

Ong Sohn Kee

(- 8 Jan 1905)

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Chinese Funeral

Ong Shu Kee Buried Quietly Yesterday Afternoon

The remains of Ong Shu Kee were lowered into a grave in Congressional cemetery yesterday afternoon in the presence of three of his Chinese friends and a few curious people who followed the body from points between the undertaking establishment of J. William Lee and the cemetery. Ong was not possessed of much of this world's goods and was not extremely popular with his fellow-countrymen. He was just a plain laundryman who did not visit the gambling places of the Chinamen and make himself popular with the sporting element. Had he been a leading light in the Chinese Masons' lodge things would have been different, and he would have had a much more elaborate funeral. While life remained his friends looked after him in their own way, but when death claimed him his body was hurried off to the undertaker's and was afterward buried.

Under ordinary circumstances a Chinaman would have been seated on the hearse with the driver and would have dropped imitation money along the streets to tempt the evil spirits and attract them from the corpse, but the weather was too cold for the one who was designated to perform this service yesterday, and he rode in the one carriage that followed the hearse. Evil spirits in the forms of small boys occasionally stepped behind the cortege and picked up the money to keep as souvenirs, but certainly no invisible spirits were responsible for the disappearance of the fake money. Upon reaching the cemetery the driver of the hearse was directed to the section in which the bodies of so many Chinamen have been interred, and the body was soon resting over the opening into which the remains of the laundryman were so soon to be lowered.

Several cups were placed about the grave, and these were filled with a liquid which soon evaporated. Each time the liquid disappeared the cups were refilled. This was done several times, and then the lighting of punk and the burning of paper made the affair take on a distinctive Chinese appearance. This done, the body was lowered into the grave and a small quantity of earth thrown upon the box covering. Then the Chinese friends of the deceased put in some roast chickens and cooked rice and the grave was filled. Some more punk was burned and fake paper money destroyed. The three friends had then finished the ceremony at the grave, and the body was left to rest there until such time as friends will come and have it disinterred to be taken to China.