

Hei Ching Chan, Matilda

**Project title:**

Rooting Home: Hong Kong migrants' Funeral Practices and Identities

**Abstract:**

Funeral practices among Hong Kong citizens varied depending on one's religious belief, cultural upbringing, social statuses, and macroscopically, the city's history. Early Hong Kong residents were comprised of immigrants from the Pearl River Delta, which Guangdong-style funeral rites were prevalent. However, under the British colonial rule, Hong Kong was also influenced by the foreign culture that introduced Christianity and Western funeral practices.

As "city of immigrants" or "city of flows", the ebb and flow of people of Hong Kong has been of academic interest. The attention to the funeral practices in Hong Kong has been paid to the styles of funeral rituals and burial preferences, but also simultaneously for Chinese migrants whom left "home" for better working opportunities, the desire to return to their roots upon their deaths. As such, there comes an existence of a symbiotic relationship between charity groups and body repatriations with studies on the function of the diaspora charity network.

Yet, the affluent corpus of studies focused on the analysis of "Chinese" funeral rites without considering the transcultural influences with the effects of migrations and colonisation, rendering not only the blurring on the cultural boundaries of funeral practices, but also the interpretation on the boundary of "home".

The Hong Kong diaspora is the ideal case study due to the scant research on the outbound migrants and their preferences of funeral rituals, along with the different waves of migration, there needs an understanding on the reasons of migration, engendering generations of migrants whom have diverse take on the sense of identity and belongings. As a result, this dissertation considers the correlation of death, home and migrations under socio-cultural and metaphysical perspective.