

# Chinese Heritage in Beechworth



The 1850's gold rush saw many Chinese diggers converge on Beechworth seeking their fortune. Mining camps sprang up as gold was discovered in Spring Creek, Reedy Creek, Silver Creek, the Nine Mile Creek and the Woolshed Valley.

At the height of the Ovens Goldfields rush, the Chinese population in Beechworth had grown to 7,000 out of a total population of 30,000 to 40,000. Many of the Chinese were employed by sluicing companies, while others worked their own small claims.

The town had a permanent Chinese camp, temple, shops and burial ground with the distinctive burning towers which can still be seen today at the Beechworth Cemetery where some 2000 Chinese were buried.

The Burning Towers at the Beechworth Cemetery were built in 1857, and were used by relatives and friends for burning paper money in memory of the dead. The shrine in front of the Burning Towers was not built until 1883-84.

Colonial prejudice meant that the Chinese were not allowed to live in Beechworth and had large camps on the outskirts of town. There were many additional controls, enforced regulations and licence checks against the Chinese miners with anti-Chinese sentiment widespread during the 1850's Gold Rush.

Of particular historical significance is the Chinese Section of the [Beechworth Cemetery](#). Here, some 2000 Chinese gold seekers and settlers are buried. The Chinese Burning Towers (1857) were used for burning paper prayers and meals were provided on the altar (1883) for the spirits of the dead.

A memorial in recognition and remembrance of the Chinese contribution to society in Australia was erected in the Chinese Section in 2010.

A visit to the [Burke Museum](#) will reward those interested in the Chinese Heritage and History of the Gold Rush and a wander through the [Chinese Gardens](#), built to commemorate the contribution of the Chinese to the township of Beechworth, are a great place to reflect and relax.