaoen wenhua 孝恩文化<sup>27</sup> which presents diverse information about the understanding of filial piety, past and present, various religious festivals and customs, a digital journal entitled *Xiaoen zazhi* 孝恩雜誌, a collection, *Xiaoen wenku* 孝恩文庫, containing articles mainly written by Ong Seng Hwat, and current news about Chinese culture researches in Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries. The website is still under development. The Xiaoen yuan also runs a foundation, which supports various cultural and religious projects, the details of which may be accessed online.

### ***Nirvana Memorial Park, Semenyih / Fugui shanzhuang* 富貴山莊**

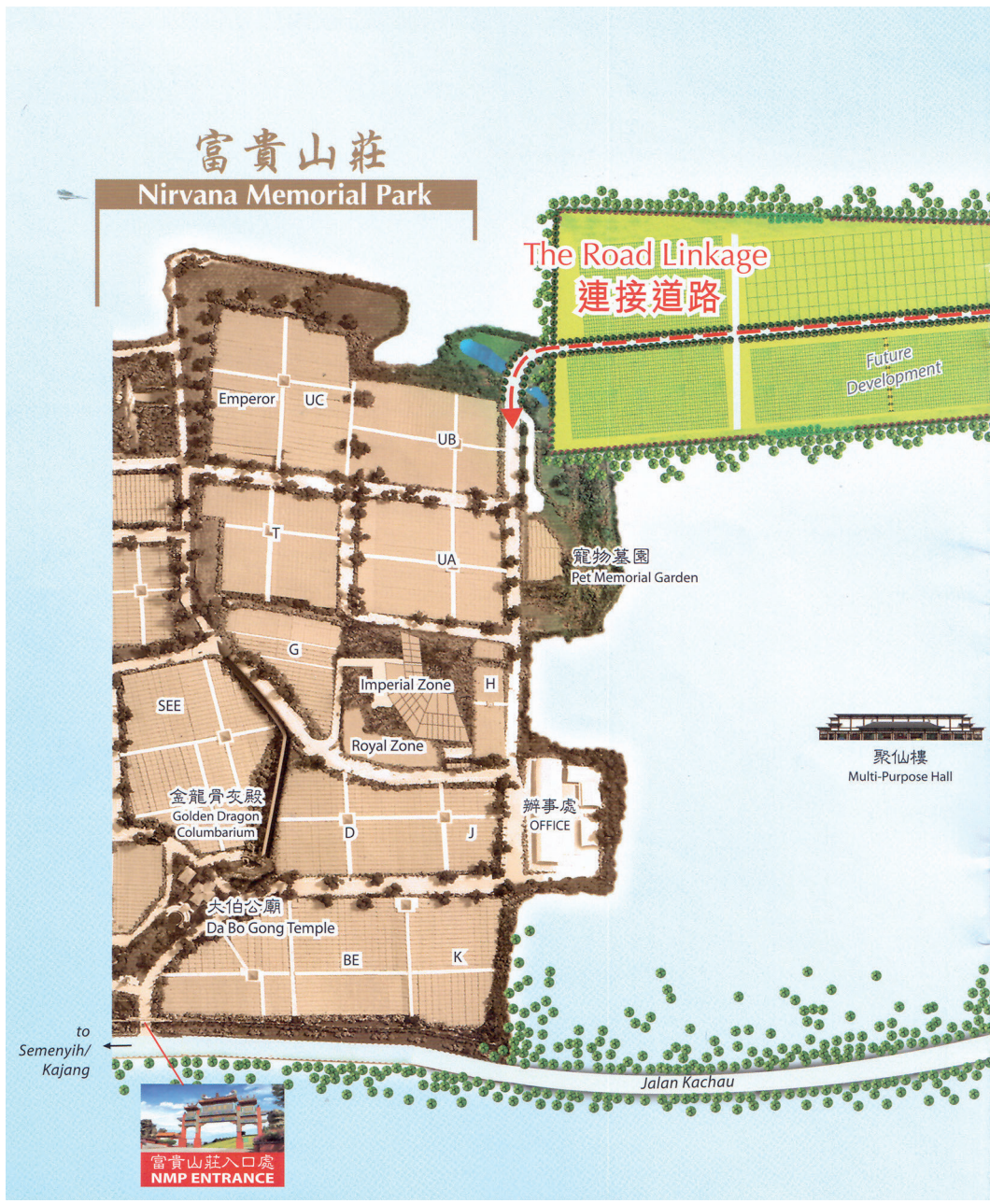
The Nirvana Memorial Park, Semenyih, is one of the world's largest memorial parks. It sits on approximately 323 hectares of land of a former plantation, and is accessible within 25 minutes by highways from Kuala Lumpur.

The park was designed with outstanding landscaping and lush greenery. Moreover, it has a wide range of hills with pleasant contours that are said to provide an excellent *fengshui*. (Plan 2) The landscaped park however does not convey a feeling of harmony because it lacks homogeneity, and exhibits certain extravagances, such as the Jinlong guhui dian 金龍骨灰殿, which is a columbarium shaped as a 1000-foot long undulating dragon's body (Plate 5), adorned with Chinese tiles, with an effigy of Guanyin perched on its head. However, most of the local Chinese appreciate it.

The cemetery has different zones for burial plots of varied prices, the most expensive are the Royal, Imperial, and Emperor Tombs. The park also includes the Peace Garden or Yishu lingyuan 藝術陵園 "Art Cemetery," with very modern-styled tombs (Plate 7), and next to it the memorial of the singer Bai Guang 白光 (1921-1999), including a piano, which plays her songs. (Plate 8) It is reminiscent of the private cemetery of Chin Pao San 金寶山 (located on a mountainside in Jinshan district, New Taipei) famous for the tomb of the Taiwanese singer Teresa Teng or Teng Li-yun 鄧麗君 (1953-1995) whose memorial garden features her life-size statue and a large electronic keyboard

27. See <http://www.xiao-en.org/cultural/magazine.asp?loc=zh-cn>









that can be played by visitors. Also included in the Nirvana Park are two temples dedicated to Dabo gong 大伯公, the Earth God.

About two kilometers away from Nirvana Park, the distinctive Nirvana Memorial Garden (which since 2015 is linked to the Park by an inner road crossing a newly acquired plot of land that is still under development) is located on 84 hectares of gently undulating land, creatively parceled into several zones for different purposes. One of these zones, called The Royal, includes the impressive funeral complex for the Kong family as well as the mausoleum of the late Master of *fengshui* Ye Qinghua 葉清華, which is adorned with a huge geomancy compass. This garden also includes a nicely designed Chinese garden. The name of this, Taoyuan guzhen 桃源古鎮 “The Ancient Town of the Peach Valley [i.e. Arcadia]”, alludes to the story of a man who went through a peach orchard and discovered a secluded valley where people were living in peace, ignorant of the changes of dynasty. The garden, set along a river, has various buildings in Chinese style, some of which sheltering burial urns. This memorial garden also includes a multipurpose structure, called Juxian lou 聚仙樓 shaped like a sanctuary with the effigies of the Buddhist Trinity and of the King of Hell. The Juxian lou is used for various Buddhist and Taoist ceremonies. The structure also functions as a columbarium, and as a place to display ancestral tablets made out of translucent plastic, electrically lit on various altars for worship purposes. A special altar is devoted to the tablets of aborted and stillborn infants. The structure also includes a memorial hall or *jinian guan* 紀念館, with photographs of various personalities. A special section for *shengji* 生基 or “foundations of destiny” also known as “prosperity and longevity tombs” or *shoumu* 壽墓. (Plates 9 a-b) The *shengji* installation is aimed at perfecting the course of a person’s destiny by harnessing the positive *qi* 氣 “life-giving principle” from the universe for better fortune, *zhong shengji*, *qiu haoyun* 種生基 求好運. The *shengji* installation has to be performed by a master of *fengshui*, on an auspicious date.<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, the garden displays a collection of stone inscriptions called Zhonghua renwen beilin 中華人文碑林 or “Chinese Writing Stele Forest” (Plates 10-11).<sup>29</sup> The inscriptions were selected with care after several study visits to China. They offer a diachronic view of Chinese calligraphic masterpieces, thanks to 138 stone slabs, enlarged replicas of works by famous calligraphers, starting with the *jiagu wen* 甲骨文 or oracle bone inscriptions of the late Shang Dynasty up to modern times. Two extra sections display the masterpieces of forty former Malaysian Chinese calligraphers and a sample of works from Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. Apart from a calligraphy by Tang

28. Locally called “Chinese Calligraphy Stone Gallery”; address: Lot 1170, Jalan Sg Lalang, Batu 30, 43500 Semenyih, Selangor, Lot 1170, Jalan Sungai Lalang.

29. This old Taoist practice seems to have been reactivated for commercial purposes.





Plan 3 – Plan for accessing Taman Makam Quiling / Heaven Memorial Park. (Source: Heaven memorial Park)

Empress Wu Zitian 武則天 (624-705), no other women's masterpieces are displayed even for the modern period, which is, at least, shocking. The project plan was initiated in 2009 by the founder of Nirvana, under the influence of the Xiao En Group. The latter at the same time, on a smaller scale, planned the engraving of Zhu Xi's "Family Precepts" on a huge stele, which was erected inside Xiaoen yuan the following year, as we have seen. The Stele Forest was inaugurated on November 3, 2012, by Health Minister Datuk Sri Liow Tiong Lai 拿督斯里廖中萊 in the presence of the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Malaysia. It had taken about three years to complete, and is the only one of its kind in Southeast Asia.

### ***Taman Makam Quiling / Heaven Memorial Park***

Taman Makam Quiling, located in Desa Buana Jaya, Jl. Jonggol Cianjur, in *kecamatan* Tanjung *kabupaten* Bogor, is at two or more hours drive from Jakarta (Plan 3). The cemetery is located in a scenic and peaceful landscape watered by the natural river Cibebet and surrounded by a wide range of mountains that are reminiscent of those in Guilin, Guangxi, China, which earned it the "best possible *fengshui*," *zhishang fengshui* 至上風水. An arch, *pailou* 牌樓, across the road, with the English name of the burial site has replaced the Chinese one: Guilin muyuan shanzhuang 桂林墓園山莊, since 2015 and indicates the main entrance. (Plate 12) The cemetery garden measures 123 hectares of which about one-fourth is occupied by burial sites that have been sold. Apart from the Reception Hall, the park has a restaurant and a hotel. Diverse other structures are available for certain collective celebrations: such as the *Qingming*, and Avalambana or *Yulanpen* 盂蘭盆, the festival led by Buddhist monks dedicated to the liberation of errant souls, that is held on the 15th day of the 7th lunar month.

The different sections of the park, separated from one another by paved paths, are each allocated to a certain type of tomb. (Plate 13) The biggest burial lots or *kavling*<sup>30</sup> may reach some 200 square meters. Some of the most sumptuous tombs are in a richly elaborated traditional Chinese style, out of fashion in China proper, that is still produced for export in the vicinity of Huian 惠安, Fujian province, which remains a significant center of tomb manufacture. A few burial lots have been purchased by Taiwanese. The cemetery includes tombs of Christians as well as those of deceased who retained their traditional beliefs, and offers the services of a master of *fengshui* who helps families to find a suitable location for their tombs.

### ***San Diego Hills and Funeral Homes***

San Diego Hills Memorial Park is located in the industrial corridor of

30. *Kavling*, from the Dutch *kaveling*, refers to a burial plot.



Cikarang, West Java, about 15 km by road from Jakarta, and has its own helipad. The cemetery is set on a plot of land of about 500 hectares in area. The story goes that initially Mochtar Riady wanted to dedicate a memorial to his parents to receive their ashes. Later, perhaps in view of the success achieved by Lestari Memorial Park founded three years earlier, this plot of land was developed into a gigantic *public cemetery*, and given the exotic name of San Diego Hills. The master plan of the present memorial park (online) in fact indicates a special section, called “Mochtar Riady Heritage,” on one of the highest hills, that is devoted to the Lippo Group family.

The Riadys first had in mind a universal cemetery that could accommodate the dead without distinction of religion. However, during the initial planning, they reached the conclusion that this ideal was not necessarily suitable for the Indonesian people who worship their dead according to their respective faiths. Finally, the memorial park was divided into three areas, respectively the Garden of Creation for Christians, the Garden of Prosperity and Joy for Hindu-Buddhists, and the Heavenly Garden for Muslims respectively, all of which became elegant cemeteries. Each area is divided into compartments in order to create a number of spaces with pleasant English appellations, having different types of burial sites, ranging from standard single tomb to sophisticated gazebos, and family estates. A special burial plot called Heroes Plaza or “Taman Pahlawan versi San Diego Hills” is devoted to personalities who have contributed to Indonesian culture, literature, arts, social sciences, sports, and other fields.<sup>31</sup>

The Riadys’ dream was to construct a cemetery on the model of the Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Los Angeles, California. Like the founder of the first Forest Lawn in Glendale, Hubert Eaton, they thought that a cemetery should be a pleasant place for the dead as well as for the living, “filled with towering trees, sweeping lawns, splashing fountains, beautiful statuary, and (...) memorial architecture.” For this purpose, they commissioned Edaw/Aecom, a firm specialized in landscape architecture, to design this new park, which spreads on the slopes of small hills surrounding the eight-hectare artificial Lake Angeles, while the main entrance is precisely southeast of the lake.<sup>32</sup>

In the different sections of the Christian burial sites are numerous copies of European statuary, while the partially enclosed Columbarium “Breath of Life” looks like a Greek monument. The Chapel Square, which is just beyond the main entrance, displays two multipurpose monuments, a small-scale replica of Istanbul’s Blue Mosque, and a facsimile of the church located on the grounds of Forest Lawn in Hollywood Hills (itself a reproduction of Old North Church in Boston). As for the Muslim cemetery garden, which includes several

31. See <http://sales-sandiegohills.com/artikel-sandiegohills/taman-makam-pahlawan/>

32. Kurniawan and Lianita, Marketing Graves.

*musyallas*,<sup>33</sup> it takes its inspiration from the Mughal Gardens of India. The most sumptuous tombs include elegant *cungkups*.<sup>34</sup> According to Kurniawan and Lianita, one of the main architects of San Diego Hills was Ahmad Fauzi who works with RSP Architects Snd Bhd, Kuala Lumpur.<sup>35</sup>

In a cluster of buildings called “Family Centre”, funeral, and leisure activities, weddings, and birthday parties may take place, side by side. The Centre, together with the Chapel, includes a restaurant, hotel, flower shop, meeting halls, sport facilities such as a swimming pool, and a jogging track....

San Diego Hills Memorial Park, which has a potential capacity of five million tombs, has had great success with the Indonesian elites. According to the estimations of its managing director in 2012, all the burial lots are expected to be sold before 2020.

### **Cemetery Gardens as Mirror of Cultural Identities**

The fact that all these new cemeteries are enclosed inside walls (with the exception of Heaven Memorial Park), and guarded day and night, makes them protected oases, allowing their promoters to cultivate all sorts of dreams, that differ between Malaysia and Indonesia. Malaysian Chinese tend to use these gardens as a base for reviving diverse elements of a rather remote Chinese culture for their own benefit, but also to visualize the grandeur of Chinese culture, in order to disseminate it beyond the Chinese world. In Indonesia, where the ancestral culture has largely become oral, the descendants of Chinese are less inclined to elaborate on the merits of Confucian values or on those of Chinese calligraphy. Nevertheless, they maintain in their deepest hearts a traditional funeral culture, which they try to put into practice by accommodating it to the surroundings that affect them. They may even go so far as to relocate Chinese culture into a universe dominated by Western values.

### ***Malaysia***

In the following, we will show that the first cemetery garden conveys a permanent didactic message to the community, whereas the second equally relying on stone inscriptions, offers a visualization of the greatness of Chinese culture.

### ***Xiao'en yuan as a New Place of Memory***

Since its inception Xiao'en yuan has been the cradle of an active educative movement based on Confucian principles, which may be partially explained by the fact that Datuk Choo was first a teacher deeply imbued with Chinese moral values. Additionally, some Chinese had and still have the impression

33. A *musyalla* is a prayer house, a place where people can say their prayers.

34. A *cungkup* is a structure in the shape of a house above a tomb.

35. Kurniawan and Lianita, *Marketing Graves*.

that their cultural roots are threatened. After the passing of Datuk Choo, the movement continued under the guidance of Xiao En Group that shares the same philosophy.

The worldwide celebrations of the 880th Anniversary of Zhu Xi's birthday were an opportunity to strengthen its mission, by putting the emphasis on the "Family Precepts" of Zhu Xi. Linking its efforts with Zhu surname associations or Zhushi gonghui 朱氏公會 in six different countries in Southeast Asia, Xiao En Group took the initiative of organizing commemorative celebrations. For the purpose, they decided to erect a huge stele (2.3 m high and 6 m long) engraved with the original text of Zhuxi's Precepts, accompanied by an English translation. (Plate 3) The stele would stand as "a concretization of consciousness," *yishi jingxiang* 意識景象, to raise awareness of the historical memory of traditional cultural values. In so doing, Xiao En Group also wanted to make Xiaoen yuan a "New Place of Memory" or *Xin de jiyi changsuo* 新的記憶場所.

According to Ong Seng Hwat, who wrote a very interesting article<sup>36</sup> on the meaning of the *Zhuji jiaxun* Stele as regards the institutional transmission of collective memory, the Chinese people at the sight of the stele will first be moved, then will respond from their depths of their hearts, and will finally reach historical memory. Still according to Ong, from the point of view of the historical experience of the Chinese in Southeast Asia, this stele will be a "firewall" *fang huo qiang* 防火牆 against "structural amnesia" or *jiegouxing shanwang* 結構性善忘.<sup>37</sup> The author continues by saying that the bilingual stele will also be a tool to open a dialogue with the Chinese who cannot read the characters any more, as well as with the outside world. In brief, this monument has transformed a simple burial ground into a place of historical memory. In order to better propagate the message, before the launching of the stele, Xiao En Group had 20,000 copies of Zhu Xi's Precepts circulated among the pupils of primary and secondary schools in Kuala Lumpur and in the state of Selangor in order to make sure that they would understand the importance of this historical message.<sup>38</sup> In order to create a link with the wider Chinese world, the famous Taiwanese calligrapher Tian Fengsheng 田豐盛 was commissioned to execute the calligraphy of the Precepts in regular Kai 開 Style, while the engraving of the latter was made in Huian 惠安, Fujian, under the supervision of Liang Shuangjin 梁雙金 from the University of Guangxi, History of Arts Department.<sup>39</sup>

36. Ong Seng Hwat, "Zugou jiyi chuancheng : Malaixiya luocheng 'Zhu Xi jiaxun' bei de yiyi 組構記憶傳承：馬來西亞落成「朱熹家訓」碑的意義," Xiaoen wenhua: <http://www.xiao-en.org/cultural/magazine.asp?cat=34&loc=zh&id=1911>

37. Ong Seng Hwat, *Op. cit.*

38. Ong Seng Hwat, *Op. cit.*

39. Ong Seng Hwat, *Op. cit.*

The importance given to Xiaoen yuan in the making of an “historical memory” should be understood in relation to the fact that the Sino-Malaysians feel completely deprived of their role in the development of the city of Kuala Lumpur,<sup>40</sup> as well as in the making of Malaysia as the memorial in honor of all those who resisted the Japanese during the Occupation attests. The fact that Xiaoen yuan is also the meeting place of contemporary Malaysian Chinese poets further shows the importance of Xiaoen yuan as an epicentre of ancestral culture.

### *Nirvana Memorial Garden as a Platform for Visualization of Chinese Culture*

On a bigger scale, Nirvana followed in the footsteps of Xiao En Group, first by borrowing its concept of filial piety for its own motto<sup>41</sup> and second, in its idea of relying on its deathscape to visualize Chinese culture, in this case by displaying a permanent collection of enlarged replicas of masterpieces of Chinese calligraphy. Datuk Sri Kong Hon Kong intends this Chinese Writing Forest of Steles, “inspired by the beauty of ancient wisdom,” “to serve as a platform for the public, especially youths, to get a better understanding of Chinese culture.” Datuk Sri Kong Hon Kong further said: “These days, youths are more exposed to Western culture. They should also make time to understand their own culture.” According to chairman Datuk Fu Ah Kiow of *The Star*, the company also planned to hold calligraphy competitions, talks and other related activities so the public could appreciate the antique artwork.<sup>42</sup> The Stele Forest is open to the public, and entrance is free. Moreover, an official website ([www.beilin.com.my](http://www.beilin.com.my)) and Gallery Master Plan provides detailed information on the stone inscription calligraphers and reproductions of the calligraphies.

### *Indonesia*

The two memorial parks envisaged here present opposite visions: one locked in an imaginary Chinese world, and the other opened to a cosmopolitan universe.

### *Taman Makam Quiling: A Little China in an Indonesian Setting*

Seemingly the founder of the Taman Makam Quiling, Suwito Muliadi, had no difficulty in transposing his dream. The evocation of a Chinese name was enough to give shape to a whole funerary complex in Chinese style. The cemetery garden was designed without reference to any historical event, as if in a timeless space. Only the dates of the tomb inscriptions given according to

40. See Yat Ming Loo, *Architecture and Urban Form in Kuala Lumpur*, chap. 6.

41. The motto reads: “以孝為本，給生命永恆關懷 or Filial Piety as the core value, to serve life with eternal care.”

42. Cf. “Gallery of Chinese Calligraphy Stones Launched in Seminyih”: <http://zyx1007sandra.wordpress.com/2012/11/19/gallery-of-chinese-calligraphy-stones-launched-in-semenyih/>

the Gregorian calendar, and perhaps the epitaphs (some of which are written in Indonesian instead of Chinese) may remind the visitor that he or she is no longer in the China of old. The replacement of the cemetery garden Chinese name by that of Heaven Memorial Garden only has to do with the fact that its owner wants to imitate his competitors.

Worthy of note is the fact that the Heaven Memorial Garden, or Tiantang huayuan 天堂花園, which Suwito Muliadi opened in August 2015 in the area of Tangerang is more clearly divided into sections according to religious faith, including a “Land of the Buddha” and an Immanuel Garden, as well as a playground for children. Muliadi is also said to have in mind the inclusion of a Memorial Hall or *jinian guan* 紀念館 to commemorate those of its “residents” who, during their lifetime, played a significant role.<sup>43</sup>

### *San Diego Hills: Chinese among Other Indonesians*

Things were perhaps much more complicated for the founder of San Diego Hills who still nourishes deep feelings of filial piety,<sup>44</sup> but who, having lived several years in the USA, has acquired a new *Weltanschauung* or conception of the world, and of “the American way of death”<sup>45</sup> which he introduced into his landscaped-memorial park project and adapted to local conditions. Mochtar Riady’s bet was this: There existed in Indonesia a multi-cultural elite mentally prepared to accept this new type of cemetery garden that, like its Lawn Forest model, is both a burial place and recreational park, and that they could afford the expected expenses. Such people would come to celebrate happy events, or just to enjoy some fun, alongside those who bury or worship their dead. The bet proved right, and San Diego Hills has become a symbol of harmony and unity within a certain segment of Indonesian society.

A far from complete list of names of the most prominent residents of the memorial park (accessible on San Diego Hills website), shows that they emanate from political, business, and artistic circles: such as Sophia Mungi Irawan (1956–2011), wife of Chandra R. Gunawan and the daughter-in-law of the owner of Panin Bank, Widjajono Partowidagdo (1951–2012), Deputy Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources of Indonesia (2011–2012), and Endang Rahayu Sedyaningsih (1st February 1955 – 2 May 2012) an Indonesian physician, researcher, and author. She served as Minister of

43. *Yindunixiya shangbao* 印度尼西亞商報, August, 20th, 2015: “Woguo shouchuang yuanlin fengjingyuan Tiantang huayuan longzhong kaizhang 我國首創園林風景墓園天堂花園隆重開張.”

44. Mochtar Riady stated recently that he used to visit his parents’ tombs in Malang once a year; cf. Visi Pendiri: sales-sandiegohills.blogspot.com

45. See Jessica Mitford, *The American way of death* (first ed. 1963) and its updated revision: *The American way of death revisited*, 1998, an exposé of the abuses in funeral home industry.



Health from October 22, 2009 until April 30, 2012.<sup>46</sup> Others include William Soeryadjaya (December 22, 1922 – April 2, 2010) (Tjia Kian Liong 謝建隆), also known as Oom (Uncle) Willem, born in Majalengka (West Java), who was an Indonesian Chinese businessman and co-founder with his brothers of Astra International, Indonesia's largest conglomerate...<sup>47</sup>

### Memorial Parks and Legal Frameworks

The demand for plots for modern memorial parks has grown alongside that for other “pre need” products and services, and this trend is foreseen to continue. Memorial parks as well as cemeteries must conform to the land-use plan or zoning ordinance of the locality having jurisdiction over the project site, and must be located on the periphery of the town or in areas sparsely inhabited.

In Manila the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (from the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council) promulgated *Rules and Regulations for Memorial Parks/Cemeteries*,<sup>48</sup> which clearly state the requirements that should be thought of by owner/developer before applying for preliminary approval and operational clearance from the Department of Health prior to actual operation of the cemetery/memorial park.

In Malaysia and in Indonesia legislation regarding the development of memorial parks, cemeteries, columbaria and crematoriums remains to be clearly elaborated. For the time being, memorial park developers need the help of qualified legal counsels to find their way through the maze of legislation. This explains why Nirvana published online a document in draft form that is supposed to provide a “Regulatory Overview” of laws and regulations relating to the acquisition and use of land for Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia.<sup>49</sup> We have borrowed extensively from this draft in order to provide here a summary of the Malaysian and Indonesian legislation relating to cemeteries and memorial parks.

### Malaysia

The laws and regulations relating to the acquisition and use of land differ between the states in West Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak. Here we will only present the *National Land Code* (“NLC”) and the *National Land (Penang and Malacca Titles) Act* 1963, which apply to the cemeteries of Nilai Park and Seminyih. Under the NLC, a person obtains an indefeasible title to or interest

46. Endang Rahayu Sedyaningsih was buried in the Heroes Plaza.

47. Several videos featuring the celebrities buried within its borders are online.

48. These *Rules and Regulations for Memorial Parks/Cemeteries* can be accessed online in PDF.

49. This Regulatory Overview can be accessed online: [www.hkexnews.hk/.../ENALTD-20140924-15.PDF](http://www.hkexnews.hk/.../ENALTD-20140924-15.PDF)

in land after such person's proprietorship of or interest in land is registered on the document of title to the land. The NLC provides for several exceptions to indefeasibility, which include fraud or misrepresentation, or where registration of the title or interest was obtained by forgery or by means of an insufficient or void instrument, or when the title or interest is unlawfully acquired.

Under the NLC, land is alienated by a state authority either as freehold (in perpetuity) or as leasehold (for a term of a maximum of 99 years). For a leasehold, an application must be made to the state authority for the extension of the term upon expiry, and if approved, the extension is subject to the payment of a premium. If no application of extension is made the land reverts back to the state authority. A state authority also has the power to reserve land (whether alienated or un-alienated) for any public purpose through notification in the Gazette.

The category of land use, if any, is endorsed on the documents of title issued by the state authority for the land. Uncategorized land or land categorized for use as "buildings" may be used as cemeteries, funeral homes and columbaria under the NLC.

Moreover, the NLC provides that a registered proprietor of land may apply to the state authority for the alteration of any category of land use to which the land is for the time being subject, or for the rescission, or amendment of any express condition endorsed on or referred to in the document of title to the land, provided that the conditions further set out under the NLC are met. This last clause allows cemetery developers to alter the category of land purchased in order to develop cemeteries.

### ***Indonesia***

The following is a brief summary of Indonesian laws and regulations that are relevant to cemetery business operations. Land use and ownership is principally regulated under the *Indonesian Basic Agrarian Law* and its implementing regulations, which include *Government Regulation No 24 of 1997* ("GR 24/1997") and *Government Regulation No 40/1996* ("GR 40/1996") on the right to cultivate, the right to build, and the right to use/or collect products from the land (*Hak Pakai Title*) (i.e. "the right to use"). These regulations provide for various forms of land title and establish a registration system to protect proprietorship of land. According to *Government Regulation No 9 of 1987 on Provision and Utilization of Land for Cemeteries* ("GR 9/1987"), utilization of land for "cemetery business" in the form of a public cemetery, non-public cemetery, or specialized cemetery will be pursuant to *Hak Pakai Title*. Public cemeteries are cemeteries "that are intended for any communities regardless of their religion or nationality", whereas non-public cemeteries "are managed by social and religious private institutions that are in the form of legal entity and foundation." This clear-cut distinction makes

evident the fact that as regards cemeteries operated by Sino-Indonesians, San Diego Hills is legally a “public cemetery.”<sup>50</sup>

*Hak Pakai Title* can be granted 1) over state land, 2) *Hak Milik* land,<sup>51</sup> and 3) “right to manage land” (*Hak Pengelolaan Title*). *Hak Pakai Title* may be held by foreign citizens residing in Indonesia, or foreign corporate bodies with Indonesian representatives. *Hak Pakai Title* ceases to exist if, among other things, 1) its period of validity as stated in the relevant decree or agreement granting the *Hak Pakai Title* expires, 2) for *Hak Pakai Title* that is situated on land under another title, it is cancelled by the competent authority holding the *Hak Pengelolaan Title* (i.e. “right to manage land”) or the holder of the *Hak Milik Title*, or 3) it is revoked by the government and designated for use for public purposes.

The *Hak Pakai Title* over land for cemetery business is limited in the following manner: Under GR 40/1996, the *Hak Pakai Title* over land, or over state land, with *Hak Pengelolaan Title*, is granted for a maximum of 25 years, and may be extended for an additional term for a maximum of 20 years. Following expiration of this additional term, a renewal application may be made. Compared to West Malaysia where the leasehold lands are let for a term for a maximum of 99 years, in Indonesia *Hak Pakai Title* does not exceed 45 years.

Several pragmatic questions must be asked regarding the viability of these for-profit cemeteries and the rights of the burial lots in the long run. First, what happens if a cemetery owner for one reason or another loses ownership of the land? We have seen above that in Indonesia the legal framework is rather prohibitive, the *Hak Pakai Title* not exceeding 45 years. Second, what happens when the cemetery purchaser has obtained his title by forgery or by an insufficient or void instrument, or when the title or interest is otherwise unlawfully acquired? Third, the zoning requirements in each country may change, creating a lot of unexpected problems for the survival of the cemeteries themselves and the rights of the owners of burial lots and niches. Fourth, if a cemetery ultimately goes bankrupt or is otherwise closed down, the rest of the operations at the cemetery will be interrupted: maintenance of the grounds, the burial of individuals who prepaid for their burial plots, and other day-to-day-goings-on. These will be at a standstill, while the courts and banks work out what happens next to the business and land. In such cases is there protection for buyers of burial lots and niches in columbaria? Such questions have already surfaced. By scrutinizing the press and analysing court rulings, for example, it will be possible to trace how they develop.

50. It seems that this legal definition also applies to Mount Carmel Memorial Park Cluster Madinah, a 100 hectare property that was developed in Ungaran (Central Java) and opened to the public in 2007 by the firm PT Pagoda Karya Abadi (founded in 2005 in Semarang).

51. *Hak Milik Title*, which is similar to freehold title, is available only to Indonesian individuals and certain religious and social organizations and government bodies in Indonesia. A right of ownership is not available to companies (whether Indonesian or foreign owned) or foreign individuals.

## Management and Marketing Strategies

Apart from their site offices, the memorial parks analysed here have headquarters, in the centre of the cities, which are often coupled with funeral homes and sometimes a columbarium.

For example, in Malaysia, Nilai Memorial Park Center is situated at No.1, Jalan Kuari, Taman Bukit Mewah, Cheras area, Kuala Lumpur, while Nirvana Center is strategically located in the “Golden Triangle” of the capital. Nirvana Center or Wisma Nirvana is a large multi-storied-building which includes a showroom for coffins (mostly imported from Western countries) and other death care products (including imitations of Qing dynasty mortuary costumes and jewelry), a flower shop, a VIP Memorial Hall, various types of funeral parlours (which close every day at 10 pm), a Buddhist columbarium, and a coffee shop. Nilai Memorial Park Head Office has a similar structure, but on a smaller scale.

In Indonesia Heaven and Lestari Memorial Parks have their headquarters in Jalan Mangga Dua, Chinatown, Jakarta, while those of San Diego Hills are at Sudirman Tower Condominium, Jalan Garnison Dalam in the modern area of Karet Semanggi.

These bereavement care suppliers try their best to provide their agents with continuous professional training and even organise special seminars, to which they invite foreign scholars and experts in the study of “life and death.”<sup>52</sup> Since 2015 Nirvana Asia also publishes a bilingual journal (Chinese and English) called *Fugui xin shijie* 富貴新視界 / *Nirvana New Vision* for internal circulation only. The top management and all the personnel are committed to comply with the requirements of ISO, the International Organisation of Standardisation. For instance, Nilai Memorial Park was certified in accordance with ISO 9001: 2000 Quality Management Systems in 2005.

Their marketing strategies are similar, although more or less developed. Burial plots may be sold at the headquarters sales offices, at those on the burial sites, which both provide “one stop service,” or through funeral homes as intermediaries. Contacts with sales management can also be established, through their websites which claim that sales office hot lines operate twenty-four hours a day. Sales are divided into those “at need” and those “pre need.” The first concern the families of the deceased; while the second address the interested parties themselves who want to make purchases in advance to make sure that they will have “a home for their afterlife,” or because they do not want to be a “financial burden” for their children. The “pre need” sales can be made with credit. If the credit runs for one year it is without interest, if it is for two years, the credit is of 15% or so. In Indonesia, Graha Sentosa

52. In 2015 Nirvana signed an agreement with the Department of Life and Death Studies Shengsi xuexi 生死學系 of Nanhua daxue 南華大學, Jiayi 嘉義, Taiwan.

Memorial Park, which works with Bank Artha Graha, even offers credit for three years.<sup>53</sup> In Malaysia and Indonesia these “pre need sales” attract many customers.

For both “at need” and “pre need” sales managers offer a wide range of burial plots from simple lots of 1m x 2, 6m which, at San Diego Hills for instance, cost about 800 US dollars, to couple and family lots of different sizes, which vary in price according to their location (the highest being the most expensive). The latter are divided into “Family Lots,” “Super Family Lots,” “Royal Family Lots,” and even “Imperial or Luxury Lots” in Nirvana Seminyih, the prices of which vary accordingly. The purchase of a burial plot includes permanent maintenance. In Malaysia Nirvana Asia also offers economy columbarium places to reduce the financial burden of families with limited budgets.

In order to better attract customers, sales managers rely on online videos. One of their aims is to show these new burial sites as public gardens offering an “agreeable atmosphere,” *suasana nyaman*, in order to change the general perception that the Chinese have of cemeteries as being unpleasant places full of “negative energy” or *shaqi* 煞氣 which eliminates good fortune. Their serene scenic landscaping, and captivating background music “give the visitors the impression that they blend with in nature” (*ren yu di ronghe zai yiti* 人與地融合在一體). For those who are already “members” of these burial grounds and have a special entry code online, advertisements are posted for various collective activities organised on the spot, which range from religious celebrations (in Malaysia for Buddhists especially)<sup>54</sup> to breakfast and durian parties.<sup>55</sup> The magic of terminology is everywhere (no matter whether in English, Chinese or Indonesian): funeral parlours are now “funeral homes,” the deceased “the loved ones” or “the dearly departed,” graves are “eternal homes,” coffins “caskets” ...

Top sales managers always find new devices to attract customer’s attention, and to keep closer to them. Last year, for instance, Nirvana opened a new section called “Imperial Zone” for advance booking. In order to “attract” “pre need” customers, a “soft launching” was organised on 8 November 2015 while a “cash rebate of RM 5000” was made for those who purchase “a double plot.” We have no information about the results of this new promotion.

53. See online “Bisnis Taman Pemakaman Sangat Menggoda” posted by an anonymous author: <http://bisnismlnterbaruonline.com/2013/03/bisnis-taman-pemakaman-sangat-menggoda/>

54. Nirvana monthly “Filial Duty and Gratitude Dharma Assemblies” or *Fugui shanzhuang xiaoqin baoren fahui* 富貴山莊孝親報恩法會, are said to attract a crowd of over 200 devotees each session.

55. Cali Zimmerman, “Cemeteries: A Grave Business. Is there Money in a Memorial?” (Published on Friday Oct. 31, 2008, *NuWire Investor*) mentioned an “urban environment cemetery” in the USA that provided community activities such as an Easter egg hunt for and a reindeer petting zoo during the winter holiday; see <http://www.nuwireinvestor.com/articles/cemeteries-a-grave-business-52206.aspx>



## Conclusion

This overview shows that since the 1960s non-profit cemeteries run by Chinese secular associations, religious institutions, and municipalities have gradually retreated in favor of memorial parks managed for-profit by real estate businesses and other entrepreneurs.<sup>56</sup> Certainly the first outcry from Chinese communities in Indonesia and Malaysia was: “Save our cemeteries.” In Indonesia the protesters were not heard,<sup>57</sup> but their counterparts in Malaysia have sometimes succeeded in converting their old cemeteries into “heritage parks” – especially in cities like Melaka and Kuala Lumpur – in order to prevent them from destruction by greedy real estate developers. However, since these cemeteries were almost full, these protests did not prevent promoters, namely Xiaoen jituan and Nirvana, from embarking on the establishment of new cemeteries on the outskirts of the capital and Melaka. For this purpose, they had to travel abroad to study how such memorial parks were conceived and managed and how they might be suitable for their respective countries. Datuk Choo Ching Hwa was the only one whose primary aim was not to make a profitable business, but to create a cemetery that would embody prescriptions of filial piety towards parents and more generally some elements of Chinese culture related to the requirements of their contemporary society, in turn deeply influenced by foreign cultures.

As a result, these new cemeteries, well maintained and boasting a pleasant atmosphere that is more or less Chinese, progressively attract families, even among those whose deceased are buried in the old cemeteries, and who not long ago were struggling against their destruction. After hesitating more or less, some of them finally decide to discreetly transfer the remains of their ancestors to these memorial parks.<sup>58</sup> Thus they contribute to the destruction of the traces of their own history, which previously they wanted to preserve. Such an attitude adequately demonstrates that this imported concept of a cemetery has deeply shaken the perceptions that local Chinese of Insular Southeast Asia had about death and burial, and that they are prepared to accept the mutation.<sup>59</sup>

56. However, the *yizhong* 義塚 (or *yishan* 義山 as they are called in Malaysia), understood as a burial place intended for all the Chinese of the community and run by local private associations, have more chance of survival in small cities and villages.

57. The destruction of Chinese cemeteries in Surabaya started in the 1950s and in Jakarta in the 1970s, see Sarkawi B. Husain, “Chinese Cemeteries as a Symbol of Sacred Space, Control, Conflict, and Negotiating in Surabaya, Indonesia,” in Freek Colombijn and Joost Coté (eds.), *Cars, Conduits, Kampongs: The Modernization of the Indonesian City, 1920-1960*, Leiden: Brill, 2014, pp. 323-340; and in this issue: “Ancient Chinese Cemeteries as Vanishing Landmarks of the Past (17th-20th centuries).”

58. The formalities are completed by the memorial park. For a list of prices, see “Update 06 Mei 2013. Biaya pemindahan kerangka dari TPU ke San Diego Hills (all in),” accessed on 15/01/2016: <http://sales-sandiegohills.com/biaya-pemindahan-kerangka-dari-tpu-ke-san-diego-hills/>

59. Muslim Indonesians have followed this trend. In 2012 PT Nusantara Prima Sukses Sejati (NPSS), which is under the umbrella of Yayasan Pesantren Islam Al-Azhar, launched Al-Azhar

These changes that can involve moral distress and even financial sacrifices, also allow local Chinese to worship their ancestors appropriately. Since there are no legal size limitations for the tombs, some families wanting to demonstrate their achievements, do not hesitate to construct large and even ostentatious mausoleums by which they express their gratitude to their forebears, as did Datuk Sri Kong Hon Kong.

For those who feel that they are denied equality of rights in their own countries, the new cemeteries have also become the places where they project their dreams and aspirations, some in rather opulent settings recalling bygone China, or in a cosmopolitan framework. Some others, like the owners of the Xiaoen yuan, deliberately set out to make their park a place of history. There the visitors are reminded both of their Chinese cultural roots, and of their contribution to the making of Malaysia. The Riadys, by creating a special section devoted to “Indonesian heroes,” seek to demonstrate that they have their own vision of *pahlawan nasional*. In other words, these new cemeteries are not only a place of memory where the living commemorate their ancestors but also a place where the former may express political views.

Since the founding of this first wave of new cemeteries, a significant number of memorial parks have appeared not only in the Malay Peninsula and in Java, but also in Sabah, and Sarawak. They would deserve a further study in order to reveal how the concept of memorial park has evolved in Malaysia as compared to Indonesia.

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Memorial Garden at Krawang Timur KM 62. The concept of this new Muslim cemetery garden closely follows that of its Chinese counterparts. See its official site online and the video that features it.



**Plate 1** – Water village, Xiaoen yuan / Nilai Memorial Park. (Photo: C. Salmon)



**Plate 2** – Gravestone of a couple in modern style, Xiaoen yuan. (Photo: C. Salmon)







**Plates 4 a-b** – Tomb not yet occupied of Tan Sri Datuk Liu Tiancheng and his wife, Xiaoen yuan.  
(Photo: C. Salmon)







**Plate 5** – Columbarium shaped as a huge dragon, Nirvana Memorial Park. (Photo: C. Salmon)



**Plate 6** – Plot of land under development, Nirvana Memorial Park. (Photo: C. Salmon)



**Plate 7** – Tombstone of the actress Li Ming and of her late husband (1927-2005), Art Cemetery, Nirvana Memorial Garden. (Photo: C. Salmon)



**Plate 8** – Tombstone of the famous artist Bai Guang (1921-1999), Nirvana Memorial Garden. (Photo: C. Salmon)





**Plates 9 a-b** – Special section for *shengji* or “foundations of destiny”, Nirvana Memorial Garden. (Photo: C. Salmon)



**Plate 10** – Entrance to the Chinese Writing Stele Forest, Nirvana Memorial Garden. (Photo: C. Salmon)



**Plate 11** – An alley of the Writing Stele Forest. (Photo: C. Salmon)





Plate 12 – Main entrance to Taman Makam Quiling / Heaven Memorial Park. (Photo: C. Salmon)



Plate 13 – A Fujian-style tomb in Heaven Memorial Park. (Photo: C. Salmon)