

ULTRA

Positions and Polarities Beyond Crisis

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Chinese Public Memorials: Under the Effect of Exclusively Pursuing Solemnness, Sacredness, and Grandness

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Abstract

Authentic public memorials did not appear in the Chinese public space until the late 19th century. As a result of Western influence, many war memorials were built during the Republic of China era (1912-1949). Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the government has invested much in developing public spaces. Also, the government placed many memorials in Chinese cities to shape collective memory and urban identity. The affection of solemnness, sacredness, and grandness is the main affection that most memorials are intended to embody, particularly those that commemorate famous people, the government's achievement, and the deceased from natural disasters and wars.

By taking the example of memorials built from 1942 to the present in Chongqing, China, this paper critically examines changes over time in the forms. In addition, taking the analysis result from memorial forms as a base and combining widely cited literature in Chinese and English, the paper further explores the negative impacts of the intensive focus of solemnness, sacredness, and grandness.

This paper's analysis identifies standard, persistent and symbolic features in Chinese memorials, despite the diverse landscape elements and advanced construction techniques. Key themes emerge from this research are solemnness, sacredness, and grandness. Also, it reveals the issues raised by the exclusive pursuit of these affections, including similar memorial forms, insufficient engagement of memorials, and the unitary research topics on memorials.

Introduction

1. Joubert Joubert and George H. Calvert, *Some of the "Thoughts" of Joseph Joubert* (W.V. Spencer, 1867), 102. <https://books.google.com.au/books?id=YXEaAAAAYAAJ>.

2. Yang Zhiyu, "Zhongguo Gudai Gonggong Jinianxing Diaosu Queshi De Yuanxin," *Dazhong Wenyi* 000, no. 023 (2014), 51-52; Gao Junling, "Chengshi Kongjian Zhong Jinianxing Diaosu Fazhan Tanxi," *Yishu Keji* 30, no. 01 (2017), 189.

3. Xu Kai and Klaus Semsroth, "Gonggongxing De Moluo Dao Fuxing—Yu Ouzhou Chengshi Gonggong Kongjian Duizhaoxia De Zhongguo Chengshi Gonggong Kongjian," *Chengshi Guihua Xuekan*, no. 03 (2013), 61-69.

4. Robert Harbison, *The Built, the Unbuilt, and the Unbuildable: In Pursuit of Architectural Meaning* (MIT Press, 1993); *Huanjing Yishu Gailun*, ed. Xi Yueliang (Qinghua Daxue Chubanshe, 2006), 42. <https://books.google.com.au/books?id=am4fwhGiAgsC>; Wu Hung, "Monumentality of Time: Giant Clocks, the Drum Tower, the Clock Tower," (2003).

5. Erika Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (University of Chicago Press, 2012), 20.

6. Wang LaiYang, "Minguo Shiqi Zhongguo Chengshi Diaosu Yu Bentu Gonggong "Wuyu" De Goujian Yu Chengxian," *Diaosu*, no. 2 (2013), 26-31; Jiao Xingtao and Li Zhu, *Chongqing Diaosu 70 Nian* (Chongqing Chubanshe, 2016), 15.

7. Luo Shiping, "Jinianbei Yu Jinianxing Huanjing," *Meishu*, no. 09 (1988), 42-45; Ji Feng, "Jinianbei, Ouxiang, Fuhao Yu Gonggong Yishu—Ge Lishi Fazhan Jieduan Zhongguo Chengshi Diaosu Fanying De Shehui Lishi Xingtai," *Makesi Zhuyi Miexue Yanjiu* 12, no. 01 (2009), 271-77; Liu Libin, *Xiandai Diaosu De Qiyuan: Mingguo Shiqi Xiandai Diaosu Yanjiu*, 10-12.

8. Liu Guangwei, "Lun Zhongguo Dangdai Jinianxing Diaosu De Yangshixing Tezheng," *Huizhou Xueyuan Xuebao* 29, no. 03 (2009), 85-89.

"Monuments are the grappling-irons that bind one generation to another. Preserve what your fathers have seen."¹

Public memorials add value by keeping past events alive in our collective memory and providing a physical representation of that which cannot easily be expressed – loss, grief, and pain caused to the public through war, terrorism, natural disasters, and genocide. Looking back to Chinese memorial history, scholars argue that authentic public memorials did not appear in Chinese public space until the late 19th century.² There was little publicness in the cities of ancient China due to the strict regime; hence, there were no authentic public memorials in public spaces.³ Those commemorative structures in ancient China, like gateways, stelae, ornamental columns, and Chinese pavilions, bell towers and drum towers, were mainly an embodiment of monarchy without publicness, even though they have monumentality— commemorating events and people. Undeniably, these precedents have a significant impact on later Chinese memorial forms.⁴

What factors influenced the appearance of public memorials in China? In the late 19th century, it was the time that commemorative structures mushroomed in Western countries' urban space.⁵ Also, European colonists built many monuments in the concession of Shanghai, marking the beginning of public memorials in China. Under such influence, the well-educated Chinese who came from abroad advocated building indigenous memorials. Then, genuine Chinese public memorials appeared in the early 20th century.⁶

Little Chinese research discusses the development of Chinese public memorials, but the process can be concluded by reviewing related work on urban sculptures. In formal terms, three stages in Chinese memorials' development, memorial stele (1912-1976), urban memorial sculptures (1976-1998), and memorial landscapes (1998-present).⁷ However, one thing is never changed. Chinese memorials pursue the image of solemnness, sacredness, and grandness almost exclusively.⁸ How do Chinese memorial forms constantly develop but pursue the same image along the way? For answering this question, this paper explores multiple memorials in Chongqing from 1941 to the current. In addition, it points out issues raised by exclusive pursuing after case study and literature review.

As one of the four cities directly under the control of the central government and the provisional capital in the Republic of China (ROC, 1912-1949), Chongqing is an ideal location to research Chinese public memorials. This is because its economic, historical, cultural, and political context offers a solid foundation for memorials' development, helping explore Chinese memorials across different times.



Figure 1: The Sichuan Revolutionary Martyrs Monument. (Photographed by Zhu Qiuyu, 2021).

Memorial Stela and Statues 1912-1976 (纪念碑与纪念像)

9. Sun Zhenhua, "Yu Lishi Fazhan Xinghu Yinzheng—Zhongguo Chengshi Diaosu 40 Nian," *Meishu* (2018), 11-16.

10. Ji, "Jinianbei, Ouxiang, Fuhao Yu Gonggong Yishu" 273-77.

11. Bai Zuomin, "Chengshi Diaosu De Leixing, Ticao Ji Gousi," *Meishu*, no. 12 (1982), 3-7; Fu Chuanyu, "Lun Zhongguo Zaoqi Jinianbei Diaosu Xingshi De Chixuxing Yiyi," *Meishu Daguan*, no. 08 (2013), 56-57.

12. "Yuzhong: Sichuan Geming Xianlie Jinianbei Yizun Haoqichangcun De Fengbei," Propaganda Department of Central Committee, 2016, accessed 16th June, 2020, http://www.wenming.cn/syjj/dfcz/zq/201606/t20160603_3414608.shtml.

13. Mark A Schneider, "Sacredness, Status and Bodily Violation," *Body & Society* 2, no. 4 (1996), 75-92.

Previously, scholars believed that the form of memorials should be stela and statues, despite the current fact that memorials are in various forms.⁹ Contemporary scholars divided this period into three parts: The Republic of China (ROC) (1912-1949), The People's Republic of China (PRC) to the beginning of the Cultural Revolution (1949-1966), and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). In this period, vertical stela and giant statues predominated Chinese public memorials from 1912 to 1978.¹⁰

Many scholars suggested that vertical and straightforward forms of memorial stela strengthen the feeling of grandness and sacredness.¹¹ In addition, the memorial stele is a typical symbol of memory because, in ancient China, people used it to record important history and events. Many modern memorials utilised such form. For example, the Sichuan Revolutionary Martyrs Monument located in the first public park of Chongqing was built in 1942 to commemorate the Martyrs Peilun Yu, Guoliang Rao, and Qin Bin. They perished in The Huanghuagang Uprising initiated by Sun Yat-sen in 1910 (fig.1). The memorial is a 7.18-meter high rectangle stone table placed on a highly raised pedestal in order to outline its grandness. The grandness of this memorial is also embodied in its location. Due to the hilly topography, the park was a terrace garden. The particular topography of the park affords a sense of "hierarchy". The stele was placed on the highest terrace of the park to outstand its superior status.¹²

Distancing people from memorials also contributes to a sense of sacredness and solemnity.¹³ In addition to their height, physical fences that enclose memorials further distinguish them from the secular life. At Sichuan Revolutionary Martyrs Monument, a series of stone pillars were set along the edge of the terrace. Between each pillar, an iron chain separates the memorial from the people. The fence keeps people from getting close to memorials to shape sacredness and solemnity.

The pattern of pedestal and fences existed in other contemporary memorials in Chongqing (fig.2).



Figure 2: *Left.* The Monument for Zhang Peijue. *Right.* The Monument for Firefighters in Chongqing. (Photographed by Zhu Qiuyu, 2021).

14. "Jiefangbei Naxie Xianweirenzhi De Gushi: "Bei" Zi Shao Yipie Zhongbiao Ceng Tingbai Lougao Buguo Bei," *XinhuaNet*, 2021, accessed 7th June, 2021, http://m.xinhuanet.com/cq/2021-06/16/c_1127566095.htm.

15. Ji, "Jinianbei, Ouxiang, Fuhao Yu Gonggong Yishu," 271-77.

Over time, memorials began to dominate surrounding environments. For instance, in 1947, the People's Liberation Monument was erected to celebrate China's victory after World War II, which is a 24.5 meters high octagonal prism placed on a 1.6-meter high terrace (fig.3). Moreover, the government did not permit the surrounding buildings to be higher than the monument; these rules were not broken until urgent needs of building multi-story shopping malls in 1973. In the later interview, the construction manager recalled the difficulties persuading the government to break the rule.¹⁴ Another consideration is the location of this monument. It is in a central location of an intersection. Scholars suggested that such deployment creates the feel of grandeur and authority.¹⁵ Two crossed streets are extended until hundreds of meters away, enabling people to see them distantly. In 1950, the new central government erased the original inscriptions on the People's Liberation Monument because it was from officers belonging to the ROC government. Memorials played as a political vane.

16. Sun, "Yu Lishi Fazhan Xinghu Yinzheng," 11-16.

The central government took memorials to emphasise its dominance, and educate citizens, encourage patriotism. Many memorials' topics were about victory in the war and heroism. Under such context, the idea was maximised—pursuing an atmosphere of solemnness, sacredness, and grandeur at memorials. This idea dramatically affects the later development of Chinese memorials.¹⁶



Figure 3: Left. The People's Liberation Monument in 1947. (<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:抗戰勝利紀功碑.tif>). Right. The People's Liberation Monument in 2021. (Photographed by Jie Zhu, 2021).

Urban Memorial Sculptures 1976-1998 (紀念性城市雕塑)

17. Ji, "Jinianbei, Ouxiang, Fuhao Yu Gonggong Yishu," 271-77.

18. He Jingzhi, "Yingjie Woguo Chengshi Diaosu Shiye De Huangjin Shidai—Zai Quanguo Chengshi Diaosu Dierci Guihua Huiyi Shang De Jianghua," *Meishu*, no. 7 (1984), 5-8+22.

19. Jiao and Li, *Chongqing Diaosu 70 Nian*, 126-28.

20. Zhang Jian, "Yishi Xingtai, Wenhua He Gonggong Jinianxing Diaosu—Dangdai Zhongguo Gonggong Jinianxing Diaosu De Huigu Yu Qianzhan," *Meishu Yanjiu*, no. 03 (2000), 22-25.

21. Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (Univeristy of California Press, 2003), 51-53.

22. Liu, "Lun Zhongguo Dangdai Jinianxing Diaosu De Yangshixing Tezhen," 85-89.

After the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese government realised the value of sculptures on urban identity, collective memory, and urban beautification. This provided unprecedented opportunities for public memorials' development.¹⁷ In 1984, a statement in The Second National Conference of Urban Sculptures Planning redefined the meaning of the memorial: "there are two kinds of urban sculptures in terms of their purpose; one is for commemoration and education, and another one is for urban ornamentation."¹⁸ The new definition marked public memorials' creation tried to break through the constraints on traditional forms.¹⁹

Under the influence of western humanism, traditional pedestals, terraces, and fences did not adapt to the social needs of that time. Some memorials were with a lower pedestal, or the pedestal was designed in artistic ways; the terrace and physical fences gradually disappeared; memorials attempted to horizontal development, not just vertical.²⁰ Nevertheless, seemingly humanised changes were by no means that Chinese memorials stop chasing grandness, sacredness, and solemnness. Designers were seeking to make memorials deliver these feelings through metaphors and implications. As Immanuel Kant claimed, there are two factors of the sublime, mathematical sublime and dynamical sublime; mathematical sublime harness oversized forms to shape sublime; in contrast, the dynamical sublime is raised by a mental agent without direct material forms.²¹ Liu, Guangwei asserted that Chinese memorials eulogise virtues such as perseverance, fearless sacrifice for revolution, and loyalty to the Communist Party through metaphors and symbols. They are the invisible force that arouses visitors' feeling of grandeur and sanctity.²²

For instance, in 1987, a memorial was erected on an ancient city gate, Tongyuan Gate, to commemorate martyrs who perished in the “331 Incident” (On 3rd March 1927, the Kuomintang in Chongqing brutally suppressed the assembly in Chongqing). It is a vast stone fist breaking out from the tall pedestal. The clenched fist symbolises the spirit of the martyrs who broke through without fear of death; the pedestal was designed as a vast and rough rock that is the emblem of constraints and suppression from outsiders (fig.4). Moreover, a collection of silhouetted figures is attached to the walls under the sculptures. Those exaggerated gestures of silhouettes stand for the martyrs’ qualities of tenacity and persistence in revolution.²³



Figure 4: The Monument of the “331 Incident.” (Photographed by Zhu Qiuyu, 2021).

24. Yun Gang, “Jinianxing Diaosu Zengyang Chu “Xin”—Xiang Kangri Zhanzheng Qundiao Jin,” *Meishu Guan*, no. 12 (1997), 10.

Additionally, diversified-central and architectural sculptures provide more opportunities for people to sense grandeur and sanctity.²⁴ For example, the Chongqing Bombing Memorial, constructed in 2000, is located on one of the busiest streets in Yuzhong District, Chongqing (Fig.5). It was built on the historical site to remember the citizen who died in the tunnel because of an air raid from the Japanese Force during the Second World War. Compared to previous examples, there is no central figure. Instead, a crowd of people carved onto a giant rock.

25. Jiao and Li, *Chongqing Diaosu 70 Nian*, 132, 202.

Furthermore, people’s severe and painful expression on the relief, which contrasts to the prosperous and bright street scene, implies the sites’ particularity and the solemn atmosphere.²⁵ People cannot reach out to these figures and have to head up to observe the iconic figures, contributing to a sense of solemnness from every angle. In addition, the memorial serves as a gate of the underground museum, taking nearly whole sidewalks. Thus, people are more likely to pass through the memorial on their travels down to the street.

During this period, memorials deliver solemnity, grandeur, and sanctity from metal forces. Also, changes in forms are a reply to the need for humanistic care. However, the essence of memorials pursuing those atmospheres does not change.



Figure 5: The Chongqing Bombing Memorial. (Photographed by Zhu Qiuyu, 2021).

Memorial Landscape 1998- Present (纪念性景观)

26. Liu Bingyi and Li Kairan, "Jinianxing Jingguan Yuanze Chutan," *Guihuashi* (19, no. 2 (2003), 21-25; Liu Bingyi, *Jinianxing Jingguan Yu Lvyou Guihua Sheji*, vol. 1, Southeast University Press, (2005), 4-6.

27. Chen Wei, Chen Tuo, and Huang Biao, "Lun Chengshi Jinianxing Jingguan Sheji De Keduxing Biaoda," *Lvse Renju*, no. 35 (2015), 1-2.

28. Chen Sijia and Zhang Hongwei, "Lun Dangdai Jinianxing Jingguan Zhong Jianzhu De Xiaoyin," *Zhongguo Yuanlin* (China Landscape Architecture) 34, no. 08 (2018), 78-81; Zhang Li, "Chuzhi De Jinianbei He Shuipin De Gongyuan—Zhong Xi Dangdai Jinianwu Zhi Bijiao," *Jianzhu Yu Wenhua* (Architects and Culture), no. 3 (2017), 133-34.

29. Chen Xiewei, "Jiyu Changsuo Lilun De Jinianxing Jingguan Sheji Yaodian Qianxi," *Dazhong Wenyi*, no. 02 (2019), 66-67

In 2003, a new definition of memorials was proposed. Liu, Bingyi contends that “纪念性景观” is composed of three elements: the physical form of memorial landscape, the connotation of landscape, and its visitors.²⁶ This marked that a change in the conception of memorials—from a single object to spaces. Liu’s research became the basic theoretical framework to support later Chinese research on the memorial landscape in Chinese, which facilitates memorials’ spatialisation in China.²⁷

A few scholars realised that solemnness, grandness, and sacredness are not exclusive features of memorials.²⁸ Nevertheless, the motivation to create spectacular memorials still exist. Apart from being presented only through memorial objects, this awareness is infused into the whole commemorative environment.²⁹

For example, in 2007, a memorial plaza, Red Rock Soul Square (the name of Red Rock Soul (红岩魂) refers to the revolutionary spirit of the Communist Party), was constructed to commemorate the communists and their relatives who died in the 11.27 Massacre (Fig.6) (Before leaving Chongqing, the ROC government executed detainees on 27th November 1949). The symmetrical and rectangular square is composed of platforms and flights of stairs. In this case, people process along stairs, maintaining a view upward to memorials. Moreover, the whole plaza is flanked by a row of upright pine and cypress. All memorial objects are located in the middle axis but have different forms. Distancing people from memorials still exist but in a subtle manner. For example, the pool keeps people away from the central memorial object, the rough stone pavement marks the particular area that potentially keeps people at bay, or physical fences are hidden behind the flowers. These fences try to separate from people’s daily lives.



Figure 6: The Red Rock Soul Square.(Photographed by Jie Zhu, 2021).

30. Liu Binyi and Jiang Shan, "Jinianxing Jingguan De Shijue Tezheng Jiexie," *Zhongguo Yuanlin* 28, no. 03 (2012), 22-30.

31. Liu Bingyi and Li Kairan, "Jinianxing Jingguan De Jiben Tushi Muti," *Zhongguo Yuanlin*, no. 05 (2003), 20-23.

32. Cheng Yuning and Tan Ming, "Jiyu Lianghua Jishu De Jingguan Secai Huanjing Youhua Yanjiu—Yi Nanjing Zhongshan Linyuan Zhongzhouxian Weili," *Xibu Renju Huanjing Xuekan* 31, no. 04 (2016), 18-25.

This memorial form is the stereotype of memorial landscapes in China.³⁰ Scholars believe the symmetrical and regular shape (square, rectangular, and circle) and repeated elements create a sense of grandeur and sanctity, which derives from the similar deployment of the ancient imperial cemeteries.³¹ Those massive imperial cemeteries are always symmetrical and connected by the ascending staircase flanked by uniform stone columns. Thus, similar deployment of modern memorials is an implication, promoting reverence and awe. Plus, scholars suggest that the pine and cypress strengthen the sense of sacredness and grandness because of their dark colour and upright shape; they are also a metaphor of eternal existence after death in Chinese culture.³²

Current memorials are involved in the competition of elevation. One recent memorial in Chongqing, the statue of Fighters in the Anti-Japanese War near the Egongyan Bridge, exemplifies this fact (Fig.7). It was erected in 2018 for Sichuan soldiers who participated in the Anti-Japanese War (1931-1945) with a 7-meter high statue placed on a 23-meter high pedestal. Several layers of roadway overpass spiral around the memorial but remain lower than the statue. A fearless soldier holding a rifle and striding to the battlefield stands on the top. It is a remarkable fact that the 23-meter tall pedestal, making the statue 5-meter higher than the elevated bridge. In this case, people are able to see the statue from the overpass while sitting in their vehicles, being offered a "look-up" perspective instead of looking down. This is an example of Chinese memorials responding to the higher urban interface challenge—becoming higher. Spatial memorials have become sites for secular life. They try to find a new development direction in the conflict between sustaining spectacular images and adapting to new urban contexts and people's needs.



Figure 7. The Statue of Fighters in the Anti-Japanese War. (Photographed by Li Bo, 2021).

The Issues Raised by Exclusively Pursuing Solemnness, Sacredness, and Grandness

33. Cheng Yuning and Tan Ming, "Jiyu Lianghua Jishu De Jingguan Secai Huanjing Youhua Yanjiu—Yi Nanjing Zhongshan Linyuan Zhongzhouxian Weili," *Xibu Renju Huanjing Xuekan* 31, no. 04 (2016), 18-25.

Undeniably, present Chinese memorials have progressed dramatically since the 1990s and become critical elements shaping urban identity.³³ The above analysis of memorial forms has demonstrated Chinese memorials pursue solemnness, sacredness, and grandness along the way. Nevertheless, exclusively pursuing those spectacles on memorials cases also raise some issues.

Exclusive pursuit constrains the diversity of memorial forms. Examining memorials from Sichuan Revolutionary Martyrs Monument to Fighters in the Anti-Japanese War, it is evident that Chinese public memorials maintain some features on forms. First, the obsession with height exists in the whole Chinese memorials' history. Terraces and pedestals are probably not necessities; nevertheless, memorials are designed on

33. Cheng Yuning and Tan Ming, "Jiyu Lianghua Jishu De Jingguan Secai Huanjing Youhua Yanjiu—Yi Nanjing Zhongshan Linyuan Zhongzhouxian Weili," *Xibu Renju Huanjing Xuekan* 31, no. 04 (2016), 18-25.

a massive scale or placed on higher ground are substitutes. Vertical memorials have to compete for elevation with surroundings, like the Fighters in the Anti-Japanese War memorial. Besides, memorial objects always occupy the centre of the space, which becomes a convention. All this evidence express an awareness that memorials are supposed to be massive and remarkable.

How do memorial forms change over time? Compared to the memorial stele in early China, current memorial sculptures still emit infectious zeal via figuratively depicting the solemn or grand moment. Meanwhile, metaphors and mental implications encourage people to feel revolutionary spirits that are always bound to sacredness, grandness and solemnness. Also, spatial memorials construct a commemorative atmosphere with various methods, including organised plants and spaces, specific and vivid imagery, and enough open space to attract people to visit. However, these elements keep the original spiritual meaning—grandness, solemnness, and sacredness. Hence, even if memorial forms change, those changes always have the same aim — strengthening the spectacle of memorials and making them adapt to the current social context. Correspondingly, the constraints on memorial forms also limit people's engagement with memorials, which might accelerate people's ignorance of them.

34. Anita Bakshi, *Topographies of Memories: A New Poetics of Commemoration* (Springer, 2017), 196; Q. Stevens and K. Franck, *Memorials as Spaces of Engagement* (Routledge (New York, United States), 2015), 129-38.

Apart from commemoration, memorials serve as spaces for daily engagement. People can connect with memorials by using them rather than just in a passive position, such as acquiring memory only from seeing the pale imagery on fenced memorials.³⁴ To promote sanctity and solemnity, Chinese memorials seek to exclude people's physical engagement. The fence still exists but is transformed as short plants or water pools to stop people from getting close. Plus, scholars believe that the linear and regular space with flights of steps, which is similar to the imperial cemeteries, inspires people's worship and reverence as processing forward. Nevertheless, raised plaza and steps might damage the engagement because steps become a barrier for older people or people with the stroller; plus, people cannot have various activities compared to the flat ground.

35. Jan Gehl, *Life between Buildings: Using Public Space* (Island Press, 2011), 134-60.

36. Chang-tai Hung, "Revolutionary History in Stone: The Making of a Chinese National Monument." *The China quarterly* (London), no. 166 (2001): 472-473.

Additionally, scholars contend that placing the memorial in the middle of space can arouse people's worship and awe because of its similar form to the ancient ritual sites. However, according to the edge effect, people tend to remain on the outer edges of sites.³⁵ So, how can they connect with the memorial by a brief pass? In this case, these memorials might be ignored due to little connection with visitors, which deviates from the original intention—remembering. Probably, designers intentionally designed memorials to be less engaging. This seems to corroborate some scholars' point that Chinese memorials are primarily political propaganda and education.³⁶ Constraints on people's engagement mean easy management and stopping the generation of competing ideas.

37. Liu, "Lun Zhongguo Dangdai Jinianning Diaosu De Yangshixing Tezhen," 85-89.

Also, pursuing solemnness, grandness, and sacredness is a popular topic of public memorial research.³⁷ It also means the exclusive pursuit of these affections constrains the development of memorial research. Early research is an era to advocate spectacle and is primarily about describing public memorial forms, which could date back to 1950.³⁸ The

38. Tan Yuan et al., "Shanghai Baoshan Lieshimu Jinianningbei," *Tongji Daxue Xuebao* (Journal of Tongji University), no. 02 (1978), 38-43.

39. Liu Kaiqu, "Renmin Yingxiong Jinianbei," *Zhuangshi*, no. 01 (1958), 10+18-19.

40. Zhang, "Yishi Xingtai, Wenhua He Gonggong Jinianxing Diaosu," 22-25.

41. Luo, "Jinianbei Yu Jinianxing Huanjing," 42-45.

42. Bai, "Chengshi Diaosu De Leixing, Ticao Ji Gousi," 3-7.

43. Liu and Li, "Jinianxing Jingguan Yuanze Chutan," 21-25.

44. Zhang, "Yishi Xingtai, Wenhua He Gonggong Jinianxing Diaosu," 22-25.

enthusiasm for those feelings lay under the scholars' descriptions of them. Liu, Kiaqu described the Monument to People's Heroes (The first public memorials initiated by the central government of the PRC): the monument is towering and grand, erected in the centre of Tiananmen Square.³⁹ Meanwhile, some works examined public memorials in the Soviet Union, which was the primary reference for creating early public memorials in China.⁴⁰ These works complemented the grand and sacred image of memorials in the Soviet Union and suggested that Chinese memorials should learn from them.

In 1978, Chinese public memorials encountered new opportunities. However, scholars were still keen on studying memorial forms, and delivering and maintaining the sense of grandness and sacredness. Luo, Shiping contended that the memorial sculptures should coordinate with surroundings to shape grandness and solemnness.⁴¹ Bai, Zuoming suggested that casual site selection and building memorials everywhere damage their sacredness.⁴² This idea contrasts sharply with the fact that memorials in western countries are in neighbourhoods.

After 2000, under the background of memorials' spatialisation, more scholars focus on memorials. Research on memorial landscapes explores not only memorial objects but also other elements, including plants, spatial deployment and shape, and touring routes.⁴³ However, this research has a similar purpose. That is to grant memorials with a feeling of grandness, solemnness, and sacredness through environmental elements. After reviewing the development process of Chinese public memorials' research, the result implies that most scholars concentrate on transferring and stimulating grand, solemn, and sacred affections. In this case, such persistence might make scholars ignore other research topics of memorials.

Conclusion

This paper has explored examples of memorials erected in the city of Chongqing from 1942 to the present. It argues that the Chinese memorials have continued to pursue a sense of grandeur, solemnity, and sanctity. Factors shaping these affections include massive scale, keeping people away from memorials, symbols and metaphors, raised ground, and orderly deployment. They have hampered public memorials' development and people's engagement with memorials. Through studying Chinese public memorials, it is possible to glimpse the relationship between the public and government. Memorials are products of the centralised system of China— probably serving to educate people and motivate patriotism.⁴⁴ Although memorial forms constantly change, their essence pursuing grandeur, solemnity, and sanctity barely changes. Thus, Chinese memorials are bound to pursue solemnness, sacredness, and grandness exclusively. Future research should explore what Chinese memorials mean to citizens, how people respond to these memorials exactly, and how the government maintains and strengthens memorials' spectacle image.