

15 Whose Heritage? Western and Russian Tombs on Chinese Soil as Tangible Sites of Alterity

Abstract. Among the enduring forms of tangible Western and Russian heritage in Greater China there are not only buildings or statues, but also tombs and cemeteries. These tell their own history of place which may well be at variance with the one locally preferred, and they are, as opposed to buildings for example, evidently not open to potential adaptive “reuse”. At the very most, they can be reframed. Neither can they be simply transferred to museums as one may do with a statue. Their existence and the question of their preservation pose a particular challenge to the present-day surrounding society since they are not only representing but also materially hosting “foreign dead”, i.e. “ancestors” of “others” whose physical remains are interred in Chinese soil. In short, “their” memory is not – or not necessarily – “our” memory from the viewpoint of the culture and society they are situated in. On a political level, this entails potential diplomatic issues, and also extends to issues of colonialism and post-colonialism. On the other hand, the tombs and cemeteries also speak of Western/Russian views of death, religion and the body, and they visually manifest those to the Chinese society surrounding them today. This study therefore argues for the importance to not only look into Western and Russian material heritage of, and for, the living in Greater China, but to include also the remaining dead. These stand for (local and translocal) history and foreign agency in the past at large, but also more personally for the very individuals and their different societal roles; and their material legacy links them to the place far from their own homes and to the context of a foreign society and culture. Cemeteries, while reminding everyone of the common fate of a finite existence shared by all human beings, are nevertheless culturally inscribed, and thus foreigners’ tombs are a material and visual presence of alterity physically grounded in a Chinese context.

Keywords. Cultural heritage, Greater China, Cemeteries, Military, Religion.

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Modern-day heritage politics in Greater China have to deal with the question of what to do with the particular material legacy represented by locally extant Western/Russian tombs and cemeteries?¹ Should they be kept, and if so how, for whom, and by whom? Since it is not only tombstones but also human remains that are involved, any decision is bound up with issues of piety, if not religion. Tombs are personal and private, but they can be made to serve also politics and be “nationalized”. While memorials concern the living more than those remembered, physical remains in a cemetery remind the living that the dead cannot be completely left out of the picture; they “demand” their share of attention,² whatever might be attached to their tombstones above ground, and in whatever context they are placed by others. Although their tombstones are – to use Alois RIEGL’s terminology – “intentional” (gewollte) monuments with historical commemorative value (Erinnerungswert), their “present-day value” (Gegenwartswert) is questionable and relative according to whom they are for,³ however being attached to human remains as they are, they are simply more than just monuments.⁴

At times, the picture becomes additionally complicated by further players, namely – in our case in Greater China – with the Japanese when they were masters at some locations. For example, in Taiwan during the Japanese colonial period, Western cemeteries were “used” to serve diplomatic agendas, most notably with the “French Military Cemetery” in Keelung (Jilong 基隆) set up for French casualties during the Sino-French War of 1884/85 (fig. 15-1). Since the Japanese who held Taiwan as their colony from 1895 to 1945 had no reason to commemorate the Qing soldiers (and local volunteers) who fought against the French in 1884/85, they turned the foreign site, i.e. the French military cemetery, into a museum-like site, which was, in 1923, even visited by the Japanese crown prince (the later Shōwa Tennō 昭和天皇) (1901–1989). This, in turn, did not render the site particularly

1 Cf. for just one of many similar cases, here in South Asia, Ashish CHADHA: “Ambivalent Heritage: Between Affect and Ideology in a Colonial Cemetery”. In: *Journal of Material Culture* vol. 11, no. 3, 2006, pp. 339–363.

2 Cf. Thomas W. LAQUEUR: *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press 2015, with a focus on Western Europe.

3 For the terminological system of RIEGL which provided a basis for international heritage preservation concepts, namely the Venice Charter (1964), see Ernst BACHER (ed.): *Kunstwerk oder Denkmal? Alois Riegls Schriften zur Denkmalpflege* (Work of Art or Monument? Alois Riegl’s Writings on the Preservation of Monuments), Wien et al.: Böhlau 1995. An English translation of the main part of his major work in this regard is: Alois RIEGL: “The Modern Cult of Monuments, its Charter and its Origin”, transl. by K.W. FORSTER and D. GHIRARDO. In: *Oppositions*, no. 25, 1982, pp. 21–51.

4 Similarly, RIEGL had been careful about religious monuments, since here, too, additional factors beyond art and matter come into play.

endearing to the Taiwanese population.⁵ There were apparently larger designs planned by the Japanese to turn the site into a showcase memorial, but the French pointed out that the site was a cemetery and thus a commemorative place. This reveals the difference of a “heritage site” for those somehow involved (i.e. the French standing for the “bereaved” and caring for those buried) and those merely “managing” the site (the Japanese, aiming at some benefit from what is visible above ground). In Lüshun 旅順 in Manchuria, in turn, the victorious Japanese took over the place formerly held by the Russians during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904/05 and were the ones to bury most of the Tsarist dead there, here successfully setting up a showcase cemetery after the war, with classical-style mausoleum and (Latin) marble crosses included (fig. 15-2, 15-3, 15-4). This means that what is to be seen in this “Tsarist” part of the present-day cemetery is, in fact, a Japanese construct of “Westernness” with references to Greek antiquity with the “mausoleum”, and to Christianity in a broad sense by the crosses, but not explicitly “Russian” in visual appearance.⁶ In fact, Western European models, namely the Victorian “fashion”, spread all over the British Empire and imitated beyond,⁷ were likely on the Japanese mind for setting up a “state-of-the-art” cemetery.

5 See Gotelind MÜLLER: *Challenging Dead: A Look into Foreigners' Cemeteries in Macau, Hong Kong, and Taiwan*, Heidelberg and Berlin: CrossAsia-Repository 2018, available online: DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11588/xarep.00004145>, p. 30. For the “touristic value”, see XU Yuliang 許毓良: “Jilong Faguo gongmu kao” 基隆法國公墓考 (Study on the Keelung French cemetery). In: *Taiwan fengwu* 臺灣風物 (“The Taiwan Folkways”) vol. 52, no. 2, 2002, pp. 111–137, there pp. 130–131. The 1923 visit of Crown Prince Hirohito 裕仁 to Taiwan has been studied by WAKABAYASHI Masahiro since the 1980s in various articles. See, e.g., WAKABAYASHI Masahiro 若林正文: „Sen kyūhyaku nijūsan nen Tōgū Taiwan gyōkei to ‘naichi enchō shugi’” 一九二三年東宮台灣行啓と“内地延長主義” (The 1923 Taiwan visit of the Crown Prince and the “ideology of extension of the homeland”). In: *Iwanami kōza: Kindai Nihon to shokuminchi 2: Teikoku tōchi no kōzō* 岩波講座。近代日本と植民地 2。帝國統治の構造 (Iwanami symposium: Modern Japan and the colonies 2: The structure of imperial rule), Tokyo: Iwanami shoten 1992, pp. 87–119.

6 It might be mentioned that at the time the Japanese cast themselves in the role of the defenders of Western civilization against the “oriental” Russians. Cf. Naoko SHIMAZU: *Japanese Society at War: Death, Memory and the Russo-Japanese War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2009. As it seems, the Greco-Roman “mausoleum” in Lüshun de facto did not contain any human remains and thus is a memorial building only.

7 Cf. James Stevens CURL: *The Victorian Celebration of Death*, Stroud: Sutton Publishing 2000.



Figure 15-1: Keelung: French Military Cemetery: monument to the French officers, soldiers and marines who died during the Sino-French War in Keelung ©2018



Figure 15-2: Lüshun: Soviet Military/ “Martyrs” Cemetery: Japanese-built “mausoleum” for Russian war dead erected after the Russo-Japanese War ©2018



Figure 15-3: Lüshun: Soviet Military/ “Martyrs” Cemetery: Japanese-built individual tombs of Russian officers erected after the Russo-Japanese War ©2018



Figure 15-4: Lüshun: Soviet Military/ “Martyrs” Cemetery: Example of collective tomb for Russian war dead at single battle sites erected by the Japanese after the Russo-Japanese War ©2018

The defeated Russians themselves were only allowed in 1912 to take an active part again in the cemetery which hosted their own dead,⁸ setting up a large Orthodox cross with an icon of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker and a tiny chapel dedicated to St. Equal-to-the-apostles Vladimir,⁹ thus “Russianizing” the cemetery (fig. 15-5).



Figure 15-5: Lüshun: Soviet Military/ “Martyrs” Cemetery: Restored Tsarist huge cross for the Russo-Japanese War dead ©2018

8 See Gotelind MÜLLER: *Ambivalent Remains: China and the Russian Cemeteries in Harbin, Dalian and Lüshun*, Heidelberg and Berlin: CrossAsia-Repository 2019, available online: DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11588/xarep.00004181>, esp. pp. 49–55.

9 According to architectural historian LEVOSHKO, it was probably to be kept small as to not tower over the Japanese-built mausoleum. S.S. LEVOSHKO: “Arkhitekturnye traditsii pamiati v pravoslavii: khramy-pamiatniki pavshim voenam na Dal’nem Vostoke (k 100-letiiu russko-iaponskoï voïny 1904–1905 gg.)” (Architectural traditions of memory in Orthodoxy: sanctuary-monuments to fallen soldiers in the Far East (to the 100th anniversary of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904–1905). In: V.G. BABIN (ed.): *Makar’evskie chteniia: Materialy chetvertoï mezhdunarodnoï konferentsii (21–22 noiabria 2005 goda)* (Macarius readings: Proceedings of the fourth international conference (November 21–22, 2005)), Gorno-Altaiisk: RIO GAGU 2005, 7 pages, there p. 5. Paper available online via the index page: <http://e-lib.gasu.ru/konf/mak/arhiv/2005/index.html>.

The controversial icon designed for Lüshun to ward off “paganism” which did not arrive in time for the Russo-Japanese war, understandably never made it to the place during the years of Japanese occupation. It is somewhat ironic that it is now installed in a consecrated copy at the time of a Chinese Communist regime officially subscribing to atheism, although here the potential “anti-Japanese” association is most probably much welcome. Needless to say, for the faithful the icon has more important connotations than politics, but it is kept publicly inaccessible most of the time by the cemetery administration anyway.¹⁰

Another factor making things even more complicated is the fact that “Western” cemeteries were not necessarily exclusively “hosting” “Westerners”, if one thinks, for example, of the British military which is commemorated today in Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemeteries, in the Greater China area represented in Hong Kong: “British military” included also Indians and other “non-Westerners” (fig. 15-6, 15-7). And also in terms of a religious perspective, beyond the Christians there are also Jews, and these include – beyond the European/Russian Jews buried in Harbin and Hong Kong until today – also the so-called Baghdadi Jews from British India (and Iraq), whose tombs are still to be found in Hong Kong. Many Sephardic Baghdadi Jews as well as Ashkenazic Russian Jews had also been buried in Shanghai once, but there no Jewish cemetery has survived, just scattered tombstones and some single (relocated) tombs, e.g. of the influential Baghdadi KADOORIE family in the “international cemetery”.¹¹ This leaves Harbin with the “largest Jewish cemetery of East Asia” as the only one in mainland China which mostly “hosts” Ashkenazic Russian Jews,¹² and Hong Kong with a mixed Jewish representation of Sephardim and Ashkenazim (fig. 15-8, 15-9).

10 The chapel in Lüshun is usually closed to the public.

11 See Gotelind MÜLLER: *Between History, Heritage, and Foreign Relations: Extant Westerners' Cemeteries in Guangzhou and Shanghai*, Heidelberg and Berlin: CrossAsia-Repository 2018, available online: DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11588/xarep.00004163>, p. 17 and p. 31.

12 See MÜLLER: *Ambivalent Remains* (2019), pp. 26–30.



Figure 15-6: Hong Kong: Sai Wan War Cemetery (Commonwealth War Graves Commission) ©2018



Figure 15-7: Hong Kong: Sai Wan War Cemetery: some non-Briton / non-Christian tombs ©2018



Figure 15-8: Harbin: Jewish cemetery: restored tombstones and name plaques ©2018



Figure 15-9: Hong Kong: Jewish Cemetery ©2018

With these caveats in mind, and with the awareness that in a more general vein “foreigners” in the area also included Muslims and Indian Parsees in terms of religion,¹³ as well as Vietnamese, Koreans, Mongolians, and the numerous Japanese in terms of ethnicities, most of the “foreign dead” still to be found in the Greater China area are Westerners or Russians. Apart from the Jewish dead, they are for the most part Christians. With the Soviets, finally, a secularized form of burial made its way to China as well. Whereas the orthodox Russians, especially in the pauper cemeteries, sometimes used wooden crosses which easily decayed, the more frequent case was tombs in stone, and these had, by the very nature of the material, better chances to “survive”.

Thus, what the Chinese encounter today are these remaining tangible visual-material sites of alterity. Still, not all cemeteries are exclusively “foreign”, and in some cases there is a mixture of foreign and Chinese graves in the cemeteries, usually in those cases where Christian denomination is the defining criteria. For example Harbin’s “Orthodox cemetery” hosts Russian as well as Chinese orthodox, or Hong Kong’s Catholic cemetery “St. Michael’s”, while visually being dominated by “Western” tombstone design with statues and angels (fig. 15-10), from the start hosted whatever Catholic, regardless of nationality. In fact, the Catholics insisted on rejecting the “race” segregation suggested by the British colonial authorities and integrated the Chinese Catholics from the very start.



Figure 15-10: Hong Kong: St. Michael’s Catholic Cemetery ©2018

13 Beyond the Sino-Muslims (*hui* 回), there are also, e.g., Arabic traders’ tombs. Notable foreign Muslim populations were usually present at places of trade. The Parsees, in turn, still have a running cemetery in Hong Kong, while the ones in Macau and Guangzhou are historical.

On the other hand, an important factor was the question of who is running the cemetery: if it is the municipality, then there is no reason to exclude whoever lives there. The “Hong Kong Cemetery” (earlier also named “Protestant” or “Colonial Cemetery”) thus became fairly mixed in time in the sense that it not only took in the equally foreign Japanese, but also a substantial number of (selected) Chinese, though being visually defined by “Western” tomb architecture and the garden cemetery design popular since the 18th century in Britain (fig. 15-11).¹⁴ The most mixed of all, though, is the Macau “S. Miguel” cemetery which, in spite of having a large part of Christian crosses and statues and a chapel (fig. 15-12), now provides also clearly visible signs of Buddhist, Daoist, and other creeds (fig. 15-13). And the longer a cemetery is used beyond the “colonial” or foreign-imprinted period, the more it obviously changes. Thus, while the “Hong Kong Cemetery” is basically closed today, the Harbin “Orthodox Cemetery” and the “S. Miguel” cemetery in Macau are still fully in use (though numbers between the two differ substantially, given the tiny Orthodox parish in Harbin) (fig. 15-14). This, in turn, also means that for “heritagization”, mainly the closed cemeteries are those available for such a process, while cemeteries still running are not easy to protect as heritage, as they are continually changing. Furthermore, funerary policies are a decisive factor as well; while old tombs may be protected, the newer ones usually are only set up on slots leased for some time and will be replaced. Thus, only those sections of a running cemetery, i.e. the oldest ones that are “perpetual tombs”, will remain, while other tombs are designed to be replaced as to not run out of space. While “heritagization” implies tombstones and artwork above ground are to be kept, newer tombstones are already set up with the knowledge that they will be there only for some time (and as long as there are relatives caring for said tombstones). This binds tombs more strictly to the bereaved and the people interred, while “heritagization” rather focuses on the durable artwork above ground (and possibly the prominent character of the particular person interred).

14 For a brief overview on the development of cemeteries in Western Europe, see James Stevens CURL: “A Short History of the Cemetery Movement”. In: Richard BARNES: *The Art of Memory: Sculpture in the Cemeteries of London*, Kirstead: Frontier 2016, pp. 7–41.

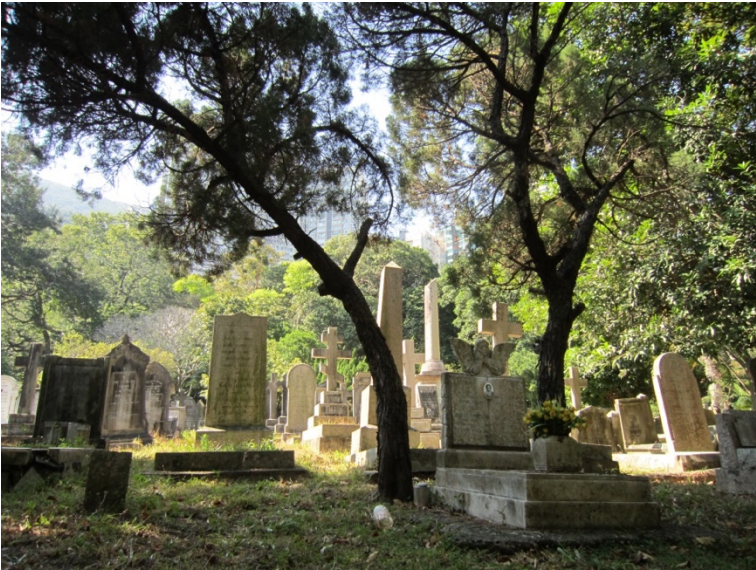


Figure 15-11: Hong Kong: Hong Kong (Protestant/Colonial) Cemetery ©2018



Figure 15-12: Macau: S. Miguel Arcanjo Cemetery ©2018



Figure 15-13: Macau: S. Miguel Cemetery: different creeds ©2018



Figure 15-14: Harbin: View into the Orthodox Cemetery ©2018

With the Soviet burial tradition which has left a profound imprint on the PRC by its so-called “martyrs’ cemeteries” (*lieshi lingyuan* 烈士陵园/ *lieshi gongmu* 烈士公墓), which are most prominent in Manchuria, another tangible visual-material site of alterity is created. (This cemetery type would also serve as a model for similar cemeteries for Chinese Communist “martyrs”.) Here it is the celebration of “the cause” for which a “martyr” laid down his (or sometimes: her) life, by which, as Reinhard KOSELLECK aptly remarked, “the visible legitimation of what for one died swallowed the reason why one died”,¹⁵ and also how. Although the “heroes” (as the Soviets called them, while the Chinese used “martyr” in English for *lieshi* 烈士 in Chinese) died for “a cause”, their commemoration picks up Western traditions of mourning, from antiquity to Christian symbolism,¹⁶ turning them, however, into a secularized form. The individuals are “nationalized” in the process and no longer are “of their families”. In the Soviet case of the ones who died in China, the majority were Red Army soldiers, and thus the military topic is paramount (fig. 15-15). (Some civil Soviet specialists who died in China are included, however, as are family members of the Red Army where the latter was stationed for some more time as in the Lüshun 旅顺 - Dalian 大连 area, including Jinzhou 金州). The design of these military tombs was not only for the dead, but more pronouncedly for the living, stressing the educative function of these “martyrs’ cemeteries” for the younger generations. Heritage is thus also integrated into education programs, e.g. in the patriotic education programs in the PRC.¹⁷ But also in Hong Kong, the “Stanley War Graves Commission Cemetery” (fig. 15-16) has been assigned an educative function.

15 Reinhardt KOSELLECK: *Zur politischen Ikonologie des gewaltsamen Todes: Ein deutsch-französischer Vergleich* (On the political iconology of violent death: a German-French comparison), Basel: Schwabe & co. 1998, p. 8.

16 For a “classical” overview of the development of funerary monuments from antiquity to the Renaissance in an art-historical perspective, see Erwin PANOFSKY: *Tomb sculpture: Four lectures on its changing aspects from Ancient Egypt to Bernini*, London: Phaidon 1992 [1964]. For Western views on death through time, see Philippe ARIÈS: *Western Attitudes Toward Death from the Middle Ages to the Present*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 1974. See also Michel VOVELLE: *La mort et l'occident de 1300 à nos jours* (Death and the Occident from 1300 to our days), Paris: Gallimard 1983.

17 Thus, the Lüshun Soviet Martyrs’ Cemetery is today officially Chinese graded heritage and integrated into patriotic education programs.



Figure 15-15: Harbin: Soviet Military/ “Martyrs” Cemetery ©2018



Figure 15-16: Hong Kong: Stanley Military Cemetery (Commonwealth War Graves Commission) ©2018

The Stanley Cemetery not only hosts representatives of the British military, but also volunteers who participated in the fight against the Japanese when the latter attacked and took Hong Kong in 1941 (and during their occupation also killed oppositional people in the concentration camp located in close proximity to the cemetery). As George MOSSE has pointed out, the inclusion of volunteers' tombs adds a particular emotive value to such cemeteries for the surviving community.¹⁸

While Western and Russian tombs at times create some aspects of "nostalgia" even for local Chinese inhabitants, e.g. in Harbin or Shanghai,¹⁹ other places have started to playfully integrate them as is the case in Keelung in Taiwan with the "French Military Cemetery" which is today included in local Ghost Festival activities; an important part of local intangible heritage. On the other hand, the tangible monumentality of Soviet military commemoration has left a deep impression with Chinese visitors.²⁰ The large figures transport a Western-coded monumentality on deathscapes unknown before in the Chinese context (fig. 15-17).²¹ Chinese tombs,

18 Cf. George MOSSE: *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1990, chapter 2.

19 For Harbin, see the Harbin writer [WANG 王] Acheng 阿成 who reflects on local history and repeatedly refers to the foreign cemeteries, e.g. in *Haerbinren* 哈尔滨人 (Harbiners), Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe 2014; or in: Acheng: *He shangdi yiqi liulang: Youtairen Haerbin binanji* 和上帝一起流浪. 犹太人哈尔滨避难记 ("The Jews in Harbin", lit.: Wandering with God: record of the Jews seeking refuge in Harbin), Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe 2008. ([WANG] Acheng should not be confounded with the more well-known Chinese writer and playwright [ZHONG 钟] Acheng). The famous "Shanghai nostalgia" already grew into a whole genre in the 1990s already.

20 Cf. TIAN Zhihe on the Lüshun cemetery: TIAN Zhihe 田志和: *Yongheng de huainian: Zhongguo tudishang de Sulian hongjun bei ta lingyuan* 永恒的怀念. 中国土地上的苏联红军碑塔陵园 (Eternal cherishing: Monuments and Cemeteries for the Soviet Red Army on Chinese soil), Dalian: Dalian chubanshe 2010, pp. 194–195. Monumentality flows from LENIN's early advocacy of "monumental propaganda". Cf. his comments to Anatolii Vasil'evich LUNACHARSKIĪ (1875–1933), the responsible Commissar, pushing him into action, referred to by Christina LODDER: "LENIN's Plan for Monumental Propaganda". In: Matthew Cullerne BOWN and Brandon TAYLOR (eds.): *Art of the Soviets: Painting, Sculpture and Architecture in a One-Party State, 1917–1992*, Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press 1993, pp. 16–32. And more recently and comparatively: Leah DICKERMAN: "Monumental Propaganda". In: *October* no. 165, summer 2018, pp. 178–191.

21 There were some first moves in this direction by the GMD in Republican times, though, for example with the large SUN Yat-sen tomb in Nanjing. Still, these mainly referred to Chinese traditional architecture with some Western models (e.g. the LINCOLN memorial) included, notably with the huge statue of the deceased. As, e.g., UNFRIED has pointed out, Stalinist monumental sculptures, in turn, functioned as a semisacred form, based on Tsarist monumentality, and as a religious substitute. Berthold UNFRIED: "Denkmäler des Stalinismus und 'Realsozialismus' zwischen Ikonoklasmus und Musealisierung" (Monuments of Stalinism and 'real socialism' between iconoclasm and musealization). In: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* (Austrian Journal of Historical Studies) no. 5,

traditionally not placed in “cemeteries”, were typically individual tombs set up at some hill site, if available, or at best gathered in an area where, e.g., a native-place organization looked after a proper burial, if families were not at hand.²² In the case of foreign cemeteries (if open to the public), Chinese tourists are coming to look at other peoples’ graves which the Chinese usually would not do. A cemetery as a place to visit and stroll through (à la Père Lachaise in Paris) is a fairly new phenomenon in China, which is also connected to the aspect of visual experience. Without much “interesting” things to see above ground, no one would probably visit but for the relatives, not to mention Chinese folk beliefs which rather suggested to avoid contact with death beyond what was deemed absolutely necessary. “Romantic” involvement with death was, in the end, a Western phenomenon.

The topic of “heritagization” implies the question as to the connection of this “other” to the “self”, and what it means for the construction of the categories of “Russian” / “Western” in Chinese minds via this particular form of tangible and visual-material sites that are cemeteries. First of all, the fact as to what remains (or has been rebuilt) today is largely the outcome of choices on the Chinese side: either these cemeteries were seen as useful, e.g. in terms of foreign policy (fig. 15-18),²³ or they are directly linked to the “self”, e.g. via the Soviet (or others) “help” given to China to fight against the Japanese in WWII, or against the U.S. during the Korean War (1950–1953). Those cemeteries were to be kept for political reasons in the PRC to show China’s indebtedness to this legacy, and also in Hong Kong, e.g., the “Stanley Cemetery” which has also retained this connotation of foreign help following the post-handover times.

1994/2, pp. 233–258. And architect Louis KAHN has famously enlarged the definition of “monumentality” to be “a spiritual quality in a structure which conveys the feeling of its eternity, that it cannot be added to or changed”. Louis I. KAHN: “Monumentality”. In: Paul ZUCKER (ed.): *New Architecture and City Planning*, New York: Philosophical Library 1944, pp. 577–588, there p. 577.

²² Cf. the study on Shanghai by Christian HENRIOT: *Scythe and the City: A Social History of Death in Shanghai*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2016.

²³ This does at times include cases where it was deemed unwise to upset foreigners, as with the Shanghai “International Cemetery”, now part of the “Song Qingling Memorial Park”, where remains were moved to and reburied (but without original tombstones of pre-PRC times which obviously had, in the meantime, been destroyed) with new name plaques above ground. These foreigners seem to be mostly “normal” people without any particular “political” problem. Another example is in Canton/Guangzhou 广州 which mostly “hosts” sailors, merchants etc. but also the first U.S. resident minister to China in the 19th century. Cf. MÜLLER: *Between History* (2018).



Figure 15-17: Lüshun: Soviet Military/ “Martyrs” Cemetery: Central stele with monumental bronze figures to both sides ©2018



Figure 15-18: Guangzhou: Foreigners’ Cemetery ©2018

Some cemeteries are cared for by foreign institutions, e.g. the War Graves Commission cemeteries in Hong Kong, while in some cases the official administering entity is local with foreign entities just helping with care (e.g. with the Tam-sui/Danshui 淡水 “Foreigners’ Cemetery” in Taiwan where nowadays the Canadian Chamber of Commerce cares for cleaning, or in Keelung where the French *Le Souvenir Français* gives a hand). Another motivation for upkeep is religion: Churches, e.g., run some cemeteries like the Catholic Church does with “St. Michael’s” in Hong Kong, or the (now autonomous Chinese) Orthodox Church with the orthodox in Harbin, while in the Soviet cemeteries (which de facto sometimes “host” Tsarist or “White” tombs, too) the Russians were, directly or indirectly via some private agency in between, caring for restorations, though only carefully involving the Russian Orthodox Church.²⁴ As for the Jews, only Hong Kong has a local community looking after the cemetery, while in Harbin the “Jewish Cemetery” is historical and cared for by the municipality.

As for the construction of what “Russian” and “Western” means to the Chinese with regard to the cemeteries, “Russian” was largely perceived as either “orthodox” with iconic architectural features like onion domes on churches and “orthodox” crosses in cemeteries, or Soviet. (The “mixed” Jewish legacy is in Chinese, at least PRC, eyes not “Russian”, e.g., but connected to Israel in spite of “hosting” tombs mostly predating that state’s founding.) While, in fact, in contexts where “Russianness” is no issue, also Russians used, e.g., Latin crosses, in the contexts where distinction was perceived needed, the “orthodox” cross was prevalent. This can be seen, e.g., in the “Hong Kong Cemetery” where the Russians tend to stress their specificity by orthodox crosses with the lower slanted crossbeam between all the Latin ones (or other tombstone designs) around (fig. 15-19).

24 E.g., Russian Orthodox priests also visited the Harbin “Soviet Martyrs’ Cemetery” or the Lüshun “Soviet Martyrs’ Cemetery” to pray there for the “compatriots” interred. While the former is purely “Soviet”, the latter is, as mentioned, “hosting” many Tsarist and “white” tombs. At the reopening ceremony after restoration of the large Lüshun cemetery, the Russians invited, beyond the Russian Orthodox, also a rabbi and a mufti, due to the fact that the Tsarist (and partly the Red) armies were multi-cultural and multi-religious, and thus the cemetery also has some non-orthodox tombs. See MÜLLER: *Ambivalent Remains* (2019), p. 61.



Figure 15-19: Hong Kong: Hong Kong Cemetery: some Russian graves ©2018

In this sense, although the context is Christian, the particular denomination was clearly expressed. On the other hand, Soviet secularized cemeteries were perceived by the Chinese as the model of how a “modern” and “socialist” cemetery should look like. Still, in spite of some early pushes for cremation in the Soviet Union, basically the Soviet practice did not uproot the Russian orthodox tradition of earth burials,²⁵ while the Chinese Communists since the mid-1950s advocated cremation with more and more vigor,²⁶ though opposition was not easy to overcome here either. In fact, only since the 1980s was the push for cremation more thoroughly implemented,²⁷ and only very few people (Muslims, e.g.) exempted. This, in turn, bespeaks the fact that earth burial became a privilege, and the embalming of MAO Zedong 毛泽东 (1893–1976), in imitation of LENIN (1870–1924),

25 Orthodox Church Law prohibited cremation. MERRIDALE mentions that although there was a tendency to argue for cremation in the early Soviet Union among the Bolsheviks, the topic was not followed through. Catherine MERRIDALE: *Night of Stone: Death and Memory in Twentieth-Century Russia*, New York: Viking 2000, pp. 133–136, p. 142, pp. 280–282.

26 For the development in China, see the Shanghai Funerary Museum catalogue: *Shanghai Binzang Bowuguan* 上海殡葬博物馆 (“Shanghai Funeral Museum”), n.p. [Shanghai], n.d. [2009 or after]. The argumentation picked up on those Soviet precedents that had argued for it, most extremely with the Bolshevik and Central Committee Member Mikhail Stepanovich OL’MINSKIĪ (1863–1933) who declared he wanted to be used “rationally” after his demise as fertilizer to demonstrate his material-atheist view on death. Cf. MERRIDALE: *Night of Stone* (2000), p. 142.

27 Cf. *Shanghai Binzang Bowuguan* [n.d.], pp. 78–79.

and of him alone, underlines this development further.²⁸ More recently, even tombs are becoming considered a nuisance, and thus “green burial” with ashes dispersed is advocated which, needless to say, also has its advocates in the West as “modern” and “ecological” beyond saving space and money for care after relatives might have moved away.²⁹ In terms of military tombs, it is furthermore noteworthy that while in the West the tradition of not differentiating any longer in tombstone outlook between ranks was established in the 20th century, the Soviets kept the differentiation, and also in the cemeteries located in China, a “graded” treatment of the Soviet dead was practiced. In other words, in the Red Army, a “democratization” was not taken up.

MAO Zedong had sanctioned the differential treatment of death in his own ideological way by referring to the Han-dynasty scholar SIMA Qian’s 司馬遷 *Shiji* 史記 (Record of the Historian, roughly 100 BC) and his statement that death can be weightier than Mount Tai 泰山 or lighter than a feather, depending on what someone’s life ended for.³⁰ This means that it is down to posterity to decide on whose death “counted” and thus on the question as to whose tomb was to be preserved. Thus, MAO also suggested to exorcize all “unwelcome” “ghosts” of the past, including the foreigners not deemed “helpful” for China. MAO, in fact, commented in this way on the Hangzhou West Lake tombs during his stays there where he complained of the many tombs surrounding him. These tombs were of outstanding Chinese of the past, but also of several Western foreigners, including the missionary parents of the last U.S. ambassador to GMD-governed China, John Leighton STUART, he himself being born in Hangzhou, whom MAO had famously ridiculed on his leave when the Communist takeover was imminent.³¹ This past, in

28 Cf. Frederic WAKEMAN Jr.: “MAO’s Remains”. In: James L. WATSON and Evelyn RAWSKI (eds.): *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1988, pp. 254–288.

29 As KONG has pointed out, this led also to a new kind of “placeless and immaterial space for the dead”, i.e. a cyberspace where the dead can be memorialized instead. (Lily KONG: “No-Place, New Places: Death and Its Rituals in Urban Asia”. In: Joanne Punzo WAGHOREN (ed.): *Place/No-Place in Urban Asian Religiosity*, Singapore: Springer 2016, pp. 49–70. This development, though, has been mainly spearheaded by Japan – which strangely has not been covered in this volume on “Urban Asian Religiosity”).

30 Cf. MAO’s piece: “Serve the People” (wei renmin fuwu 为人民服务) on the death of the Red Army soldier ZHANG Side 张思德. See also the chapter “The Cult of the Red Martyr” by Hung-tai CHANG: *Mao’s New World: Political Culture in the Early People’s Republic*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press 2011, pp. 213–234.

31 Interestingly, in a move to ameliorate U.S.-PRC relations, in 2008, i.e. more than four decades after STUART’s demise, his ashes were interred according to his last wish near West Lake; without publicity in China but reported in U.S. media. See David BARBOZA: “John Leighton Stuart, China Expert, Is Buried There at Last”. In: *The New York Times*, November 19, 2008, p. A16.

other words, was deemed a burden “haunting” the living, and should be removed (and their representatives symbolically put to the ultimate death)³² to sanitize the present and build a future unburdened.

Since these posterior contexts for presentation and “heritagization” very much depended on the local situation, let us turn to a “system-specific” observation with 1. Macau and Hong Kong for colonial (Portuguese and British) contexts, both then having been “handed back” to the PRC in the late 1990s; 2. with Taiwan which has gone through several shifts, including Japanese colonialization and then the GMD authoritarian rule up to present-day democratic rule; and finally 3. the Chinese mainland which has not only undergone a decisive rupture with the Communist takeover but partly also earlier, namely in Manchuria, due to the Japanese-Manchukuo rule.

Macau and Hong Kong

Here the colonial authorities could largely implement policies from their respective homeland. For the Portuguese, this meant that the “city of the name of God”, as Macau was proudly called, was since their fixed settlement in the 16th century conceived of as a Catholic city. While most of the Chinese living there would transfer their dead back to their native place, those buried in the tiny area (which only in 1871 became an official colony of the Portuguese) were Westerners and Catholics who, as was the custom of the time in Europe in the 16th century and beyond, were buried in churchyards around their parochial church. In time, though, Macau as an important entrepôt was also confronted with the problem of non-Catholics who happened to die in the area. At first, this was handled by transferring those outside of the city walls, but since the Chinese villagers living close by did not welcome burials of foreigners in a territory they considered their own, a strong sense of unsafety of the tombs pushed for a burial space inside the city walls also for non-Catholics. In spite of official Portuguese regulations that no soil was to be “given away” on the one hand, and Catholic Church law on the other which prescribed that only Catholics may be buried in Catholic consecrated soil, the English

32 As scholarship on iconoclasm and the Western ancient tradition of *damnatio memoriae* in their effects on tombstones and epitaphs has made clear, the destruction of tombstones and epitaphs was conceived of as “the ultimate murder, the ultimate death” in the words of Karl GUTHKE. (See his *Epitaph Culture in the West*, Lewiston et al.: Edwin Mellen Press 2003, p.1).

East India Company which had a residence in Macau, finally managed to strike a deal to set up the “Old Protestant Cemetery” with a first burial in 1821 inside the city walls on private ground (fig. 15-20).³³



Figure 15-20: Macau: Old Protestant Cemetery ©2018

With changed legislation in Portugal in the mid-19th century, though, all inner-city cemeteries were to be closed, and thus all burials were now transferred to the area outside of the city walls.³⁴ In this context, the present-day “S. Miguel” cemetery was set up, and also the “Old Protestant” one was closed and a “New Protestant Cemetery” opened instead. The more aggressive assertion of Portuguese control also in the area beyond the city walls (which were to be removed subsequently)

33 It might have helped that in Rome the “non-Catholic cemetery” (Cimitero Acattolico) was opened at the same time (though it was not the first in Italy which was the “Old English Cemetery” in Livorno). Since the “Old Protestant Cemetery” of Macau was placed (and remained) inside the former city walls, this also means today that it is covered (and thus protected) by the UNESCO world heritage site of Macau’s historic center, unlike any other cemetery.

34 By this, the Portuguese state not only aimed at ameliorating inner-city hygiene in line with similar moves in many other Western countries at the time, but also tried to wrest authority (and burial fees) from the Church. By additionally transferring the say on the dead from priests to modern doctors who had to certify death (against payment), these changes sparked widespread resistance in Portugal at the time. See LAQUEUR: *The Work of the Dead* (2015), pp. 307–308.

led to repeated clashes with the Chinese villagers living there at first, but ended with Macau's being officially acknowledged as a Portuguese "colony" by the Qing government, and through this act also the cemetery area for the Portuguese was secured. Since the municipality was in charge of the "S. Miguel" cemetery, the Catholic Church, however, was no longer able to claim the cemetery exclusively for Catholics. Furthermore, after Portugal became a republic, in 1912 an outright policy of secularization also meant that the cemetery became "pluralized": on principle, now every citizen was entitled to be buried in "S. Miguel" (or any other of the municipal cemeteries established in the meantime), regardless of religion. This made for "S. Miguel's" already mentioned mix of creeds, "hosting" tombs of Catholic bishops of a diocese which once "governed" large parts of East Asia, besides tombs with Buddhist or Daoist visual markers, and covering a wider range of ethnicities.

Hong Kong, in turn, reflects the British colonial administration's preoccupation with "racial" differentiation: cemeteries were at first only designed for Westerners, while it was assumed that the Chinese, who usually lived there only temporarily, would in any case transfer their dead back to their place of origin. Much more than Macau, Hong Kong was seen from all sides, both Chinese and Western, as a temporary abode where death would only occur by chance. Still, the fact was that, not the least because of diseases and frequent plagues but also because of the military, there were many deaths occurring, and thus the British had to quickly set up cemeteries. This they did for the Anglicans/Protestants, but given the many Irish amongst the troops, also almost immediately for the Catholics, too. In time, beyond the military personnel, more and more civilians flocked to Hong Kong. While the Catholic Church ran the "St. Michael's" cemetery where, as mentioned, foreign as well as Chinese Catholics were buried, the "Hong Kong Cemetery", as it is called today, was originally intended for British Anglicans/Protestants only, at first denying Chinese access even in life.³⁵ Basically, since the "Hong Kong Cemetery" was run by the municipality, it could, however, not easily refuse non-British and non-Protestants in the long run, but given that the Catholics had "St. Michael's" next door, only those Catholics refused there, e.g. if they had joined Freemasonry, were taken in. Furthermore, in time, also Armenians and Russian Orthodox, but also the equally "foreign" Japanese as well as some (Christian)

35 Cf. KO Tim-Keung: "A Review of Development of Cemeteries in Hong Kong: 1841–1950". In: *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. 41, 2001: pp. 241–280, there p. 247. It should be noted that by 1880 the British "Burial Laws Amendment Act" settled the older divisive burial issues between the Anglican Church and various non-Anglican Protestant denominations by the state, granting them access to graveyards equally. (On the problems before, see LAQUEUR: *The Work of the Dead* (2015), pp. 161–182).

Chinese were included.³⁶ On principle a zoning approach was intended, although this was only partly realized in practice. After Japanese Buddhist burial customs led to complaints from some Westerners, they were simply pragmatically concentrated in a far-off angle up the hill. Muslims, Jews, Hindus and Parsees had set up their own cemeteries anyway. Still, both “St. Michael’s” as well as the “Hong Kong Cemetery” are visually strongly Western-coded in tombstone design which apparently also appealed to some non-Westerners, namely the Christians. The establishment of specific cemeteries for *Chinese* Protestants, in turn, “relieved” the “Hong Kong Cemetery” of caring for those under normal circumstances, while a special Eurasian one cared for those of “mixed” descent neither being counted as “Western” nor “Chinese” in British colonial taxonomy.³⁷ The “Hong Kong Cemetery”, though, retained an aura of “superiority”, since well-known Chinese as well as Eurasians would rather apply for (and were admitted to) the “Hong Kong Cemetery” instead of going to the Chinese Protestant or the Eurasian or the “Chinese Permanent Cemetery”, the latter being modeled upon the “Hong Kong Cemetery” for non-Christian upper-class Chinese.³⁸ In a sense, the “Hong Kong Cemetery”, like “S. Miguel” in Macau, received those that had no other “specialized” cemetery to go as, for example, the Muslims or Parsees had in both places, but, unlike Macau, the “Hong Kong Cemetery” retained this aura as the “best” choice, if available, i.e. had something of a “class” distinction to it. In fact, one had to apply for getting in. And, unlike “S. Miguel”, the “Hong Kong Cemetery” is now, as mentioned, basically closed. For the British military, in turn, which had at first also been buried there, the War Graves Commission Cemeteries were set up which reflect the World Wars and are closed today as well.

In terms of material and visual markers, the Westerners’ tombs and burial practices differed from the traditional Chinese one: as mentioned, the idea of an (often fenced-in) cemetery was set against the typically individual Chinese hillside burial mounds. The “garden cemetery” as a European/Western development since the late 18th century which appeared also in the “Hong Kong Cemetery”, for example, acted as a role model,³⁹ and was appreciated also by some Chinese (although death

36 For a “thick description” of the “Hong Kong Cemetery”, see Patricia LIM: *Forgotten Souls: A Social History of the Hong Kong Cemetery*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press 2011. See also LIM’s database: https://www.hkmemory.hk/collections/hong_kong_cemetery/about/index.html.

37 Cf. MÜLLER: *Challenging Dead* (2018), p. 13.

38 For the different cemeteries, cf. KO: “A review” (2001) and MÜLLER: *Challenging Dead* (2018), pp. 12–15.

39 Cf. Ken NICOLSON: *The Happy Valley: A History and Tour of the Hong Kong Cemetery*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press 2010, pp. 5–7. It should be noted that in the colonial setting the British often erected more lavish tombs than those they had at home. Cf. CURL: “Short history” (2016), p. 12, with reference to British India.

is largely tabooed in Chinese culture and tombs of ancestors only visited at special occasions, and never tombs of “others” on top of that). The simplicity of Western burial practices (e.g. no valuables in coffins), the gravity of funeral processions and interment services etc. were also a diverging feature from Chinese custom. The crosses, including the orthodox ones for Russians, e.g. in the “Hong Kong Cemetery”, statues as, for example, in the Catholic ones, and different tomb designs with stones flat or upright, columns etc., were also noted by the Chinese as peculiar. In this regard, also the Jewish tombs in Hong Kong’s “Jewish Cemetery” did not diverge very much, that is except for their inscriptions. In other words: tomb designs in the “Jewish Cemetery” which in any case is also much less frequently visited and thus less “present” for Chinese viewers do not substantially differ from, for example, the “Hong Kong Cemetery”. Typically, the Sephardic Jews used tomb architecture similar to the British with a preference for horizontal layout, while the Ashkenazic Jews rather opted for vertical headstones.⁴⁰

In terms of heritage preservation, this means that in Hong Kong (and partly in Macau) the visual markers of foreignness in the cemeteries are, since the hand-over, largely “museum-like” to the Chinese public. Those tombs that stand for “problematic” or, in a Chinese perspective, “ambivalent” if not “dissonant” heritage when recording people and events lauded by the colonizers but condemned by the Chinese, are a challenge.⁴¹ While statues could be easily removed from townscapes, in cemeteries things are less easy.

In fact, the Westerners buried represented various “sorts” of foreigners: not only women (often “wives of”) and children, but also men with various professions such as: merchants, missionaries, physicians, sailors, or military staff. In Chinese eyes, especially in the post-colonial era, the foreigners were either “good”, “neutral”, or “bad”, depending on their former role and attitude *via-à-vis* the local society. This, in turn, means that the heritage preservation of today confronts the question as to whose heritage is deemed desirable to be preserved, especially if there are no relatives laying claims to them, and whether it is possible (e.g. for diplomatic reasons) to clear those whose heritage is not deemed desirable. The strategies followed differ: in Macau’s “S. Miguel”, for example, the politically

40 Although most Jews abhor a physical representation of the deceased, the Hong Kong “Jewish Cemetery” has one Russian tombstone with a photo – something typical for Russian Orthodox cemeteries and also often seen in Harbin’s “Jewish Cemetery”. In fact, also elsewhere Jewish tombstone layouts resemble those of the respective majority culture. In Hong Kong, therefore, British as well as Russian influence is mirrored in the “Jewish Cemetery”.

41 For the concept of “dissonant heritage”, see John E. TUNBRIDGE and Gregory J. ASHWORTH: *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*, Chichester: Wiley 1996.

controversial tomb and statue of Macanese Colonel Vicente Nicolau de MESQUITA (1818–1880) who had once “fought for” Macau against the Chinese and thus was a hero in the colonial perspective but a villain in the nationalist Chinese one, is still in place after the handover (fig. 15-21), although his statue in town had already been razed by rioters during the times of the Cultural Revolution in the neighboring PRC that also led to turmoil in Macau. Thus, the “S. Miguel” cemetery and MESQUITA’s tomb there is the only place where this piece of history still survived with a material legacy, however here, with tombstone architecture connected to his physical remains. This case, though, also has additional layers to it, connected to MESQUITA’s individuality. MESQUITA died by suicide after having killed his wife and one daughter (and wounded two further of his children), arguably out of a psychic crisis. This crisis is said to have, at least partly, been triggered by his feelings of being discriminated against as someone of “only” (mixed) Macanese decent, since he was not adequately awarded for his decisive services by the Portuguese. Given the whole background, his interment had at first been a problem. Catholic canon law did not allow for a Catholic burial in such a murder/suicide case, and it was only after years that he was posthumously rehabilitated and granted reburial in the same “S. Miguel” cemetery, shifting him from a not consecrated section to the consecrated one, being close again to his family, and this time the burial was done with full military honors.



Figure 15-21: Macau: S. Miguel Cemetery: monument to MESQUITA ©2018

In Hong Kong, in turn, the memorial column to controversial British trade envoy and Royal Navy officer William John NAPIER (1786–1834) who figured in the trade issues between Britain and China in the years leading to the Opium War (1839–1842) and who was indirectly responsible for the British choosing Hong Kong as their foothold subsequently, was transferred from the “Hong Kong Cemetery” to the Hong Kong Museum of History after the handover. NAPIER had died in Macau in 1834 after his failure to negotiate better terms of trade with the Chinese in Guangzhou 廣州, had first been buried in Macau’s “Old Protestant Cemetery” and then was shipped back home to Scotland where he is ever since lying in peace. His memorial column had resurfaced in Hong Kong after WWII and was put in the “Hong Kong Cemetery” by the colonial authorities, but with the post-hand-over transfer to the museum it was tellingly turned from a (positive) memorial into a (controversial) historical exhibition piece. The absence of his physical remains facilitated, of course, this recontextualization.

Taiwan

While the situation in Macau and Hong Kong was fairly stable due to the long colonial rule of the Portuguese and British up to the late 1990s’ handover, in Taiwan things went through several shifts. When in 1895 the Japanese received Taiwan as one of the spoils of war from the Qing to become their very first colony, Westerners’ cemeteries were already in place, namely in the South in today’s Tainan 臺南 and Gaoxiong/Kaohsiung 高雄 (both today no longer extant as cemeteries),⁴² and in the North in Danshui/Tamsui and Jilong/Keelung. Both the “Foreigners’ Cemetery” in Tamsui (fig. 15-22) and the “French Military Cemetery” in Keelung are officially declared heritage sites today, but during the Japanese colonial period they served foreign policy agendas of the Japanese: the Tamsui cemetery adjacent to the tomb of Canadian missionary George Leslie MACKAY (1844–1901) and those of his missionary staff, Taiwanese or foreign, was first cared for by the British who often represented also other nationalities who did not bother to open own representations on the island (fig. 15-23). Thus, either the respective embassy in Tokyo or the British (and a few other) consuls on the island were caring for those other nationalities that did not have representations there during the

42 Of the Kaohsiung cemetery, some tombstones have been found in the area. For an attempt to reconstruct this cemetery’s history, see David Charles OAKLEY: *The Story of the Takow Foreign Cemetery*, Gaoxiong: Gaoxiong shizhengfu wenhua ju 2016.

Japanese colonial period (1895–1945). After the GMD government took over Taiwan in 1945, the fate of the cemetery in Tamsui as well as of the “French Military Cemetery” in Keelung was again closely connected to the diplomatic sphere, and after the British gave up their diplomatic representation in Taiwan, the U.S.-Americans and finally the Canadians stepped in in Tamsui, while the local Presbyterian Church which runs the secondary school on whose grounds the MACKAY tomb is located, keeps an eye on the site and de facto provides access to both the missionary cemetery around the MACKAY tomb, and the foreigners’ cemetery.



Figure 15-22: Tamsui: Foreigners’ Cemetery ©2017



Figure 15-23: Tamsui: “MACKAY Cemetery” around the highest monument of MACKAY ©2017

In Keelung, in turn, the physical remains of some of the mid-level French commanders and troops of the Sino-French War 1884/85 who mainly died from diseases and were interred in Taiwanese soil, were centralized over time (fig. 15-24), if they had not been shipped back home like the remains of the main figure Admiral Amédée COURBET (1827–1885) who had succumbed to disease, died during the final stage of the war on his ship, and had been transferred back from the Pescadores to receive a state funeral in France already at that time. The longstanding debates about the Keelung “French Military Cemetery” in a society that did not historically share the European treaty convention of respecting cemeteries of friend and foe,⁴³ however, show the difficulty for the local society to accept such a “foreign” cemetery with the dead buried there representing one-time “enemies” until only recently when the place was relabeled a “Memorial Park of the War between the Qing and the French”, thus reframing the cemetery as a space of education and leisure rather than commemoration of the dead foreigners. Here, too, things were additionally complicated by the fact that the Japanese colonial administration which governed Taiwan after defeating the Qing, used the French cemetery, as already mentioned, for its own diplomatic agendas. The GMD government which took over Taiwan after WWII, was from the start rather hostile, and even more so when France switched her diplomatic allegiance to the competing PRC, playing up nationalist issues. However, in Keelung, being one of the major sites of the “February 28 incident” of 1947 with the GMD’s crack-down on Taiwanese opposition and its subsequent White Terror, local feelings toward the GMD were mixed as well.⁴⁴ In contrast, in Tamsui’s “Foreigners’ Cemetery” with its civilian dead adjacent to the tomb of Canadian missionary Reverend MACKAY, who represented a more “positive” Sino-Western relationship with his educational, medical, and charity endeavors, things were overall less controversial.

In summary, in Macau, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, the physical remains of the most controversial figures standing for the colonization of, or historical military confrontation with, the Chinese had anyway already been transferred back to their homelands, leading to a rather de-emotionalized present-day attitude toward this foreign heritage.

43 One should, however, note that in Europe this implied mutuality, while in Taiwan, for example, the relation was only “unilateral”.

44 Cf. MÜLLER: *Challenging Dead* (2018), pp. 27–33.



Figure 15-24: Keelung: French Military Cemetery: remains of Lieutenant JEHENNE relocated from the Pescadores ©2018

Chinese mainland

Most of the foreigners' cemeteries once on Chinese soil have, however, disappeared. While in some places of trade mainly civilians had been buried, usually divided along religious lines, other places featured military cemeteries. Those still extant are typically connected to WWII. There had once also been cemeteries with, for example, the foreign Boxer War casualties (military or not), but their commemoration was and is anathema to the Chinese society, and thus they have been levelled. Most of the Chinese mainland only went through a major change with the Communist takeover, but in Manchuria the Japanese had intervened already previously. Especially in Southern Manchuria in the Kwantung (Guandong) 關東 Leased Territory which the Japanese claimed from Russia after their victory in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904/05, the Russian cemeteries were reshaped (as in Lüshun) or newly set up (like in Jinzhou) (fig. 15-25) by the Japanese who buried the fallen Russians after the war and used this for projecting their own nation positively to the world. In Jinzhou and, above all, in Lüshun/Port Arthur, both today

part of the Dalian municipality, the Japanese imitated, as mentioned, Western cemetery and tomb designs when burying their dead Tsarist foes.⁴⁵ Lüshun stood out as the showcase cemetery par excellence, inviting the Russian Orthodox Church as “guests” at the pompous opening in 1908 and trying to use the small but fledgling Japanese Orthodox Church as a mediator.⁴⁶ In northern Manchuria, though, with Harbin the Japanese role became decisive only later after the “Manchurian Incident” of 1931 and the subsequent founding of the “puppet state” Manchukuo, although in terms of cemeteries and their layout the Japanese role was here rather ephemeral.

In all of Manchuria, however, the 1945 “August Storm” of the Soviets who “liberated” the area from the Japanese, left an enduring imprint via the military cemeteries set up for the Soviet casualties. By this, they now also introduced Soviet (military) burial practices to the Chinese society which up to then only knew Christian or Jewish cemeteries as standing for “Westerners” or “Russians”. Memorialization of “heroes”, as the Soviets called the fallen Red Army members, with red starred tombstones and identification of rank, and, at times, army division, e.g. with emblems of tanks or air planes, was a new, secular style (fig. 15-26, 15-27). Army casualties augmented further during the Korean War, mainly with aviators (fig. 15-28). With the Soviets stationed in the Dalian-Lüshun area in 1945–1955 who lived there with their families, and Soviet advisors coming to the early PRC, also Soviet civilian tombs came to be added in time (fig. 15-29). While the “Soviet Martyrs’ Cemeteries”, as they are called by the Chinese, introduced also a socialist monumentality to the field of cemeteries, as mentioned, they provided an example for Chinese “martyrs” (and high-level cadres) and their burial,⁴⁷ and they showed how one could integrate such places into socialist education activities.

45 However, some elements at the cemetery were similar to burial fashions as used (or taken over) by the Japanese for themselves at the time, e.g. to bury the officers individually but the normal soldiers together. Given the high numbers of the rank-and-file Russian soldiers claimed, they must have been cremated before as was customary to the Japanese burial fashion, though official Japanese regulations at the time requested to bury the orthodox Russians in “their” fashion, i.e. with earth burials. For the Japanese burial fashion for the Russo-Japanese War military casualties, see Naoko SHIMAZU (2009), esp. p. 125.

46 For more on this, cf. MÜLLER: *Ambivalent Remains* (2019), pp. 52–53.

47 Cf. the Babaoshan 八宝山 Cemetery in Beijing for the highest-level cadres (most no “martyrs”). See Hung-tai CHANG: *Mao’s New World* (2011), pp. 224–232. But “martyrs’ cemeteries” were set up all over China to remind the locals of the sacrifices others had taken upon themselves, obliging the living generation to continue their unfinished task.



Figure 15-25: Jinzhou: Soviet Military/ “Martyrs” Cemetery: Memorial to the Russo-Japanese War dead first buried by the Japanese and later memorialized by the Tsarist government ©2018

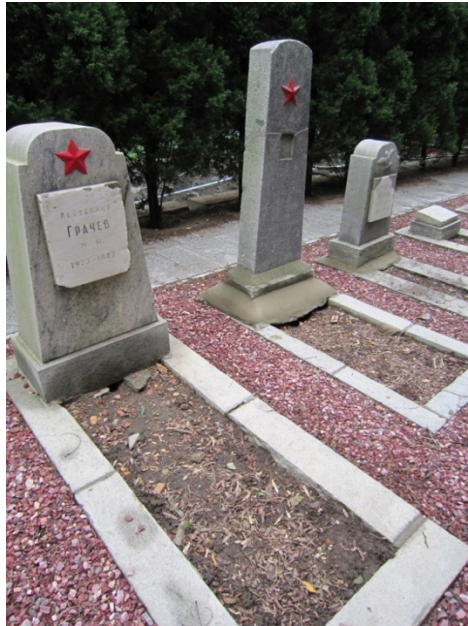


Figure 15-26: Dalian: Soviet Military/ “Martyrs” Cemetery: Soviet officers’ tombs with red starred headstones (photo of deceased missing), flat ones for soldiers ©2018



Figure 15-27: Jinzhou: Soviet Military/ “Martyrs” Cemetery:
Example of Soviet tombstone featuring the symbol of the
military unit (tank) (photo of deceased missing) ©2018



Figure 15-28: Lüshun: Soviet Military/ “Martyrs” Cemetery:
The Soviet aviators’ section of the Korean War ©2018



Figure 15-29: Lüshun: Soviet Military/ “Martyrs” Cemetery: post-1945 children’s section ©2018

The fact that today the largest “foreigners’ cemetery” in mainland China is the “Soviet Martyrs’ Cemetery” in Lüshun which de facto hosts, beyond the Soviets, above all Tsarist dead of the Russo-Japanese War who are out of question to memorialize for today’s Chinese since they were as imperialist as the Japanese in Chinese view, throws into relief the problem of the national and the private. The Soviet dead who “fell for the socialist cause” and more specifically “for China” are nationalized and to be remembered, the more monumental the better. The others, though, should be levelled in Chinese perspective. Only diplomatic relations put a brake on this to not annoy the Russians who see all those dead as “compatriots”, but the complicated story of how earlier Russian/Soviet cemeteries were to be renovated and who would, and could, be informed about this, shows the Chinese ambivalence and sensitivity toward these foreign cemeteries.⁴⁸ And it shows the bifurcation between the Tsarist or “White” religious Russians (and religious Westerners) and the atheist Soviets in Chinese perception. In fact, the present-day official Russian appreciation of the Tsarist and “White” legacies vs the ambivalent attitude toward the more divisive Soviet one, is criticized by the Chinese. The latter, in fact, try to pose as the “true heirs” to “the cause” the Soviet “martyrs” died for.

48 For more on the renovation process, see MÜLLER: *Ambivalent Remains* (2019), pp. 56–62 for Lüshun, and pp. 34–37 for Harbin.

On the other hand, a purely “historical” cemetery like the civilian Jewish Cemetery in Harbin, though “religious” as well, is today less problematic and readily used for bilateral relations with Israel, helped by the fact that it is hosting relatives of some outstanding Israeli politicians, including former prime minister OLMERT (fig. 15-30). Tellingly, the fact that most of those Jews were from Russia or the Russian Empire is of no importance to the Chinese (and apparently also to the present-day Russian authorities), and materially speaking, their tombstone outlooks are strongly orientated toward Western fashions which had also been picked up in late Tsarist Russia, often only by a Star of David and by the tombstone inscription “outing” their being Jewish.⁴⁹ However, different from the Hong Kong “Jewish Cemetery”, e.g., in the PRC the Cultural Revolution intervened heavily for the fate of cemeteries in general, as they were easy to attack and a “classical” feature of Red Guard destructive activism, if they had not been damaged earlier in the brief mid-1950s campaign triggered by MAO’s Hangzhou “impressions” mentioned above. While the Shanghai Jewish cemeteries did not survive (only some tombstones), the one in Harbin did, though with clear signs of destruction (fig. 15-31). Also elsewhere in China, notably with Shanghai and its once numerous foreigners’ cemeteries, but also in Guangzhou, the Cultural Revolution heavily intervened. While in some cases the tombstones (if not necessarily the human remains beneath) could be (re)assembled in the 1980s, in other cases the human remains were transferred but the tombstones had gone lost, as seems to be the case with China’s most well-known “foreigners’ cemetery” in Shanghai: the “International Cemetery”, as it was once called, now part of the “Song Qingling Memorial Park” (fig. 15-32).⁵⁰ Most notably with “controversial” figures of importance and, above all, religious figures, destruction in the Cultural Revolution could almost be counted upon, and thus the tombs of clergy were particularly singled out for attack, as, for example, can be seen with the Orthodox Russian (and Chinese) clergy in the still used Harbin “Orthodox Cemetery” (fig. 15-33) (or, to a lesser extent, in the Dalian “Soviet Martyrs’ Cemetery” which had been an, above all civilian, cemetery in the hands of “White” Orthodox clergy up to the 1940s, with Soviet tombs then added later).⁵¹ But also Guangzhou’s protestant missionaries’ tombs, e.g. the ones of well-known medical missionary John KERR and family, which have been recently restored at a new location (fig. 15-34), fared no better.⁵²

49 There are, of course, exceptions, e.g. with the “oriental-looking” Jewish tombstone in Lüshun of a young woman from present-day Ukrainian Ternopol (MÜLLER: *Ambivalent Remains* (2019), p. 50), or with the tomb of the religious key figure, rabbi Aron Moshe KISELEV (1863–1949) in Harbin (ibid. pp. 29–30), which are peculiar.

50 See MÜLLER: *Between History* (2018), esp. pp. 22–33.

51 See MÜLLER: *Ambivalent Remains* (2019), pp. 42–47.

52 See MÜLLER: *Between History* (2018), pp. 11–12.



Figure 15-30: Harbin: Jewish cemetery: Newly restored tomb of Ehud OLMERT's grandfather ©2018



Figure 15-31: Harbin: Jewish Cemetery: Reassembled tombstone ©2018



Figure 15-32: Shanghai: SONG Qingling Memorial Park: Foreigners' Cemetery: small concrete slabs in place of tombstones ©2018



Figure 15-33: Harbin: Orthodox Cemetery: Plea to not destroy the tombstone at Father Valentin Semënovich BARYSHNIKOV's (1906–1962) tomb (backside) ©2018



Figure 15-34: Guangzhou: Protestant Cemetery: Missionary KERR family tombs ©2018

While the tombs of the pre-PRC times tell of a religiously pluralized “West” and an either Orthodox or Jewish “Russia”, the Soviet tombs became, as mentioned, role models for a secularized dealing with death. Since the 1950s the Chinese argued strongly for cremation to do away with the Chinese custom of earth burial, but the arguments now combined the practical ones of hygiene (which was a problem not only because of numbers but also since the Chinese rather put up mounds than bury the dead deeply) or of saving land for “productive” uses, with the more ideological of the body as material, which should and could be burnt, therewith also going against “feudal” superstition which were deemed prevalent with traditional funerary customs. Care for the living instead for the dead, was the main motto, and cities had set targets to “free” themselves of cemeteries, thus causing transfers at best, while at the worst levelling for Chinese dead and their tombs ensued.⁵³ Once completed, the space occupied by the dead foreigners whose living compatriots usually had had to leave the country after the Communist takeover (excluding some socialist “brother nations”) had to be “dealt with”, too. While at first burial practices not conforming to the new cremation standard, e.g. with the

53 See Thomas MULLANEY (ed.): *The Chinese Deathscape: Grave Reform in Modern China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2019. Digital volume available online: <https://chinesedeathscape.supdigital.org>.

Orthodox earth burials, were still allowed, finally cremation was to be pushed through nationwide. In this, the Chinese went beyond the Soviets, as mentioned, who also had less problem with space. MAO's call to do away with the many signs of "ghosts" around West Lake was a call heeded, although ironically he himself became a "socialist embalmed", given the Soviet precedent with LENIN.⁵⁴

Concluding remarks

However the Western and Russian tombs on Chinese soil fared throughout time, today those remaining are visual material sites of alterity working against a "structural amnesia" (CONNERTON).⁵⁵ While to the Chinese viewer they present mostly religious, but also secular, ways of dealing with death, either private or more monumentally nationalized, the remaining dead speak of the past and Western/Russian agency of their time in a foreign land. In all cases, it has been of high importance for the local authorities to stress that no matter who is interred, and which material markers of foreignness might be above-ground, the soil is and will remain Chinese. But beyond national(ist) sensibilities, arguing out of the defensive, heritage politics also offer on the positive side the possibility to discover (and protect) the

54 For a comparative view, see Gwendolyn LEICK: *Tombs of the Great Leaders: A Contemporary Guide*, London: Reaktion Books 2013, chapter 2. Notably, MAO, who had signed the Communist cremation pledge back in the 1950s, had already chosen a family tomb slot at the Babaoshan Cemetery together with his last wife, JIANG Qing, revisiting it several times in his last years which shows he obviously cared, but at the time of his death (1976) it was out of question for his successors to carry this out, and thus MAO was embalmed and the Memorial Hall on Tiananmen Square created. (Cf. ROSS TERRILL: *MAO: A Biography*, rev. and exp. ed., Stanford: Stanford University Press 1999, p. 457.) Needless to say, JIANG Qing who committed suicide in 1991 while serving her life sentence following MAO's demise, did not make it into that chosen family tomb slot of the prestigious Babaoshan Cemetery either, but was buried in a "normal" cemetery in Beijing by her (and MAO's) daughter.

55 Cf. CONNERTON's different types of forgetting: Paul CONNERTON: "Cultural Memory". In: Christopher TILLEY et al. (eds.): *Handbook of Material Culture*, London: Sage 2006, pp. 315–324, there pp. 319–322. A more recent update can be found in: "Seven types of forgetting" in: Paul CONNERTON: *The Spirit of Mourning: History, Memory and the Body*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2011, chapter 2, pp. 33–50. "Structural amnesia" – unfortunately the type least spelled out by CONNERTON – connotes a patterned forgetting due to structures of a society to which something has no further social relevance. Those tombs that were a heritage too "dissonant", have undergone "repressive erasure", instead, and thus are no longer physically extant, e.g. the foreign Boxer War casualties.

manifold layers historical encounters between cultures engendered, and how this may relate meaningfully to the present. Given the enduring material presence of cemeteries, they provide a visual and tangible starting point for digging out (instead of corpses in a Red Guard fashion)⁵⁶ the multiple stories enclosed, large and small, local and translocal, telling of a richer interwoven past than some present-day narrow interests may frame for achieving some specific short-term aim. For better or for worse, this heritage is a “shared” one, and a “coming to terms” with history entails also making peace with the dead. Nolens volens then, the shifts in perceptions of Westerners and Russians also reflect the continuities and changes Chinese self-perception has undergone in the 20th century and over the larger area of Greater China, and the contingency of the respective forms this has taken.

56 One of the most extreme acts during the Cultural Revolution regarding tombs was to not only destroy tombstones but even dig up human remains and scatter (or performatively humiliate) them. The case of Confucius and his most recent descendants became widely known in China but was only the tip of the iceberg. Cf. SANG Ye and Geremie R. BARMÉ: “Commemorating Confucius in 1966–67: The Fate of the Confucius Temple, the Kong Mansion and Kong Cemetery.” In: *China Heritage Quarterly*, no. 20, December 2009. Available online: http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org/scholarship.php?searchterm=020_confucius.inc&issue=020. Apart from politics, this was also to drive home the point of materialism and to ward off any potential “superstition” on the part of the living. It had also “socialist” antecedents in Soviet attacks on “White” enemies’ tombs (and in itself is in any case a practice with an unfortunately long prehistory, East and West: cf. LAQUEUR: *The Work of the Dead* (2015), pp. 103–106).

