

## 死與人間研討會

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香港中文大學 大學通識教育部主辦

### **Development of Cemeteries in Hong Kong: 1841-1950**

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This paper attempts to trace the development of cemeteries in Hong Kong between 1841 to 1950.

The first cemeteries in Hong Kong were established even before the Opium War was formally brought to an end. The first years in Hong Kong had a distressing aspect for the British troops because of disease. Consequently, some sort of burial ground was urgently needed which resulted in the creation of cemeteries in Wan Chai and Happy Valley. The consolidation of Hong Kong as a trading centre in the 1850's had attracted traders of different religious background including the Parsees, Indians, Jew, and later Japanese, flocking into Hong Kong. This created special needs for their own cemeteries. By 1880's, in addition to Protestant and Catholic ones, other cemeteries for the Jews, Zoroastrians (Parsees), Muslims, Hindus and Chinese Christians had already been well established.

As cremation was not popular with the Chinese, at least before the Second World War, burial was the standard form of disposing of the dead. Coping with the growth of population since the 1840's and the regional diversities of the new residents, a large number of cemeteries designated for the Chinese had been erected since the 1870's. However, with the rapid urban expansion, dozens of these cemeteries had been cleared since the early 20th century, most disappeared without a trace.