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Shrines of Yue Fei

Spaces for Creation of Public Memory

Memory of Yue Fei: Contact Point Between Narrative and Recollection

West Lake (Xihu), located to the west of the Zhejiang provincial capital, Hangzhou, is surrounded on three sides by mountains, is 3.3 kilometers long on its north-south axis, and 2.8 kilometers wide on its east-west axis, with a total surface area of 5.6 square kilometers, and divided into five unequal sections by the Su Dike (Su di), which runs north to south, and the Bai Dike (Bai di), which runs east and west.¹ On the side of West Lake that is near the southern foot of Qixia Mountain, there is a famous man-made scenic spot, the Shrine to Yue Fei, erected to commemorate the Southern Song dynasty general, Yue Fei, who was wrongfully put to death in Hangzhou and whose grave is located within the shrine. In China Yue Fei is a historical character whose name has become a household word, although, because of the influence of literature popular among the masses, people do not know the true historical Yue Fei.²

Translation © 2005 by M.E. Sharpe, Inc., from the Chinese text. Huang Donglan, “Yue Fei miao: chuangzao gonggong jiyi de ‘chuang,’” *Xin shehui shi* (New History), no. 1 (2004), pp. 158–77. Translated by William Crawford.

Yue Fei (1103–1142) came from a tenant farmer's family in Tangyin, Henan province. At the beginning of the twelfth century in North China the Jin dynasty, established by the Nüzhen people, was continuously attacking the Han-Chinese Song dynasty, and when the flames of war spread to Henan province, Yue Fei, at a very tender age, gave up farming and joined in the armed struggle to resist the Jin invaders. On the battlefield Yue Fei's true talents came to the fore, and before ten years had passed he had changed from a barely literate farm boy to one of the "Four Generals of the Resurgence," whose names were heard far and wide. Just at the time when he was exploiting a victory and closing in on the Jin capital, he was recalled with twelve "golden tablet" messages [the golden tablet, *jin pai*, meant that a message was to be delivered without delay or hindrance and had the force of an imperial command—Trans.] by the Gaozong emperor of Southern Song and was immediately relieved of his command. At the beginning of the year 1141, the Gaozong emperor, who still harbored suspicions toward Yue Fei and his commanders, in collusion with the prime minister, Qin Hui, sent someone to Yue Fei, who had been living in retirement at Lu Shan, and this person enticed him into coming to Hangzhou, where he was arrested and thrown into jail. Qin Kuai sent an official of the Censorate named Moqi Xie to torture a confession from Yue Fei so he could be falsely implicated in a fabricated plot of treason, and so on January 28, 1142 (twelfth month, twenty-ninth day of the lunar calendar), Yue Fei, who was only thirty-nine years old at the time, died by poisoning in the Dali Temple in Hangzhou, while his son, Yue Yun, and one of his lieutenants, Zhang Xian, were taken under guard to a public area in the midst of town, where they were executed by being cut in two at the waist. A prison guard named Kui Shun felt sorry about what had happened to Yue Fei, so he smuggled the general's body out of prison on his back and buried it in the Jiuqucong Temple on North Mountain in Hangzhou (in the area of the present-day landmarks Palace of Youth [Shaonian

gong] and Precious Stone Mountain [Baoshi shan]). It was not until twenty years after Yue Fei died, when the Gaozong emperor had abdicated in favor of the Xiaozong emperor, that Yue Fei was cleared of the wrongful accusations made against him. He was posthumously restored to his original rank, and his remains were transferred to the southern foot of Qixia Mountain, where they were buried.

After Yue Fei's name was cleared, shrines in his honor were erected everywhere. The earliest was the "Martyr's Shrine" (*zhonglie miao*) in Wuchang, and it was followed by temples, stone tablets, and pavilions in the places such as Jiujian and Yixing, where he had lived during his lifetime of struggle. In 1221 the Southern Song court, at the request of Yue Fei's descendants, bestowed the Zhiguo Temple, which was next to Yue Fei's burial site, upon the Yue family and changed the temple's name to Temple of Yue Fei's Achievement and Virtue [Yue Fei gongde si]. This was the origin of Hangzhou's Shrine to Yue Fei. There is also another Shrine to Yue Fei, established in 1450 and now as well known as the one in Hangzhou, at Yue Fei's birthplace in Tangyin county, Henan province. What sets the shrine in Hangzhou apart from all the others is that it is the only site that combines the temple and the burial site architecturally into one.³

"The Tomb of Yue Fei" [Yue Fei mu] was declared an important national site for cultural preservation by the State Council in March of 1961, and, after sustaining serious damage during the Cultural Revolution, it was rebuilt and opened to the public in 1979. Since 1979 there has been an annual average of between four and five million tourists visiting the site, which makes it second only to the Former Palace Museum in Beijing.⁴ The magnet-like attraction of the Shrine of Yue Fei is not really a recent phenomenon, since during the Republican period it was said that "If you go to West Lake now, you must pay your respects at Yue Fei's shrine, and as soon as you mention Yue Fei's shrine, West Lake must come to mind."⁵ Pursuing this further back in history one will find

that ever since the Southern Song the Shrine to Yue Fei has attracted many visits from the literati elite. The stone tablets left behind by these literati, with compositions singing Yue Fei's praises engraved upon them, have become one of the attractions within the shrine. The French scholar of the Annales School, Pierre Nora, has pointed out that symbolic commemorative objects serve as "places" of memory.⁶ Does the Shrine of Yue Fei attract visits from tourists merely as a tourist attraction? Or might there perhaps be another reason? I took the number thirty-nine—Yue Fei's age at death—and interviewed thirty-nine visiting tourists in front of the Hangzhou Shrine of Yue Fei, asking them such questions as who Yue Fei was and what his image was in their eyes. The respondents were very uneven with regard to their knowledge of Yue Fei, and the points they emphasized varied somewhat as well, but their largest common denominator can be summarized as follows: "Yue Fei was a hero of the people in our struggle against the Jin invaders, who was killed through the treachery of a perfidious official and died a wrongful death."

The Japanese scholar of folklore, Kunio Yanagita, has said that the first condition for going from human to god is to leave this world regretful at being wronged.⁷ Whether in ancient times or modern, in China or abroad, wrongful death is a theme that arouses sympathy, and with this in mind, the attention and admiration that ordinary people focus on Yue Fei can be said to have universal significance. Nonetheless, after nine hundred years of historical change, during which China has evolved from a country that advocated strict cultural distinction between Han Chinese and barbarians to a modern multiethnic country, can Yue Fei, who was the historical hero of the Han Chinese, be called the hero of the entire Chinese people? The debate on issues of this sort has gone on intermittently since 1951. In December 2002, just before the nine hundredth anniversary of Yue Fei's birth, the deletion of the narrative describing Yue Fei's heroism from high school texts and reference books opened up a debate that raged on for sev-

eral months in newspapers and on line, becoming a hot national issue. In March 2003, just when the debate was winding down, the government of Tangyin county, Yue Fei's birthplace in Henan province, put up three million yuan to hold a large-scale program of activities commemorating the nine hundredth anniversary of Yue Fei's birth. This large-scale commemorative occasion, which was held by the local government and attended by many descendants of Yue Fei and personages from every field, not only affirmed Yue Fei's unassailable place as a hero of his people, it also merged his patriotic spirit with the economic development of his birthplace.⁸ The inconclusive debate within the national context created a clear contrast with the feverish enthusiasm for adulation of Yue Fei as hero within the local context, and this contrast reverberated a tension within the public memory and nation-state identification in contemporary China. In the sections below this article will use the idea of places of memory—taking the Shrine to Yue Fei as a focus—to explore the creation of public memory surrounding the Shrine of Yue Fei, and, through separate consideration of this public memory's historicity and diversity, to probe several issues involving identification with the modern nation-state.

Symbolic Space of the Shrine of Yue Fei

In Europe and North America the large-scale appearance of commemorative objects came at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth. China came somewhat later than Europe and America in that commemorative objects symbolizing the national revolution, such as Huanghua Gang [burial place of those who were martyred in the unsuccessful revolutionary uprising of April 27, 1911] and the Zhongshan Ling [Sun Yat-sen's mausoleum] appeared after China's Republic was established in 1912.⁹ After the establishment of the People's Republic, such places as the Monument to the National Heroes [Renmin yingxiong jinian bei] and the Anti-

Japanese War Memorial Hall [Kang ri zhanzheng jinian guan] appeared one after the other.¹⁰ At a somewhat lower level there appeared all sorts of provincial and county-level objects commemorating the Revolution. The Shrine to Yue Fei belongs between these two levels.¹¹ The reason for this is, even though the “uncompromising patriotism” embodied by the shrine has meaning at the national level, the relevance of the shrine to the Revolution was ascribed through creation of a tradition that was not originally part of the shrine.

The Shrine to Yue Fei as a Commemorative Place

The Shrine to Yue Fei, which occupies an area of 23.5 *mu* [1.57 hectares], with the structure itself occupying a space of 2,793 square meters, preserves the architectural style of the Qing dynasty’s Kangxi period.¹² Spatially, the shrine is made up of three main areas: the Zhonglie Hall area (*zhonglie ci qu*), the area of the garden where the tomb is located (*mu yuan qu*), and the Qizhong Hall area (*qizhong ci qu*).

The Zhonglie Hall area includes the hall itself, the garden in front of the hall, and the archway. The archway is in the Qing dynasty double-eave style of architecture with a tablet reading “Shrine of King Yue” (*Yue wang miao*) suspended from the crosspiece. In front of the archway there is an open public area and a stone tablet that reads “Loyal Heart Perished in a Just Cause” (*bi xue dan xin*). Entering through the archway and mounting the flight of stairs, straight ahead is Zhonglie Hall. Zhonglie Hall, the main hall commemorating Yue Fei, is built in the Qing dynasty double-eave “mountain peak” style (*xie shan ding*—characterized by eaves sloping out from the roof line) and has an area of over 500 square meters. Among the eaves there hangs an inscription by Field Marshal Ye Jianying that reads “A Heart That Illuminates the Sun in the Sky” [*tian ri*, “sun in the sky,” is sometimes used as a metaphor for justice and right—Trans.]—a transformation of what Yue Fei wrote when he was near death: “The sun in the sky

shines on and on” (*tian ri zhao zhao, tian ri zhao zhao*). Inside the hall in the center there is a statue 4.75 meters in height of Yue Fei clad in a purple “boa robe” [robe worn by officials decorated with a boa constrictor design woven in golden thread—Trans.], his right hand clenched in a fist, his left hand resting on a sword, and above the statue a horizontal plaque, written, according to tradition, by Yue Fei himself, reading “Return My Land of Rivers and Mountains” (*huan wo he shan*). The three surfaces of the interior walls contain nine murals depicting the major events in the life of Yue Fei. There are walls on the sides of the Zhonglie Hall that separate it from the Qizhong Hall, and the sculptured brick doorway that leads to the Qizhong Hall has the inscription “Gate to Loyalty and Filial Piety” (*yi men zhong xiao*). By the entrance on the southwest side of Zhonglie Hall that leads to the tomb area there is a half-pavilion built against the wall, and inside the pavilion the “Petrified Cypress of Quintessential Loyalty” (*jing zhong bai hua shi*) is on display. Legend has it that this tree, outraged by the injustice being done to Yue Fei, suddenly shriveled and died on the day he passed away, though, in fact, it is merely a petrified coniferous tree.

The garden-and-tomb area occupies the southwest section of the shrine. A gate of Song-style design divides the area into two sections, the area of the tomb itself and a garden. The wall on the east of the garden has “Loyal to the Utmost in Service to the Nation” (*jin zhong bao guo*) engraved upon it. The north and south are occupied by corridors where stone tablets are displayed. The northern corridor has a display of tablets bearing Yue Fei’s poetry, his memorials to the throne, his calligraphy, and painted portraits, while the southern corridor has elegies from different periods praising Yue Fei’s poetry, a letter for Yue Fei written by the Gaozong emperor of Song, and a tablet from the Southern Song bearing the imperial decree posthumously reinstating him—altogether 127 tablets. On the path that runs through the middle of the garden area lie the remains of the “Divided Body Juniper” [*fen shi*]

hui, which metaphorically represents the dismemberment of Qin Hui, who betrayed Yue Fei and whose personal name, Hui, means “juniper”—Trans.], and farther to the west there is the “Quintessential Loyalty Bridge” (*jing zhong qiao*), on the other side of which is a gate to the tomb area, with the inscription “Wellspring of Loyalty” (*zhong quan*) on the right front. Farther west through the gate is the tomb area. At the front in the center is Yue Fei’s tomb, while to the left is the tomb of his son, Yue Yun. It is said that Yue Fei’s tomb contains his personal effects [rather than his body—Trans.] and that it is facing east, round in shape with an arching top, with steps made of stone slabs surrounding it below, and earth planted with grass sealing it above. It is 2.7 meters in diameter, 2.65 meters in height from top to bottom, with the stone slabs arrayed around it measuring 1.2 meters in height. The tomb of Yue Yun is shaped in the same way as that of Yue Fei, its orientation inclined toward the south, measuring 5.0 meters in diameter and 2.0 meters in total height, with stone slabs 1.1 meters in height arrayed around it. Along the path that runs from the front of the tombs of Yue Fei and his son there are three pairs of stone statues of civil and military officials, as well as one pair each of horses, sheep, and tigers carved in stone, each pair being set face-to-face on opposite sides of the path. At the end of the path on one side are statues of Qin Hui and his wife kneeling and, on the other side, statues of Moqi Xie and Zhang Jun, also kneeling.

The Qizhong Hall area, which lies to the north of Yue Fei’s tomb and to the west of Zhonglie Hall, is made up of the Qizhong Hall itself and the Garden of Quintessential Loyalty (*jing zhong yuan*). The Qizhong Hall, which is “Yue Fei’s memorial hall,” has three galleries. The first gallery provides an introduction to Yue Fei’s youth and the story of his participation in the resistance to the Jin invaders. The second gallery’s purpose is to refute the school of thought that considers Yue Fei to have had a foolish sense of loyalty and to demonstrate his “struggle to oppose conciliation and surrender.” The third

gallery gives an introduction to Yue Fei's influence on later generations and their commemoration of him, and also includes a display of photos of national leaders such as Deng Xiaoping visiting the shrine.

Commemoration is a type of behavior whereby people express the way they cherish the memory of events and people from the past. Guided by the principle of "transforming idol worship into scientific commemoration" (articulated by Hu Qiaomu),¹³ the modern-day Shrine of Yue Fei, through the medium of imitation classical architectural style, illustrates the uncompromising patriotic spirit of Yue Fei as well as the antagonism between patriotism and treason exemplified by his life. Here the center of the symbolic space is not Yue Fei's tomb—that is, his death—but his life, and the symbolic items concentrated in his "memorial hall" not only illustrate his "life" in the past tense, but his "life" in the present tense as well. In the traditional sense, the function of a tomb is expressed in ritual behavior, and while this ritual entails commemoration, it commemorates the dead by using a religious ritual to offer consolation to their spirits.¹⁴ During the Song dynasty there existed the custom of erecting graveside huts, which ordinarily were used by monks to chant scriptures and keep watch on the site, and then at the end of the year the whole family would pay their respects together. The Shrine of Yue Fei was originally constructed with this intention in mind. How, then, was the original ritual function of this shrine transformed into a purely commemorative function? Let us first look at the historical Shrine of Yue Fei, which served as a ritual space.

The Shrine of Yue Fei as a Place for Ritual

"Rituals are the most important thing for temples." It was mentioned above that, during the fourteenth year of the Jiading reign of the Southern Song (1221), the court of Southern Song granted the request of Yue Fei's descendants and bestowed upon them the Zhiguo Temple, which was at the graveside,

changing its name to the Temple of Yue Fei's Achievement and Virtue [Yue Fei gongde si]. While this temple served to remind people of the exemplary life Yue Fei had led, its main function was that of overseeing the rituals by which respects were paid to the deceased.¹⁵ In the early period of the Yuan dynasty, the Shrine of Yue Fei had been destroyed in war. During the fifth year of the Dade reign (1301) the descendants of Yue Fei from Jiujiang and Yixing pooled their resources and began restoring the shrine, but it was not until five years had passed that the work was completed. Later on, "there were some among the King's [respectful reference to Yue Fei—Trans.] distant relations who were monks, who took all they had from the temple and sold it to others, and not only sprinkled, swept, and repaired the gravesite, but even the (original) appearance was put in place again.¹⁶ One can see that responsibility for the routine rituals in the Shrine of Yue Fei was taken on by members of the Yue clan and that as a place for rituals the shrine served as a family shrine.

Expenses for normal operation and performance of rituals were defrayed by revenues from the "Recognition of Achievement Fields" (*jing gong tian*). Beginning with the "imperial bestowal of permanent reduction in taxes for worship of the three graves and five temples" during the first year of the period of the Longxing reign in the Southern Song, then passing through the "reclaim confiscated lands and restore the temples" policy of the period of the Taiding reign of the Yuan dynasty, and the "clean up lands and burial sites; commands carried out become the norm" policy of the *xinchou* year [thirty-seventh year of the sixty-year cycle—Trans.] of the Zhizheng reign of the Yuan dynasty, the Shrine of Yue Fei already had basic property on a scale appropriate for carrying out rituals. When the temple devoted to past emperors was erected in Nanjing at the beginning of the Hongwu period of the Ming dynasty, Yue Fei was designated as the attendant to the spirit of the Taizu emperor of the Song. The Shrine of Yue Fei in Hangzhou also obtained the protection of the Ming court: "The

shrine properties will be subsumed as Recognition of Achievement Fields, accounting for money and grain will be waived, and exemption from corvée labor and miscellaneous services will continue to be granted.” According to a survey of the shrine’s “Recognition of Achievement Fields” taken in the ninth year of the period of the Wanli reign, there were 59.19 *mu* [4 hectares] of land, yet only 1.8516 taels [93 grams] of silver were paid each year in taxes. In the Qing dynasty the practices of the former dynasty were maintained, with “the bars of silver being sent and the obligation for corvée labor being waived, just as before,” and commands that the “lotus fields,” former temple property taken over by Manchu bannermen, be returned, and that property lines be strictly drawn. In this way the money for normal operating expenses and performance of rituals at this “family shrine” was assured, and the Shrine of Yue Fei gained possession of considerable real property. The fact that during the Cultural Revolution the Shrine to Yue Fei was turned into the “Rental Collection Courtyard” and used to carry out education for class struggle is probably not unrelated to its ownership of fields and its collection of interest on rentals.

It was during the Ming dynasty that a national presence impinged upon the rituals honoring Yue Fei. In the fourth year of the Hongwu reign, Zhu Yuanzhang [founder of the Ming dynasty—Trans.] bestowed upon Yue Fei the title of “honored martial king, youthful defender of the land of E [Hubei province] for the Song dynasty” (*song shao bao e guo wu mu wang*) and sent a representative each year on the twenty-ninth day of the twelfth month of the lunar calendar (the anniversary of Yue Fei’s death) to the Shrine of Yue Fei in Hangzhou to offer sacrifices. This meant that, in addition to the end of the year, when sacrifices were offered by Yue Fei’s descendants, the anniversary of Yue Fei’s death became a time for a ritual of sacrifice that had national overtones. In the first year of the Tianshun reign (1457), Ma Wei, the head administrator (*tong zhi*) of Hangzhou, made contributions to the restoration

of the shrine, after which he beseeched the imperial court to bestow a plaque which read “Loyal Martyr’s Temple” (*zhong lie miao*). At that time in the north another shrine of Yue Fei, built not long before in Tangyin, had been designated for two annual sacrifice rituals, one in the spring and the other in the fall. In reference to this, Ma Wei wrote, “The great Song general, Yue Fei, was born in Tangyin and buried in Hangzhou. Since the birthplace has been favored by Your Highness with designation for two sacrifice rituals each year, how can his resting place be granted less?”¹⁷ Ma Wei’s request was granted by the Ming court.

The spring and autumn sacrifice rituals at the Shrine of Yue Fei in Hangzhou were carried out in the second and eighth months, the specific days of the month being set by officials according to the local situation. On the evening before the ritual, the local officials would lead their subordinates to the temple, where they would have a vegetarian meal and spend the night. During the fifth watch [just before dawn], everyone would rise, dress in ritual attire and go to the great hall. There, before an altar that had been prepared beforehand, they bowed four times with hands clasped in front of them, after which they stood erect again. Next came the “initial tribute rite” (*chu xian li*), in which the officer of tributes (*xian guan*) came in through a side entrance, holding up a vessel containing wine, and placing silk beneath the spot, he offered the vessel to the spirit, after which he prostrated himself and stood again. Once this was completed, it was time to read an invocation. Everyone knelt as the invocation was read, and when it was finished they prostrated themselves and then stood again. After this was done, two more rites, called the “secondary tribute rite” (*ya xian li*) and the “final tribute rite” (*zhong xian li*), each of which followed the steps described above, were carried out. Having completed this phase, everyone went to the incense altar, knelt to drink the wine of good fortune (*fu jiu*) and partake of the sacrificial meat. They then prostrated themselves, returned to their places, performed two bows with hands

clasped in front of them, and stood up straight again. Finally, the ones who had read the invocation and presented the wine and silk cloth burned the cloth and the text of the rite, and then the ritual reached its conclusion. The most important part of the ritual was the drinking of the wine and the receiving of sacrificial meat, the meat and wine used in the ritual sometimes being referred to as “wine of good fortune” and “meat of good fortune” (*fu rou*), which, when consumed after a ritual in ancient times, signified a spiritual sharing with one’s ancestors.¹⁸ The meaning here can be understood as partaking of Yue Fei’s spirit of loyalty and filial piety. The expenses for this ritual, in which local officials participated, representing power at the national level, were of course defrayed using public funds.

During the latter part of the Ming dynasty the Qizhong [inspire loyalty] Hall, the Jizhong [Carry on Loyalty] Hall, the Yizhong [Assist Loyalty] Hall, and the Liufang [Enduring Honor] Hall were added to the original shrine site. In rituals performed during the period of the Wanli reign there was a clear distinction between “public” (official) and “private” (civilian), with the spring and autumn rituals being limited to the Main Hall (*zheng dian*), the Prince Liewen Hall, the Prince Fuwen Hall, and the Liufang Hall, and the local officials being responsible for arrangements regarding the objects used in the ritual. Yue Fei, Zhang Xian, and Niu Gao were all officials of the Southern Song, so the ten who were designated as attendants for them were also officials of the Southern Song. “Regarding objects used for rituals in such locations as the Qizhong Hall, the descendants of the Yue family took turns providing them using funds from the rental of the fields belonging to the shrine.”¹⁹ Nonetheless, during the period of the Tianqi reign at the end of Ming, demands from a “chivalrous warrior” (*yi shi*) named Gao Yingke caused the distinction between “public” and “private” rituals to disappear: “Expansion for ritual sites such as the dormitory hall, Jizhong Hall, Yizhong Hall, Liufang Hall, and the Hall of the Earth has been

repeatedly requested of the provincial authorities by Gao Yingke, who also suggested that the objects used in ritual in the two previously mentioned halls [Qizhong Hall and Liufang Hall, according to the person making the citation] be alike, and that only a small amount of silk cloth be burned.”²⁰

The situation with regard to rituals at the Shrine of Yue Fei during the Qing is not known. In addition to the spring and autumn rituals during the Qing, there were special rituals performed during the reign of the Qianlong emperor when his six separate tours of the southern areas (*nan xun*) reached Zhejiang province and he sent one of his ministers to pay respects at Yue Fei’s tomb. On the first, second, and third tours the emperor himself, accompanied by the empress, went to the Shrine of Yue Fei. On the sixteenth day of the third month of the forty-ninth year of the Qianlong period, during the sixth tour, “it was ordered that the seventeenth son of the emperor enter the shrine to pay his respects.”²¹ Splendid occasions of this sort were extremely rare in the history of the shrine. In his *Abridged Record of the Shrine of Yue Fei*, Feng Pei writes:

In Hubei province, since the reinstatement during the period of the Longxing reign of Song, through the Yuan and Ming dynasties and up to the present, there have been representatives present to pay respects and show admiration, but this has only amounted to seasonal rituals in spring and autumn with officials following the tradition by offering sacrifices, and there has never been another instance like that of His Imperial Majesty gracing the shrine with his presence, ordering his ministers to participate in the ritual, and personally visiting the tomb site in order to commemorate this quintessential loyalty.²²

In view of all this, why did those who rule the country wish to participate in a ritual sacrifice to Yue Fei? The answer to this riddle lies in the commemoration of loyalty by the Qianlong emperor. The performance by the national rulers of rituals in spring and autumn—behavior outside the scope of ordinary life—was meant to achieve a goal that was to be very much part of ordinary life: to establish Yue Fei as a paradigm

of political virtue. In this way a ritual performed for a departed soul was superseded by the glorification of the spirit of one who had perished. Here it is easy to understand how, under the influence of post-twentieth-century modernist thinking, the religiously oriented behavior of rituals will quietly withdraw in the face of the behavior through which Yue Fei is glorified on a national scale, and how the symbolic center of the Shrine of Yue Fei will shift from his tomb and the Zhonglie Hall to the Yue Fei Memorial Hall.

The Origin of the “Kneeling Iron Figures”

Facing Yue Fei’s tomb we can see four kneeling figures rendered in iron: Qin Hui and his wife (née Wang), Moqi Xie, and Zhang Jun. These four, who are considered the perpetrators of Yue Fei’s murder, have been spat upon and cursed by generation after generation. In fact, the principal murderer is none other than the Gaozong Emperor of Song. While his motives for causing the death of a general so loyal to him are very complex, one point that is certain is that concerning the issue of resisting the Jin invasion, he and Yue Fei, ruler and subject, had taken diametrically opposed positions. Yue Fei had vowed to fight to the end, “to exterminate the vanquished barbarians, to recover the Three Passes, to receive the Two Holy Ones, to revive the Song dynasty, and to make the Central Kingdom safe and strong.”²³ The Gaozong emperor, on the other hand, wanted “harmony” to be the essential (*ti*), taking “war” as an expedient (*yong*), his personal preference being to keep his diminished realm, the Southern Song, in a safe corner away from strife, because receiving the “Two Holy Ones” (his father, the Huizong emperor, and older brother, the Qinzong emperor) might undermine the legitimacy of his reign, which had not come to him through the formal process of succession. The Gaozong emperor premeditated the murder of Yue Fei, and Qin Hui was his accomplice. With the cooperation of General Zhang Jun, Qin Hui sent his trusted

henchman, the Censor Moqi Xie to trap Yue Fei in an untenable position. At a time when rulers were all powerful, it was not possible that the Gaozong Emperor would have to take responsibility for Yue Fei's death, so the one who actually committed the murder was held responsible instead. Before the period of the reign of Gaozong had ended, Qin Hui had already become the target of curses and spitting among the people, and after Yue Fei's name was cleared and he was posthumously reinstated, Qin Hui's name became even more synonymous with traitorous villainy.²⁴ Moqi Xie was next in line after Qin.²⁵ Zhang Jun's becoming a target of curses and spittle because of his role in bringing Yue Fei to harm seems to have happened later than for Moqi Xie. The traditional account that Mme. Wang [Qin Hui's wife] egged the perpetrators on is probably speculation, and in this respect the popularity of the *zaju* opera "Crime at the Eastern Window" [Dong chuang shi fan], which was widely performed toward the end of the Southern Song, played a key role.

For a long period of time these four people had no direct relation to the rituals performed and the memory embodied in the Shrine of Yue Fei. In 1449, amid antagonism between the Ming court and the Mongols to the north, there occurred the "Coup of Tumubao," which was an instance like the "Coup of Jingkang" during the Northern Song dynasty [the coup that took place when the Jin invaders took Gaozong's father and older brother hostage—Trans.], and Zhu Qizhen, the Yingzong emperor of the Ming dynasty was taken captive by the Waci (Oirat) Mongols. The threat of the nomadic people from the north once again summoned the historical memory of the people of the Central Plains concerning invasions and trouble from alien northerners, so both imperial court and the general populace began activities on a large scale to create images associated with Yue Fei, and among those images the most common and best maintained by later generations were those of the "kneeling iron figures."

According to written records, in the eighth year of the

Zhengde reign of the Ming, the figures of Qin Hui, his wife, Mme. Wang, and Moqi Xie, rendered in bronze on orders of Municipal Administrator (*du zhi hui*) Li Long and placed before the Shrine of Yue Fei, “had long been broken apart by beatings from visitors.” In the twenty-second year of the Wanli reign, the Deputy Director of Courts (*an cha fu shi*) Fan Lai, believing bronze not to be hard and durable enough, had new figures cast in iron, also adding a figure of Zhang Jun as he did so. Not long after, Wang Ruxun, governor of Zhejiang province, sank the figures of Zhang Jun and Mme. Wang in the river and placed the figures of Qin Hui and Moqi Xie so that they were kneeling before the hall. In the thirtieth year of the Wanli reign, when Fan Lai returned to Zhejiang in an official capacity he paid for restoration, and the four figures were once again all in place. “Later on people from the village beyond the shrine have hit Mme. Wang with staffs, and her iron head has fallen to the ground.” In the Qing, during the thirty-first year of the Kangxi reign (1692), when the prefect of Hangzhou, Li Duo, renovated the shrine, Qin Hui, Mme. Wang, and Moqi Xie were kneeling before the tomb, but Zhang Jun was not there.²⁶ During the Yongzheng reign, Li Wei, in his capacity as governor-general of Fujian and Zhejiang, submitted a memorial to the throne requesting recasting of the iron figures, adding that “iron should not be so defiled, so please use scrap iron collected from rebels and rogue soldiers to cast these four figures.” In the ninth year of the Yongzheng reign, Li Xing, magistrate of Qiantang county, was ordered to recast the iron figures. Again in the twelfth year of the Qianlong reign, an administrative officer named Tang Mo had the iron figures recast. In the seventh year of the Jiaqing reign, Governor-general Ruan Yuan led a naval expedition to suppress piracy, and, taking iron from the artillery and other weapons he had confiscated, had figures recast that were so solid and heavy they could not be moved. In the twenty-third year of Guangxu (1897), the administrative official Yun Zuyi had the iron figures recast because “rainwater had eroded, sunlight had

scorched, so that even tough iron had become worn away, beyond which the righteous anger of the people had brought year after year of curses and blows, which had left their heads and bodies badly deteriorated.”²⁷ These figures were preserved until the autumn of 1966, when they were destroyed. The kneeling iron figures found at present in the Shrine to Yue Fei were recast in 1979. To prevent visitors from venting their ire and damaging these figures an iron fence has been erected around them, and on the wall behind the figures signs of the sort that remind visitors to respect cultural relics and to refrain from spitting appear.

What symbolic meaning did the creation of these four figures have? One of the creators explained: “During the Spring and Autumn period, even the dead were castigated so that the punishments of law would be clear to all.” This is to say that the message conveyed to each generation by these figures is that loyalty must be rewarded and treachery punished. When the figures were recast during the Qing dynasty a fresh nuance was added: these figures of traitors were cast from the iron in weapons used by rebels that had been suppressed. These figures were repeatedly destroyed and recast, and there was a mid-nineteenth-century incident in which someone surreptitiously carried Qin Hui’s likeness off and threw it in the lake: “There is one among us, a descendant of thieves, who stole Qin’s statue, arousing general indignation, and we thought that it might have been sunk in the lake, so we dragged a net to find it, and with one pull we brought it out.”²⁸ People today have a difficult time fathoming what these people had in mind, although the incident makes one point clear: the symbolic meaning of these figures was not perfectly homogeneous in the memory of the people, and surrounding the existence of these figures was an adversarial tension between the mainstream and the folk discourse. According to the mainstream discourse, while the motivation that drove Governor-general Wang Ruxun to sink the figures of Mme. Wang and Zhang Jun, at least one can be certain that he had reservations con-

cerning whether the two of them should have to bear responsibility for Yue Fei's death. Once a symbol comes into existence, the extent to which it corresponds to history is no longer important. During the Qing dynasty some of the ordinary people would hang derisive couplets by each of the statues, and among these was the following couplet concerning Qing Hui and his wife, Mme. Wang:

Alas! I am so sorry—had I a good wife, how could I have come to this?

Hah! Your wife has a gossiping tongue—yet no one who was not a scoundrel could have come to this pass!

The formation of the image of Mme. Wang and the plays and fiction that portrayed her both reflect the male-centered historical view of morality, and, consistent with this, the iron figure of Mme. Wang kneeling forms a strong contrast with image of the women—Yue Fei's mother being most prominent among them—portrayed in the role of assisting their husbands and training their children, in the Qizhong Hall and the Jizhong Hall within the Shrine of Yue Fei.

Yue Fei on the Stone Tablets

The Dilemma of Both Remembering and Forgetting

The Value Orientation of "Restoration" (chong xiu)

In the fifth year of the Dade reign (1301) of the Yuan dynasty, the descendants of Yue Fei restored the shrine from ruins, which means that during the Yuan dynasty maintenance of the tomb was a Yue family affair. Later on, when the monks of the Yue family took temple property and "sold it to others" the shrine had deteriorated dramatically. In the *bing yin* year of the Taiding reign of the Yuan dynasty (1326), the abbot of the shrine, named Keguan, appealed to the authorities, and this resulted in the prefecture of Hangzhou procuring money from

Li Quan to have the temple restored and the return of the “Recognition of Achievement” (*jinggong*) fields, after which thirteen years passed until, in the sixth year of the Zhizheng reign (1340), work was completed. Li Quan’s support makes it clear that local officials had already begun to take the symbolic meaning of the Shrine of Yue Fei seriously at the local level. After the advent of the Ming dynasty, as participation in sacrifice rituals in honor of Yue Fei rose to the national level, the Shrine to Yue Fei entered a process of continuous reconstruction. Within this process we can scarcely glimpse traces of Yue Fei’s descendants. This is to say that the main part of the behavior of “restoration” passed from the family of Yue Fei to officials and civilian gentry of the prefecture or county to which the shrine belonged. Here we cannot help but ask: What was the value orientation of the behavior involved in “restoration”? After restoration had been carried out, what had the shrine gained and lost? This is a perspective that is indispensable in studying the symbolic meaning of the Shrine of Yue Fei.

After the “Coup of Tumubao” the need to resist the threat from the north summoned forth the memory of Yue Fei in court and among the people, based on stories of Yue Fei’s resistance against the Jin invaders, and local officials actively undertook activities that would create public memory of Yue Fei. During the Tianshun reign, the prefect Ma Wei spent his own salary for restoration of the shrine and the Qing court bestowed a tablet reading “Temple of the Loyal Martyr” (*zhonglie miao*). During the Hongzhi reign the eunuch Mai Xiu restored the dormitory hall in the shrine and had the words “All Red the River” [*man jian hong*: reference to a poem by Yue Fei considered to be the epitome of patriotic feeling—Trans.] engraved in one of the corridors. In the twelfth year of the Zhengde reign, the eunuch Wang Tang had portraits done of Lady Wang and her children in the rear dormitory, with a plaque reading “Gate to Loyalty and Filial Piety” (*yi men zhong xiao*). In the fourteenth year of the Jiayin reign, the censor

Zhang Jing had “Loyal to the Utmost in Service to the Nation” (*jin zhong bao guo*) engraved on a stone tablet that was placed upright to the south of the tomb. In the twenty-seventh year of the Jiaqing reign, the governor-general Hu Zongxian restored the shrine, and still there were other instances. The most important change was the setting up of the “kneeling iron figures” and the new halls for rituals. Particulars concerning establishment of the halls can be known from inscriptions on stone tablets, the second year of the Hongzhi reign (1489) being the time when the Yizhong Hall was founded to commemorate the unsuccessful attempt by Shi Quan to assassinate Qin Hui and Liu Yunsheng, ordinary people who were murdered by Qin Hui because he had petitioned to get redress for Yue Fei.²⁹ During the *jiachen* year of the period of the Wanli reign (1604) the figure of Kui Shun was added during restoration. During the *jiazi* year of the Tianzi reign (1624) expansion activities saw the completion of the “Five Halls” (*wu ci*)—Qizhong Hall, Jizhong Hall, Yizhong Hall, Liufang Hall, and the Hall of the Earth. The Qizhong Hall commemorates family members such as Yue Fei’s parents, his daughter, Yinping, and his grandson, Yue Ke, while the Jizhong Hall commemorates Yue Fei’s five sons, which include Yue Yun, and his wife, as does the Yizhong Hall. The Liufang Hall focuses on such people as Han Shizhong, Zhou Sanwei, Shi Hao, the rest of the “ten nobles” (*shi wei wang gong*), and also local officials and gentry, who called out for justice during the period between Yue Fei’s being thrown into prison and his reinstatement.

After the Ming dynasty had collapsed, a censor from the provincial government named Fan Chengmo made a contribution for restoration of the Shrine of Yue Fei in the eighth year of the Shunzhi reign. By the twenty-third year of the Kangxi reign (1684), the shrine was in ruins, and a transportation official named Luo Wenyu paid for restoration. In the thirty-fourth year of Kangxi, the prefect Li Duo restored and rebuilt the Qizhong Hall, the Zhonglie Hall, and their two

corridors, and also had statues sculpted of “Prince Liewen”—Zhang Xian’s title—and “Prince Fuwen”—Niu Gao’s title. In the forty-seventh year of the Kangxi reign Fan Shizhong called for the renovation of the shrine grounds. In the seventh year of the Yongzheng reign there was an imperial edict concerning the resting places of rulers of former times and the shrines of subjects who had been virtuous and loyal, charging administrators in each province to have their subordinates carry out conservation and maintenance of these sites. At the end of each year officials in each locale concerned were to enter maintenance expenses into a ledger and turn it in to the Ministry of Public Works. In the ninth year of the Yongzheng reign, Governor-general Li Wei included on the path in front of the tomb as part of the renovation a stone tablet with an inscription that read “Loyal Heart Perished in a Just Cause.” There are no later references to this. During an imperial tour of the south in the *xin wei* year of the Qianlong reign, the order went out to carry out renovation whenever necessary. In the sixth year of the Jiaqing reign (1801), when Ruan Yuan, governor of Zhejiang, carried out renovations, a plaque that read “Shrine of King Yue” was placed above the main gate, and ever since that time this title was taken to be the correct formal title of the shrine. The “restorations” that took place during the Qing emphasized the halls that embodied those who were blood relations of Yue Fei. According to the work, “Abbreviated Record of Yue Fei’s Shrine” [Yue miao zhi lue], which was compiled during the Jiaqing reign, at that time the Yizhong Hall and the Liufang Hall had fallen into ruin. One can see from this that what “restoration” entailed during the Ming was somewhat different from what it entailed during the Qing.

After the Republic of China was established, Yue Fei’s position rose until it was equal to or even higher than that of Guan Yu [legendary hero of the Three Kingdoms period and epitome of loyalty and righteousness—Trans.]. In 1914, President Yuan Shikai decreed that rituals should be established to pay respects to the military and civilian figures from China’s

history who represented outstanding courage and achievement, and to those who had been martyred in the struggle to establish the Republic. The next year the regulations for performing rituals at the shrines of Yue Fei and Guan Yu were promulgated, and these included setting up the main hall so that Guan Yu was on the left and Yue Fei was on the right. Placed behind the two of them in the position of attendants were twenty-four historically prominent military figures.³⁰ At that time people were somewhat skeptical about Guan Yu and the twenty-four attendants, with Yue Fei being the only one who escaped their skepticism. With this commemorative activity the Republican government attempted to standardize the heroic figures contained within the symbolic space of traditional memory and belief. Between 1918 and 1921, two military governors (*du jun*), Yang Shande and Lu Yongxiang, and the governor of Zhejiang, Zhang Zaiyang, pooled their efforts and spent 150,000 yuan restoring the Shrine of Yue Fei, discarding some of the Qing cultural artifacts and adding some artifacts from the Republican period as they did so. It is said that originally there was an extremely large number of couplets hanging from columns (*ying lian*) in the shrine, but after restoration most of what was found in the shrine consisted of items written by military commanders from Zhejiang or people who were prominent at the time, and “as for the older couplets, except for one or two that had been taken over to the Qizhong Hall, they were discarded and no trace is left of them.”³¹ In 1933, Zhang Zaiyang, who was the former governor of Zhejiang and the current head of the committee entrusted with taking care of the Shrine of Yue Fei, raised money to restore the shrine and historical sites associated with Yue Fei in Hangzhou. This restoration took place after the September 18 Incident [seizure in 1931 of Shenyang by the Japanese as a prelude to occupation of China’s Northeast—Trans.] and the January 28 Incident [seizure of part of Shanghai by the Japanese in 1932—Trans.], just at the time the Japanese were accelerating the pace of their invasion of Chinese terri-

tory. Obviously, this crisis of national territory caused the Republican government in Nanjing and local officials to become aware of the purpose that could be served by the symbol of Yue Fei and his shrine in arousing a surge of nationalistic spirit among the Chinese people.

During the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution, which began in 1966, the Shrine of Yue Fei suffered the most serious destruction wrought by human beings since the Mongols of the Yuan dynasty. While this may seem like the action of Red Guards during their rampage, it was actually the result of tensions within the discourse (*hua yu*) concerning Yue Fei and the nation which had been present since the 1950s. Viewed in terms of the Marxist theory of classes, Yue Fei was a member of the ruling class and therefore someone to be criticized and overthrown, while viewed from the perspective of nationalism, there was a clash between the historical spirit he symbolized and the people of modern China, and so the real meaning of Yue Fei became somewhat doubtful. After the ordeal of the Cultural Revolution, a crisis arose in the ideology of class struggle, and the patriotism symbolized by the Shrine of Yue Fei was once again recognized. And it was against this new historical background that in 1979 the Shrine of Yue Fei got extensive renovation.

Generally speaking, the “renovations” that the Shrine of Yue Fei underwent during the Ming and Qing monarchies and under modern nationhood not only restored the shrine, but also added and took away a number of symbolic commemorative objects. In the process of reinventing tradition at the Shrine of Yue Fei, some of the public memory of Yue Fei has been preserved, while some of it has been discarded.

National Remembering and Forgetting

Public memory includes national memory, with the nation being what occupies the memory and the citizenry being the body that does the remembering. The American scholar Benedict

Anderson believes that the nations and peoples of recent times are “communities of memory,” and the reason that people who have never met can have a feeling of community and connection is because they imagine a shared memory of the past. Modern nations use such things as narratives, monuments, memorial halls, memorial days, and museums to preserve and develop these memories and see to it that they are passed on as tradition.³² Notwithstanding, if we look at the tradition that has embodied the memory of Yue Fei for more than 800 years already, the things Anderson says are not necessarily all correct, because since recent times creation of the public memory of Yue Fei derived its impetus at the folk level, and then, at the juncture when foreign incursions were growing worse by the day, the intellectual elite were first in trying to reawaken a memory of Yue Fei that had become bogged down in the thought patterns of popular politics and in trying to turn it into an important spiritual resource for resistance to foreign aggression.

The Yue Fei Shrine’s more than 800 years of existence have revealed two kinds of discourse: one of constancy and the other of changeability. The idea of constancy is embodied in the expression, “Loyal to the Utmost in Service to the Nation.” This expression, consisting of four Chinese characters now engraved on a stone tablet and on a wall at the shrine, was, according to tradition, tattooed on Yue Fei’s back by his mother. During the Ming and Qing dynasties this expression was interpreted, in conformity with the needs of Confucian political morality, to mean “loyalty and filial piety,” whereupon Yue Fei became the embodiment of political morality for the family (filial piety) and the nation (loyalty), institutions which, while at different levels, exhibited the same structure. In recent times this expression became virtually synonymous with Yue Fei, and Yue Fei became seen as a historical model of patriotism. Nonetheless, the stone carvings and other writings accumulated over the generations at the Shrine of Yue Fei reveal a tension within the national context

on Yue Fei, a tension arising from the mutual exclusivity of memory and forgetting among the Chinese people. In order to dispel this tension within the national discourse on Yue Fei, there were carried out, both in recent times and in earlier times, what Eric Hobsbawm has called “the invention of tradition.” After the “Coup of Tumubao” in the Ming dynasty, a number of titles were conferred upon Yue Fei, including “Loyal Martyr” (*zhong lie*), “Loyal Warrior” (*zhong wu*), “Great Emperor Who Calms Evil Spirits in the Three Realms and Honored Martial King Who Protects from Harm and Brings Good Fortune” (*san jie jing mo da di bao jie chang yun wu mu wang*), “Great Emperor of the Three Realms Before Whom Evil Spirits Lie Prostrate, Heavenly Guardian of the Wonderful Dharma of Loyalty and Filial Piety, Holy Lord Emperor Yue” (*san jie fu mo da di zhong xiao miao fa tian zun Yue sheng di jun*), and so on, which indicates that he had risen from exemplary subject of his ruler to a spirit that had completely transcended the mundane world. The reason Yue Fei’s image endured so long without fading was that the nation under the Ming dynasty attempted to incorporate Yue Fei into the discourse on “the distinction between the Chinese and barbarians” (*hua yi zhi bian*), and make him a symbol of someone who in reality had resisted invasion by an alien race from the north.

The Manchus, like the Jin people, were descendants of the Tungus race, and after they had conquered the Ming and established the Qing, they took very different attitudes toward the Yue Fei and Guan Yu who existed in traditional memory: they posthumously granted titles to three generations of Guan Yu’s family and ordered shrines to Guan Yu built throughout the country, while for Yue Fei they adopted a more low-key policy. Looking at another aspect, we have mentioned above that “restoration” of the shrine of Yue Fei was carried out during the periods of the Shunzhi, Kangxi, and Yongzheng reigns of the Qing. Why, then, would this sort of difference become apparent? It should be noted that the “restorations” were all initiated by local officials, and rather than saying they were actions originating at the national level

and proceeding top-down, they should be described as behavior that began at the bottom and worked up to the national level. In the fourth year of the Yongzheng reign (1726), Yue Fei was removed from the “Martial Shrine” (*wu miao*) that had been added during the Ming, which shows that the Manchu court had still not rid itself of the image of Yue Fei’s involvement in the narrative that embodied distinction between the Chinese and barbarians, and the history of Yue Fei’s resistance to the Jin invaders still rankled. Even so, with anti-Manchu struggles continuously springing up along the southern coast of China, even as local officials harshly suppressed efforts to resist Qing and restore Ming, they also tried to convert the image of Yue Fei as anti-Manchu into an image that would affirm the legitimacy of their rule.

In the creation of the national discourse on Yue Fei, a major role was played by the Gaozong emperor of the Qing, whose reign title was Qianlong. When he went through Hangzhou on his six tours of the south, he left behind nine poetic compositions extolling the loyalty and filial piety of Yue Fei, and these compositions were engraved on stone tablets and placed by the main gate. The Qianlong emperor left the confines of the traditional view of differences between Chinese and barbarian to merge Yue Fei’s image to the fate of an empire that included Han Chinese, Manchus, Tibetans, and other races: the emperor pulled Yue Fei down from his spiritual pedestal and positioned him as a man; he eliminated the narrative of a Yue Fei associated with the distinction between Chinese and barbarian; and he converted him into the epitome of a dutiful subject. By creating an image of absolute loyalty and filial piety for Yue Fei, the Qianlong emperor revealed his goal of establishing a common historical memory with the Han Chinese. Here are two of his poems:

Reading history I often think of loyalty, filial piety, and honesty.
 Again I view the punished tree arch by the charming town.
 It was wrongful imprisonment, a needless time of woe,
 Yet he who valued righteousness could scoff as death drew near.

Autumn winds in the old home place evoke memories of
yesteryear,
And the ancient moon over the stone gate grows as if alive.
Wrapped in the darkness of the grave your anger may find
peace,
Though I suspect Hangzhou's ire toward us has yet to subside.

The first half of this poem commends Yue Fei for his loyalty, filial piety, and honesty, and the second half casts blame on the Gaozong emperor of the Song for bringing peace through appeasement, while the line “Autumn winds in the old home place evoke memories of yesteryear” refers to the setting of the Qianlong emperor's visit to Yue Fei's ancestral home in Tangyin the year before.³³ Another poem reads:

The yellow dragon comes straight away, with vapors tower-
ing high,
The people of Yan use southern gold to halt the northward
march.
Just when the time was ripe and revival within grasp,
Who could know that hollowed force would turn the enter-
prise to naught?
Love of money, deeply felt, is the officials' flaw,
And fear of death drives them to cast the warrior's life
away.
The mighty Great Wall's fortress, all laid waste in vain,
The graveside tree still bears witness to outrage difficult to
quell.

The first half of this poem describes how Yue Fei narrowly missed his triumph, and the second half condemns the Song officials for being corrupt.

The two poems end with the lines, “Though I suspect Hangzhou's ire toward us has yet to subside” and “The graveside tree still bears witness to outrage difficult to quell.” Any reader who, terrified by the literary inquisition of the times, did not realize that the author was the Qianlong emperor would no doubt have mistakenly assumed that these poems were composed by a literatus of the Song or Ming who

felt deeply aggrieved. In the poems the emperor blurred the *self-other* distinction between Manchu and Han ethnic groups by viewing Yue Fei as “self” and both the Gaozong emperor of the Song and the Jin barbarians as “other,” thereby laying claim to a historical memory of Yue Fei that was shared with Han culture and the Han people. Thus the Han people who had lost their “present” were able, through identification with their “past,” to share a common history with an emperor who came from an alien ethnic group.³⁴

Even though the Qing rulers succeeded in transforming the memory of Yue Fei into a national memory that was beneficial to their rule, toward the end of the dynasty the shrines of Yue Fei became the sites where the call for the anti-Manchu revolution went out. The anti-Manchu revolutionary party of the late Qing, the Guangfuhui [Revival of illumination party] set forth a rule in the charter by which they formed a secret society, the Longhua Society charter (*Longhua hui zhangcheng*), that initiation into the Longhua Society had to be carried out in a shrine of Yue Fei, and that initiates had to take the blood oath before the representation of Yue Fei’s spirit. In this instance, Yue Fei was inducted into the genealogy of anti-Manchu revolutionaries, replacing figures who were prominent as advocates of deposing the Qing and reviving the Ming in traditions maintained by the Heaven and Earth Society, and occupying the most prominent position of all in that genealogy.³⁵ In the late Qing the revolutionaries used this traditional ritual of the blood oath as a manifestation of the self-other distinction that existed between Manchu and Han, placing the two groups in an irreconcilably adversarial relationship as a reaction against the Qianlong emperor’s creation of a public memory of Yue Fei in an attempt to eradicate the line between Manchu and Han. In the refurbished Shrine of Yue Fei in 1921, the stone tablets bearing the Qianlong emperor’s poems were moved away from the main gate, and the words of modern nationalists were brought into the shrine. A parallel couplet by Cai Yuanpei reads:

The spirit of our people, with the era of the Qing supplanted,
finally becomes whole, and if spirits have awareness, this
may assuage the lingering outrage.

The scenery of the lakeside, embellished by this temple,
barely escapes being forlorn, while the beauty of this land
lends itself to a shrine we see restored.

The couplet by Feng Yuxiang reads:

Return my land of rivers and mountains, says a loyal heart
that cares only for his nation.

Drive out the tribes of alien peoples, after years of deep
humiliation from irreconcilable enemies.

The couplet by Cai Yuanpei, still kept within the shrine up to the present, includes the phrase “The spirit of our people, with the era of the Qing supplanted, finally becomes whole,” a phrase that perpetuates the type of Han nationalism that has placed Yue Fei in the midst of an adversary relationship between Han and Manchu since the last days of the Qing. Nonetheless, with the advent of the People’s Republic, and within the context of the national discourse, Yue Fei has become a hero for the entire modern nation. The model for modern nations is based upon the Western European concept of an ethnically homogeneous nation-state,³⁶ while in modern China, which is multiethnic in composition, transformation of the discourse on Yue Fei has encountered difficulties: How can a hero of the Han ethnic group become the hero of a modern nation made up of multiple ethnic groups? In other words, in the sphere of discourse of the modern nation-state, how can the specialized image of Yue Fei found in the traditional sphere of discourse attain universality? How can the historical hero be linked to the ideology of the modern nation-state? During the Republican era this issue ultimately was not resolved from a theoretical standpoint, since while the narrative of Yue Fei as a national hero carried on the mainstream narrative of the Han cultural historical tradition, it also obtained a sort of dubious inclusion into the narrative of modern nationalism. After the September 18 Incident, Yue Fei was called one of

the “military geniuses” of Chinese history,³⁷ which gave prominence to one aspect of his national heroism. After the War of Resistance against Japan began, the anti-Japanese military leader Feng Yuxiang made a plaque for the Shrine of Yue Fei in Hangzhou that read “Hero of the Nation,” which further solidified Yue Fei’s symbolic significance as a national hero. That plaque is preserved to this day.

After the Cultural Revolution ended, the shrines of Yue Fei were refurbished and became “places” where public memory could be created after the ideological crisis. As a symbol of patriotism, the image of Yue Fei became inclusive and blurred the distinctions between ethnic groups. In patriotic propaganda from the late seventies until the mid-eighties the symbolic meaning of Yue Fei and his shrines was broadly employed. In 1979, Ye Jianying, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, made an allusion to Yue Fei’s dying words, “the sun in the sky shines on and on” (*tian ri zhao zhao*), when he ordered a large plaque with gilded script that read “His Heart Illuminates the Sun in the Sky” (*xin zhao tian ri*) made for the newly built Temple of King Yue (*Yue wang miao*), adding a written comment to the effect that “the millions our nation has spent for construction of a shrine to Yue Fei have as their main purpose the instruction of generations to come.” On December 2, 1983, leaders personally visited the Shrine of Yue Fei.³⁸ In 1995 the Shrine of Yue Fei was designated a patriotic educational site by Zhejiang province, and in 1996 it was designated by six authorities, including the State Cultural Relics Bureau, the National Educational Committee State Education Commission, and the Ministry of Culture, as a “national site for primary and secondary patriotic education.” And today, with society changing at a frantic pace, and with impetus provided by the concept of “a structure of unity within diversity for the Chinese people” (*Zhonghua minzu duoyuan yiti geju*, an expression coined by Fei Xiaotong),³⁹ the Shrine of Yue Fei, as a site for patriotic education, is undergoing yet another recreation of tradition.

Conclusion

Fissures and Continuity in Public Memory

Memory may be subcategorized as individual memory and collective or public memory. The former is the memory of an individual or a clan, while the latter embodies variations according to region, culture, organization, class, age, minority group, or ethnic identity. The behavior that constructs collective memory is simultaneously accompanied by the act of forgetting, and that act of forgetting constitutes a part of remembering. Collective memory will, through varying levels of cultural hegemony, make use of, enhance, usurp, and change, obliterate, or suppress individual or group memories that are different from it or even opposed to it. The *nationalization* of ritual behavior in the Shrine of Yue Fei since Southern Song times shows that over the years the ruling dynasties have endeavored to avail themselves of Yue Fei's image and, through control of this image, create a public memory suited to the respective value orientations by which they governed.

The English Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm holds that "invention of tradition" involves the structuring and systematizing of tradition, so that a tradition may be created within a short period of several years and, once created, it is governed by a set of explicit or implicit rules that become habitual. In order to inculcate certain values and norms, invented tradition will hint strongly at continuity between oneself and the past through use of a set of symbols and rituals, though this continuity is ordinarily not historical in nature.⁴⁰ Anthropological and historical studies focusing on the Shrine of Yue Fei allow us to see that during the last 800 years the changes which are manifest there reveal the creation of public memory regarding Yue Fei during different eras, and this process of creation was intended to infuse the national ideology with Yue Fei's spirit of unwavering loyalty to the nation. Even so, the symbolism of Yue Fei, which was fixed in historical space

and time, required the use of some sort of medium to introduce it into a constantly changing national discourse. The Shrine of Yue Fei became an important medium of just this sort. In the context of national power and mainstream ideology during each period, the Shrine of Yue Fei has, since Southern Song times, become the “place” in which the tradition of belief in Yue Fei was actually created and recreated, with Yue Fei sometimes being taken to symbolize a subject loyal to his ruler, sometimes being incorporated into the discourse on Chinese versus barbarian or the discourses on nationalism and class antagonism. The result of this is that the single historical Yue Fei came to be represented in multiple nonhistorical forms. If we were to span the more than 800 years of historical time and space, taking the different representations displayed in the shrine at various times and placing them together in one hall, it would not be difficult to discover all the internal contradictions contained within the symbolism ascribed to Yue Fei.

The debate that began in December of 2002 and continued until the spring of 2003 concerning whether Yue Fei was a “national hero” once again showed the tension within the national discourse concerning Yue Fei. What sparked this debate was the passage quoted below from *Complete Lesson Plans for Ancient Chinese History*:

Hostilities among our ethnic groups are by nature internal disputes, family fights, struggles which are contained within China’s territory, and for this reason hostilities between the various ethnic groups may be just or unjust, but they do not constitute aggression and counter-aggression. Generally speaking, those that have as goals the conquest or pillaging of one group by another are unjust, while the struggles that follow the trend toward unification, resist pillaging, oppose ethnic oppression, or put down rebellions by ethnic groups are just. Using the criteria stated above, Yue Fei, who is well known to all of us as a prominent general who resisted the Jin people, cannot be called a national hero.⁴¹

A writer who supported the opinion that “Yue Fei cannot be called a national hero” wrote as follows:

Yue Fei’s identification as a national hero has no realistic or positive significance. Quite the opposite, it may well serve as an incitement to some of the more sensitive elements in certain ethnic groups, and this sort of incitement can only encourage ethnic separatism. If we say that we wish to be faithful to history and adhere to its original form, then the historical Yue Fei is a loyal subject, a loyalist of the Han cause who failed in his endeavor, at most a hero of his times for the Han rulers of the Song imperial court, but not a hero in the contemporary sense of the word. In the context of modern relations between nations, Yue Fei has no positive meaning or value in any sort of diplomatic activity or international relationship.⁴²

Obviously the writer’s view lacks a historical basis. After the Manchu invaded and conquered China proper, they not only did not eradicate society’s history and memory of Yue Fei; quite the opposite, they injected Yue Fei’s symbolism into the ideology upon which the Qing dynasty based its rule. In each of the six tours of the south he took to display his imperial power, the Qianlong emperor not only performed sacrifices to Yue Fei in the Hangzhou shrine, but in the fifteenth year of his reign (1750), during his first tour of the south, he also made a special stop to pay respects at the Tangyin shrine, leaving behind poetry equivalent to what he left in the shrine in Hangzhou. During the terror of the literary inquisition, without the Qing imperial court to create a public memory of Yue Fei, the shrines and symbolism of Yue Fei would have maintained no historical continuity beyond the transition from Ming to Qing.

Certainly, as they confront the viewpoint that denies national heroism to Yue Fei, the critics should be clearly aware that once the twentieth century began, with the interaction between Han-Manchu antagonism and the discourse of modern nationalism, fissures appeared in the public memory of Yue

Fei: even as the tradition of Yue Fei was becoming a patriotic ideology that extended to the modern nation, it was neglecting the distinctions between modern nations and between the ethnic groups they contained. In the case of Yue Fei, after the Xinhai Revolution [1911], the plaques bearing the Qianlong emperor's poetry in both the shrine in Hangzhou and the one in Tangyin were put aside, some even being destroyed, and they were replaced in the center of the symbolic space by commemorative objects that reflected the needs of the new era. Those who advocated denying that Yue Fei was a national hero pointed out that there were internal differences and tensions within the national discourse on Yue Fei, and to get rid of this tension one resorted to the well-worn cliché of giving history back its original face. This was to be done by taking the shrines of Yue Fei as the focal "place" for public memory and reconstructing a public memory of Yue Fei in past and present tense, searching for a historical spirit that could bring together the various commemorative objects, including both those with similarities and differences in meaning, within the symbolic space of a shrine where past and present intertwined.

Notes

1. Zheng Yunshan, Gong Yanming, and Lin Zhengqiu, *Hangzhou yu xihu shihua* (Historical stories of Hangzhou and West Lake) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, September 1980).

2. For research concerning Yue Fei since the 1980s, see Deng Guangming, *Yue Fei zhuan (zengding ben)* (Biography of Yue Fei [revised edition]) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1983); Wang Zengyu, *Yue Fei xin zhuan* (New Biography of Yue Fei) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1983); Li An, *Yue Fei xing shi yu Yue Ke shi ji* (The deeds of Yue Fei and the achievements of Yue Ke) (Taipei: Shangwu yinshi guan, 1984); Gong Yanming, *Yue Fei ping zhuan* (Critical biography of Yue Fei) (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2001).

3. In addition to knowing of the twelve shrines of Yue Fei and a large number of shrines dedicated to both Yue Fei and Guan Yu on Taiwan, I received a long letter minutely describing the background and present condition of thirty shrines to Yue Fei—twenty-three of which are still extant—on the Chinese mainland, written by a thirty-second-

generation grandson of Yue Fei, Yue Zhifeng. I divide these shrines into two categories, the first of which is meaningful in terms of cultural commemoration, and the second of which is closely tied to the local social structure.

4. Chen Wenjin, “Hangzhou Yue miao wen wu baohu gongzuo de huigu yu zhanwang” (Retrospect and prospects for the work of cultural object preservation in the shrine of Yue Fei at Hangzhou), in *Yue Fei yan jiu* (Yue Fei studies) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992).

5. *Qixia mu miao* (Tombs of Qixia Mountain); Li Hanhun, “*Yue Fei nian pu*” *yi ji kao* (“Chronology of Yue Fei”: A study of historical sites) (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1969), 119.

6. Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les lieux de mémoire,” *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7–24. See also *Kioku no ba* (Japanese trans. of *Places of memory*), vol. 1 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, November 2002).

7. Kunio Yanagita, “Hito o kami ni matsuru fushu” (The custom of human worship of gods), *Yanagita Kunio shu* (Collected works of Kunio Yanagita), vol. 10 (Tokyo: Chikuma shobo, 1962).

8. For details of this large-scale commemorative occasion, see *Yue Fei sixiang yanjiuhui huibao* (Bulletin of the society for the study of Yue Fei’s thought) 1 (Jiujiang, 2003).

9. Wang Liping, “Creating a National Symbol: The Sun Yat-sen Memorial in Nanjing,” *Republican China* (April 1996); Li Gongzhong, “Zhongshan ling yan jiu” (A study of Sun Yat-sen’s mausoleum), Ph. D. dissertation, Nanjing University Department of History, 2002.

10. Rana Mitter, “Behind the Scenes at the Museum: Nationalism, History, and Memory in the Beijing War of Resistance Museum, 1987–1997,” *China Quarterly*, no. 161 (March 2000); Chang-tai Huang, “Revolutionary History in Stone: The Making of a Chinese National Monument,” *China Quarterly*, no. 166 (June 2001).

11. I believe that another symbol that belongs in the same category with Yue Fei is the Yellow Emperor (*huang di*). Concerning the myth of the Yellow Emperor and its relation to nationalism in recent times, see Shen Songqiao, “Wo yi wo xue jian xuan yuan—huang di shen hua yu wan qing de guo zu jian gou” (I shall sacrifice to the Yellow Emperor with my own blood: The myth of the Yellow Emperor and the establishment of nationalism in late Qing), *Taiwan shehui yanjiu jikan* (Taiwan social studies quarterly) 28 (1997); and Sun Longji, “Qing ji min zu zhu yi yu Huang di chong bai zhi fa ming” (Late Qing nationalism and the invention of worship of the Yellow Emperor), *Lishi yanjiu* (Historical studies) 3 (2000).

12. The narration below is based on my research, which, in the process of being written up, made reference to the work, *Yue Fei mu miao* (The shrine of Yue Fei’s tomb), compiled by the Yue Fei Study Society

(Yue Fei yan jiu hui) and the Institute for Conservation of Cultural Objects at the Shrine of Yue Fei's Tomb (Yue Fei mu miao wen wu bao guan suo) (Beijing: Dangdai Zhongguo chubanshe, 1998).

13. Chen Wenjin, "Hangzhou Yue Fei miao wenwu baohu gongzuo de huigu yu zhanwang" (Retrospect and prospects of cultural artifact preservation work at the shrine of Yue Fei in Hangzhou), *Yue Fei yanjiu* (Yue Fei studies) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992).

14. James L. Watson and Evelyn S. Rawski, ed., *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

15. Concerning the Gongde Temple and the graveside pavilions during the Song, see Chang Jianhua, *Zong zu zhi* (*Zhongguo wenhua tongzhiz hidu wenhua dian*) (Clan registry [in Chinese cultural history: repository of cultural material pertaining to the system]) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1998), 141–44.

16. *Chongxiu Jingzhong miaoji* (Record of renovation of the Jingzhong Hall), Yuan zhiyuan liu nian (sixth year of the Zhiyuan reign, Yuan dynasty), by Zheng Yuanyou.

17. Jaiqing, *Yue miao zhi lue*, *juan yi* "Cimu" (Jiaqing reign period, Abridged record of the shrine of Yue Fei, vol. 1, "Tombs").

18. "Bunka to Shuuzoku" (Culture and customs) in *Shirakawa Yasushi chosaku shuu* (Collected writings of Yasushi Shirakawa) (Heibonsha, 2000), 7: 70.

19. Jaiqing, *Yue miao zhi lue*, *juan san* "Sidian" (Jiaqing reign period, Abridged record of the shrine of Yue Fei, vol. 3, "Rituals").

20. *Zhonglie miao zeng jian wu ci ji* (Record of erection of five new halls in the Zhonglie shrine), Tianqi jia zi nian (*jia zi* year of the Tianqi reign period) (1624), by Zhang Yingyuan.

21. "Rituals," *Abridged Record of the Shrine of Yue Fei*, vol. 3.

22. *Ibid.*

23. Yue Ke, "Guangde jun jinshasi bi ti ji" (Inscriptions of the Guangde army on the wall of the Jinsha temple), *Eguo jin tuo cui bian xubian*, *juan 19* (Essential compilation from Jintuo in Hubei province, vol. 19). [This is a second installment of biographical materials on Yue Fei, compiled by his grandson, Yue Ke, at his country estate, called Jintuo, in Hubei province—Trans.]

24. Chen Dengyuan, *Guoshi jiuwen* (Old stories from our national history) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000), 2:392–97.

25. There is an interesting episode concerning Moqi Xie. The descendants of Yue Fei and the grandson of Moqi Xie got into a dispute over property, and the investigator for the case, a man named Xing Yuanlong, who had received his *jinshi* degree during the Qingyuan reign of the Ningzong emperor of Southern Song, declared: "General Yue was the loyal subject of his generation, while Moqi Xie helped the scoun-

drel Qin Hui, so even though they forfeit their property, its worth is not adequate for them to redeem themselves before the world, so how dare they dispute ownership with the Yue family? The land shall belong to the Yue family, and the documents may be consigned to flames. Public opinion approves of this.” Ibid., 401–2.

26. *Chongxiu Yuewu muwang cimubei* (Record of renovating the tomb and stone tablets at the shrine of Yue Fei), Qing dynasty, thirty-first year of the period of the Kangxi reign (1692), by Li Feng.

27. *Yuemu chongchou sitie xiangji* (Record of recasting the four iron figures at the tomb of Yue Fei), twenty-third year of the period of the Guangxu reign (1897), by Yun Zuyi.

28. Shen Wujiu’s foreword to *Luozhong shi* (the Luozhong poem); Li Hanhun, “Yue Wumu nianpu” yi ji kao (Chronology of Yue Fei research on historical sites cited therein), 118. The poem does not have a chronological reference, but it is inferred from “for seven hundred years now, no matter whether noble or humble, even women and children all say that this land has supported the Yue family shrine for a very long time.”

29. *Xinjian yuewu muwangmiao tushen yizhong cizhiji* (Record of new construction of the tutelary spirit and Yizhong halls in the shrine of the honored martial king Yue), fourth year of the Hongzhi reign (1491), by Xia Shizheng.

30. On the east looking west: Zhang Fei, Wang Rui, Han Qinhu, Li Jing, Su Dingfang, Gu Ziyi, Cao Bin, Han Shizhong, Xu Liewu, Xu Da, Feng Sheng, Qi Jiguang; on the west looking east: Zhao Yun, Xie Xuan, He Ruobi, Yuchi Jingde, Li Guangbi, Wang Yanzhang, Di Qing, Li Qi, Guo Kan, Chang Yuchun, Lan Yu, Zhou Yuji.

31. *The Shrines of Qixia*, Li Hanhun’s investigation of historical sites, 121.

32. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991). Japanese translation, *Zoho sozo no kyodotai* (The community of expanded imagination) (Tokyo: NTT, 1997).

33. See Wang Qingchun and Tao Tao, *Tangyin Yue Fei miao* (The shrine to Yue Fei in Tangyin) (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1991), 13.

34. Chen Lifu wrote “Du ci jiwen, zhi pei qing gaozong zhi shi jian (Shu Ming Qing er di de ji Yue yi jinian wumu dansheng)” (To read this funeral oratory is to be awed by the vision of the Gaozong Emperor of Qing, a recounting of the Ming and Qing emperors’ elegies for Yue Fei as a memorial on the Venerable Martial’s birthday), *Zhongyang ribao* (Central Daily News), March 16, 1984. However, he failed to explain what he meant by the title.

35. *Longhua hui zhangcheng* (Longhua Society charter). Hirayama shu, “Shina kakumeito oyobi himitsu kessha” (China’s revolutionary

parties and secret societies), *Nihon oyobi Nihonjin* (Japan and the Japanese), no. 569 (November 1, 1911), p. 73. This book was translated into Chinese under the title *Zhongguo mimi shehui shi* (History of Chinese secret societies) (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1912).

36. Charles Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

37. Wu Meng and Yi Zhenggang, *Zhongguo junshen Yue wumu* (China's military genius, venerable marshal Yue) (Shanghai: Hanxue shudian, 1935).

38. Handwritten items and photographs from visits by Li Xiannian, Ye Jianjing, and Deng Xiaoping are on display in Exhibition Hall No. 3 of the Shrine of Yue Fei.

39. Fei Xiaotong, chief ed., *Zhonghua minzu duoyuan yiti geju* (A structure of unity within diversity for the Chinese people), rev. ed. (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu daxue chubanshe, 2003).

40. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1–3.

41. Chen Qi, *Zhong guo gu dai shi quan jiao an* (Complete plan for teaching of ancient Chinese history), “Quan ri zhi putong gaoji zhongxue jiao cai (ren jiao ban) jiaoan xilie congshu” (Complete teaching materials for ordinary senior high school from the era of Japanese occupation [ren jiao edition], part of the teaching plan series) (Renmin jiaoyu chubanshe and Yanbian jiaoyu chubanshe, July 2002), 162.

42. Shan Zhengping, “Yue Fei de dangdai yiyi” (The contemporary significance of Yue Fei), *Dongfang wenhua* (East Asian Culture) (May 2003).