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Source: *The China Journal*, No. 70 (July 2013), pp. 24-47

Published by: The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the College of Asia and the Pacific, The Australian National University

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/671331>

Accessed: 12-09-2017 23:19 UTC

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Grieving at Chongqing's Red Guard Graveyard: In the Name of Life Itself

Everett Y. Zhang*

ABSTRACT

This article presents a historical and ethnographic account of the event of mourning at the Graveyard for the Red Guards in Chongqing. Built in the Cultural Revolution to glorify about 450 Red Guards as “revolutionary martyrs”, this graveyard testifies to the tragic nature of their deaths, which resulted from fighting between two factions for their shared goal of “defending Chairman Mao”. The post-Mao reform negated the Cultural Revolution. In a way, their deaths and mourning their deaths were stigmatized, resulting in their “second death”, but recent important changes in Chinese society have allowed the resurgence of grieving for them, culminating in the granting of the official title of “cultural relic” to the graveyard. Opening up a space to contest their stigmatization and to invalidate the official judgement about the Cultural Revolution, this title signifies the rising imperative to account for every death in the name of life itself.

On 6 January 2010, China's Xinhua News Agency reported that the city of Chongqing had granted the title of “Cultural Relic Preservation Unit” to 193 sites in Chongqing Municipality.¹ One of these sites, barely mentioned in the original report, was the “Graveyard for Red Guards” built in the late 1960s. The news about the graveyard quickly spread on the Internet and in news media. On 25 February, the prominent newspaper *Southern Weekend* published a cover story titled “The Last Graves of the Victims of the Armed Fight”.²

On Qingming (Tomb Sweeping Festival) in April 2010, several hundred people visited the grave, many more than before. One mourner said that the new title

* I have received help from many friends and numerous other people in China; the list of names is too long to be presented in full here. I express my wholehearted indebtedness to them all. On several occasions I presented a part of this paper, and want to thank Roger Des Forge, Arthur Kleinman, Benjamin Elman, Susan Naquin, Stephen Teiser, Didier Fassin, Joan Scott and all members of the “Ethnography and Theory” reading group at the Institute for Advanced Study for helpful comments. Two anonymous reviewers of *The China Journal* made insightful suggestions. Andrew Kipnis and Luigi Tomba, the editors of *The China Journal*, made tireless efforts to help sharpen the arguments and smooth the narrative. I thank the editors, reviewers and staff members of *The China Journal* for the improvement to the article.

1. Zhang Qin, “Chongqing liangjiang suodao deng 193 chu xin shiji wenwu ‘chulu’” (193 New Key Point Cultural Relic Sites of Chongqing Granted Including Two Cross-River Cableways), Xinhua (6 January 2010).

2. Yang Jibin, “Zuihou de wudou li nanzhe muqun” (The Last Graves for the Victims of the Armed Fight), *Nanfang zhoumo* (Southern Weekend) (24 February 2010), p. 1.

had provided legal protection to the graveyard against the threat of demolition and neglect. Another welcomed it as the first step toward building a museum for the Cultural Revolution, an idea already raised by the famous writer Ba Jin in the 1980s, arguing that the only way to prevent a second Cultural Revolution was to build a museum.³ A third mourner suggested that the title offered official justification for the mourning of dead Red Guards. A fourth, a former “comrade-in-arms” of the dead, declared, “Granting the title is a victory of the people”. He called for “preserving a true history of the Cultural Revolution” in order to foil what he saw as the official intention behind the title: “displaying the cruelty and reactionary nature of the Cultural Revolution”. He argued that “the Cultural Revolution was a spectacular revolution that had played an enormous role in advancing history”.

The administration of Shaping Park (沙坪公园, where the graveyard was located) was delighted to be able to place the graveyard, now known as the only remaining one of this type in the country, legally under its care.⁴ After the first wave of media attention, however, an official from the city’s Party committee ordered the park administration to avoid interviews. The official felt that too much publicity about the graveyard could backfire and undermine its preservation. The surge in the number of mourners was rumored to have alarmed the public security and state security bureaus; the emotion of the mourners could stir up social unrest. All these actions and reactions indicate that, even as Chinese society transforms, the politics of the Cultural Revolution have not died.

As a Chongqing native, I had seen graves for Red Guards before, but I did not enter this graveyard until 2006. Since then, I have made a field trip to Chongqing almost every year, observing scenes of mourning, interviewing people and collecting historical records (photos, diaries, handbills, rebel organization newspapers and memoirs). I have never been able to brush aside a sense of shock and sorrow on seeing the tombs. The more I talked to mourners and visitors—family members, former comrades-in-arms, the buriers, former prisoners, the killers, local historians, park employees, cadres and naïve young people⁵—the clearer it became that the shared, dominant feelings of the mourners were that the Red Guards had “died an unjust death” (*yuan*si 冤死).

3. Ba Jin, *Wuti ji* (An Untitled Collection) (Hong Kong: Sanlian Shudian, 1986).

4. A number of tombs and graves for the Red Guards or rebels have been found recently, widely scattered in rural Dalong Mountain, Luzhou City, Sichuan. See Feng Xiang, “Bei guyi wangdiao de jinianbei” (Monuments That Have Been Intentionally Forgotten), *Nanfang renwu zhouban* (Southern People Weekly), No. 7 (March 2012), <http://www.infzm.com/content/72448> (accessed 26 March 2013).

5. For this project, I have conducted in-depth interviews with 94 people and had conversations with numerous people from all walks of life.

These Red Guards died in factional fights, a type of violence considered both tragic and ironic. The Cultural Revolution featured three types of violence.⁶ The first was violence against the five black categories, capitalist roaders, “bourgeois intellectuals”, schoolteachers and so on.⁷ The second was the torture of suspected class enemies under investigation.⁸ The third type was “factional fighting” among the Red Guards.⁹ A number of memoirs have demonstrated the tragic deaths of the Red Guards who killed each other, despite the fact that all claimed to be fighting as “revolutionaries” in the name of “defending Chairman Mao”. Two views of these deaths are common. Some argue that the deaths of Red Guards were worthless, because the Red Guards’ passion was stirred up and used by Mao.¹⁰ Others, like the “comrade-in-arms” mentioned above, considered the deaths noble and glorious, because the Cultural Revolution, like any revolution, requires sacrifice of life. Both these completely different views challenge the post-Mao official standpoint on the Cultural Revolution, which stigmatizes and ignores these deaths.

How could these two opposing views share the feelings of “unjust death” and the desire to de-stigmatize the Red Guards? How did the notion of “unjust death” come to define the memory of the Cultural Revolution and contribute to the struggle to mourn dead Red Guards in public? This article examines, from the standpoint of “the history of the present”, the history of mourning at the graveyard since it was built. This history consists of three overlapping phases. In the first phase, which faded out over the late 1960s and 1970s, the Red Guards were mourned gloriously as “revolutionary martyrs”. In the second (between the

6. Yin Hongbiao, “Wenhudageming zhong de wudou” (The Violence During the Cultural Revolution), *Zhongguo yanjiu* (China Research), No. 2 (1996), pp. 55–65; see also Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao’s Last Revolution* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

7. Yang Su, *Collective Killings in Rural China During the Cultural Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Wang Youqin, *Wenge shounanzhe* (Victims of the Cultural Revolution) (Hong Kong: Kaifang Zazhi Chubanshe, 2004).

8. Michael Schoenhals, “The Central Case Examination Group, 1966–1979”, *The China Quarterly*, No. 145 (March 1995), pp. 87–111.

9. Xu Youyu, *Xingxing sese de zaofan* (Rebellion of All Sorts) (Hong Kong: Zhongwen Daxue Chubanshe, 1999); Tang Shaojie, *Yiye zhichun: Qinghua Daxue 1968 nian “Bairi da wudou”* (An Episode in the Cultural Revolution: The 1968 100-Day War at Tsinghua University) (Hong Kong: Zhongwen Daxue Chubanshe, 2003); Michael Schoenhals, “‘Why Don’t We Arm the Left?’ Mao’s Culpability For the Cultural Revolution’s Great Chaos of 1967”, *The China Quarterly*, No. 182 (June 2005), pp. 277–300; Andrew Walder, *Fractured Rebellion: The Beijing Red Guard Movement* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); Hong Yung Lee, *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: A Case Study* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Stanley Rosen, *Red Guards Factionalism and the Cultural Revolution in Guangdong (Canton)* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982); Jonathan Unger, *Education Under Mao: Class and Competition in Canton Schools, 1960–1980* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

10. For journalistic or personal accounts in English, see Phillip Pan, “The Cemetery”, in *Out of Mao’s Shadow: The Struggle for the Soul of a New China* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008), pp. 81–112; Xu Jun Erberlein, “Swimming with Mao”, *The Walrus*, Vol. 3, No. 6 (2006), pp. 72–78.

1970s and the 1990s), they were stigmatized as wrongdoers. They thus suffered “a second death”, during which it became impossible to mourn them publicly. In the third phase, since the late 1990s and particularly since the early 2000s, the Red Guards began to be mourned again, leading to the granting of the title which officially, if guardedly, legitimated public mourning for them.

Resurgence of mourning, including the reburial of the dead who had been wronged at their deaths, has been an important topic in anthropological studies of mourning. For example, by analyzing the waves of reburials in the aftermath of the disintegration of the former Soviet regime in Eastern Europe, Katherine Verdery shows the significant role which reburial played in reclaiming moral legitimacy for the cause of the dead (or denying legitimacy to the dead), and in reordering post-socialist political life.¹¹ Addressing efforts to mourn “missing persons” resulting from the religious and international conflicts in Cyprus, Paul Sant Cassia shows that justice could not be done to the victims of past tragedies until the mourners won the struggle to mourn the dead adequately.¹² Erik Mueggler shows the importance of reconstructing death rituals in overcoming the “age of wild ghosts” resulting from the destruction of traditional burial and mourning rituals under Maoism in China.¹³ Those ethnographies show how concrete ritual actions on the dead symbolically rectified historical tragedies.

This article draws on Judith Butler’s notion of “grievability” to show how the feeling of “unjust death” resulted not only from how Red Guards died but also from whether and how their deaths were mourned, and to explore further than the previously mentioned ethnographies the political and ethical significance of mourning. According to Butler, “grievability” refers to the entitlement of the dead to be ritualistically mourned in public.¹⁴ In the case of Chongqing Red Guards, the sense of entitlement initially experienced, then lost, and finally regained, reveals the dramatic change in the moral value of this graveyard in China, as well as a transformation in how life in general is valued. Contradicting official CCP efforts to bring closure to the history of the Cultural Revolution and to stigmatize the Red Guards as the guilty party, the granting of the title of “Cultural Relic” to the graveyard and the resurgence of mourning have opened space for reconsidering the lives and sacrifices of the Red Guards. The moral ground of this mourning has now largely shifted away from glorifying the sacrifice of life

11. Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

12. Paul Sant Cassia, *Bodies of Evidence: Burial, Memory and the Recovery of Missing Persons in Cyprus* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005).

13. Erik Mueggler, *The Age of Wild Ghosts: Memory, Violence, and Place in Southwest China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

14. Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (New York: Verso, 2010). See Everett Yuehong Zhang, “Mourning”, in Didier Fassin (ed.), *A Companion to Moral Anthropology* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 264–82.

toward the valuing of life itself, signifying an emerging ethos in China. To see this shift, let us begin with the ethos of sacrifice and the original construction of the graveyard during the Cultural Revolution.

BECOMING “REVOLUTIONARY MARTYRS”

Before 1949 the graveyard was a privately owned, rectangular burial place of 3,000 square meters. After the owner donated this estate to the city in the 1950s, it was occasionally used for special burials. It remained a quiet place until July 1967, when two dead rebels were buried there at the request of the leadership of the “August 15th” (8.15) group of Chongqing University, a leading Red Guards organization.

The Cultural Revolution in Chongqing started in June 1966 when, in response to the call from Beijing, the Party committee of the city sent a work team to Chongqing University to begin the campaign against the “revisionist” leadership of the university. In August the conflict between the students and the work team led to the birth of the first rebel organization—the 8.15. After several months of confrontations between the loyalists under the leadership of the city Party committee and the rebel organizations that mushroomed around the city, in late January 1967 the rebel organizations claimed victory, and seized power in the city.

Disagreeing over how to organize the new governing body, in February 1967 the rebel organization split into two opposing factions—the 8.15 and a group which later became the “Rebel to the End” (RTE, *fandaodi* 反到底) faction. The conflict escalated. Fights with wooden bars and iron spears in early April became fights with small-caliber guns by July. Entering August, semi-automatic rifles, automatic machine guns, four-barrel anti-aircraft guns, cannons and even tanks were used.¹⁵ As casualties from both factions increased, each faction buried its dead in different zones of the city. This graveyard became the most popular burial place for the 8.15 rebels.

By early 1969, 131 tombs had been built in the southwest corner of the park. The largest held 38 bodies, and about 450 people were buried in total. The ages of the dead ranged from 6 to 60.¹⁶ Many were under 20, consisting mostly of students (middle school, professional school, vocational school, college and military academy students) and young workers (factory workers, clerks and teachers).¹⁷

15. He Shu, *Wei Mao Zhuxi er zhan: wenge Chongqing da wudou shilu* (Fight for Chairman Mao: Documentation of Chongqing's Great Armed Fight in the Cultural Revolution) (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2010).

16. The six-year-old boy was killed by a stray bullet on a city street.

17. Although the “Graveyard for the Red Guards” is not the correct name, I adopt it because of its popularity. In the same way, even though the Red Guards and the rebels refer to somewhat overlapping but largely different groups of people, this article sometimes does not make a distinction.

Chongqing's armed factional fighting was among the worst in the country. The death toll was estimated to be in the thousands, and over 20 graveyards for Red Guards were built.¹⁸ In comparison, the famous "hundred-day armed fight" at Tsinghua University in Beijing in 1968 caused only 18 deaths.¹⁹

Three conditions made the fighting so fierce. First was the availability of firearms. Chongqing was a key base city in the state's project of constructing the third-front defense bases in the 1960s. Eight major ammunition manufacturers located in the city fell under the control of the two opposing factions. The two factions delivered brand-new firearms directly from different warehouses to their fighters, in addition to firearms seized from the military or armed divisions of the local government.²⁰

Second, the two factions were relatively balanced in power, prolonging the fighting. Around the country, mobilized Red Guards and rebels commonly split into opposing factions.²¹ The mass organizations in Chongqing underwent two major splits—one in 1966 and another in 1967. After the second split, the momentum between the two factions shifted back and forth, in part because of the manipulation and struggle of the leadership of the Cultural Revolution in Beijing.²² A large number of mourners at the graveyard recalled how encouraged they were by Jiang Qing's notorious slogan, "attack with reason and defend with force" (*wengong wuwei* 文功武卫). One Red Guard commented, "If one can defend with force, one can turn defense into offense with force". Another Red Guard recalled, "We were all encouraged by this, because we believed Mao was behind her".

Today many mourners raise the question of why it took so long for the center to stop the loss of life. Not until the end of July 1968 did Mao take decisive measures to end the armed fighting at Tsinghua University.²³ Ironically, this move signaled the end of the Red Guards movement and the beginning of their marginalization.

A third aspect of the fighting's intensity was the dominance of an ethos of sacrifice of life. This ethos can be seen in the mourners' memories of passionate and

18. Chen Xiaowen, "Chongqing hongweibing mudi sumiao" (A Sketch of the Graveyard for the Red Guards in Chongqing), in Liu Qingfeng (ed.), *Wenhua dageming: shishi yu yanjiu* (The Cultural Revolution: Historical Facts and Research) (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1996), pp. 163–76.

19. Tang Shaojie, *Yiye zhichun*, p. 64.

20. Li Musen, *Qin li Chongqing da wudou* (Personal Experience of Participating in Chongqing's Great Armed Fight) (Hong Kong: Zhongguo Wenhua Chubanshe, 2011).

21. Dong Guoqiang and Andrew Walder, "Factions in a Bureaucratic Setting: The Origins of Cultural Revolution Conflict in Nanjing", *The China Journal*, No. 65 (February 2011), pp. 1–25; Andrew Walder, *Fractured Rebellion*; Xu Youyu, *Xingxing sese de zaofan*.

22. He Shu, *Wei Mao Zhuxi er zhan*.

23. When exactly factional violence ended varied from place to place. See DONG Guoqiang and Andrew Walder, "From Truce to Dictatorship: Creating a Revolutionary Committee in Jiangsu", *The China Journal*, No. 68 (July 2012), pp. 1–31.



Mao's slogan: "Long live the dead martyrs!"

selfless participation of the Red Guards in armed fighting. Xu Youyu, a former Red Guard, a scholar of philosophy and an expert on the Red Guard movement, has stated: "What I want to emphasize is, from the Western criteria and today's perspective, it is very difficult to imagine how much the rebels and Red Guards lacked any awareness of their own interests".²⁴ In the graveyard in 2006, a female college student said to me, "I can't understand it. When I do volunteer work, I list it on my resume to make me look good. The Red Guards fought to the death not to get any benefits for themselves?!" In Chongqing, former Red Guards constantly recalled to me their ethos of "revolutionary sacrifice" and "revolutionary martyrdom".

This spirit of sacrifice makes the graveyard seem like an alien place today. The inscriptions on tombstones present biographical information of the dead in the following order: "Courageously Sacrificing Life to Defend Chairman Mao's Revolutionary Line", the dates of birth and death (or the age), the name of the dead followed by the title "The Tomb of a Martyr", the name of the 8.15 Red Guard organization, and the date of construction of the tomb. The biographical

24. Xu Youyu, *Xingxing sese de zaofan*, p. 179.

information on some tombs include the deceased's family origin (for example, poor peasant) and political status (for example, Party member), commonly flanked by a couplet in Mao's calligraphy. One popular couplet from 1958 reads: "So many sacrifices inspire our soaring aspiration that dares to order sun and moon to shine for a new sky" (*Wei you xisheng duo zhuangzhi, gan jiao riyue huan xintian* 为有牺牲多壮志, 敢教日月换新天). Another popular couplet was originally dedicated to Liu Hulan, a 16-year-old female revolutionary martyr killed by the Kuomintang in the civil war in the 1940s: "Born great and died glorious" (*sheng de weida, si de guangrong* 生的伟大, 死的光荣).

Sacrifice is the dominant theme of the tombs' designs. Most tombs resemble the Monument to the People's Heroes in Tiananmen Square. Several long eulogies describe loyalty to Chairman Mao. A popular couplet reads: "My head can be chopped off, my blood can be shed, but I will never abandon Mao Zedong's thought; however harshly beaten up and scolded, I will never bow my revolutionary head!" (*tou ke duan, xue ke liu, Mao Zedong sixiang bu ke diu; ke ai da, ke ai ma, shi si bu di geming tou* 头可断, 血可流, 毛泽东思想不可丢; 可挨打, 可挨骂, 誓死不低革命头).

Telling me about the death of her elder brother on 4 August 1967, Ms Wang, a woman now in her 50s, illustrated the atmosphere of sacrifice. The second of eight siblings, he was attending Chongqing Industrial College and was the only college student in the family. He went back home in late July. His parents locked the front door to keep him from leaving home, but he jumped out of the kitchen window and left for the battleground. He was shot dead in an attack on the other faction's building. A middle-school student at the time, Ms Wang was participating in the rehearsal of a show titled "The Epic of the Red Guards" when she was notified of his death. She attended a memorial meeting in an auditorium where a whole column of coffins was placed on the platform. Her brother was first buried on campus and later reburied in the graveyard.

She showed me his notebook, a prize that he had won from the college in 1965. As I flipped through it, I discovered Ms Wang's own diary entries written just after her brother's death.

14 August

Erge (Second Elder Brother) . . . Erge . . . Erge: I shout your name thousands of times, but you don't answer me anymore. I hear your voice no more, I can see your smiling face no more. Erge! I miss you so much . . .

Looking at your diaries, I feel as if you were sitting on the bed and I was sitting on the stool. You were thrilled to tell me about the day of 15 September 1966. You were so happy, because you saw the Great Leader Chairman Mao . . . but now . . . now . . .

24 August

Erge, you have been gone from this world for 20 days. If you were alive, you would have done many good things over the past 20 days! You could be with your comrades-in-arms, attacking Hangfeng (The Sailing Pioneers) or Chongyi (Chongqing Medical College) [two fighting squads of the RTE]!

31 August

Each time the Internationale was played before our show, I thought of you—my dear Erge. Erge, our comrades-in-arms of the 8.15 in the Mountain City (Chongqing) will remember you, the martyr. Your comrades-in-arms are following Chairman Mao's teachings: stand up, wipe off the blood on the body, and bury the dead comrades. Then join the fight again. Now, the comrades are risking their lives fighting. So many comrades-in-arms died for the cause of defending Chairman Mao's revolutionary lines.

I lost you, Erge, but I also see many, many brave and strong comrades-in-arms charging under a hail of bullets. Erge, the victory belongs to the faction of the 8.15. A new Mountain City glittering with Mao Zedong's thoughts will come into being.

4 October

Erge, you died for the people, and your death weighs as much as Mount Tai.

May my dear Erge rest in peace! We the 8.15 will realize your ideal.

Forty years ago, expressing determination to follow in the footsteps of her brother gave Ms Wang a way to grieve. All her memories were tied to the cause deemed so noble and glorious. The only personal memory was her brother sitting on her bed, thrilled to tell her about how he had seen Chairman Mao. His diary also described the scene when he saw Mao:

I saw Chairman Mao, the Red Sun which never sets in the hearts of Chinese people and revolutionary people in the world! The most, most beloved Chairman Mao is in his 70s, wearing a simple military uniform and a Red Guard armband . . . He shows boundless youthful energy in this new stage of socialist revolution . . . this is the happiest blessing for Chinese people and revolutionary people around the world!

Many of my interviewees shared similar memories. Zheng, a member of the 8.15, recalled the moment when he recognized Chairman Mao's figure atop Tiananmen Tower: "Tears were bothering me: they kept welling up and blinded my eyes. My right arm was fortunately not being held by anybody in the crowd,

so I wiped away my tears with my right sleeve and gazed at Chairman Mao. My tears kept welling up, and I kept wiping them, shouting ceaselessly: 'Long live Chairman Mao!' . . . After that I became more determined to defend Chairman Mao with my life."²⁵

On 22 September 1966, a second-grader's diary entry states:

Rainy. Today I saw *Chairman Mao Together with the Army of One Million Cultural Revolution Revolutionaries* [a documentary film]. At five o'clock on 18 August Chairman Mao came to Tiananmen Square, inspected the army of revolutionaries of the Cultural Revolution, and shook hands with them. How happy I would have been if I had seen Chairman Mao! We are determined to read Chairman Mao's works, to listen to Chairman Mao's words, to do things according to Chairman Mao's instructions, and to become Chairman Mao's good children. I will strive hard to become a Red Guard after I grow up, and go to Beijing to shake hands with Chairman Mao and have a picture taken with Chairman Mao.²⁶

Many interviewees said that their worship of Mao as God was genuine despite the Communist culture of atheism. Sacrifice was glorified, and individual lives became insignificant. Zhou Ziren (周孜仁), a member of the 8.15, recalled two of his dead comrades-in-arms—Li and Duan. Li wrote a letter to his girlfriend but died before it was mailed. He wrote:

If I die, please do not tell this to my family . . . when you learn that I have died, it won't be honest if you don't feel sad, but I just hope you would not be saddened excessively . . . I did not abandon the education given by the Party and Chairman Mao, I did not let him down. I think, so long as you think of this, you might feel better.²⁷

At Duan's memorial, his mother said, "I lost my intimate comrade-in-arms, my endearing son. My heart is soaked in extreme sorrow. But I feel proud of him, because the purpose of raising children is to fight to realize the ideal of Communism."²⁸

Sometimes families were split between the 8.15 and the RTE. Zhou Xingfan's (周兴帆) father was buried with 37 others in the largest tomb in the graveyard. Zhou was 16 when his father died in a battle in August 1967 at the age of 39. A

25. Zheng Zhisheng, *Hanxuelei* (Sweat, Blood and Tears), unpublished manuscript, pp. 76–77.

26. I am the author of this entry.

27. Zhou Ziren, *Hongweibing xiaobao zhubian de zishu* (A Red Guards Tabloid Editor's Memory) (Fort Worth: Fellows Press of America, Inc., 2006), p. 178.

28. Zhou Ziren, *Hongweibing xiaobao zhubian de zishu*, p. 180.

week before, his uncle had asked his father to leave the factory in the “war zone” and stay at his place. His father rejected the offer. They had not spoken to each other for a while, because they belonged to opposing factions. After the death of Zhou’s father, Zhou’s uncle did not dare to come to collect the corpse because he was afraid of being beaten by his younger brother’s faction.

In another example, Wen Jing (文静), a student at the No. 19 Middle School, joined the 8.15, while her father joined the RTE. Her father was shot dead while hanging a poster near the Red Flag Broadcasting Station where he was working. When she heard the news of her father’s death, she responded coldly with the words: “weighing less than a feather of a wild goose” (referring to an unworthy death), in contrast to “weighing more than Mount Tai”.

Wen’s response might be an extreme example, as some of her classmates thought she had been possessed, but more than one person testified to the following scene. After the 8.15 took a school building occupied by the RTE on 25 July 1967, a teenager of the 8.15 stood at the gate of the building and thrust a pencil knife into the arm of every captive surrendering with their hands up and walking out of the building. In another example, Chen Lezhou (陈乐洲), a student of No. 6 Middle School, was shot dead in Chongqing’s first armed fight on 7 July 1967. His heart was later removed from his body, soaked in medical fluid in a glass jar, and hung on the top of a pillar of the school building for days by his comrades-in-arms, to display how the “heartbeat of his red heart for Chairman Mao was stopped by an evil bullet of the enemy”.

Anita Chan aptly regards the combination of hatred of class enemies and worship of Mao as a Manichean vision of the world.²⁹ The graveyard manifested such a vision, in which “death was not fearsome, [because] becoming a counter-revolutionary was the most fearsome thing”.³⁰ Once the fight began, a defeat could result in the defeated being punished as a counter-revolutionary, a social status which the fighters avoided at all costs. The determination to “fight not to lose” revealed the pragmatic elements of the ideological motivation of “defending Chairman Mao”.³¹ Even the most selfless Red Guard fighters had a sense of self-interest, but it was well integrated into the ideology of “defending Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line”.

During the Cultural Revolution, burial rituals were simplified in accordance with revolutionary martyrdom.³² Since burning spirit money was considered an old feudal custom, people sang revolutionary songs, fired gunshots into the sky,

29. Anita Chan, *Children of Mao* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), pp. 206, 216. By a “Manichean worldview”, Chan refers to a dualistic outlook that sees life as in essence a constant struggle between two opposing forces (“good” and “evil”).

30. He Shu, *Wei Mao Zhuxi er zhan*, p. 176.

31. Andrew Walder, *Fractured Rebellion*.

32. See Martin K. Whyte, “Death in the People’s Republic of China”, in James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski (eds), *Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1988), pp. 289–316; Rubie S. Watson, “Making Secret Histories: Memory and Mourning in Post-Mao China”, in

read eulogies and made pledges, all modeled on official ceremonies for glorifying death and encouraging sacrifice.

Mr Cui and Ms Tong, a couple now in their 80s, lost their younger daughter in an ambush on 4 August 1967. A middle school student aged 15, she was shot dead as she helped her faction to move furniture. After she died, her fellow Red Guards from the No. 29 Middle School came to console her parents with a gift: the four-volume *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*. In a photo taken with a dozen of her classmates half a year later, Mr Cui and Ms Tong wore Red Guard armbands and badges depicting Chairman Mao.

A former Red Guard recalled how Liu Xianmei (刘显梅), an 18-year-old female Red Guard, was buried. She had served as a nurse in the famous “Panjiaping Battle” in August 1967. She was shot when she rushed across the road to rescue an injured comrade-in-arms who was attempting to blow up a building with dynamite. Her funeral was simple. She was washed and then buried in front of dozens of her fellow Red Guards, but several classmates were dissatisfied with the burial, primarily because she was not dressed in an army uniform. The day after, they dug up her corpse and re-dressed her in an army uniform. They also put an army cap on her head and a red band around her arm. Then two mourners held her in a standing position to have a picture taken before she was finally reburied. With the army uniform, her status as a revolutionary martyr was assured. The mourners believed that their dead fellow Red Guards had become martyrs, and that their noble names as martyrs would endure. Such martyrdom, however, was soon denied.

DYING A SECOND DEATH

The official appearance of the graveyard only reflected the wishful thinking of its builders. First of all, it lacked official approval from the city bureau of civil affairs. Granting the title of “revolutionary martyr” was a serious issue, being one of the ways by which the Chinese state encouraged the sacrifice of lives. In the 1960s, a martyr’s family received a tomb, a sum of money as one-off compensation and a number of other privileges. In the precarious political climate, being a family member of a revolutionary martyr meant protection. From 1949 to 1981, 6,078 titles of revolutionary martyr were granted in the city of Chongqing.³³ However, not a single dead Red Guard or rebel was granted the title, nor was even one application for such an official title received.

Rubie S. Watson (ed.), *Memory, History and Opposition under State Socialism* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1994), pp. 65–85.

33. Chongqing shizhi bianzuan weiyuanhui (The Editorial Committee of Chongqing Municipality Gazetteer), *Chongqing shizhi* (The Gazetteer of Chongqing Municipality), Vol. 13 (Chongqing: Southwest Normal University Press, 2005).

In 1950 the State Council defined “revolutionary martyrs” as “revolutionary military servicemen who sacrifice themselves in battles or noncombatant duty. That is, they die courageously for the just cause without yielding to the enemy after being taken prisoner, or are assassinated by special agents of the enemy.”³⁴ The emphasis was on fighting the enemy. Since death caused by the enemy was the precondition for being considered a revolutionary martyr, granting the title to dead Red Guards became problematic: were they killed by enemies? Was the other faction an enemy? It would be contradictory to grant the title of “revolutionary martyr” to the dead of both factions, since both factions were claiming that the other faction was the enemy.

Without the classification of “revolutionary martyr”, the families of the dead could not get any official compensation. Some of them were able to get compensation from their own faction if it was in control of their work unit, but not everyone got the same amount, and many families received nothing. The most miserable were the families of dead peasant rebels, who did not get a penny. Overall, the uneven compensation revealed the short-lived power of the Red Guards and the unofficial nature of their martyrdom. In the words of an old Red Guard, the dead could only be “unofficial martyrs” (*minban lieshi* 民办烈士).

Tombs continued to be added to the graveyard until January 1969, when all Red Guard and rebel organizations were disbanded. Starting at the end of 1968 in Chongqing, many rebels were arrested as murder suspects after law enforcement resumed its duties. A series of political campaigns were launched from 1969 onward to cleanse the class ranks. Factional fighting became scandalous and reprehensible. In the early 1970s, most graveyards for the Red Guards were demolished. The graveyard in Shaping Park remained, due to its out-of-the-way location, but the political definition of those buried there started to change.

Even though they enjoyed political privilege of which the class enemies (such as the five black categories) were deprived, the Red Guards shared life vulnerability with those class enemies, however differently they died. With the official appearance of the graveyard, many relatives and comrades-in-arms of the dead believed that, even though they had lost their lives, the spirit of the dead Red Guards would endure, and these loved ones would be remembered as revolutionary martyrs. They could not anticipate the political change that would deprive family members and comrades-in-arms of this last comfort. With the end of the Cultural Revolution and the beginning of the reform, most of the “capitalist roaders” and “five black categories” were rehabilitated. Shortly after the Cultural Revolution, memorial ceremonies were held for leaders like President Liu Shaoqi

34. Minzhengbu zhengce yanjiushi (Policy and Research Office of the Ministry of Civil Affairs), *Minzheng gongzuo wenjian huibian* (A Collection of Documents of Civil Affairs Work), Vol. 1 (1984).

to vindicate them and account for their deaths. Their ashes were solemnly buried or reburied.³⁵

In 1981, the CCP's "Resolution on Party History" expressed condolences in the following way to a list of people who died in the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution: "Leaders of the Party and the government such as Liu Shaoqi, Peng Dehuai, He Long, Tao Zhu and all other comrades inside and outside the Party who sacrificed themselves (*xisheng* 牺牲) or were sacrificed as a result of persecution during the Cultural Revolution will be remembered in the hearts of people of all ethnicities."³⁶ This list certainly did not include the Red Guards. Moreover, their exclusion indicated that the Red Guards, dead or alive, were to blame for the violence in the Cultural Revolution.

In 1983, the Party took its criticism of Red Guards further during the campaign to cleanse the Party of the "three types of persons". These were: those who had built up their careers in rebellion by following Lin Biao and the "Gang of Four" in the Cultural Revolution, those who were entrenched in factional mentality, and those who beat, smashed and looted during the Cultural Revolution. The campaign systematically shifted blame for the Cultural Revolution from Mao to the Red Guards.³⁷ As a result, many lost their Party membership and their posts in the government or in state-owned enterprises. Overall, the Red Guards and rebels were institutionally and symbolically stigmatized.

Instead of an honor and privilege, the title of "revolutionary martyr" on the tombstones became evidence of wrongdoing, a terrible stigma which the family members of the dead Red Guards hastened to avoid. Family members or relatives stayed away from the graveyard during the 1980s and most of the 1990s.

As this graveyard for dead Red Guards became forgotten, a number of headstones were dismantled or taken away by local residents. A few family members or relatives of dead Red Guards came to restore headstones, but with new inscriptions that carefully erased the title "revolutionary martyr" and the cause of death (including the date of death, in one case), to pretend that the deaths had nothing to do with the Cultural Revolution. In one case, everything on the headstone concealed the cause of the death, but the deceased's given name, Weidong ("Defending Mao Zedong" 卫东), gives the secret away.

Gu Cheng, a well-known young poet in the 1980s, visited the graveyard in 1979 and wrote two poems in 1980. A quotation from the longer poem reads:

35. Liu Shaoqi's ashes were ritualistically scattered in the ocean, and the scene was broadcast on Central Television.

36. CCP, "Guanyu jianguo yilai dang de ruogan lishi wenti de jueyi" (Resolution on Party History), 1981.

37. Song Yongyi, "Zaofanpai he sanzhongren: yige ji dai shenru yanjiu de wenti" (The Rebels and the Three Types of Persons: An Issue that Calls for Urgent and Thorough Studies), *Dongxian* (Trend), No. 2 (2006), pp. 38–43; He Shu, "Lun zaofanpai" (On the Rebels), in Song Yongyi (ed.), *Wenhua dageming: lishi zhenxiang he jiti jiyi* (The Cultural Revolution: Historical Truth and Collective Memories) (Hong Kong: Tianyuan Shuwu, 2007), pp. 497–524.

Perhaps always some lives	<i>yexu zong you yixie shengming</i>	也许总有一些生命
are destined to be	<i>zhuding yao bei</i>	注定要被
shaken out from the world. ³⁸	<i>shijie douluo</i>	世界抖落

During this period, dead Red Guards were deprived of their “grievability”—their entitlement to be mourned in public. Their lives were worth nothing. They thus died a second death. Fortunately, the story of the graveyard did not end here.

REGAINING GRIEVABILITY

In the mid-1980s, after all other graveyards for the Red Guards had been demolished, there was new pressure to demolish the graveyard in Shaping Park as well. In 1985, Liao Bokang (廖伯康), Chongqing’s Party Chief, received a letter from a cadre calling for its demolition. Liao went to the graveyard to deliberate. In an interview, he told me: “The graves could not speak, but what they represented deserves our reflection”. He decided to keep it. “It is easy to demolish it—one word and a night would be enough to get rid of it”, but he thought that “this was a historical matter”. He concluded: “Let us not argue about it”.

A decision was made to leave the graveyard alone. About 6,000 yuan were allocated to build a wall to seal it off. Liao went back to the graveyard in the late 1980s, to find that the tomb of a 14-year-old Red Guard which he had seen earlier was gone, and that weeds and entangled branches of trees had grown across the cracked concrete surfaces of the graves. The place had truly become “a zone of social abandonment”, to use João Biehl’s term.³⁹

As the stigmatization continued, China also underwent changes which led to the eventual rethinking of such stigmatization. In 1978, the CCP decided to shift its focus from class struggle to economic development. Accordingly, the whole society began to de-collectivize and individualize, particularly from the 1990s on. As a result, the ethos of “revolutionary sacrifice” faded away; the ethos of valuing individual life started to emerge, and questions about past sacrifices began to arise.⁴⁰ Since then, as part of a general religious revival, mourning activities at the time of Qingming have begun to flourish again. In 2007 the central government even designated Qingming a national holiday. These changes triggered

38. Gu Cheng, “Yongbiele, mudì” (Farewell, the Graveyard), in *Gu Cheng shi quanji shangjuan* (A Complete Collection of Gu Cheng’s Poems, Part 1) (Nanjing: Jiangsu Wenyi Chubanshe, 2010), pp. 449–57.

39. João Biehl, *Vita: Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

40. See Everett Zhang, “Governmentality in China”, in Everett Zhang, Arthur Kleinman and Weiming Tu (eds), *Governance of Life in Chinese Moral Experience: The Quest for an Adequate Life* (New York: Routledge, 2011), pp. 1–25.

questions among many relatives of the dead Red Guards: “Why shouldn't we visit the graves (and mourn publicly) for dead Red Guards?”

Some had performed mourning privately. For example, Mr Cui and his wife who lost their high-school-student daughter showed me her photos and her Red Guard armband. Looking at these things at home was a way to mourn their daughter, but they had gone to the graveyard only once. Others, however, had simply suppressed their urge to mourn. Ms Wang forgot about the emotional eulogy for her brother contained in the diary described above. She forgot the location of the graveyard as well. One day in the 1990s, when she was visiting her teenage daughter in middle school, she found herself, unwittingly, walking into nearby Shaping Park, and searched for the graveyard. Yet, because of the dramatic change in the surroundings, she got lost. Hesitating, she decided that she could not find the graveyard at all, and simply gave up. Another decade passed before she went back to the graveyard again in 2007, when she was attending a reunion in Shaping Park of the performers of the “Epic of the Red Guards” from some 40 years before. She found herself facing an overgrowth of leaves and grasses and the disappearance of names on the tombstones. She could not find her brother's tomb, and gave up again.

On the eve of Qingming in 2008, she and five other siblings planned to sweep their parents' tomb and that of their eldest brother. They thought of their second brother. Her youngest sister took the initiative to look for his grave, and found it. Ms Wang was encouraged by this rediscovery and came to visit for the first time in three decades. Her brother's name had fallen off the tombstone, but a carved icon of the revolutionary torch along with Mao's couplet was still recognizable, although blurred. Numbed to her own emotion and unwilling to open the notebook, she had previously de-identified with the senseless sacrifice. Yet her de-identification was gradually reversed. She soon wanted to redefine the death of her brother as that of a victim, rather than that of a wrongdoer, reflecting a change in her own subjectivity: initially, away from determination to take revenge on the other faction in the Cultural Revolution, and now away from accepting her brother's stigmatization after the Cultural Revolution. This change took the form of regaining a sense of entitlement to mourn her brother in public, as she now realized that his death should be explained without shame. She placed a bunch of flowers at the tomb.

Reflecting similar desires to mourn, many came to repaint the names on the tombs. I saw one woman painting the name of her dead father in red paint, while her 10-year-old son stood beside her, watching every brushstroke. Crying in public became common, now that there was no longer the fear of being accused of misplaced sympathy. I saw another woman squatting next to candles that she had lit, tears streaming down her face. She did not wipe them away, letting grief flow. An old lady went with her children, and sat on a stool brought for her, in front of the tomb of her husband who had died 40 years before. Her face froze

into a saddened expression, her gaze at her husband's name straight and intense. Motionless and speechless, she sat there for a long time, unaware of her children's repeated suggestions that it was time to leave.

Because mourning fulfills continuous familial responsibility, however imaginative, of the living for the dead, and demands public recognition of the grief, grieving in public integrates the pursuits for a moral life within family and beyond. Locating the proper grave is part of the process. Three sisters were not sure which tomb was their father's. One of them had come to the graveyard secretly in 1991. Down on her knees, she had repainted the inscription. However, by now the repainted inscriptions had worn off. The sisters repeatedly touched the blank tombstones, unable to decide where to light candles and burn paper money.⁴¹ They ended up bringing their old mother to the graveyard. She wavered, going three times around the tomb they suggested, but was not sure either. They eventually recalled a photo of the tomb taken forty years ago, but were not sure whether it was still maintained or could be found. The lack of certainty about the gravesite made them anxious.

In front of one tomb a family of 14 people had gathered. They were lucky, because the tomb inscription was recognizable. They laid out the white ribbons to call back the spirit of the dead (*hunpiao* 魂飘), lit candles and burned incense and paper money. In front of another tomb, a man in his 60s pulled out weeds around the tomb to clear a space, and laid three cigarettes that he lit for his three comrades-in-arms (buried together in the same tomb). In front of a large tomb in which 38 people were buried, a female mourner in her early 40s poured wine on the ground and burned paper money for her father who had died aged 22, when she was two months old. Back then, her mother had been prevented by other women from attending the burial, otherwise a young widow like her (20 years old) would have had bad fortune in her next marriage. The daughter bowed and murmured in a rather cheerful tone:

Dad . . . I am sending you money . . . You may not want to be too thrifty . . .
 You may want to buy good things to eat . . . I'm pouring wine for you as well . . .
 I know that you really like to drink . . . You may share them with your comrades-
 in-arms . . . Don't hold back . . . You may want to drink "flower wine" . . . look
 for a prostitute (*xiaojie* 小姐) . . .

"Looking for a *xiaojie*" was unthinkable in the Cultural Revolution, but the daughter conceived of her father in this way as if he were still alive, only living in a different yet nearby place. Her tender, intimate voice made my heart tremble.

41. On the significance of burning paper money, see Fred Blake, *Burning Money: The Material Spirit of the Chinese Lifeworld* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2011); Robert Weller, *Unities and Diversities in Chinese Religion* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987).

As these examples demonstrate, personal communication with the dead made the moral universe of mourning and political reflection inseparable. Ms Wang reflected,

It is so heavy to talk about it. It was a history we had already sealed off. But my brother just died such a death that we feel that it is too unjust. The whole thing was stirred up by Mao Zedong. We were all fooled by Mao Zedong. That's it. Looking back, Mao let ordinary folks sacrifice. Afterwards, no one came to set things straight and give a proper name to the dead . . .

Such a feeling of unjust death had been brewing among many mourners for a long time. It was also visible in the graffiti on the tombs. One reads: "Mao Zedong politically raped public opinion". A second reads, "Mao Zedong is feudal . . ." A third one reads, "Dare you speak out in the street?!" A fourth reads, "Just think that my whole-hearted loyalty in those years only got me a sorrowful life today . . ."

Ms Zheng's husband was buried in the graveyard. She said, "A life did not count then. Every time I think of this, I am heart-broken. Nowadays, a life is at least worth some money. Above all, his parents had reared him for 20-some years. Not a penny was given as compensation at that time."

This graveyard also became a site where some old Red Guards started to confront their own sense of guilt. Mr Han recalled how, on 1 July 1968, he had taken part in a battle as a member of the RTE. Sixteen years old, he was a student in the Industrial Machinery School.

I went up to the third floor of the Tool Building, and saw two men with guns in their hands. I immediately realized that they were 8.15 members, because I was the leader of our group and knew everyone on our side. I had my handgun in my right hand, and my left arm was injured from a misfire in April. In the blink of an eye, I quickly shouted to them that I was 8.15 before they had decided what to do. You know, my prompt response was the outcome of having been through many battles. They immediately relaxed their guard. Then our guys came up from behind and the two of them were surrounded. Facing so many members of the RTE, they had no way to resist. They were disarmed and taken captive. When they were taken away past me, they looked at me. I can still remember the looks on their faces. One was a little chubby, and the other was thin and older, perhaps in his 30s. When I went downstairs, they had already been killed, along with two other captives.

I did not feel anything at that time. I felt it was natural. Years later, I became an adult and then a father. I started to understand how much I hurt their families. The older, thin man must have had children already. One day I went to the graveyard and found a tomb in front of the big tomb for the Jianshe Factory. I looked quietly

at the tombstone. The person buried there died on 1 July 1968, and had the surname of Jiang. He was born in the 1930s. The tombstone was dedicated by his two daughters and two sons-in-law. I thought that Jiang was probably the thin, older one of the two I encountered on the third floor on that day. I still remember the look on his face.

My heart ached.

Jiang's two daughters were four and one when their father died. They did not have any memory of him when I talked to them in 2008. Their mother had said nothing other than one sentence—"Your father had gone to work and was gone". They could not recall anything about their father. "It was chaotic. He went to work and was gone", they repeated.

Their father was buried in one of the two big graves for the Jianshe Factory along with dozens of fighters, but the inscriptions were all gone. In 1994, on their father's 61st birthday, their mother had a small black marble tombstone erected in front of the big, blank collective tomb. She took her two adult daughters there to dedicate this small tomb to their father. She wanted her children and two grandchildren (both three years old) to know where their father and grandfather was buried so they could burn incense and paper money for him every year. She died two years later.

Nobody could know how many tears she had shed or how much suffering she had endured to raise her children. Growing up, the family went through a great deal of hardship. She was not employed by the factory but worked in a small cooperative affiliated with it. They lived on a small amount of difficulty assistance which they received from the factory every month. The two daughters recalled that in their teenage years they fetched water and coal to help their disease-stricken mother.

The tombstone does not say anything about the Cultural Revolution; the only hint is provided by the date of death. Had this tomb been erected elsewhere, there would have been no clue as to how Jiang had died. His grandchildren now know nothing about what happened during that time. "Their text books tell almost nothing about the Cultural Revolution—they refer to it only in passing", Jiang's elder daughter told me.

Current students in China know more about the Opium War in the 1840s and the Anti-Japanese War in the 1930s and 1940s than about the Cultural Revolution. On Qingming Festival, the two daughters took their children—a pair of high school students—to the graveyard. While the two children were squatting and burning incense and paper money, they teased each other and made funny faces. Even college students who stumbled into the graveyard were more often than not puzzled by its grotesque appearance, and asked questions that left me not knowing whether to laugh or to cry. Some confused the dead with official

revolutionary martyrs who died in the civil war in the 1940s. A serious, seemingly better-informed male college student asked me: "Since they fought each other to the death, the two factions must have belonged to two different classes, isn't that so?" The ritualistic actions could not make full sense to the mourners until they were performed in front of the tombs, the inscriptions on which were not meant to conceal the cause of the deaths. Mourning in public thus opens the door for a broader form of political questioning.

In 1983, Mr Han was labeled as one of the "three types of persons", but he didn't dwell only on his own loss. The "aching in his heart" motivated him to record the local history of the armed fight, confronting his grief and sense of guilt on the one hand and countering the overall forgetfulness of history in the society on the other. He interviewed many people and co-wrote a long article titled "The Graves of Youths Buried During Chongqing's Cultural Revolution", published by *Southern Weekend* (*Nanfang zhoumo* 南方周末) in 2001. He also actively helped a television crew from a big southern city to make a documentary about the graveyard in the mid-2000s. However, the co-author of the article lost his job as a staff writer of the newspaper, and the documentary was not aired until the Qingming Festival of 2012.

Before Han's attempt, in the early 1990s a group of publishing professionals had jumped over the wall into the graveyard. They had numbered the tombs and copied all the inscriptions to rescue the history that was disappearing before their eyes. As more and more family members started to mourn the dead openly in the 2000s, a retired chemistry teacher came to the graveyard to collect biographical information about the dead by interviewing mourners and visitors. With the dilapidation of the tombs and the passing away of witnesses, the need to rescue the graveyard became urgent. A group of citizens started to push for its official preservation.

The Shaping Park administration cautiously made its own moves as well. Even in the early 1990s, the administrator had arranged for a photographer to take photos of every tomb in the graveyard and store them in the park archives. In 2006, a rumor that a developer had been given permission to demolish the graveyard triggered off a reaction from the mourners so strong that the district government explicitly denied that there was any such plan. In 2007, the park administration took action, appointing a taskforce of three people to collect historical records and oral histories of the graveyard. The vision was ambitious—to be known in the country as a site for testimonies about the Cultural Revolution.

While eager to protect the graveyard, the park administration was careful not to trigger any backlash. It avoided planting pine trees there, as these were standard icons of immortality reserved for revolutionary martyrs. The Political Consultative Committee in the Shaping District continued to receive motions proposing the construction of a Cultural Revolution museum based on the graveyard, but these were never included on the committee's agenda.

In April 2008, the park's taskforce gathered momentum. The director of the National Cultural Relic Bureau made an appeal that legacies from periods such as the Great Leap Forward, the People's Commune and the Cultural Revolution should be protected. The *People's Daily* website included an article titled "Director of National Bureau of Cultural Relic Proposes Preserving Representative Architecture in the Cultural Revolution and Other Periods".⁴²

In May 2008, the park submitted an application for the title of Chongqing Cultural Relic. A committee of 20 people responsible to Chongqing's Administration of Cultural Relics examined the application. Their expertise covered the fields of history, archaeology, city planning, architecture, religion and museum management, but none of them had previously been to the graveyard. The committee went there twice in 2009 to investigate; it listened to a briefing from the park taskforce, and soon voted unanimously to bestow the new title. The mayor approved the proposal on 15 December 2009, allegedly the last decision in his tenure.⁴³ A media splash followed at the beginning of 2010.

Many mourners welcomed the title. The official approval and the warning from above sent mixed signals, however. The City Administration of Cultural Relics was trying to tone down the political significance of the new title.

According to the City Administration of Cultural Relics, the possibility of preserving the graveyard was due in large part to administrative neutrality. Preservation of cultural relics offers neutrality and objectivity to the work of recording the history of the Cultural Revolution. The administration expressed its surprise that so much attention was focused on this one site among so many, and emphasized that they had made the decision based entirely on the duty to preserve history. "We realize that anything recent could disappear rapidly if we do not take measures to protect it", an official with a BA in history commented. It was the emphasis on protecting 20th-century legacies that justified the protection of historical sites like this. The new title for the graveyard resulted from the work of bureaucracy, rather than from any order from above based on ideology or political strategy.

Nonetheless, there was reason to worry about the park, because the National Bureau of Cultural Relics had been criticized for proposing protecting historical sites of the Cultural Revolution. Moreover, in the published version of a speech

42. Wen Songhui, "Guojia wenwujuzhang tichu baohu 'wenhuadageming' deng shiqi you daibiaoxing jianzhuwu" (Director of National Bureau of Cultural Relic Proposes Preserving Representative Architecture in the Cultural Revolution and Other Periods), *Renming wang* (People's Net) (10 April 2008). <http://society.people.com.cn/GB/97734/7106061.html> (accessed 12 March 2013).

43. The mayor left office at the end of 2009. There is no evidence that Bo Xilai, who became Secretary of the Party Committee of Chongqing in 2007 and was removed from his position by the CCP's central committee in 2012, was involved in granting the title. Nor is there any record that Bo ever paid a visit to the graveyard.



A group of mourners next to the sign that reads “Chongqing Cultural Relic Preservation Unit: Red Guard Graveyard”

by the director of the NBCR, the phrase “Cultural Revolution” disappeared from the list of important historical events singled out for preservation.⁴⁴

While the application for the title was being considered in 2009, more graffiti—five stars with the words “the New Communist Party”—appeared mysteriously on a number of tombs, startling the park administration into nervously locking the front gate and allowing entry only to family members of the dead. The park did not want to allow either criticism or praise of the Cultural Revolution to develop into either political action or the formation of organizations. Consequently, the graveyard has been locked up most of the time since the title was granted. The only visible difference is a new sign, “Chongqing Cultural Relic Preservation Unit”, erected in front of the gate. The erected sign has an icon of the golden circle, indicating the status of cultural relic.

How do we understand the contradiction between the opening up and closing down of this space of public mourning? The contradiction reflects the conflict among three types of public voice.

44. Shan Jixiang, *Liuzhu chengshi wenhua de “gen” yu “hun”* (Preserving the “Root” and the “Soul” of Urban Culture) (Beijing: Kexue Chubanshe, 2010).

The first comes mostly from the family members of the dead and from people like Mr Han. It articulates the deep sorrow of those who grieve for the unaccounted-for deaths, and the sense of guilt of some participants in the Cultural Revolution.

The second comes mostly from former Red Guard leaders. They openly praise the Cultural Revolution and attribute the problems of today—primarily inequality and corruption—to its failure. A comrade-in-arms of eight dead Red Guards even said that he would prefer to lie buried with the dead than to live, given the stigmatization that he had suffered since the end of the Cultural Revolution, and today's consumer society in which everyone is corrupt.

The third is the official assessment of the Cultural Revolution. This voice cannot tolerate the first voice, because that would mean confirming Mao's culpability; it cannot identify with the second, because that would lead to praising the Cultural Revolution and undermining the legitimacy of the post-Mao economic reform.

The three voices represent different attitudes toward human life. The first type grieves the loss of individual lives, whereas the second grieves loss of life only as a price to pay for a grand goal. The third denies both the grand goal and the value of those particular individual lives. The conflict between the first two voices was evident in a debate that I witnessed. A quarrel broke out between a female mourner who condemned the Cultural Revolution and a male comrade-in-arms who praised it. This quarrel ended in the man's swift withdrawal, as she shouted in his face. She had been only seven years old when her father was shot dead. Her mother soon remarried. She recalled, "My sister and I lived like orphans". Family members of the dead were unlikely to see the deaths of the Red Guards as worthwhile, even if they could be named revolutionary martyrs.

These two opposing voices, however, share a demand that there be an accounting for the deaths. In contrast, the official assessment of the Cultural Revolution (the third voice) would still make mourning impossible. On the one hand, it discourages people from mourning the dead in the name of sacrifice for Mao, because Mao mistakenly launched the Cultural Revolution; on the other hand, it does not encourage the griever to mourn in the name of life itself, because then the deaths would need to be accounted for.

CONCLUSION

By demonstrating the rise, fall and re-emergence of the right of dead Red Guards to be mourned in public, this article illuminates the evolution of public ethics in the post-Mao era. The graveyard was first built to glorify the "revolutionary sacrifice" of the Red Guards in the Cultural Revolution and to account for their deaths in the name of revolutionary martyrdom. However, the buried Red Guards died "a second death" when the idea of this martyrdom crumbled and

the graveyard was abandoned as a result of the official negation of the Cultural Revolution in the post-Mao reform. This negation also brushed aside the accountability of the Party leadership for the Cultural Revolution, stigmatized the actions of the Red Guards and left their deaths without adequate explanation or recognition.

However, the fading away of the ethos of “class struggle” and “revolutionary sacrifice”, an overarching change in attitudes toward life, the revival of religion and the development of governmental reason has led, somewhat ironically, not only to the resurgence of grieving for the Red Guards but also to the granting of the official title of “cultural relic” to the graveyard. Contesting the official judgement of the Cultural Revolution, this title not only enables dead Red Guards to be mourned in public but also gives rise to a new moral ground for mourning: every death must be accounted for in the name of life itself. This rise of the grievability of these Red Guards is not a re-justification of senseless sacrifice, but an articulation of an emerging historical consciousness of the value of human life.

The graveyard is yet to be fully opened to the public, as the space of mourning remains under the shadow of the official judgement on the Cultural Revolution. Nonetheless, its official title of “Cultural Relic” points to a possible future direction for China. The sacrifice of life can no longer be taken lightly.