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Junyi Han

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Creating the Past:
Guoshang Cemetery and Chinese Collective Memory, 1945 and Beyond

By

Junyi Han

Dr. Tonio Andrade
Advisor

Department of History

Dr. Tonio Andrade
Advisor

Dr. Jia-Chen Fu
Committee Member

Dr. Bin Xu
Committee Member

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Abstract

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This thesis examines how China remembers World War II and what role this collective memory plays in post-war Chinese society. I address my research inquiry through a micro-historical study of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery (腾冲国殇墓园), the earliest and largest burial ground in mainland China for Guomintang soldiers killed in World War II. Dividing the history of Guoshang Cemetery into three stages in a chronological order, I argue that the meaning of this cemetery has changed overtime as a result of both governmental mandate and grassroots efforts. Ultimately this cemetery has contributed to the emergence of a nationalistic historical narrative of World War II in Chinese society and the continuance of a collective Chinese identity that transcends geographical and political borders. Combining archival research with ethnographic work, I draw upon a variety of primary sources, including gazetteers, legal documents, newspapers, photos, unpublished memoirs, and firsthand interviews. I also engage with substantial academic literature in Chinese, English, and Japanese. This thesis illuminates the nexus between China's past and its present, and provides insights into the formation process of contemporary Chinese identity.

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Introduction: Contextualizing War and Memory

“Quietly, on the forgotten hills,
Still raining, still breezing;
No one knows that History once passed by,
Leaving the spirit of martyrs in the forests to thrive.”¹

—— Mu Dan

On August 15, 1945, Emperor Hirohito formally announced the unconditional surrender of Imperial Japan, bringing World War II in Asia to a final end. For China, this Pyrrhic victory came with a devastating toll. From 1937 to 1945, more than 3 million Chinese soldiers from the Guomintang Army died during the war.² How does China remember this tremendous loss and what role does this collective memory play in the post-war Chinese society? My honors thesis addresses these questions by constructing a biography of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery (腾冲国殇墓园), the earliest and largest burial ground in mainland China commemorating the Guomintang soldiers devoured by World War II.³

Tengchong, a small county located on the borderland between China and Myanmar, witnessed bloody battles from 1942 to 1944.⁴ In 1945 the local Guomintang officials and generals proposed to establish Guoshang Cemetery to commemorate soldiers from the Chinese Expeditionary Forces who died retaking Tengchong.⁵ The Chinese Expeditionary

¹ Dan Mu, “Senlin zhi mei: Ji hukang heshang de baigu” 森林之魅：祭胡康河上的白骨 [The demons of jungle: Dedicated to the dead in Hukawng Valley], *Mu Dan shi quanji* 穆旦诗全集 [A poetry collection of Mu Dan] (Beijing: Zhongguo wenxue chubanshe, 1996), 214.

² Ping-ti Ho, *Studies on the Population of China, 1368-1953* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 252.

³ Guoan Jiang and Dingfang Yu, “Tengchong Guoshang Muyuan jianshe shimo” 腾冲国殇墓园建设始末 [The establishment of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery], *Bainianchao* 百年潮 [The hundred year tide] (2008, no.3): 76.

⁴ Xinhua News Agency, “First Non-governmental WWII Museum Established,” China website, accessed October 24, 2019, <http://arabic.china.org.cn/english/culture/134428.htm>.

⁵ Guoan Jiang and Dingfang Yu, 74.

Forces were originally dispatched to Myanmar and India by Chiang Kai-shek in support of Allied efforts against Japanese aggressions. From late 1943 to 1945, they launched decisive counter-attacks and cracked Japanese defense from China's southwestern frontiers.⁶

Commemorating China's sacrifice in a global war, Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery not only contains the graves of Chinese soldiers, but also those of Allied soldiers and even Japanese generals. This cemetery has witnessed China's victory in World War II, the subsequent Chinese Civil War between Guomindang and Communists, as well as the massive campaigns and reforms launched in Communist China after 1949. Covering a long time span from wartime to peace, this cemetery reflects the shifting narrative of World War II in mainland China.

This thesis is grounded in the study of collective memory, a relatively new subfield of historical research. The term "collective memory" refers to "a socially constructed discourse encompassing mnemonic practices carried out by social actors in symbolic forms."⁷ The idea that memory is able to transcend barriers of individuality and illuminate the process that gives shape to identities, politics, societies, and cultures was brought up by a French sociologist named Maurice Halbwachs in 1925.⁸ Since then the importance of collective memory has gradually attracted attention in academia, and Halbwachs' work has become the theoretical bedrock of this field. This thesis seeks to examine how this idea of collective memory applies to post-WWII China through the prism of a military mourning space.

⁶ For more information on the Chinese Expeditionary Forces, see Chengjun Zhang and Daoran Wei, *Zhongguo Yuanzhengjun* 中国远征军 [The Chinese Expeditionary Forces] (Beijing: Zhongguo jingji chubanshe, 1994); Kangming Xu, *Zhongmianyin zhanchang kangrizhanshengshi* 中緬印战场抗日战争史 [The History of the China-Burma-India Theater during the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance] (Beijing: Zhongguo renmin jiefangjun chubanshe, 2007).

⁷ James Reilly, "Remember History, Not Hatred: Collective Remembrance of China's War of Resistance to Japan," *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 45, no. 2, China in World War II, 1937 – 1945: Experience, Memory, and Legacy (March 2011): 465.

⁸ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 2.

After World War II, how to remember and reconcile the mass war atrocities has become a worldwide challenge. The further World War II recedes into time, the more memorial practices and spaces emerge around the world. This trend has pushed the study of collective memory to a new peak. One prominent scholar in this field is French historian Pierre Nora. He argues that *lieu de mémoire*, or sites of memory, can refer to “any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community.”⁹ Nora suggests that collective memory not only resides with intangible social networks, but also within physical spaces such as graveyards, monuments, and museums. James E. Young, a scholar of Holocaust studies, posits that the value of monuments is tied to both the memorials and their interactions with the viewers.¹⁰ He claims that monuments are “invested with national soul and memory” as “part of a nation’s rites or the objects of a people’s national pilgrimage.”¹¹ He adds nuances to the idea of collective memory by arguing that memorials or monuments harbor “an aggregate collection of its members’ many, often competing memories.”¹² Therefore, examining physical memorial spaces can be an essential way to understand how war is remembered both at the collective level and the individual level.

In China, the collective memory of World War II has been complicated by the domestic political turbulences that followed World War II. Rana Mitter, a historian of modern China, has identified three general phases shaping how WWII has been remembered in China.¹³ The first phase encompasses the last years of Guomindang governance, during which China’s victory in World War II won the government much respect from the public.

⁹ Pierre Nora, “Preface to English Language Edition: From Lieux de memoire to Realms of Memory,” *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past* (Columbia University Press, 1996), Preface.

¹⁰ Ibid, 30.

¹¹ James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 2.

¹² Ibid, xi.

¹³ Rana Mitter, “War and Memory since 1945,” *The Cambridge History of War*, ed. Roger Chickering et al., vol.4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 549.

However, this phase soon ended due to the outbreak of the Chinese Civil War and widespread corruption within the Guomintang government. In 1949, the Communist victory in the civil war pushed Chinese war memory into its second phase. The rivalry between Guomintang and Chinese Communist Party engendered “a narrative of the war in which Japanese were almost offstage actors.”¹⁴ In mainland China, the center of war interpretations shifted to Mao Zedong’s wartime revolutions after 1949. As a result, there were almost no positive discussions regarding Guomintang’s war efforts.¹⁵ In the 1980s, the narrative of war changed once again as the post-Cultural Revolution disillusion spread through Chinese society and challenged popular faith in Maoism and a desire for reunification with Taiwan emerged. According to Mitter, China now puts great emphasis on commemorating the massive atrocities of World War II that all Chinese people suffer from.¹⁶

Situating current scholarly literature within the chronology expounded by Mitter, I notice that this body of research has primarily focused on the top-down, macroscopic efforts of the central authority in shaping Chinese collective memory of World War II. Studies that examine the pre-1949 period are relatively limited. Those that examine the pre-1949 period, tend to focus on physical memorial spaces, such as Loyal Martyrs’ Shrines (忠烈祠) and municipal parks, that were utilized by the Guomintang government to reinforce its political

¹⁴ Ibid, 550.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid, 551.

legitimacy and to bolster public support against the Communist rivalry in mainland China.¹⁷ These analyses offer insights into how physical memorial spaces have shaped war memory in Republican China but they leave out the role that commoners played in this process. In one case study, cultural anthropologist Tamura Kazuhiko does briefly mention how ordinary Chinese people have situated themselves within such memorial spaces in the 20th century, but the main focus of his study is on the domestic political rivalry rather than WWII.¹⁸

Works focusing on the post-1949 period are much more plentiful. Scholars put great emphasis on Chinese government's top-down efforts in constructing a nationalistic, patriotic narrative of World War II. In a study of Chinese collective memory, Kirk A. Denton has interpreted World War II museums in post-socialist China as part of "state-sponsored nationalism."¹⁹ Political scientist Yinan He argues that elite mythmaking is a central factor in shaping China's understanding of its war history from the 1930s to the 1940s.²⁰ Historian Parks Coble also argues that the remembering of World War II in People's Republic of China remains strikingly impersonal as it primarily focuses on "the story of the nation instead of the

¹⁷ See Liangqin Jiang and Jiguang Zhu, "Kangzhan shengli qianhou guomin zhengfu zhonglieci gongneng zhi shanbian" 抗战胜利前后国民政府忠烈祠功能之嬗变 [The changing function of Guomindang Loyal Martyrs' Shrines before and after the victory of China's Resistance War Against Japan], *The Journal of Studies of China's Resistance War Against Japan* (2011-01): 89; Yusi Liu, "Cong Tengchong zhonglieci dao Guoshang Muyuan: zhanzheng jiyi de kongjian zhengduo yu quanli boyi" 从腾冲忠烈祠到国殇墓园：战争记忆的空间争夺与权力博弈 [From Tengchong Loyal Martyrs' Shrine to Guoshang Cemetery: The competition for the space of war memory and the power contest], *Exploration and Free Views* (2015-07): 115-119; Yuhui Wang, "Comforting the Living and the Dead: The Establishment of the Nanjing Nationalist Government's National System of Sacrifices," *China's Resistance War Against Japan Studies* (2018-02), accessed October 24, 2019, <https://www.taoshumi.com/subject/K4/2018/675034.html>; Jintang Cai "Baoyang ji zhonglie cisi rongdian zhidu de yanjiu" 褒扬及忠烈祠祀荣典制度之研究 [Research on the honor and commemoration system of Loyal Martyrs' Shrines], *Neizhengbu weituo yanjiu baogao* 内政部委托研究报告 [Research report from the ministry of the Interior] (March 2008): 1-194.

¹⁸ Tamura Kazuhiko, "Kin Gendai Chugoku ni Okeru 'Rekishi Kioku' no Keisei Katei ni Kansuru Bunka Jinruigakuteki Kenkyu" 近現代中国における「歴史記憶」の形成過程に関する文化人類学的研究 [Making 'historical memory' in modern China], *Ajia Rekishi Kenkyu Hokokusho* アジア歴史研究報告書 [Research reports on Asian history] (2014): 109-132.

¹⁹ Kirk A. Denton, "Heroic Resistance and Victims of Atrocity: Negotiating the Memory of Japanese Imperialism," *Exhibiting the Past: Historical Memory and the politics of Museums in Post-socialist China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2014), 137.

²⁰ See Yinan He, "Remembering and Forgetting the War: Elite Mythmaking, Mass Reaction, and Sino-Japanese Relations, 1950-2006," *History and Memory*, vol. 19, no. 2 (Winter 2007), 43-74.

individual.”²¹ Historian Arthur Waldron has noted that the Chinese government has deliberately shifted the narrative on World War II in order to create a patriotic basis for the continuation of Communist rule while what ordinary Chinese citizens made of this process was extremely difficult to access.²² While historian Yumi Ishii does use oral history accounts from common Chinese villagers to examine historical memory in mainland China in a bottom-up manner, she nonetheless suggests that these grassroots narratives result from the ideological infiltration of the Chinese Communist Party.²³ Indeed, as many scholars have pointed out, the Communist Party has been constantly reworking the collective memory of World War II in ways favorable to official policy lines.²⁴

After surveying academic literature in Chinese, English, and Japanese, I have identified two lacunas in current scholarship. First, while there are many academic works focusing on Chinese collective memory of World War II, studies that cover the entire post-WWII period (from 1945 to present) are relatively scarce. Many works are devoted to examining a relatively short time period. Therefore, a holistic, coherent narrative of the collective memory in post-WWII China is lacking. Second, current works tend to neglect the autonomous actions of grassroots stakeholders in China and mainly regard them as passive respondents to the political initiatives launched by the Chinese central authority. Taking a micro-historical approach, I seek to further qualify and nuance extant structures and

²¹ Parks M. Coble, “China’s ‘New Remembering’ of the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance, 1937-1945,” *The China Quarterly*, no. 190, 394-410

²² Arthur Waldron, “China’s New Remembering of World War II: The Case of Zhang Zizhong,” *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 30, no. 4: 976.

²³ Yumi Ishii, “Kioku to Rekishi no Kosaku” 記憶と歴史の交錯 [The crossing between memory and history], *Gendai Chugoku Kenkyu* 現代中国研究 [Modern Chinese studies], no. 37 (May 2016): 53.

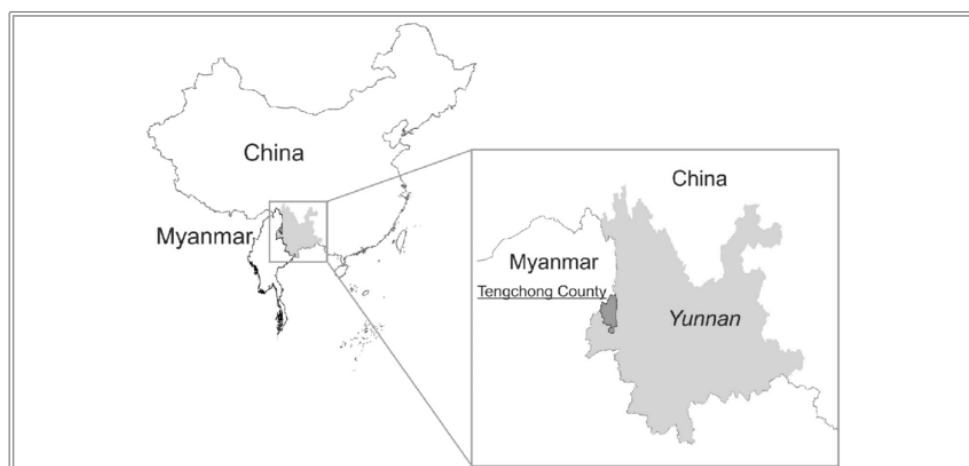
²⁴ For further readings, see Paul G. Pickowicz, “Victory as Defeat: Postwar Visualizations of China’s War of Resistance,” *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), ed. Wen-Hsin Yeh, 365-398; Paul A. Cohen, *China Unbound: Evolving Perspectives on the Chinese Past* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003); Rana Mitter, “War and Memory since 1945,” ed. Roger Chickering et al., *The Cambridge History of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 542-565; Peter Hays Gries, “A Century of Humiliation,” *China’s New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 43-53; Jonathan Unger, “Introduction,” *Using the Past to Serve the Present: Historiography and Politics in Contemporary China* (Routledge, 1993), 1-8.

frameworks through an intensive examination of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery. By doing so, I highlight the methodological difference between a case study and a micro-history project: Whereas the former mainly serves to demonstrate general laws or classifications, the latter scrutinizes pre-established norms or categories and tests their relevance.²⁵ For my project, the micro-historical approach allows me to closely examine the changing collective memory in Chinese society in greater detail. Adopting a micro-historical approach does not imply that the whole thesis is devoted to describing one single graveyard in isolation. Instead, I pay heed to the changing topography of its surroundings. In addition to analyzing the historical development of this cemetery, I also examine how the cemetery has been discussed in public discourse over time and how local people have interacted with this landmark. I incorporate a transnational perspective into my research by comparing Guoshang Cemetery with other overseas memorials commemorating the Chinese Expeditionary Forces. Combining archival research with ethnographic work, this thesis uses a variety of primary sources, including gazetteers, legal documents, newspapers, photos, unpublished memoirs, and firsthand interviews.

Dividing the history of Guoshang Cemetery into three stages in a chronological order, I examine the creation, destruction, and recreation of this landmark. I argue that the meaning of this cemetery has changed overtime as a result of both governmental mandate and grassroots efforts. Ultimately this cemetery has contributed to the emergence of a nationalistic historical narrative of World War II in Chinese society and the continuance of a collective Chinese identity that transcends geographical and political borders. Chapter one, “Horror and Honor,” traces the establishment of Guoshang Cemetery after the retaking of Tengchong in 1944. This chapter illustrates how the Guomindang’s local government in

²⁵ Vincent Azoulay, “Introduction,” *The Tyrant-Slayers of Ancient Athens: A Tale of Two Statues* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), trans. Janet Lloyd, 9.

Tengchong utilized this cemetery to facilitate state-building and to raise public morale. It also examines how the local people interacted with this memorial site and how that experience shaped their identity. Chapter two, “Dying A Second Time,” begins with the Communist victory in the Chinese Civil War in 1949 and surveys the changes that this cemetery underwent in the following two decades. As the rivalry between People’s Republic of China and Republic of China continued, Guoshang Cemetery as well as its nearby areas became a space for the government in Tengchong to demonstrate the political legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This chapter ends with the ruination of Guoshang Cemetery during the Cultural Revolution, the climax of an era when domestic political struggles overshadowed the collective memory of World War II. This chapter expounds CCP’s attempt to form a new historical narrative and examines how local people reacted to this dismantlement caused by regime change. Chapter three, “Recreating a Shared Story,” examines the restoration of this cemetery in post-Mao China. It delineates how government reforms and grassroots campaigns opened up space for a new remembrance of World War II that facilitated the formation of a unified Chinese identity that goes beyond the political and geographical boundaries. Finally, the epilogue touches upon how this cemetery is viewed today and how it will keep shaping China’ mental terrain in the future.



Picture 1. The Location of Tengchong in the China-Myanmar Border Area²⁶

²⁶ Shao-Sen Zhang et al., “Monitoring of Malaria Vectors at the China-Myanmar Border while Approaching Malaria Elimination,” *Parasites & Vectors* (2018), 11. 12. 10.1186/s13071-018-3073-4.

Chapter 1: Horror and Honor

Tengchong, a tranquil historic town perched near China's southwest frontier, used to be an important transportation hub on the Southwestern Silk Route.²⁷ Now Tengchong is known for its ever-blooming bougainvillea, therapeutic hot springs, and robust jade trade. However, back in 1944, Tengchong was a military stronghold washed by waves of death. "At dusk on September 13th, as the rain fell down, Captain Ota and about three thousand soldiers in our garrison withered with blossoms on the battlefield of Tengchong. In this defeated city, blood was in the breeze," a Japanese field medic named Takakimi Yoshino recalled on the last day before Japanese defense in Tengchong collapsed.²⁸ On September 14th, 1944, after four months of deadly battles, the 20th Group Army of the Chinese Expeditionary Forces took over Tengchong, recovering the land that had been seized by Imperial Japan since 1942.

This victory was offset by staggering losses. From May to September, about 8,671 Chinese soldiers from the 20th Group Army and 14 American soldiers died in the battle of Tengchong. More than 10,200 soldiers were injured, and 6,546 Tengchong civilians were killed during the military operations.²⁹ Lewis C. Burwell, major of the United States Army Air Forces recounted what he saw during his visit to Tengchong in the October of 1944:

The one animate thing visible was a homeless pup patiently sniffing for a scent. The stench of the unburied bodies was indescribable. Across a rubble of brick and stone that once proudly displayed the name 'Fox Theatre' over its arched door, a thatched roof rested at a crazy angle. Through a jagged hole, vines and creepers had pushed their way. I picked up a Japanese helmet – a head fell out. A few yards to the right lay the month-old corpse of a Japanese

²⁷ Wenchao Lyu, Zhubang Zhang, et al., "Preface," *Tengchong xianzhi 腾冲县志* [Tengchong Gazetteer] (zhonghuashuju, 1995), 1.

²⁸ Takakimi Yoshino, *Tōetsu gyokusaiki 腾越玉碎記* [The annihilation in Tengchong] (Japan: Takakimi Yoshino, 1979), chapter 2, translated by the thesis author.

²⁹ Zhichun Wang et al. ed., "Jingzhong baoyang" 旌忠褒扬 [Honor the loyal martyrs], *Yunnan minzhengzhi 云南民政志* [Yunnan civil annal] (Yunnan: Yunnan Civil Hall), 170.

Captain, unrecognizable except for his tunic. Three pink morning—glories had daintily and precisely arranged themselves across his stinking chest.³⁰

In this deeply wounded city, one pressing challenge emerging immediately after the recapture was to recover from the traumatic past. In Tengcong, local officials and gentries decided to create a memorial space for the war dead. While the local GMD authority intended to use this landmark to rally public support and reaffirm a legitimate statehood. For the local citizens, this cemetery provides a unique space for their daily activities, helping them reconcile with war atrocities and foster a shared Chinese identity.

In November 1944, Li Genyuan, a Tengchong native and the then commissioner of the Yunnan-Guizhou Regional Control Office of ROC (云贵监察使), proposed to build a public cemetery for the fallen soldiers from the 20th Group Army.³¹ In his telegram to the commander-in-chief of the Chinese Expeditionary Forces Wei Lihuang, Li stated that grand monuments and tombs should be established in order to commemorate heroic martyrs and comfort loyal souls.³² Working with Huo Kuizhang, the commander of the 20th Group Army, Li Genyuan organized a construction committee consisting of military officers and local gentries on November 16th, 1944. They held a meeting to discuss the construction plan for a

³⁰ Lewis C. Burwell, Jr., "Dead Japanese and Morning-Glories," 27th Troop Carrier Squadron Foundation.

³¹ The Yunnan-Guizhou Regional Control Office was a supervisory organ established in 1936. It was a regional branch of the Control Yuan in the Republic of China. For further information about this institution and its continuation in the post-war period, see Hongmin Chen et al., *Nanjing guomin zhengfu wuyuan zhidu yanjiu* 南京国民政府五院制度研究 [A study about the five-yuan system in the Republic of China] (Beijing: Beijing Book Co. Inc., 2016), chapter 6; Herbert H. P. Ma, "Chinese Control Yuan: An Independent Supervisory Organ of the State," *Washington University Law Review*, volume 1963, issue 4, December 1963, 401 – 426. https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3194&context=law_lawreview Washington University Law Review

³² Genyuan Li, "Li Genyuan zhi Wei Lihuang dian" 李根源致卫立煌电 [Telegram to Lihuang Wei], November 1st, 1944. *Bixueqianqiu: Tengchong Guoshang Muyuan ziliao huibian* 碧血千秋：腾冲国殇墓园资料汇编 [A compilation of the sources of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery], ed. Youfan Ma and Wenwei Peng (Kunming: Yunnan jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001), 7.

public cemetery. The initial design contained four major parts: a memorial tower, tombs of martyrs, a Loyal Martyrs' Shrine (忠烈祠), and a sports field.³³

This initial plan provides insight into the official military mourning rituals in Republican China. The first attempt by the National Government of the Republic of China to commemorate fallen soldiers can be traced back to 1928, when the GMD authority decided to establish the National Revolutionary Army Memorial Cemetery (国民革命军阵亡将士公墓), a public cemetery in Nanjing for soldiers of the National Revolutionary Army who were killed during the Northern Expedition (北伐战争) from 1926 to 1928. This cemetery also contained a memorial tower, a memorial hall, and a monument.³⁴ Despite the fact that the government had not issued official regulations on the design of military cemeteries, the structure and layout of National Revolutionary Army Memorial Cemetery became a precedent adopted for the design of future public military cemeteries, including the Guoshang Cemetery in Tengchong. In 1933, the government passed “Guidelines for Commemorating Martyrs in Memorial Halls (烈士附祠办法),” which identified the subjects for memorial services as being “all soldiers died for the National Revolution (凡为国民革命而牺牲的烈士).”³⁵ Instead of directly addressing soldiers who died during international conflicts, this category covered a wide range of fallen soldiers, including those who died from domestic conflicts, such as fighting with warlords, Communists, and Manchu feudal powers.

³³ Baoquan Wu, “Bendi xinwen” 本地新闻 [Local news], *Tengyue ribao* 腾越日报 [Tengyue daily], November 17th, 1944, section 4. Database of Modern Newspaper in China, 1840-1949
<http://bz.nlcpress.com/library/publish/default/IndexPaper.jsp>

³⁴ Jintang Cai “Baoyang ji zhonglie cisi rongdian zhidu de yanjiu” 褒扬及忠烈祠祀荣典制度之研究 [Research on the honor and commemoration system of Loyal Martyrs' Shrines], 22.

³⁵ The National Government of the Republic of China (1933), “lieshi fuci banfa” 烈士附祠办法 [Guidelines for commemorating martyrs in memorial halls], *Lieshi cisi ji sheli zhonglieci jinian fangbei banfa* 烈士祠祀及设立忠烈祠纪念坊碑办法 [Guidelines for establishing loyal martyrs' shrines and commemorating martyrs], Collections of the Academia Historica, No. 001000001285A.

After 1937, as the conflicts between China and Japan escalated, the commemoration of soldiers killed during the Sino-Japanese war became an increasingly significant practice of the National Government of the Republic of China to boost national morale against foreign invaders. In 1940, Chiang Kai-shek gave a written order to urge the investigation and commemoration of war dead.³⁶ In September of that year, the Nationalist Government issued “An Outline for Establishing Shrines and Memorials for Loyal War Martyrs (抗敌殉难忠烈官民祠祀及建立纪念坊碑办法大纲)” and “Guidelines to Establish and Protect Loyal Martyrs’ Shines (忠烈祠设立及保管办法).” In the draft that Chiang Kai-shek proposed to the Nationalist government, he pointed out that as Japan launched invasions three years prior, numberless people had sacrificed their lives for the war. Therefore, it was necessary to create memorial halls and commemorate these brave, loyal martyrs.³⁷ The passage of these two decrees indicated an initial attempt from the central government to create official memorial spaces primarily for China’s sacrifices during the Second Sino-Japanese War.

In 1941, “Guidelines for the Establishment of the Guoshang Cemetery (国殇墓园设置办法) came out. This guideline specified “Guoshang Muyuan (National Martyrs Cemetery)” as the official title. It clarified that the soldiers, generals, officials, and civilians who sacrificed their lives for the Sino-Japanese war were qualified for interment in the Guoshang Cemetery after verification. Also, these cemeteries should hold annual memorial ceremonies for the war dead on Arbor Day (March 12).³⁸ These decrees provided detailed

³⁶ (令各省縣黨政機關從速調製在抗戰期內死難軍民姓名尤其對於被敵慘酷殘殺之忠烈事跡更應注重記敘并籌備建坊立祠使地方官歲祠之) Kai-Shek Chiang (1940), Ministry of the Interior, Collections of the Academia Historica, 129, 452.

³⁷ Chiang Kai-shek (1940), “Xingzheng yuanzhang Jiang Zhongzheng cheng guomin zhengfu wei niding kangdi xunnan zhonglie guanmin cisi ji jianli jinian fangpai banfa dagan caoan deng chengqing gongbu” 行政院长蒋中正呈国民政府为拟定抗敌尊难忠烈官民祠祀及建立纪念坊牌办法大纲草案等呈请公布 [Guidelines for establish loyal martyrs shrines and memorial arch - Chiang Kai-shek’s proposal to the Nationalist Government], Collections of the Academia Historica, No. 001-012100-00006-005.

³⁸ (凡參加中日戰爭陣亡將士，均得葬於國殤墓園。其因傷病死亡者亦同。守土抗戰之文職官吏及人民死後經查明核准並得附葬於國殤墓園) Ministry of the Interior (1941), “Guoshang muyuan shezhi banfa” 國殤墓園設置辦法

regulations and routines on creating public space to commemorate fallen GMD soldiers and generals. In comparison with the decrees coming out in the early 1930s, these new procedures were more explicitly, and directly associated with war dead caused by the Sino-Japanese conflict. Nonetheless, the theme emphasized by these regulations remained the same: the loyalty and courage of soldiers. While these memorial services were aimed at commemorating revolutionary movements, they still appealed to traditional Chinese martial values such as loyalty and bravery. In the 1940s, commemorating the GMD soldiers and generals who died for the Second Sino-Japanese War was already an important political routine for the GMD authority to affirm its political legitimacy. Also, emphasizing the traditional Chinese moral values throughout this mourning process, the commemoration rituals significantly facilitated the state-building process.

Consisting of a memorial tower, a Martyrs Shrine, and martyr graves, Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery closely adhered to the structures and frameworks that the Nationalist Government had set up. The central themes emphasized by this cemetery were the loyalty and bravery of the soldiers. As this cemetery was established during wartime, this memorial space was designated with an important role to raise public morale by honoring war sacrifices. On January 3rd, 1945, the construction committee passed a proposal to finalize the sources of funding. Due to the financial insufficiency during wartime, the committee members decided that they would raise money primarily by encouraging public donations and by confiscating traitors' property.³⁹ On January 13, 1945, *Tengyue Daily*, a major newspaper in Yunnan, published an announcement calling for donations: "It was our warriors who were brave and not afraid of sacrifices that led the counterattack of Tengchong to

[Guidelines for the establishment of the National Martyrs Cemetery], Collections of the Academia Historica, No. 014-010603-0008.

³⁹ Baoquan Wu, "本地新闻" Bendi xinwen [Local news], *Tengyue ribao* 腾越日报 [Tengyue daily], January 3rd, 1945, section 4. Database of Modern Newspaper in China, 1840-1949
<http://bz.nlcpress.com/library/publish/default/IndexPaper.jsp>

victory. Their determination and perseverance are admirable. Therefore, our society proposed to establish a martyr shrine and a martyr cemetery to honor martyrs' loyal spirit. Nonetheless, due to our financial constraints, yesterday a fundraising campaign was initiated."⁴⁰ This short passage also appealed to the public by emphasizing the loyalty and bravery of the fallen soldiers. Two days later, the construction work officially began.⁴¹

On July 7th, 1945, Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery officially finished its construction work and opened up its space to the public. It held its first grand commemorative event for the eighth anniversary of Marco Polo Bridge Incident and for the people killed during the battle of Tengchong. That morning, about five thousand people including government officials, military commanders, U.S. representatives, and local citizens gathered at Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery for this ceremony.⁴² During this event, several major officials gave keynote addresses. Many of these speeches indicate that the local authority in Tengchong attempted to develop this cemetery as a public space to shape collective memory about the war, to mobilize people, and to raise public morale. For instance, Zhaodong Liu, the chief of staff of the 20th Group Army, said during his speech that “now in China there are many armed forces fighting for our country in various areas, if they knew that people in Tengchong were so supportive, they would also strive for victory and devote themselves to our country. The significance of this Martyr Shrine is not only to commemorate the fallen martyrs, but also to encourage future successors.”⁴³ Xiaofeng Sun, a major general from the 20th Group Army, also said that since at this moment the enemies had not been defeated, this grand ceremony will motivate more people to fight with a sense of loyalty and justice, and to prepare for the final victory.⁴⁴ “If we can recover all the lost land just like we recovered

⁴⁰ *Tengyue ribao* 腾越日报 [Tengyue daily], January 13th, 1945.

⁴¹ *Tengyue ribao* 腾越日报 [Tengyue daily], January 15th, 1945.

⁴² *Tengyue ribao* 腾越日报 [Tengyue daily], July 7th, 1945.

⁴³ *Tengyue ribao* 腾越日报 [Tengyue daily], July 8th, 1945.

⁴⁴ *Tengyue ribao* 腾越日报 [Tengyue daily], July 7th, 1945.

Tengchong, if all of our compatriots can be emancipated from the ravage of the enemies just like people in Tengchong, the purpose of our meeting today will be fully fulfilled,” said Sun.⁴⁵ In addition, during the ceremony, Genyuan Li proposed to set the day on which Chinese Army recovered Tengchong as Liberation Day (重光节) and said that every year the officials and civilians in Tengchong should hold grand memorial events on that day. He said that this cemetery belonged to the Tengchong people, and therefore everyone should come here every year on Liberation Day and pay tribute to the martyrs.⁴⁶ On this day people should hold commemorative ceremony at Guoshang Cemetery, and merchants in Tengchong should hang flags in front of their stores as a way of mourning.⁴⁷ Since very beginning, these officials were trying to set certain prescriptions for this cemetery, defining how people in Tengchong interact with the cemetery and with what meaning they expected to endow this public commemorative space. This cemetery served as a space for the local authority to publicize the necessity of wartime sacrifices, to raise national morale, and to encourage more people to devote themselves to fighting for the final victory of China.

For the local citizens, the establishment of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery provided an opportunity for them to reconcile with war atrocities. On July 2, 1945, a group of wealthy local gentries led by Li Dianshu, Li Deyi, and Zhou Weiti sent a proposal to the county mayor. They planned to host the Liberation Rite of Water and Land (水陆大会) for the soldiers buried in Tengchong Guosahng Cemetery on July 7, 1945, the day when Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery will be open to the public. Taking seven days and seven nights to complete, the Liberation of Water and Land is one of the most elaborate ritual in Chinese Buddhism. It is performed by temples and presided over by high monks. This service aims to

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ *Tengyue ribao* 腾越日报 [Tengyue daily], July 11th, 1945.

⁴⁷ *Tengyue ribao* 腾越日报 [Tengyue daily], September 12th, 1945.

help release souls from their suffering and purgatory.⁴⁸ In order to demonstrate their piety and to pray for the safety of the entire county, in addition to holding this grand ritual, these gentries also asked the mayor to issue an order for all households in Tengchong to abstain from non-vegetarian food for five.⁴⁹ For the local citizens, the establishment of Guoshang Cemetery was an opportunity for them to mourn the war dead with the hope that the tragedy will not happen again. As the cemetery was completed, it opened up space for the locals to publicly commemorate the traumatic war loss and reconcile war atrocities. For the gentries who proposed to commemorate the soldiers killed in the battle of Tengchong, this commemoration was not so much about reinforcing the political legitimacy of GMD, but more about an intention to pacify the traumatic war experiences and to bring back order and peace for their home county.

While the Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery was originally established to be a sacred, solemn space to commemorate martyrs, it was not solely restrained to formal, solemn use that served strong political purpose. As it was open to the public and free of charge, this cemetery was integrated into the everyday life of Tengchong citizens. For instance, this cemetery served as an open space for children in Tengchong to participate in school or extracurricular activities. In 1946, many children and their kindergartens teachers held open art performances at the sports field in the Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery.⁵⁰ Moreover, many local kindergarten children once used the Loyal Martyr Shrine in the Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery as a regular classroom.⁵¹ These events or activities were not necessarily associated with military commemoration or political education, but the experience of being in this

⁴⁸ Shaolin Temple, "The Waterland Dharma Function,"

http://www.shaolin.org.cn/templates/EN_T_newS_list/index.aspx?nodeid=392&page=ContentPage&contentid=2161 accessed on March 31, 2020.

⁴⁹ Dianshu Jin et al. (1945), "Gongcheng" 公呈 [A public proposal], *Bixueqianqiu: Tengchong Guoshang Muyuan ziliao huibian* 碧血千秋：腾冲国殇墓园资料汇编 [A compilation of the sources of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery], ed. Youfan Ma and Wenwei Peng (Kunming: Yunnan jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001), 19.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Yusi Liu, 116.

cemetery could still form an essential part of these children's childhood memory. This memory can be transferred into their understanding of the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance and their own identities. Li Zheng, an independent historian of the China-Burma-India Theater and a Tengchong native, shared his childhood experience in Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery during an interview:

When I was still a little kid, my father often walked me to the Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery and taught me the antithetical couplets and memorial dedications that were written by officials and generals. When I was five, I could recite the dedication written by Yu Youren – “For the world, for justice, for our motherland, for freedom; the loyal blood of the martyrs dying for the battle of Tengchong shall last forever (为世界，为正义，为祖国，争自由，腾冲一战，碧血千秋).”⁵²

As an independent scholar focusing on World War II, Li Zheng said his father always told him about the sacrifices that soldiers and Tengchong civilians had made in order to retake the city, making him want to remember this extraordinary historical period.⁵³ From Li Zheng's story, we can tell that the memory of the war could be transferred within a community and across generations in a way that was not heavily mandated by the political authority.

Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery was a physical embodiment of the sacrifices that Chinese people had made during the battle of Tengchong, and its interactions with local people played an important role in shaping people's understandings of the war. The sentiments aroused by the visiting experience were not always dedicated to the political party that proposed to establish this cemetery, but to their hometown and motherland.

⁵² Tencent News, “Li Zheng Zhuanfang” 李正专访 [An Interview with Li Zheng], <https://new.qq.com/omn/20180204/20180204C0PGE3.html>.

⁵³ Ibid.

In Tengchong, the establishment of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery sent out political and social messages to the public. On one hand, it was a dignified commemorative space for revolutionary martyrs. Established during wartime, this space was used by the local authorities to emphasize the China's tremendous sacrifices on the front and to demonstrate the political legitimacy of GMD. On the other hand, this cemetery, easily accessible to the public, also played an important role in the daily life of local citizens. Their interactions with the cemetery created a sense of loyalty to a shared nationhood, but not necessarily to the ruling political party.



Picture 2: Kindergarten Children performed at Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Cunzhong Li, ed., "Yunnansheng Tengchong xianli zhongxuexiao xunyu guicheng" 云南省腾冲县立中学校训育规程 [Education rules of the Tengchong county middle school in Yunnan province], *Tengchongxian jiaoyuzhi* 腾冲县教育志 [Tengchong county education annals] (Tengchong: Tengchong jiaoyuju, 2012), flyleaf.

Chapter 2: Dying A Second Time

As Japan officially surrendered in 1945, the dominant struggle in China shifted from international conflicts to domestic rivalry. Tensions between the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party quickly escalated, and the fragile peace between the two former wartime allies fell apart as the Chinese Civil War broke out. In 1949, the civil war concluded with the total victory of the Communist Party, and the People's Republic of China was founded on October 1st. As a new regime emerged, the collective narrative of China's involvement in World War II shifted drastically. This change was clearly reflected in the history of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery. From the 1950s to the 1970s, as Maoist revolutionary ideas and domestic class struggles dominated Chinese political discourses, the mourning function and popular use of the Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery were severely compromised, if not completely eliminated. This cemetery and its nearby areas primarily served as a space for the new regime to demonstrate its political legitimacy.

After the establishment of PRC, the domestic political discourse was largely dominated by Maoist revolutionary ideology, in which there was a clear line between reactionaries and revolutionaries. According to Mao, in China the people are “the working class, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie, and the national bourgeoisie.”⁵⁵ He argued that it was necessary for the people to suppress the GMD reactionary forces led by Chiang Kai-shek and to “enforce dictatorship over the running dogs of imperialism – the landlord class and bureaucrat-bourgeoisie, as well as the representatives of those classes, the Guomintang reactionaries and their accomplices.”⁵⁶ In this context, the GMD soldiers were perceived as the remnants of the old regime on the opposite side of the masses, and what these “Guomintang reactionaries” did during World War II began to lose its credibility.

⁵⁵ Zedong Mao (June 30, 1949), On the People's Dictatorship,” in *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection*, ed. Chen et al. (W. W. Norton and Company, 2014), 369.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Commemorating soldiers fallen for former enemies no longer aligned with the Chinese Communist Party's need to consolidate its ruling power.

Despite of the fact that the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, CCP did not gain full political control of Yunnan province until early 1950.⁵⁷ On February 20, 1950, as CCP local official Zhao Ding formed the CCP Tengchong Committee, this small town and its people stepped into a new era.⁵⁸ Bi Shixian, a Tengchong native and the former head of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery, said that right after the founding of the People's Republic of China, Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery did not suffer any physical damages, and the local government designated a doorkeeper for this cemetery. "Troops from the People's Liberation Army once stationed here," Bi said, "but they were all very respectful and did not change anything in the cemetery."⁵⁹ Nonetheless, some ritualistic changes soon took place. In 1950, the local authority cancelled the annual public memorial ceremony on Liberation.⁶⁰ As a memorial day set up to commemorate the Chinese Expeditionary Forces, the Liberation Day was directly related to the political legitimacy of the Nationalist government. Holding grand commemorative events on the Liberation Day was an essential function of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery as it was a way to reinforce the memory of GMD's wartime efforts among the public. However, at this moment due to the very recent rivalry between the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party, the moral values embodied by this memorial day could no longer be sustained. During this transition period, the moral ground of public mourning practices shifted away from glorifying loyal and brave GMD soldiers as the

⁵⁷ Linxing Yang, "Yunnan jeifangde rizi" 云南解放的日子 [The day when Yunnan was liberated], Research Institute of CCP History and Sources, <http://www.dswxyjy.org.cn/n1/2020/0228/c427186-31610166.html>, accessed on March 28, 2020.

⁵⁸ Lyu, Wenchao Zhubang Zhang, et al. ed, 569.

⁵⁹ Phoenix News, "Wenge qijian guoshang muyuan bei sunhui" 文革期间国殇墓园被损毁 [Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution], August 16, 2010, http://news.ifeng.com/history/phtv/dsy/detail_2010_08/16/1958888_1.shtml

⁶⁰ Ta Kong Pao News, "Guoshang muyuan jijing fuchen kanke" 国殇墓园几经浮沉坎坷 [The ups and downs of Guoshang Cemetery], *Ta Kong Pao*, December 19th, 2015. <http://news.takungpao.com/paper/q/2015/1219/3256062.html>.

Nationalist government was toppled and expelled from mainland China. The suspension of Liberation Day and commemorative events at Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery indicates that while the physical space of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery had not been disturbed yet, the political righteousness of the subjects that this cemetery originally served was significantly compromised due to the regime change.

Moreover, local CCP authority in Tengchong began to create monuments for their own martyrs, further weakening the legitimacy of the Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery. On March 16, 1950, the CCP authority announced an order named “Suppress Bandits and Establish New Revolutionary Order” which initiated a 3-year-long campaign to eradicate bandits and the remnants of GMD armed forces.⁶¹ This order pointed out that such a campaign was a prerequisite for establishing and restoring people’s political power on all levels, completely eliminating the remaining GMD forces in mainland, and quickly recreating a revolutionary new order.⁶² Consequently, the local government and armies in Tengchong formed an Anti-Bandit Committee as part of this nationwide campaign to suppress bandits. The definition of bandits was rather broad, including outlawed gangs, despotic landlords, spies, and reactionary forces.⁶³ In other words, this category contained any groups that might potentially endanger the newly established Communist municipality or hinder the process of consolidating power. From 1950 to 1953, 112 CCP soldiers and officials in Tengchong died for suppressing bandits. In 1954, CCP Tengchong County Committee and the government of Tengchong County began to construct the Tengchong Revolutionary Martyrs Graveyard (腾冲革命烈士陵园), a new public cemetery for Communist martyrs killed during the Anti-Bandit campaign.

⁶¹ See the official website of the Center People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China. http://www.gov.cn/ztl/17da/content_740904.htm. Accessed on March 31, 2020.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Su Meng ed., *Tengchongxian jianshezhi* 腾冲县建设志 [The annals of development in Tengchong county] (Kunming: Yunnan Nationalities Publishing House, 2003), 306.

Interestingly, the new cemetery was located right next to Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery. Moreover, the structures and layouts of these two cemeteries were very similar. In addition to martyrs' graves, they both contained memorial monuments and memorial halls for martyrs. Despite of these similarities, it is noteworthy that these two cemeteries stood for the political legitimacy of two political opponents, and they represented the attempts to build two disparate historical narratives. Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery was established to commemorate the victory in an international conflict. It constructed a narrative that emphasized the otherness of Japanese invaders and appealed to traditional Chinese martial values like loyalty (忠 zhong) and bravery (义 yi). The Martyrs Graveyard, on the other hand, was a landmark to commemorate a domestic conflict: to pay tributes to the people who died for "safeguarding the revolutionary regime in Tengchong."⁶⁴ This cemetery was devoted to honor Communist revolutionary spirit and justify the political legitimacy of the Communist regime. While it is not clear why the new graveyard was established right next to Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery in the first place, the fact that these two cemeteries were juxtaposed demonstrated an attempt of the CCP authority to replace the old historical narrative with a new one. The Revolutionary Martyrs Graveyard, emphasizing the legitimacy of the new Communist regime, combated the historical narrative left by the Nationalist regime. From the cancellation of the Liberation Day and the establishment of a new cemetery, we can tell that in the 1950s, as the Communist government consolidated ruling power, a need to justify its political legitimacy caused an alteration of the historical narrative. Now the center of historical narrative shifted to Communist revolutionary orders. As the GMD forces were categorized as reactionary forces that associated with the previous regime, the legitimacy entitled to Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery was further weakened.

⁶⁴ Tablet displayed in the Tengchong Revolutionary Martyrs Graveyard.

The deprivation of the Chinese Expeditionary Forces' entitlement to be grieved at the Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery reached its climax during the Cultural Revolution, a time when the entire country was grappled by radical movements and campaigns. On June 1st, 1966, *People's Daily* carried an editorial titled "Sweep away all Monsters and Demons." It argued that the Proletarian Cultural Revolution aimed to demolish all the old ideologies, old cultures, old traditions, and old habits that had been fostered by the exploiting classes and wielded by them to poison the masses.⁶⁵ A call to destroy the "Four Olds" addressed in this editorial quickly evolved into a nationwide campaign to attack and destroy any pre-communism elements in China. During this period, many historic sites and cultural legacies were destroyed. Unfortunately, Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery did not survive this chaos.

The Tengchong Guangshang Cemetery underwent waves of destruction, but even now it remains unclear who gave the order to destroy the cemetery in the first place. Official records described the destruction of Guoshang Cemetery in a very vague way using a passive voice. The local gazetteer of Baoshan documented that in September 1966, the Red Guards in Tengchong massively destroyed numerous historic sites in Tengchong, including the Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery, but did not give any details about who issued the order or who led this destruction operation.⁶⁶ In the annals made by the municipal bureau of construction in Tengchong, the destruction of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery was recorded as follows: "It is mystifying that during the Cultural Revolution, this cemetery was destroyed in the campaign to destroy the "Four Olds."⁶⁷ Now in Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery, the exhibition board also only contains very brief description: "During the ten-year catastrophe,

⁶⁵ Boda Chen, "Hengsao yiqie niuguisheshen" 横扫一切牛鬼蛇神 [Sweep away all monsters and demons], *Renmin ribao* 人民日报 [People's Daily], June 1st, 1966, section 1, People's Daily – Renmin Ribao Archive, <http://www.oriprobe.com.proxy.library.emory.edu/PeoplesDaily.shtml>.

⁶⁶ Jinhui Zhang, Yanping Yang et al. ed., "Hongweibing zuzhi" 红卫兵组织 [The Red Guard organization], *Baoshan diquzhi shangjuan* 保山地区志上卷 [the local gazetteer of Baoshan volume 1] (Beijing: zhonghuashuju, 1999), 414.

⁶⁷ Su Meng ed., *Tengchongxian jianshezhi* 腾冲县建设志 [The annals of development in Tengchong county], 304.

this place was severely damaged.”⁶⁸ While in Chinese language, the passive voice is often used to in a formal or professional setting, in this case it also blurs the main subjects that carried out the destructive activities. As Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery itself does not have open archives accessible to the public, this vandalization more or less became a myth in the official records.

If we look into more personal, intimate accounts, we are able to find some traces. In an essay published by Tongji University, the author Tao Jiang writes about his memory about the destruction. He recalls that it was the 54th Army from PLA that blew off the memorial tower in Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery.⁶⁹ In addition, the carved upturned eaves of the Loyal Martyr Shrine were sawed off, and the tablets were appropriated by local people for use as their bed planks.⁷⁰ Moreover, during an interview, the former head of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery Shixian Bi also shared what he remembered about the destruction. “The Cultural Revolution was a calamity for the entire country, and, of course, there was no escape for Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery.” Bi said,

The memorial tower in the cemetery was blown up. As for those small gravestones, it was the Red Guards that hammered them into pieces. One by one, one by one, eventually they smashed all of them. The bases of some tombstones were buried pretty deep, so when they were smashed they would collide with the ashes of the soldiers buried underground. Even the urns were shattered and exposed in the air.⁷¹

The people who carried out this destruction remained understated if not completely obliterated from public memory. This ambiguity observed even today more or less reflect the

⁶⁸ Exhibition board on display in Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery.

⁶⁹ Tao Jiang, “Tengchong Guoshang Muyeuan” 腾冲国殇墓园 [Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery], *Minjian Yingxiang* 民间影像 [Public imagery] (Shanghai: Tongji daxue chubanshe, 2015), 61.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Phoenix News, August 16, 2010.

current official attitude towards the Cultural Revolution. While overall the Cultural Revolution was criticized and denounced as a big mistake, the political meaning associated with the wrongdoings remained very vague.

After its total destruction, the Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery was appropriated by the local CCP authority for bureaucratic use. During the Cultural Revolution, the CCP Party School and Sports Commission moved their office space to the Guoshang Cemetery. The steles of fallen soldiers were used to pave the corridors outside of the Party School Office, and the delegation written by Huo Zhangkui was abandoned in the pigsty at the backyard.⁷² Up till this point, Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery had already lost its original role as a public mourning space, and became a place predominantly reigned by the CCP authority.

Overall, after the establishment of the PRC, the political rivalry between GMD and CPC changed the perception of GMD war dead. In order to consolidate its ruling power, the CCP authority launched several movements and campaigns to create a new historical narrative, one that is centered around the success of Communist revolutions. For the fallen soldiers buried in Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery, they were forced to face a second, undignified death. The destruction of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery represented the intention to sever connections to the old regime and to consolidate the ruling power of the new Communist regime. Its ultimate destruction marked a stage when the collective memory about the Sino-Japanese conflict was overshadowed by domestic revolutionary struggles. During this time period, the popular use of this cemetery demolished. After several waves of destruction, the Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery gradually transferred from a public memorial space into a bureaucratic domain of the CCP authority in Tengchong.

⁷² *Bixueqianqiu*, 200.

Chapter 3: Recreating A Shared Story

“In 1985, my friend and I were on a trip to Tengchong,” said Ge Shuya, an independent Chinese historian of World War II. “When we were wandering on the streets, I saw the Communist Party School. It seemed to have a beautiful courtyard with many flowers and plants in it. The front gate was open, so we decided to go inside for a quick tour. Once I stepped into the yard, I was completely shocked – many stonemasons were working, and shattered tombstones were all over the place...”⁷³ What Ge had encountered was the initial reconstruction process of Guoshang Cemetery and the beginning of China’s new remembrance of World War II. In the years to come, this cemetery would become an increasingly essential landmark in China. It would witness several major reforms initiated by the Chinese government and inspire massive grassroots nationalism from below.

The rebirth of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery was made possible by several significant reforms launched by Deng Xiaoping’s administration. In the early 1980s, one goal of the Chinese government was to recover the damages caused during the Cultural Revolution. In 1982, the Fifth National People’s Congress passed *The Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics*. This law specified that “important modern and contemporary historic sites, material objects and typical buildings that are related to major historical events, revolutionary movements or famous personalities” should be protected in China.⁷⁴ During this period, cultural heritage and historical relics gained increasing public attention. In 1981, Baoshan Area Relics Management Institution was established. It conducted a general survey of local historic and cultural sites in Tengchong.⁷⁵

⁷³ Shuya Ge, interview and translation conducted by the author, China, June 13, 2019.

⁷⁴ Article 2, Chapter 1, *The Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics*, 1982, accessed October, 22, 2019, http://english.www.gov.cn/archive/laws_regulations/2014/08/23/content_281474982987444.htm.

⁷⁵ Baoshan Culture Annals Compilation Committee, “Baoshan diqu wenwu guanlisuo” 保山地区文物管理所 [Baoshan area relics management institution], *Baoshan wenhuazhi* 保山文化志 [Baoshan culture annals] (Beijing: Guoji wenhua chubans gongsi, 1991), 362.

In 1984, Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery, along with many other cultural or historical relics, was designated as a “major cultural heritage site under county protection” (县重点文物保护单位).⁷⁶ This recognition affirmed Guoshang Cemetery’s historical significance and precluded its following reconstruction.

In addition, Deng’s administration sought to bring about a peaceful reunification of the mainland and Taiwan by initiating a diplomatic thaw with the Guomintang. In 1979, Deng Xiaoping redefined the “new-era united front” as a broad alliance of socialist laborers and all patriots.⁷⁷ His efforts engendered a tendency in the Chinese society to downplay partisan differences and to emphasize a unified Chinese identity centered on patriotism. Under such circumstances, in August of 1984, the Chinese Communist Party, the Tengchong County Committee, and the Government of Tengchong County passed a proposal to restore Guoshang Cemetery. According to a municipal announcement, this decision was aimed to construct socialist civilization, facilitate patriotic education and anti-war-of-aggression education, and consolidate the united front.⁷⁸ Given its short length, this announcement suggests that the fundamental reforms taking place in China after Deng Xiaoping ascended to the leadership position served as critical prerequisites for rebuilding Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery.

⁷⁶ Tao Jiang, “Tengchong Guoshang Muyuan” 腾冲国殇墓园 [Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery], *Minjian Yingxiang* 民间影像 [Public imagery] (Shanghai: Tongji daxue chubanshe, 2015), 61.

⁷⁷ Xiaoping Deng, “Xinshiqi tongyi zhanxian shi shehuizhuyi laodongzhe yu aiguo zhe de lianmeng” 新时期统一战线是社会主义劳动者与爱国者的联盟 [The new-era united front should be an alliance of socialist laborers and patriots], *Deng Xiaoping lun tongyi zhanxian* 邓小平论统一战线 [Deng Xiaoping discusses the united front] (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1991), 159.

⁷⁸ Ping Dong et al., ed., “Zhonggong Tengchong xianwei Tengchongxian renmin zhengfu guanyu hebing xianwei zhengfu zhaodaisuo, banqian dangxiao, huifu Guoshang Muyuan de jue ding” 中共腾冲县委腾冲县人民政府关于合并县委、政府招待所, 搬迁党校, 恢复国殇墓园的决定 [CCP Tengchong County Committee and the government of Tengchong county’s decision to merge municipal hostels, relocate the Party school, and restore Guoshang Cemetery], *Tengchongxian zhengxie zhi* 腾冲县政协志 [The gazetteer of People’s Political Consultative Conference in Tengchong county] (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 2004), 353.

In the September 1984, Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery Restoration Committee was established.⁷⁹ In the government instructions that this committee received, one essential principle for reconstruction was to restore the original appearance of the cemetery.⁸⁰ The shattered memorial towers, tombstones, dedications, and architecture had to be reestablished as they were first built in 1945 under Guomindang governance. Some people were hesitant about the reinstating process because at that time the central government had not specified how the war efforts of Guomindang should be evaluated. When Liu Chunming, the vice-chair of the restoration committee, asked a local embroidery shop to make a Guomindang party flag and a Republic of China national flag, the workers were very shocked. They said these flags belonged to the reactionaries and embroidering such flags was an anti-revolutionary activity. Even though Liu had thoroughly explained the purpose of making these flags, the embroidery shop did not accept his order until Liu provided a written disclaimer stating that the workers would not be accused for making these flags.⁸¹ This anecdote illuminates how top-down reforms began to shape Chinese collective memory of World War II: When the broad guidelines and principles issued by the central government were being passed down, they engendered various interpretations on the local level. In Tengchong, these interpretations opened up possibilities for a new remembrance of World War II even before the central authority made official remarks about how the war should be understood.

Given all the uncertainties and doubts, Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery was gradually brought back to life. The restoration committee encouraged local people to collect and return broken tombstones for Guomindang soldiers. Pieces were found in walls, stepping stones, roads, gutters, kitchen ranges, gardens, and air-raid shelters. Workers then made rubbings

⁷⁹ Su Meng, ed., *Tengchongxian jianshezhi* 腾冲县建设志 [The construction gazetteer of Tengchong county], 27.

⁸⁰ Chungming Liu, “Guoshang Muyuan de fenghuang niepan” 国殇墓园的凤凰涅槃 [The nirvana of Guoshang Cemetery], Website for Commemorating the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance, accessed October 22, 2019, <http://www.krzzjn.com/html/85463.html>.

⁸¹ Tao Jiang, 61.

based on these shattered tombstones, and they eventually managed to verify the identity of 3,364 soldiers, about one third of the original number of soldiers buried in the cemetery. Many tombstones remained anonymous and only contained the military designations.⁸² By early 1985, the main entrance, the memorial tower, and the Loyal Martyrs' Shrine (忠烈祠) had been restored.⁸³ At that time, Guoshang Cemetery was a by-product of the political reforms in mainland China. While the shifts in political thinking at the national level had not been translated into immediate acceptance at a local level yet, the efforts of local government and official agencies created an environment appropriate for a new historical narrative to emerge.

After the Tiananmen prodemocracy demonstration broke out in 1989, another noticeable policy turn took place under Deng's administration. In 1994, Deng said that the biggest mistake for the Chinese Communist Party during the reform era was "in the field of education, primarily in ideological and political education – not just of students but of the people in general."⁸⁴ He emphasized the need to teach the Chinese masses about what China was like in the period before the People's Republic of China was established.⁸⁵ The nationwide patriotic education campaign was launched shortly after the crackdown of the Tiananmen protest. It put great emphasis on China's recent humiliating past in relation to Western and Japanese powers.⁸⁶

Responding to the national campaign, Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery further developed its educational function. In 1989, visiting Guoshang Cemetery became a routine activity included in Tengchong school regulation as a way to make students "hate imperialist

⁸² Chungming Liu, accessed October 22, 2019.

⁸³ Tao Jiang, 62.

⁸⁴ Xiaoping Deng, "Address to Officers at the Rank of General and above in Command of the Troops Enforcing Martial law in Beijing." (June 9, 1989), *People's Daily*, October 26, 2010, accessed October 22, 2019, <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/dengxp/vol3/text/cl990.html>

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Zheng Wang, "National Humiliation, History Education, and the Politics of Historical Memory: Patriotic Education Campaign in China," *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 52, no. 4 (December 2008): 783-806.

invasion, loathe the evil of old society, love the superiority of socialism, and cherish our current happy life.”⁸⁷ In the April of 1995, many teachers and students from the middle schools and elementary schools in Tengchong took a field trip to Guoshang Cemetery, mourning the fallen soldiers, listening to a speech about World War II, and seeing a photo exhibition about the war. The Party Branch Secretary of Tengchong No.1 Middle School said that such an event was a perfect patriotic education class for students. “Only by informing students about the past, can we teach them to cherish our present happy life now,” said the secretary.⁸⁸ Five months later, the Administrative Office of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery held an exhibition titled “Don’t Forget History.” At the entrance, there was a banner with patriotic slogans. The preface described the war efforts of the Chinese Expeditionary Forces as a heroic sacrifice inspired by the Chinese Communist Second United Front (中国共产党抗日民族统一战线). The exhibition displayed historical objects used by the Chinese Expeditionary Forces and Tengchong civilians during World War II. In the epilogue, the administration of Guoshang Cemetery stated that this exhibition should be regarded as the beginning of a new attempt to conduct patriotic education.⁸⁹ Interestingly, in the entire textual description of this exhibition, the main participants of the battle were addressed as “Chinese soldiers and civilians and Allied soldiers (中国军民及盟军将士).”⁹⁰ The word “Guomindang” did not appear even once. In 1995, Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery was recognized as a National Outstanding Patriotic Education Base by the State Administration of

⁸⁷ Cunzhong Li, ed., “Yunnansheng Tengchong xianli zhongxuexiao xunyu guicheng” 云南省腾冲县立中学校训育规程 [Education rules of the Tengchong county middle school in Yunnan province], *Tengchongxian jiaoyuzhi* 腾冲县教育志 [Tengchong county education annals] (Tengchong: Tengchong jiaoyuju, 2012), 230.

⁸⁸ Zujia Yang, “Guoshang Muyuan yi dangnian” 国殇墓园忆当年 [Recalling those years at Guoshang Cemetery], *Yunnan zhengxie bao* 云南政协报 [Yunnan People’s Political Consultative Conference newspaper], April 26th, 1995.

⁸⁹ Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery Administrative Office (1995), “Guoshang Muyuan shiwu zhanshi wenzi shuoming” 国殇墓园实物展示文字说明 [The captions of the exhibition at Guoshang Cemetery], *Bixueqianqiu: Tengchong Guoshang Muyuan ziliao huibian* 碧血千秋：腾冲国殇墓园资料汇编 [A compilation of the sources of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery], ed. Youfan Ma and Wenwei Peng (Kunming: Yunnan jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001), 227.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Cultural Heritage.⁹¹ In 1996, Guoshang Cemetery was listed as a “major cultural heritage site under national protection” (全国重点文物保护单位).⁹² During the nationwide patriotic education campaign, Guoshang Cemetery was primarily addressed in Chinese public discourse as a symbol of a great patriotic war fought by all Chinese. The fact that this cemetery was built for the Guomindang Army was deliberately downplayed to a negligible level.

Zooming out for a more comprehensive view of the broad historical context back then, we can tell that Deng’s efforts to build the patriotic alliance extended beyond national borders and propelled the recovery of overseas war memorials. In 1987, Guanhai Qiao, the director of the consular department of the Chinese Embassy in Myanmar, visited the Toungoo memorial before the Marco Polo Bridge Incident Memorial Day to mourn the fallen soldiers from the Chinese Expeditionary Forces.⁹³ At the reception on July 5th, Guanhai Qiao said that while during the Cultural Revolution the Gang of Four (四人帮) “did many things that hurt the interests of overseas Chinese, now Deng Xiaoping would restore the order and give more care to Chinese communities abroad.”⁹⁴ With the support of the Chinese Embassy, a group of overseas Chinese managed to relocate the memorial tower in 1997.⁹⁵ The newly established memorial served both as a place for commemoration and an educational space for overseas Chinese. Bofang Yang, a veteran from the Chinese Expeditionary Forces and a leading figure on the relocation committee, launched a workshop nearby the memorial to

⁹¹ State Administration of Cultural Heritage (1996), “Guanyu banfa ronghuo ‘yijiujiuwu niandu quanguo wenwu xitong youxiu aiguo zhuyi jiaoyu jidi’ chenghao danwei jiangjin de tongzhi 关于颁发荣获 ‘一九九五年度全国文物系统优秀爱国主义教育基地’ 称号单位奖金的通知” [An announcement about awarding bonus to 1995 national outstanding patriotic education bases], *Bixueqianqiu 碧血千秋*, 229.

⁹² State Administration of Cultural Heritage (1996), “Guowuyuan guanyu gongbu disipi quanguo zhongdian wenwu baohu danwei de tongzhi” 国务院关于公布第四批全国重点文物保护单位的通知 [State Council’s announcement about the fourth batch of major cultural heritage sites under national protection], accessed October 22, 2019, http://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2014-07/21/content_2721166.htm.

⁹³ Bofang Yang, *Dierci Shijie Dazhan Zhongguo Yuanzhengjun chengyuan Yang Fengchun huiyilu 第二次世界大战中国远征军成员杨逢春回忆录* [A World War II Chinese Expeditionary Forces member Yang Fengchun’s memoir], volume 8, March 12, 2000.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Yushun Wang, interview and translation conducted by the author, Myanmar, May 16, 2019.

teach Chinese culture and language.⁹⁶ The reconstruction of these two memorial sites, both in and outside China, indicate that the domestic reform launched by Chinese central government in the reform era significantly propelled a new wave of war remembrance. Underlying this wave was a reconfiguration of Chinese identity. The new appeal emphasized the unity of Chinese ethnicity and downplayed partisan differences. This reconfiguration blurred the geographical constraints and extended the idea of Chinese to patriotic Chinese diaspora. It indicated that with a series of top-down efforts, the collective memory in Chinese society was gradually moving away from a revolutionary narrative that emphasized domestic political struggles towards a nationalistic one hinging on a unified Chinese identity.

The meaning-making process of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery is not solely dominated by the central government. Once restored, this cemetery took on a life of its own and generated various interpretations that might not always align with the state's original intentions. Shengkui Duan, a local collector living next to Guoshang cemetery, once commented that "visiting the cemetery for local people is like going to church for Westerners."⁹⁷ This cemetery is not only a landmark for local government to signal political messages, but also a place for ordinary people to gather and spend their leisure time. The cemetery's everyday interactions with visitors have sparked a revitalization of China's recent past and motivated grassroots nationalism from below in every walk of life.

To begin with, the cemetery has engendered a public interest in researching the Chinese Expeditionary Forces. For instance, when I interviewed Shuya Ge, he told me that it was his experience in Guoshang Cemetery that inspired him to do historical research. "That day my friend and I sat in the cemetery for the whole afternoon, smoking and watching stonemasons making repairs," Ge recalled. "It struck me that even though I grew up in

⁹⁶ Bofang Yang, volume 8.

⁹⁷ Yang Li, "Martyrs Remembered," *China Daily*, March 27, 2014, accessed October 24, 2019, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/kindle/2014-03/27/content_17383557.htm.

Yunnan province and earned a history degree in college, I did not know that a bloody battle once took place in my own hometown until that winter... It was this unexpected experience that made me determined to do research about the China-Burma-India Theater in World War II.”⁹⁸ From the 1980s and onward, Ge interviewed World War II veterans in China and conducted field research at the sites of previous battlefields. Now he is recognized as an authoritative independent historian in China. His blogs contain in-depth historical analyses of the China-Burma-India Theater and detailed accounts of the military operations of the Chinese Expeditionary Forces. The experience of Shuya Ge allows us to catch a glimpse of a larger trend emerging in China after 1978 – an immediate upsurge of scholarly research openly discussing the positive contributions of Chinese Expeditionary Forces. From the 1950s to the 1970s, no formal research about this topic was conducted in mainland China at all. This academic vacuum was quickly filled up by the abundant scholarly literature that began to come out since the 1980s.⁹⁹ These changes indicate that a historical narrative on China’s wartime experiences was rewritten in academia. Guomintang war efforts began to draw more attention and these favorable discussions further facilitated the emergence of a new narrative.

Moreover, the existence of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery has inspired creative interpretations of the war in popular culture. In the 2000s, many TV series about the Chinese Expeditionary Forces came out, and Guoshang Cemetery played an important role in motivating such productions. Xiaolong Lan, the scriptwriter of a hit drama *Soldiers and Their Commander*, said that he had visited Guoshang Cemetery several times when he was preparing the screenplay. “Once my friend and I brought two boxes of liquor to the cemetery,

⁹⁸ Interview with Shuya Ge, October 10, 2019.

⁹⁹ See Guobin Wei, ed., *Dianxi kangzhan wenxian* 滇西抗战文献 [Sources on the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance in Western Yunnan] (Kunming: Yunnan daxue chubanshe, 2016), Catalog. This catalog comprehensively compiles the titles of the academic works, such as journal articles and monographs, about Guomintang war efforts in Western Yunnan. This catalog shows that the number of academic works had a significant increase since the 1980s. From 1980 to 1990, more than 100 monographs and journal articles were published.

and sometimes we would clink glasses with the anonymous tombstones.” Lan said. “I am writing this story to salute the rank and file in the Chinese Expeditionary Forces.”¹⁰⁰ In addition, Liying Zhang, the producer of several TV shows about the Chinese Expeditionary Forces, also mentioned that her trip to Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery was the initial motivation for her to make so many productions about war.¹⁰¹ “It was shocking to see so many tombstones lining up the hill, and it was heartbreaking to think of the fact that every tombstone represented a once vivid life,” Zhang said during an interview.¹⁰² These accounts indicate that Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery has significantly shaped how people, who are not Tengchong locals, approach the past through traveling or visiting experiences. In these artistic works, strong nationalistic narratives have emerged, and the war has been portrayed as a victory won by all Chinese.

In addition, Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery has propelled the development of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in China. In 2007, Sun Chunlong, a Chinese investigative journalist, visited Guoshang Cemetery for the first time.¹⁰³ He said it was astonishing to see thousands of tombstones standing on the hills. Struck by the fact that he did not know anything about the Chinese Expeditionary Forces before, Sun began digging into this period of history in his own way after this encounter.¹⁰⁴ In 2008, Sun launched a campaign called “Veterans Come Home (老兵回家).” This campaign sought to help Chinese veterans who enlisted during World War II and were later

¹⁰⁰ Tao Hu, “Xie Yuanzhengjun biaoda jingyi” 写远征军表达敬意 [Salute to the Chinese Expeditionary Forces], Xinhua Website, March 6, 2009, accessed October 22, 2019, http://ent.ifeng.com/special/tuanzhang/ziliao/200903/0306_5820_1046930.shtml.

¹⁰¹ Bo Pu, “Zhongguo Yuanzhengjun zongzhipianren: Guoshang Muyuan zhuangjidao ta xinling” 中国远征军总制片人：国殇墓园撞击到她心灵 [The main producer of The Chinese Expeditionary Forces: Guoshang Cemetery has struck her mind], *Guangming ribao* 光明日报 [Guangming Daily], April 14, 2011, China News Website, accessed October 22, 2019, <http://www.chinanews.com/cul/2011/04-14/2973586.shtml>.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Chunlong Sun, “Zai Guoshang Muyuan Li, Women Nameduo Xiongdi Shi Zenme Side” 在国殇墓园里，我们那么多兄弟是怎么死的 [How did our brothers buried in Guoshang Cemetery die], *Yiyu 1945* 异域 1945 [Outland 1945] (Xinhua Press, 2010), 1.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

stranded overseas to find their families in mainland China.¹⁰⁵ In 2011, Sun quit his job as a journalist and established Shenzhen Longyue Charity Foundation. Now every month this charity pays modest stipends to nearly 3,000 extremely elderly Chinese war veterans, both in and outside of mainland China, regardless of their previous political affiliations.¹⁰⁶ It is also committed to protecting Chinese war graveyards overseas. Sun says that as an NGO, the purpose of this charity is to provide humanitarian care and to alleviate political and historical misunderstandings.¹⁰⁷ Sun's work has contributed to the ever expanding definition of "being Chinese" that transcends geographical and political boundaries. Ranging from popular culture to NGOs, these non-governmental efforts inspired by Guoshang Cemetery suggest that in contemporary China an urge to "uncover historical truth" has become pervasive. It has triggered a tendency to revise previous historical narratives and led to an expansion of the Chinese identity.

Overall, after the 1980s, Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery has witnessed a sharp turn in China's war remembrance. During this period, the fallen soldiers from the Guomindang Army are no longer solely regarded as reactionary remnants from the previous regime. Instead, they have gradually received social recognition and are now honored as loyal martyrs who died for the motherland. Now Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery has evolved into an essential local landmark and a major patriotic education base. This process was prompted by the political reforms launched by the Chinese Communist government and further

¹⁰⁵ Zhen Li, "Sun Chunlong: Kangzhan Laobing Haineng Deng Shinian Ma?" 抗战老兵还能等十年吗? [Sun Chunlong: Can War of Resistance veterans wait for another 10 years], *Chinese Philanthropist*, January 2016, accessed October 22, 2019, <http://www.szlongyue.org/?p=684>.

¹⁰⁶ "Why do people in China give so little to charity?" *The Economist* (The Economist Group Limited, September 6th, 2018), accessed October 22, 2019, <https://www.economist.com/china/2018/09/06/why-do-people-in-china-give-so-little-to-charity>.

¹⁰⁷ Ying Dai, "Sun Chunlong: He shijian saipao" 孙春龙：和时间赛跑 [Sun Chunlong: compete against time] (Xinhua Press, July 8, 2014), accessed October 22, 2019, https://gongyi.ifeng.com/news/detail_2014_07/08/37227345_0.shtml.

facilitated by grassroots efforts. This new wave of memory has created a nationalistic twist in Chinese public discourse and the idea of being Chinese has been profoundly expanded.

Epilogue

The recent changes to Guoshang Cemetery indicate that the grassroots and governmental efforts have integrated into collective forces. In August of 2011, for the first time, the Chinese government announced that it would raise compensation for families of martyrs.¹⁰⁸ On September 14, 2011, the remains of 19 soldiers from the Chinese Expeditionary Forces killed and buried in Myanmar during the Anti-Japanese War of Resistance were returned back to China with the help from local associations and non-governmental charities, a first since the Chinese Communist Party seized power in 1949. The remains of the soldiers were buried in Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery after a solemn ceremony. The dead martyrs were addressed as the “loyal souls (忠魂).”¹⁰⁹ The roots of this reference can be traced back to imperial China, and it was extensively used during the Republican period to honor fallen soldiers who died for the National Revolution (国民革命).¹¹⁰ However, now this term is used to address people who were sacrificed as national heroes for China as a nation-state.

On August 15, 2013, the anniversary of the Japanese surrender to China, Western Yunnan Anti-Japanese War of Resistance Memorial Museum (滇西抗战纪念馆) was established right next to Guoshang Cemetery. Its predecessor was the Dianmian Anti-Japanese War of Resistance Museum (滇缅抗战博物馆) in a nearby town Heshun, the first non-governmental World War II museum in China built by a local curator named Shengkui Duan in 2005.¹¹¹ Duan has been collecting war relics for more than 30 years, and his collection has reached almost 80,000 items from China, Myanmar, and India. These relics

¹⁰⁸ Didi Kirsten Tatlow, “China Honors Its War Dead, but Quietly,” *New York Times*, October 19, 2011, accessed October 22, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/20/world/asia/20iht-letter20.html>.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Jintang Cai, 1.

¹¹¹ Xinhua News Agency. Accessed on October 24, 2019.

include weapons, military uniforms, badges, and even skulls of Chinese soldiers.¹¹² The county government decided to move his museum next to Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery and the construction began in 2010.¹¹³ The new museum operates in conjunction with Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery and is an essential patriotic education base in China. Such collective efforts by government and grassroots advocates further expand the social impact of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery and propel the emergence of a nationalistic historical narrative in China.

Tracing the history of Tengchong Guoshang Cemetery in the past few decades, this thesis provides insights into the changing historical memory about World War II in mainland China. During different time periods the meaning and function of this cemetery have changed dramatically. Its creation, destruction, and restoration can be considered a miniature of the political waves washing over twentieth-century China.

¹¹² "Dianxi Anti-Japanese War Memorial Hall Graveyard of National Heroes, Tengchong, Yunnan Province," The War Memoryscapes in Asia Project, accessed October 24, 2019, <http://www.warinasia.com/>.

¹¹³ Xinhua News Agency, accessed October 24, 2019.

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