

Preface

This book has come a long way, a very long way indeed. It started to become a more focused project in around 2013, following books on school textbooks in East Asia and on historical documentaries in China to probe into the ways historical consciousness is constructed in and beyond the classroom. However, due to other projects and books coming in between which led me deeper into the field of cultural heritage studies, though proving helpful for this present book, too, this manuscript went from the front to the backburner repeatedly. Finally, then, it now sees the light of the day. Most of the materials were collected over many years, and on-site observations cover the period of 2010 to 2018 mainly, though the time-frame covered with documentation is longer (roughly 1997 to 2019). Between 2013 and 2017, I had the occasion to travel more regularly to visit ‘patriotic education bases’ around China, if always squeezed in between the teaching seasons, and for the funding of some of the fieldwork, I am very grateful to the Heinz-Götze Foundation. For further documentation, an extremely helpful hand was always offered by our institute’s former librarian, Anne Labitzky: I am deeply indebted to her for the great support she has provided and the enthusiasm with which she accompanied my academic work until her well-deserved retirement. I am also grateful to my former students who took part in seminars on related topics in early phases of this book project and sometimes wondered about the huge amount of materials that the ‘patriotic education campaign’ produced: they also put up with the sometimes rather bad visual and acoustic quality of filmic sources. Regarding some details, I am furthermore indebted to Dr. Mariana Münning, Olivia Wenzel, and Dr. Clemens Büttner for their valuable suggestions. The production of the book has been luckily in the professional hands of Nicole Merkel-Hilf and the HASP team, and a special thank you goes to Thilo Scheidt for taking over the technical parts of the index with the precision and endurance one needs for this task. On a technical note, I should state that, given that the topic is concerned with the ‘patriotic education bases’ of the People’s Republic of China, I have opted for using simplified characters for Chinese in general in this book, and Pinyin for transcribing it (but for very common exceptions like Chiang Kai-shek etc.).

I dedicate this book in memoriam to my late mother and father, being thankfully aware that I would have never made it without their life-long unwavering support which remains a very dear memory to me. They were always there to back up the family and help my husband keep it running during my absences, and wondered

how long it would take to finish this particular book, when every fieldwork resulted in yet further heaps of materials piling up. It is really sad that they did not live to see the book finally accomplished: it simply took too long, but I only realised this time that while I have dedicated books to my children, my husband, and other close family members in the past, I completely missed out on doing so for the most obvious: you, Mum and Dad, to whom I owe so much, so this is my unfortunately belated, but even the more deeply felt thank you for all that you have done for me in life: I will always keep you in my heart. R.I.P.

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