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A History of Protest Memorials in Three Democratic East-Asian Capital Cities: Taipei, Hong Kong and Seoul

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Abstract

This paper examines a range of grassroots protest memorials erected over the past 60 years within public spaces in the capital cities of three 'Asian Tigers': Taiwan, Hong Kong and South Korea. These cities grew quickly as their polities rapidly democratized in the 1980s after long periods of foreign and local authoritarian rule. The paper explores the complex relationships between these memorials and their various urban settings, and how these reflect the wider evolution of political authority, social history and values in each host territory. Drawing on documentary research, interviews, discourse analysis and site analysis of over 20 projects, the paper examines two key aspects of the planning and design of grassroots memorials in Taipei, Hong Kong and Seoul. Firstly, it discusses how these memorials' designs communicate and critique the struggles of civil society against the cities' authoritarian rulers. Secondly, it analyses the kinds of sites where these grassroots memorials have been erected, which contrast with the cities' more prominent, government-endorsed commemorative sites. The paper identifies key formal types, commonalities and differences, and historical changes in the ways that citizens in each capital city have developed a post-colonial, post-authoritarian representation of local history through protest memorials in urban spaces.

Introduction

Protest memorials remember and represent civic protesters against governments. They are, by their nature, often unofficial. This paper examines the evolution of protest memorials installed in public settings in the capital cities of three East Asian territories: South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan. These are now three of the most democratic territories in Asia, which have thus witnessed the greatest efforts and opportunities to create memorials that communicate opposition to government. The paper draws on 22 memorial examples erected between 1961 and 2021. This sample and its analysis

draw upon 25 in-depth interviews with relevant activists and academics across the three cities, a detailed database of 65 democracy memorials compiled by South Korea's well-funded Korea Democracy Foundation, and a comprehensive set of fieldwork, analysis and mapping of the three cities' memorials over the past century.¹ The paper draws together a range of existing research by the author and others that have documented in detail the various individual memorials, their locations and their production processes, as well as media reporting on these sometimes ephemeral installations, and constructs from these an historical narrative about the development of memorials as a prominent, permanent form of protest in public spaces within capital cities.

As with many democracies, the development of democratic governance and freedom of expression in South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan has been recent, gradual and only partial. All three territories emerged from colonial occupation by Imperial Japan at the end of World War II. Hong Kong returned to British colonial rule, with significant civil liberties but limited political participation. South Korea and Taiwan, administered by the Republic of China, experienced several decades of dictatorship. These territories are also three of the four 'Asian Tigers' which have undergone extremely rapid, continuous industrialisation and economic growth since 1950. Rising standards of living and increasing international trade developed hand-in-hand with calls for greater democratic freedoms. South Korea's last dictatorship ended in 1987. In Hong Kong, it was only after the 1984 agreement that the territory would be returned to the People's Republic of China in 1997 that the territory's government began a gradual process of democratisation, and it was only in 1995 that its Legislative Council became fully directly elected. Taiwan was a dictatorship until 1996 and its ruling Kuomintang only first lost government in 2000. Because protest memorials in public settings require government approval, or at least toleration, these dates of first democratic governments provide key timepoints for the emergence and spread of protest memorials. However, in all three jurisdictions, a wide range of earlier protest activities against autocratic rule helped to precipitate democratic changes, and in each case memorials to those protests also began to emerge while the authoritarian governments were still in power.

The democratisation of these three territories progressed remarkably over the subsequent few decades. By 2021, the governments of Hong Kong, South Korea and Taiwan had become, respectively, the 85th, 16th and eighth most democratic in the

world among 167 territories, and nineteenth, fourth and second among 28 territories within the Asia-Pacific. Before recent curbs by Hong Kong SAR's government, it had also ranked as high as seventeenth in the world in terms of civil liberties such as freedom of expression – significantly higher than the United States of America, which the memorial symbolism discussed in this paper shows to have provided a key exemplar for expressing liberty.²

The paper examines two broad sets of questions about protest memorials which link to earlier research about the increasing democraticness of public memorials.³ The first relates to what range of memorial subjects have been expressed, when and how they have been represented. The paper's analysis identifies the emergence of four main types of memorial formats that have been used to convey the memory of protest, protestors and victims: commemorative cemeteries for anti-government activists who were killed; collective memorials to protesters; allegorical memorials where protest becomes associated with ideal figures and values; and memorials to individual domestic protesters. The second main research question is what kinds of urban locations have these protest memorials been erected in, and why. The latter issues influence what kinds of public engages with a protest memorial and how, and its spatial, thematic and chronological relationships to other memorials.

Protest Memorials Erected in Pre-Democratic Times

The first major memorials to protests against South Korea's and Taiwan's earlier authoritarian rulers were erected while those territories were still dictatorships. The earliest pre-democratisation protest memorials were informal cemeteries where repressive governments had discreetly dumped the bodies of many anti-government activists they had killed. The first was to individuals executed as opponents of Taiwan's ruling Kuomintang during the 'White Terror' – martial law that lasted from 1949 to 1987. The latter, on the outskirts of Seoul, commemorated the victims of the 1960 student uprising against the corruption of South Korea's first post-war dictator, Syng-Man Rhee, on 19 April 1960. That protest had been triggered by the police killing of a high-school student during earlier protests against rigged elections. After April 19, Rhee resigned and fled into exile. The earliest formal protest memorial, erected in 1961 on the inner-city campus of Seoul National University (SNU), also commemorated that protest. In 1963, subsequent dictator Park Chung-hee, who ruled from 1961 until 1979, formally established and expanded the cemetery, commemorating the uprisings to help legitimate his own seizing of power after Rhee's

abdication. The cemetery centres on the 21-metre-high columns of the *April Student Revolution Monument*, flanked by relief sculptures from that time depicting the students' victory over Rhee, and focusing around an abstract statue group representing the 224 protestors killed.⁴ A military coup d'état in December 1979 ousted Park and led to the imposition of martial law and closure of universities. A student uprising in the south-western city of Gwangju led to further killing of protestors on 18 May 1980, and their dumping in another informal cemetery. These gravesites were marked only with ephemeral banners and flowers until after democratisation began in the 1990s.

The third representational mode of protest is exemplified by a memorial depicting three crucified figures, erected in 1983 in Seoul on the site just outside the walled city's Namdaemun Gate where unrepentant Catholics were executed under Korea's Joseon Dynasty in the nineteenth century.⁵ These victims are represented allegorically like Jesus, as martyrs.

Remembering Tiananmen Square

Another allegory which gained associations with protest was liberty, and by extension democracy. In Hong Kong, the earliest large-scale civic opposition to authoritarianism involved protests against the Chinese Communist government's killing of democracy protesters in Tiananmen Square, Beijing, on 4 June 1989. On 19 June 1989, Hong Kong residents temporarily erected a replica of the Tiananmen protesters' own temporary plaster *Goddess of Democracy* statue, with two hands raising a flame of liberty, in centrally located Victoria Park, at a vigil for those killed, in what became an annual event. This and several other *Goddess of Democracy* statues subsequently created in Hong Kong also indicate affinity with the United States of America as a symbol of democratic values. No permanent site was found to permanently display this first version and it was dismantled.⁶

The crowd attending these vigils became larger with the approach of the handover of Hong Kong to PR China on 1 July 1997. Four weeks before that date, at the candlelight vigil in Victoria Park on the massacre's eighth anniversary, students displayed the 8-metre-high *Pillar of Shame* sculpture by Danish artist Jens Galschiøt, which depicts piled bodies writhing in pain. That work was originally developed for and displayed at the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation Summit in Rome in 1996, to commemorate unnecessary deaths caused worldwide by hunger due to the uneven

distribution of the world's resources. Other copies have been erected elsewhere to represent other massacres. After the vigil, students moved the sculpture to the Hong Kong University campus. Over the next year, it was relocated to six other university campuses in Hong Kong, before reappearing at the ninth anniversary vigil. In September 1998, the Hong Kong University Students' Union ran a poll to house the *Pillar of Shame* permanently at the union facilities on their campus, for which a majority approved. Apart from its display in Victoria Park for the ninth anniversary in 1999, the memorial then remained on the HKU campus until 22 December 2021, when it was dismantled and put in storage by the university administration.

In later years, several additional small-scale replicas of the *Goddess of Democracy* statue from Tiananmen Square were produced. This memorial format became a key token of student protest against the mainland Chinese government. A white fibreglass version of the statue was created in 2004. It was displayed at the twentieth anniversary vigil in 2009. It was subsequently moved to Times Square, a popular upmarket shopping mall in Causeway Bay which has a privately owned outdoor plaza surrounding its signature clock. After being seized by police for lacking the appropriate permit, the statue was brought to Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HK PolyU) and displayed in its student union building.⁷ In 2009 and 2012 other plaster versions were created, displayed in the same public locations and subsequently stored at HK PolyU and outside the June 4 Museum at the City University of Hong Kong. All were sponsored by the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements in China, which organised the annual vigils.

In 2010, a Chinese-born New Zealand artist, Weiming Chen, created a different *Goddess of Democracy* statue in copper, more closely resembling its original inspiration, New York's Statue of Liberty, with one hand raising a flame and the other cradling a book which originally featured the cover text 'Liberty Democracy Justice Human Rights'. The statue was initially displayed at Hong Kong's Times Square and was seized by the police. The student union of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) applied to permanently locate the statue on their campus, and although the university administration initially refused, they eventually acceded to student protests. The same artist also created a large relief sculpture depicting the Tiananmen Massacre and showing the original *Goddess of Democracy* statue, erected at Hong Kong's Lingnan University in 2010.

Local government refusal and contestation of these unofficial installations of democracy memorials in public and quasi-public settings in Hong Kong have always been couched in terms of lack of official permits and potential risks to public safety. University administrators' opposition has been couched in terms of maintaining university's political neutrality. This shows they recognise the memorials' political symbolism. The proponents of these memorials argue that both kinds of official opposition constitute censorship. What these struggles highlight is that memorials erected in Hong Kong since 1997 to democracy protests that occurred in mainland China in the previous decade have precipitated protests over the restriction of liberties within Hong Kong itself since its handover to the People's Republic of China.

Commemorating Collective Domestic Protest in the Democratic Era

In Seoul and Taipei, protest memorials generally represent protesters and their actions, not their ideals. In 1993, South Korea's democratic government enlarged and reconsecrated Seoul's April 19th Cemetery as a National Cemetery commemorating the 1960 revolutionary protests. A *Root of Democracy* sculpture was added on the street outside the cemetery. In 1997, the government also opened the May 18th National Cemetery, with a similar format, adjacent to the old unmarked Mangwol-dong Cemetery in Gwangju, and relocated the bodies there. This site's focal monument is twin 40-metre pillars flanked by sculptural groups depicting the young, armed participants of the grassroots uprising. Following South Korea's democratisation, several other memorials have also been erected to civilian protest against democratic governments. One from 1998 is to a department store collapse that resulted from corruption in the building approvals process.⁸

In Taipei's central Peace Park, the focal *228 Memorial Monument* (1995) commemorates the victims of 28 February 1947, when the military massacred thousands of people protesting against government corruption and violence. The park also contains a radio station commandeered by the protesters. In 1998 a plaque was installed where the '228' confrontation began, when an official from the State Monopoly Bureau struck a Taiwanese widow suspected to be selling contraband cigarettes, a police officer fired at angered bystanders, and one was killed. Taipei has numerous recent memorials that remember the suffering and murder of victims of the former undemocratic government, including a large memorial depicting a sunflower adjacent to the White Terror victims' rediscovered graves in Liuzhangli Cemetery (2003-15) and public memorials at a former execution site (2000) and a political prison

(2002-15). The White Terror memorial erected in 2008 directly opposite the president's office commemorates all opponents killed during Taiwan's 40-year martial law.

Within the past decade, numerous large-scale protests have occurred in Hong Kong directed against the territory's own government, its restrictions on elections, public expression, civic assembly and other civil liberties and the introduction of new extradition and national security bills. Hong Kong's shift away from democracy has precluded durable commemoration of those protests, but these events were, like the Tiananmen Square vigils that came before them, accompanied by temporary, unofficial memorials to the protests. They include *Umbrella Man* (2014), a 3-metre statue assembled from timber offcuts and holding up a yellow umbrella, key symbol of the Umbrella Movement seeking direct election of Hong Kong's chief executive. Umbrellas had been a key tool for protesters' passive resistance to police use of pepper spray to disperse crowds. In August 2019, a statue titled *Lady Liberty Hong Kong* was produced in just one week as part of extended protest actions against Hong Kong's proposed new mainland extradition bill. The 3-metre-high white statue represents a contemporary protester, and specifically evokes a female volunteer medic who had been shot in the eye and blinded with a bean bag round by police earlier that month. The statue held a folded umbrella in one hand, a raised protest flag in the other, and wore, like many protesters, a hardhat, goggles and filter mask to combat police tear gas and non-lethal ammunition. The statue's material costs were crowd-funded; the detailed sections of the hands and head were 3D printed, and various plaster body sections were separately produced by various artists, both to speed up the production process and to enable their easy and discreet transport. It was initially displayed at the CUHK campus, and was then carried in pieces and reassembled on 13 October on Lion Rock, a high, exposed granite bluff which is prominently visible from central Hong Kong. It was destroyed by vandals the following day.

The repeated use in Hong Kong of large statues as symbols of protest clearly reinforces the shared ideology between Hong Kong's protesters and those in Tiananmen Square: their common opposition to the government of the People's Republic of China.⁹ Such protests and the organisations that led them have now been banned or pre-emptively shut down due to new laws in Hong Kong and mainland China. In December 2021, the administrators of Hong Kong's universities removed all protest memorials related to Tiananmen Square.

Remembering the Comfort Women

Starting in 2011, another set of public statues was erected in all three territories as a form of collective civil protest directed against foreign governments, paralleling the *Goddess of Democracy*, but taking a representational rather than allegorical form. These memorials remember the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, the so-called 'Comfort Women', victims who protested against the Japanese government's lack of apology and restitution for their suffering under the large-scale system of sexual slavery operated in numerous territories under Imperial Japanese control during the second Sino-Japanese War (1937-45) and World War II. These memorials do not commemorate protests against the host territories' own earlier non-democratic governments, but protests against another government. They thus reflect the broadening of civic expression which their territories' democratisation had made possible. The first demonstration by living former 'comfort women' was held in Seoul on Wednesday 8 January 1992, on the occasion of a visit by Japan's then Prime Minister. The protest was then repeated every Wednesday, and a bronze statue was erected on the 1000th Wednesday, 4 December 2011, by which date, 66 years after the war's end, most former comfort women had passed away. The memorial is of a young seated girl in a traditional *hanbok* gown, depicting the women as they would have been at the time of their mistreatment, not as they appeared much later as elderly protesters. A second empty bronze chair next to the statue communicates the idea that other members of the public may join her; most protesters today are descendants or supporters of the actual victims. Like Hong Kong's Goddesses, it commemorates protests against another government. It sits opposite Seoul's Japanese embassy.

In the eleven years since, additional comfort women memorials have been erected in at least 50 cities worldwide.¹⁰ Hong Kong's comfort women memorial was installed in 2017, on the 80th anniversary of the start of the Sino-Japanese war, also near the Japanese embassy. Like several in other cities, it depicted three seated young women of different races: Korean, Chinese and Filipino. It was removed in August 2021, ostensibly because it lacked an official permit. The theme is still commemorated by officially approved memorials in mainland China, where sexual slavery also occurred during Japanese occupation.¹¹ In Taiwan's capital, Taipei, there is a small museum commemorating Taiwan's comfort women, but their protests have only been commemorated in public through a temporary performance by a live model painted bronze. Taiwan's first permanent comfort women memorial was erected in its historic

capital city, Tainan, in 2018. Tainan was also capital of the Taiwanese Republic that was proclaimed as part of local resistance to Japan's conquest of the island in 1895.

The comfort women memorials, although they are privately funded and focused on one specific group of victims, more broadly communicate South Korea's, Hong Kong's and Taiwan's shared opposition to former Japanese colonial rule and subjugation – protesting victimisation in the past. But unlike the case of the student protesters, the protesting comfort women have not yet achieved the social change they seek. These comfort women memorials also represent ongoing opposition to the current Japanese government's recalcitrance in acknowledging those injustices and facilitating reparations. The statues are a performative protest of Japanese government neglect in the present.

Remembering Individual Protesters

Protests against South Korea's authoritarian government continued after the Gwangju Massacre until 1987, when the torture and killing of student protester Park Jong-Cheol and subsequent mass anti-government protests precipitated the end of the last military dictatorship. Prior to democratisation, a memorial to another student who died from a fall when protesting in 1983 had already been erected in 1985 on the new outer-suburban Gwanak campus of SNU, but it had been destroyed by the police. It was rebuilt in the 1990s, after democratisation. A plaque to Park Jong-Cheol was installed here in 1991 and a bust added in 1997. In 1991, the memorial first erected in 1961 to the student protests on 19 April 1960 was also moved here from SNU's original inner-city campus. A black stele with explanatory text was added nearby in 2009. These were eventually joined by fourteen others forming a curated 'path to democracy' through the campus commemorating various individual protesters.¹²

Another statue in Seoul commemorates an individual anti-government protester. A memorial statue was erected in 2005 to garment industry worker Chun Tae-il, who had immolated himself in 1970 to protest the government's lack of action against the low pay and poor conditions endured by his fellow workers.¹³ Similarly, in Taipei, a statue was unveiled in 2012 to democracy activist 'Nylon' Cheng (Cheng Nan-jung), as part of a privately financed memorial museum built within the apartment where he had published the Freedom Era Weekly. In 1989, when police came to arrest Cheng for insurrection, he had committed suicide by self-immolation.¹⁴

A more recent protest memorial in Hong Kong that commemorates protests in mainland China was a bronze statue of Nobel peace prize winner Liu Xiaobo, who had participated in the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989, been imprisoned for promoting democracy and died of cancer on 13 July 2017. It was unofficially installed by his supporters two weeks before the first anniversary of his death, outside Hong Kong's Times Square shopping mall, and then wheeled around on a trolley to several other locations in the inner city. Another memorial depicting Liu was unveiled on the first anniversary of Liu's death on a public plaza in Taipei's Xinyi shopping district, near the City Hall. Since Taiwan's democratisation, Taipei has only hosted one memorial recognising Taiwanese people's protests against their own government in pursuit of liberties.

The most recent memorial erected in Taipei, in 2021, protests the killing of an innocent victim of repression by Taiwan's earlier authoritarian government. It commemorates Dr Chen Wen-chen, a National Taiwan University alumnus teaching at a US university, who was on vacation in Taipei in 1981 when he was detained and interrogated and killed by the secret police for supporting Taiwan's democracy movement – not for actively protesting against it. But there are no memorials in Taipei's public places to democracy protesters themselves, their demands or their actions. It is the recent acts of erecting formal memorials to victims which are the acts of protest; and those actions only happened after democracy was already achieved.¹⁵

The Means of Remembering

The representational modes of commemorating protest in the three Asian capital cities have varied. The oldest protest memorial discussed here, the 1961 memorial to student protests in Seoul on 19 April 1960, is an abstract obelisk above a relief sculpture that shows rows of students marching with banners. Most protest memorials erected since democratisation have been figurative. There have been three distinct approaches. The figurative sculptures at the April 19th Cemetery in Seoul (1963) and the New Mangwol-dong Cemetery in Gwangju (1997) generically represent groups of protesters. So do the comfort women statues. The model for the first one in Seoul in 2011 was the artist's daughter, and this form has been reproduced in many other cities. Hong Kong's *Umbrella Man* (2014) and *Lady Liberty* (2019) also generically represent protesters, although they also represent values. Many memorials erected since 1980 are statues or busts of specific individual protesters: Chun Tae-il, Liu Xiaobo, Nylon Cheng and many students on the SNU 'Path to Democracy'.

Hong Kong's *Pillar of Shame* (1997) ostensibly commemorates protesters, but it was designed for another theme – hunger – and actually depicts anonymous victims of shameful government action. Hong Kong's other Tiananmen memorials all symbolise the principle that the Tiananmen protestors, and by extension the Hong Kong protesters, were seeking: democracy. Those memorials all primarily pursued this through allegory or “mediated reference.”¹⁶ The five *Goddess of Democracy* statues are copies of a copy of a copy. The Tiananmen ‘original’ was itself modelled on New York's Statue of Liberty, holding a flame aloft, which was in turn modelled on the Roman goddess Libertas. The CUHK *Goddess of Democracy* imitates New York's in carrying a book of laws. Her book's cover spells out democracy's key principles. The large sunflower on the 2015 memorial to the White Terror victims at Liuzhangli cemetery is also a symbol of democracy, particularly since Taiwan's 2014 Sunflower Movement, when students occupied Taiwan's legislature to prevent the then Kuomintang government's passing of a trade agreement with mainland China.

Taipei's recent memorial to Chen Wen-chen is, atypically, an abstract black mirror cube: partly to symbolize an interrogation room, and partly to convey the government's silence and the lack of clarity about how exactly Chen died.¹⁷

Places of Protest

Many of the earliest locations of protest memorials were site-specific: Seoul's official April 19th Cemetery, and the places of unceremonious burial for killed protesters at Mangwol-dong Cemetery on the outskirts of Gwangju, in south-west South Korea, and the cemetery to victims of Taiwan's White Terror at Liuzhangli Cemetery on the outskirts of Taipei. These were all peripheral locations with low access and low public visibility, in contrast to most official memorials commemorating government-led actions such as the Korean War. One of the memorials to student protesters on the SNU Path to Democracy is site specific and peripheral, because it commemorates a student who fell while hanging a protest banner outside a campus building. Similarly, the 2021 memorial to Dr Chen Wen-chen is located in a carpark on Taipei's NTU campus where his body was found.

The comfort women statues in Seoul (2011) and Hong Kong (2017) were also site-specific, but very central, because the women they commemorated had sat facing those cities' Japanese embassies. These memorials were unauthorised and occupied

a public footpath and an elevated walkway, but they were tolerated because the host territories' governments shared the protesters' criticisms of Japanese inaction on the issue. These served as unofficial government protests about a foreign government. The Seoul memorial eventually gained official approval. Hong Kong's was removed in 2021.

Most other protest memorials in Seoul and Hong Kong have remained confined to the supportive setting of university campuses, because even after democratisation, there remains much conservative social and political opposition to installing memorials to democracy protesters in public places. Even within university campuses, pro-democracy professors have often had to overcome resistance from conservative administrators, and protest memorials have been attacked by conservative students.

As the three territories gradually developed democratic practices and norms, protesters have increasingly sought to place protest memorials in more public settings. The initial displays of Hong Kong's *Goddess of Democracy* statues and the Liu Xiaobo memorials in shopping areas in the centres of Hong Kong and Taipei gave them high visibility and publicity, but were not tolerated for long. The other locations where the Goddesses were displayed were also very central but consciously temporary, to accompany the vigils that occupied the city's largest, most accessible and flattest public space, Victoria Park. Until 2019, these memorials were tolerated as part of the civil protest of the vigils. Like the SNU campus memorials in Seoul, the longstanding locations of Hong Kong's *Goddess of Democracy* statues and the *Pillar of Shame*, inside the student union facilities on various university campuses, were somewhat less public, but until late 2021 they were doubly protected from government interference by the student unions' autonomy and the universities' stance of political neutrality and commitment to free expression. This trend towards publicising protest commemoration has dramatically reversed in Hong Kong since 2019, with the government's broad crackdown on dissent and anti-Chinese sentiment. In late 2021, the *Goddess of Democracy* statues and *Pillar of Shame* were all removed from Hong Kong's campuses.

Conclusion

The earliest protest memorials in the Asian Tigers were to people killed in domestic protests against government oppression during dictatorships: Seoul's official April 19th Cemetery, and the cemetery to victims of Taiwan's White Terror on Taipei's outskirts.

As these polities have democratised, these memorials have received greater acknowledgment and stronger marking, but only in Taiwan have memorials to victims gained prominent city-centre locations. The oldest protest memorial in Hong Kong was to student protesters killed by another government, in the People's Republic of China. As South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan have democratised, the first and perhaps easiest subjects for civic protests, and subsequently commemorations of them, have been the evils of other governments: the comfort women (Imperial Japan) and the Tiananmen Square massacre (the still-ruling Chinese Communist Party, who still pursue greater control over both Hong Kong and Taiwan). The commemoration of citizens protesting their own government's actions comes later, if at all.

The first memorials in Taipei that criticised Taiwan's former authoritarian government only arose after its fall from power, and remembered citizens executed by the government, although those citizens were not necessarily vocal activists or even opponents. Taipei has hosted numerous large public protests both before and since its democratisation. But beyond the private memorial to Nylon Cheng in 2012, and the renaming of the street where he produced the *Freedom Era Weekly* as 'Liberty Lane', there are, as yet, no fully public memorials that recognise and remember these actions and actors. Taiwan only hosts protest memorials that remember, and demonstrate affinity with, protesters in other Asian territories: the comfort women in South Korea, and Liu Xiaobo in mainland China.

Those memorials highlight a recognised affinity and exchange of values and symbols among the citizens of the Asian Tigers. The *Goddess of Democracy* also indicates an affinity, through several translations, with the United States of America as a symbol of democratic values. Yet these commemorations of protest against the hosting territories' enemies, while generally grassroots-led, are in fact *dirigiste*, supporting the State.¹⁸ They mostly represent patriotic action, and thus enhance patriotism and thereby support for their own governments, rather than challenging it. They have been tolerated because the host territories' governments shared the protesters' criticisms.

The promoters of protest memorials in all three cities have sought to display them in increasingly public, central locations, moving from the marginality and seclusion of cemeteries and university campuses to centrally located public parks, to confront sites of national government and of other nations' governments. Seoul's memorial to aggrieved garment worker Chun Tae-il is the rare case that has succeeded in

permanently marking the capital city with a symbol of democratic contestation. Both that memorial's subject and the struggles of its advocates show the public that the price paid for free expression of dissent can be very high.

Endnotes

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