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Tiananmen Square:
A Political History of Monuments

A FEW MONTHS AFTER JUNE 1989, we began to view the Tiananmen movement as history, and as history, the event is transformed into words—chronicles, memorial speeches, analyses—and images of three kinds. Recorded images are subjects of photo journalism, broadcast to us in "full coverage," edited and preserved for documenting or reconstructing that heated period of fifty days and nights (16 April–4 June). A condensed image is a "particular [that] represents the more general"; it is extracted from chronology to become a symbol: a single recorded image—a young man in a white shirt standing motionless before a row of slowly moving tanks. The precise time of the event is rarely remembered, and no one even knows the brave man's name. Printed on magazine covers, posters, and T-shirts, however, this still scene stands above the rest and embodies them.

Then there is an enriched image—Tiananmen Square, a vast open ground centered on and defined by a series of monuments constructed over a period of some five hundred years. Many Westerners perhaps only recently learned its name, but to every Chinese from a college freshman to the country's paramount leader, the Square has always been the center of political tension and attention. A series of mass movements taking place there have become landmarks in modern Chinese history: the demonstration on 4 May 1919 in protest against the Treaty of Versailles handing over Chinese lands to Japan; the patriotic march on 18 March 1926; the demonstration on 9 December 1935, which started the resistance movement against the Japanese invasion; the anti-autocratic movement during the Civil War on 20 May 1947; the mass memorial to the former prime minister Zhou Enlai on 5 April 1976; and finally the 1989 student uprising. Parallel to these grass-roots movements runs another sequence of "demonstrations" mobilized by authorities to display power: the Victory March in 1900 by the Allied Army celebrating their occupation of Beijing; Gen. Zhang Xun's grand ritual on June 1917 to commemorate his restoration of the imperial order; the establishment of the puppet regime under Japanese patronage; the parade celebrating the recapture of Beijing by Republican troops; the founding of Communist China on 1 October 1949; and, finally, the elaborate National Day parade shortly after the People's Liberation Army blood-washed the Square in 1989. As these two
chains of events are tied to Tiananmen Square, everything there partakes of the fate of the state and of its one billion people. Correspondingly, the Square partakes of every event and consequently changes its meaning. Its vast vista records nothing, and its monuments are too complex and diverse to express any coherent ideology. As historical memory itself, the Square is renewed and enriched by ongoing events while at the same time encompassing them.

This essay is about the Square, an architectural complex that provides a locus of coalescence for political expression, collective memory, identity, and history. The Square has been and will continue to be a prime visual means of political rhetoric in modern China to address the public and actually to constitute the public itself.

**The Gate**

In the early morning of 30 May 1989, Beijing's residents awoke to find a new statue of some seven meters high in the Square. Representing a young woman holding a torch with both hands, it raised the total number of monuments in the Square to six. Along the central axis, Tiananmen or the Gate of Heavenly Peace enclosed the Square to the north; above its closed and guarded central passage a giant portrait of Chairman Mao stared silently at the crowds below. Directly facing Mao was the new statue—the Goddess of Democracy—who after a few hours would engage the wonderment of the world. Then there was the Monument to the People's Heroes, better known in China as the Monument to the People's Martyrs, standing in the center of the Square like a needle on an enormous sundial. South of the Monument was Mao's massive Mausoleum, reportedly still holding the Great Helmsman's corpse in a crystal case. Away from the central axis, two enormous buildings—the Museum of National and Revolutionary History and the Great Hall of the People—flanked the Square to the east and west. One rarely finds such a strange assemblage of monuments of contradictory styles in such orderly formation. Their architectural disharmony and disciplined layout signify competition for dominance, not cooperation to define a common space.

The war of monuments in the Square began in 1949. When Chairman Mao ascended Tiananmen and declared the birth of the People's Republic of China, the ancient building was reborn. Before this moment, Tiananmen was, as its name signifies, a gate. Built first during the Ming (1368–1644) and reconstructed during the Qing (1644–1911), it was one of a series of gates located on the capital's north-south axis as the formal entrance to a number of subcities—the Outer City, the Inner City, the Imperial City, and the Forbidden City (figs. 1 and 2).5 Tiananmen's particular function and symbolism was understood in a larger architectural complex known as Beijing,4 and in particular in its connection with the walls
and other gates. Indeed, gates and walls were two principal features of a capital in traditional China because they both shaped a city and made it meaningful. The walls created repeated enclosures, one nesting inside another, while the gates allowed a procession path to penetrate the walls and thus to link the broken spaces into a continuum.

Without much difficulty historians have traced this design back to China’s antiquity; a diagram in a 2500-year-old ritual canon shows a very similar pattern (fig. 3). The difference between imperial Beijing and its remote ancestor is not its structure but its infinite horizontal expansion: walls and gates were added and
the central axis was elongated. Although such an unbroken tradition in city planning may be admirable, one wonders why a culture would so insistently reject any fundamental change. In particular, what did these gates and walls mean and why did they become an imperial obsession?

Perhaps the only logical explanation for this obsession was a political tenet that power could be maintained only by keeping it secret (fig. 4). The walls were layers of barriers that repeatedly separated the "inner" from the "outer";\(^6\) the gates led to (but did not display) something deep inside the labyrinth of rectangles. The walls were fifty feet thick; a passageway resembled a dark, tomblike tunnel. When the gates slowly swung open during a grand audience, ministers and noblemen fell on their knees in awe before passing through them toward the emperor's throne. Outsiders remained outside; otherwise they would have an access to secrecy and power.

The "thing" concealed behind the walls and gates was precisely the emperor—the embodiment of the imperial order—who could maintain his power because he was invisible from the public space and because he, and only he, saw everything outside from his private space:

![Figure 3: Idealized plan of the Zhou capital. From Yongle dadian (The great encyclopedia of the Yongle period; Beijing, 1959), 9561.4b.](image1)

![Figure 4: Tiananmen, detail of a painting by Zhu Bang, c. 1500. Reproduced from J. D. Spence, The Search for Modern China (New York, 1988), by permission.](image2)
The Way of the ruler lies in what cannot be seen, its function in what cannot be known. Be empty, still, and idle, and from your place of darkness observe the defects of others. See but do not appear to see; listen but do not seem to listen; know but do not let it be known that you know. . . . Hide your tracks, conceal your sources, so that your subordinates cannot trace the springs of your action. Discard wisdom, forswear ability, so that your subordinates cannot guess what you are about. Stick to your objective and examine the results to see how they match; take hold of the handles of government carefully and grip them tightly. Destroy all hope, smash all intention of wrestling them from you, allow no man to covet them.

Such a political philosophy was so powerfully manifested in the design of imperial Beijing that even an early-twentieth-century visitor could not help being bewildered by it when walking through its walls and gates: "He passed through one blank wall and beneath one brooding gatehouse after another, to find beyond it only a featureless avenue leading to yet another wall and gate. Reality was softening into a dream. His mind, so long attentive to a distant goal somewhere ahead in this labyrinth of straight lines, so long expecting a climax that never seemed to come."

This old architectural symbolism, however, collapsed—at least on the surface—when Mao appeared above Tiananmen on 1 October 1949. To the thousands of commoners and soldiers gathered under the Gate, it meant that the hidden power had finally emerged and submitted itself to them. No other gesture could more effectively prove the newness of the Communist leadership, and no other act could more convincingly seal the title of People's Republic. From that moment Tiananmen was no longer one of many gates, but a monument where yearly parades would refresh the memory of the country's founding.

To become a monument, Tiananmen had to be isolated and extracted from its traditional context. This process first took place on a symbolic level: after 1949 the Gate became an emblem, its image replicated in isolation on the country's banknotes and coins, on the front pages of all government documents, and in the nation's insignia (which was again hung under the eaves of the Gate and thus epitomized its newly gained monumentality; fig. 5). Tiananmen was then physically detached from the rest of the city. From the 1950s to the 1960s, Beijing's walls gradually disappeared from sight. The north gate of the Imperial City, called Dianmen or the Gate of Earthly Peace, which balanced Tiananmen to the south, was leveled to the ground, and with it vanished the dualistic structure that had characterized Beijing's traditional design. Almost all the magnificent tower gates of Beijing's Inner and Outer Cities were demolished as soon as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution began in 1966. The common mind could hardly understand the reason for this massive destruction: the land freed from these ancient buildings seemed incommensurate with the energy and manpower wasted in the project. Some brave historians protested, while others proposed compromises such as turning the city walls into a continuous high-rise public
garden. But all these efforts were in vain: Beijing had to be a “revolutionary” city, and revolution meant, in Mao’s own words, “violence against” the old order.

From this giant obliteration emerged the new Tiananmen. Whenever a wall disappeared, the Gate became bigger and grander, its yellow roof and purple columns brighter. Whenever Beijing was freed from one of its traditional enclosures, the light of the Gate, hence that of the Chairman and the Party, radiated further to every corner of the country. An immense avenue was then opened up, running east to west in front of the Gate and burying the old north-south Imperial Way underneath. Mass parades (and all traffic) had to proceed under Tiananmen’s shadow, not through its doors. No one could ever claim that Tiananmen was still a gate.

Once the building stood as an individual entity, its monumental form became analogous with the new ruling power and ruling figure. It was anthropomorphized, and the logic of its anthropomorphization was simple: as both the Gate and Chairman Mao were primary symbols of new China, they were naturally equated. A huge portrait of Mao was installed on the Gate and was updated year after year. The 1949 portrait, showing Mao in a three-quarter view facing upward, was soon replaced by a series of frontal images directly staring at the onlooker. The Gate was thus also constantly updated; together with the Chairman it grew older and became more respectable. Most tellingly, after Mao died in 1976 a memorial ceremony was held in front of the Gate. Tiananmen’s tower was left empty; all the Party leaders stood below the Gate on a platform built for the occasion. The ceremony reached its climax when the leaders, as well as 500,000 “revolutionary masses” behind them, faced the Gate in silent tribute.
The Square

The concept of a “square” (guangchang, meaning literally a “broad ground”) is political in the People’s Republic of China. Every city, town, or village must have a square for public gatherings on important (thus political) occasions—holiday parades and pageants, announcements of the Party’s instructions, and struggle rallies against enemies of the people. Big or small, a square is always conjoined with a platform built for the leaders (of a city, a town, or a village) to review the mass assemblies. A square thus becomes a legitimate place for people to meet their leaders (or vice versa), an indispensable joint between the high and the low, the brain and its body. As various squares become established in all administrative centers, they comprise a “square system” corresponding to the hierarchy of the state—a parallel that unmistakably indicates a square’s official function to shape a desirable “public.” As the “enemy-class elements” (which change their content from campaign to campaign) are generally excluded from these public meetings or are only present as targets of accusation, the masses’ identity as “the people” is proved by the square.

Among all the platforms none is more privileged than Tiananmen, the stand of the country’s paramount leader. Logically, there must be a square—in fact the square—of unmatched status for the public. The Gate gains its meaning by reinterpreting a traditional form, but the Square’s significance can be derived only from its physical immensity. Mao must have been troubled by what he saw from Tiananmen’s balcony in 1949: even though the ground below was hurriedly expanded before the country’s founding ceremony, still only some seventy thousand people could parade through it. Shortly afterward he ordered a new square built, a square “big enough to hold an assembly of one billion.”11 His words were explained by an official architect: “The Chairman’s ocean-broad mind flies beyond the confines of the old walls and corridors and penetrates into the future. It is exactly his vision that reveals the direction for constructing the new Square.”12 Behind these bombastic words is a simple idea: only the biggest public, thus the largest square, could match the supreme power of the Chairman and the Gate.

Mao’s ambition was never realized. (Despite all efforts, the new Square completed in 1959 could only hold 400,000 people, and, rather ironically, it was only after the Chairman’s death that the Square was further expanded to hold 600,000.) The problems involved in creating a square of some fifty acres in the heart of Beijing, which is one of the most densely populated cities in the world, were more one of destruction than construction. New monuments, however massive in size, were achieved in short order: we are told that the Great Hall of the People and the Museum of National and Revolutionary History were completed within ten months, and that Mao’s mausoleum was finished within half a year. It took three decades, however, to destroy all the old structures surrounding the old Tiananmen Square, including walls, gates, roads, steles, artificial rivers,
bridges, sculptured wooden arches called *pailo*, and numerous administrative buildings left from Imperial China and foreign occupation. This Herculean destruction was again considered worthwhile: "For the need of the new age, the old Square had to be reformed and replanned as soon as New China was founded." Like the Gate but in a different way, the Square emerged from a demolition of the past.

In the old days Tiananmen faced a T-shaped walled square (fig. 6). The two arms of the T stretched east and west from the Gate, while the vertical bar of the T extended south toward the Front Gate of the Inner City. Two groups of government ministries flanked this square. To the east, among others, stood the Ministries of Rites, Industry, Population, and Medicine, and to the west, the Departments of the Five Armies, Imperial Guard, Police, and Justice. A popular saying went: "Those to the east govern our lives; those to the west govern our death." This traditional layout, therefore, was already based on the opposition between the ruler and the ruled. Located at the top of the T, Tiananmen appeared as the head or the brain. Rays of the emperor's power and wisdom radiated from the Imperial City through the Gate to every department of the empire. Such an architectural symbolism was highlighted by yearly rituals held there. The grandest of all ceremonies was the issuing of imperial edicts when a new emperor was enthroned or a royal heir was born. The Minister of Rites would receive the edict from the throne hall in the Forbidden City. Placed on a "cloud tray" under the imperial yellow umbrella, the edict would be carried in a portable "dragon pavilion" onto Tiananmen's gate-tower; officials and selected commoners would kneel down facing the emperor behind the Gate. The edict would

![Figure 6. Drawing of the Qing Dynasty Tiananmen Square. From Zhao Luo and Shi Shuqing, Tiananmen (Beijing, 1957), 21.](image-url)
then be put in the mouth of a gilded wooden phoenix that was lowered by a rope to another “cloud tray” below. Again it would be put in a “dragon pavilion” carried to the Ministry of Rites, where it would be copied and sent around the country.

What we find in this ornate performance is how the ancient Tiananmen Square worked. Rather than forming a static pair, Tiananmen and the Square, hence the ruler and his subjects, communicated with each other through rites. Neither the ruler nor the subjects, however, were present: they were represented—the former by an elaborate set of ritual paraphernalia and the latter by chosen representatives. While any trace of individuality was obliterated in this ritual (even the representatives had to kneel with their faces to the ground), the monolithic power of the imperial authority was enhanced.

We may wonder how much the mass parades in modern Tiananmen Square differ from this ancient rite. It is true that the ruler of the new dynasty has emerged above the Gate, and that the assemblies in the Square are several thousand times bigger than the old ones. But the basic logic of ritual remains. In those
grand modern operas, such as Mao’s frequent reviews of the Red Guards that 
mobilized the Cultural Revolution, the enormous Square was covered with “rev-
olutionary masses” (fig. 7). I imagine that looking down from Tiananmen’s tower, 
a half million men and women must have formed a vast ocean; on its surface red 
flags and slogans were waving and floating. The size of this crowd seemed 
immense, yet any attempt to identify it as “the people” would have been illu-
sionary: it still consisted of representatives chosen by the man standing on the 
Gate through an elaborate bureaucratic system. I then imagine the camera 
changing its angle to some individuals in the Square: in the remote distance they 
would hardly be able to make out the Chairman’s tiny silhouette. Yet they cried 
out with joy and excitement, because the Chairman was there, above the Gate 
merging with his giant portrait, and because the Chairman, or his portrait, was 
looking at them. A desirable “public,” not “the people,” was thus formulated.

The Square has another, less glamorous, aspect that can be again traced to its 
past. In traditional China the ground before Tiananmen was also a place of 
death. According to Imperial Law, twice a year a High Court would be set in the 
Square’s T-shaped enclosure to review all death sentences. Every fall the accused 
would be brought to a row of officials to answer a simple question: “Is your sen-
tence just or unjust?” Most of the sentences were confirmed; according to one 
source, many prisoners had been tortured so severely that they could hardly 
speak. Occasion ally there was a lucky person, and in this case he would be 
received by his relatives outside the Square. A string of hawthorn would be hung 
around his neck, indicating that this person had at least one more year to live, 
because his case would be reviewed again the next fall.

This rite was abolished after the fall of the Qing; the new rulers of China only 
updated the ancient edict-issuing ceremony associated with the Gate. For more 
than two decades their rule seemed to have succeeded. The endless pageants in 
the Square presented a disguised reality of a contented people cheering at their 
leaders. Then, in 1976, everything suddenly changed: the Chairman died; the 
Gate was empty; the heated Cultural Revolution had turned into a nightmare; 
the Gang of Four was about to seize power. From all directions people came to 
the Square, of their own will and to express their own will. When they tried to 
speak out and prove they were “the people,” they were arrested and beaten. 

Suddenly the colorful puppet shows ended; the Square was once again asso-
ciated with outlaws, the accused, and death. Suddenly the submerged dark side 
of the Square jumped back out. The age-old memory of Tiananmen Square as a 
place of public abuse and humiliation was refreshed, challenging the official myth 
surrounding the purple Gate. In retrospect we realize that the antagonism 
between the ruler and the ruled had been always there, in the very opposition 
between a public ground and a privileged platform, and it will continue to exist 
as long as the regime is unable to identify this opposition.

Tiananmen Square
The Monument

But when people went to the Square in 1976 to hold the first public demonstration in post-1949 Beijing, they did not passively fill in the vast Square. They gathered around the Monument to the People's Heroes and turned this monument, which had been part of the regime's political rhetoric, into their own symbol.

Completed in 1958, the Monument to the People's Heroes rises 37.4 meters high at the center of the Square (fig. 8). Topped with a small roof in the traditional Chinese wudian style, the granite obelisk resembles an infinitely enlarged stele, a common form of stone structure used in traditional China for commemorating important events and for engraving authorized versions of the Confucian Classics. While the Monument itself is built of stone blocks, a single-piece slab of sixty tons is inserted in the front side to bear a gilded inscription written by Mao in 1955: “Eternal glory to the people’s heroes.” A longer text on the back drafted by Mao in 1949 is shown in Zhou Enlai’s calligraphy. The east and west sides of the obelisk are carved with “red stars,” flags, pines, and cypresses, identified as symbols of “eternal revolutionary spirit.”

Directly under the vertical column is a double plinth. The upper plinth is decorated on all four sides with carvings of eight large wreaths of peonies, lotus, and chrysanthemums—symbols of nobility, purity, and perseverance. Ten white marble reliefs built into the lower plinth narrate the revolutionary history of the Chinese people since 1840. Each relief is two meters high, and the 170 figures depicted are all life size. None of these figures, however, is an identifiable personage. As the designers emphasized, the strength of these carvings derives from the figures' collective anonymity.

Two flights of stairs on a double terrace lead visitors to these reliefs. Both layers of the terrace are surrounded by white marble balustrades; and the floor plan of the lower one, which covers an area of more than three thousand square meters, derives its shape from a crab apple blossom. To the north, the Monument faces Tiananmen Gate over the open vista of Tiananmen Square; to the south, hundreds of large pine trees in forty-four rows cover the area between the Monument and the Front Gate.

The designing process of the Monument started in 1949, but the stone structure was only unveiled a decade later. Considering its rather simple structural and technical requirements, as well as the amount of manpower that the regime could easily muster, the project took an unusually long period (as already mentioned, other far more complex buildings in the Square were all finished within a year). The problems involved were more those of theology than aesthetics or technology. A few published reports of the project, though all following the official interpretation, allow us to glimpse some major debates regarding its location, form, and decoration, and enable us to speculate on the motivation behind the final plan.
The location of the Monument, as one finds it now in the Square, has aroused the strongest criticism from art historians and architects all over the world. Calling the granite giant a “good sneeze” in “a concert hall at just the most exquisite and magical point of a musical phrase,” the French art historian Simon Leys has expressed his outrage at its assault on the sublime architectural harmony of old Beijing (“the brutal silliness,” “the Maoist rape of the ancient capital,” a “revolutionary-proletarian obscenity in the middle of the sacred way,” an “insignificant granitic phallus receiving all its enormous significance from the blasphemous stupidity of its location”). China’s Communist leaders, however, might take his outrage as a joke, for Leys was denouncing exactly the effect they were seeking. “Someone thinks,” we read in an official document, “that the view along [Beijing’s] central axis . . . should not be blocked. But through studying we have recognized that the axis of the present Square is no longer the past Imperial Path. The importance of the Monument will be most effectively accentuated by this central position.”

This passage, written by a chief designer of the Monument in 1978, is misleading, however, on two accounts: it seems to suggest 1) that the location was determined by him and his professional colleagues and 2) that this decision came after the new Tiananmen Square was completed. An examination of historical evidence immediately discloses the falseness of both impressions: the location of the Monument was decided by none other than the Party long before the expansion of the Square and even before the establishment of the People’s Republic of China. As soon as Mao’s army took over Beijing in March 1949, a special consultative committee was organized under the Party’s leadership to design a commemorative monument for the future regime. The first question delivered to the committee was about the monument’s location. Different opinions were offered:
some members of the committee suggested placing the monument east of Tiananmen or west of Beijing; others proposed to build it atop an ancient structure such as the Front Gate or the Duanmen behind Tiananmen Gate. The last plan was simply (and perhaps rightly) called "absurd" by Mao. Taking the matter into his own hands, Mao's chief assistant Zhou Enlai "worked hard on the issue. He took special trips to Tiananmen's tower, from where he contemplated the square and studied the relationship between Tiananmen and the [future] Monument in terms of their distance and relative proportion. He finally arrived at the decision to build the Monument on the axis between Tiananmen and Zhonghuamen [a gate destroyed in 1976 to make room for Mao's tomb]."23 This plan was passed unanimously in the First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference on 30 September 1949, the day before the new republic's founding ceremony. In the same meeting Mao also wrote an inscription for the Monument (which was later engraved on its back). Coming out of the conference hall all the chief officials of the government (who had received their posts in the same meeting) went directly to a spot south of Tiananmen Gate, where Mao took a shovel and laid the Monument's foundation stone.

The actual planning and construction of the Monument started in 1952. The designers now faced the question of orientation. Should the Monument face south according to a classical rule in Chinese city planning? In such a position it would become one of many south-facing buildings punctuating the central axis of Beijing. This plan, agreed upon by all members of the planning committee, was changed at the last minute before the central slab (for Mao's inscription) was inserted into the obelisk. An instruction came down from the top: the Monument should face north. Again it was Zhou Enlai who made this decision with Mao's special permission.

This change was made with good reason in the new ideological context. After having been turned around toward Tiananmen, the Monument became a direct counterpart of the Gate, and these two juxtaposing structures then embraced the Square in the middle. But more profoundly, the new scheme signified an intention to group all architectural elements in the Square into a self-contained unit independent from the rest of Beijing. Once this unit was formed, a new perspective and a new hierarchical structure of the city emerged: the Square became the meeting point of the four directions and thus the heart of the capital and the whole country. The same scheme also meant that all architectural forms in the Square had to be planned according to their internal coherence. They provided one another with standards and references in form, proportion, orientation, and distance. The Monument had to be viewed from the Gate; the Gate had to be approached from the Square; and the Square only became real when it was enclosed by the Gate and the Monument (and later also by the Great Hall and the museum to the east and west). In drawing a figure a child first paints a head and then adds arms and legs; in modern Beijing the Tiananmen Complex has determined the rest of the city.
FIGURE 9. Designs of the Monument to the People’s Heroes.
From Wu Liangyong, ibid., figs. 6–8.

But a central question still remains: What is the Monument—both as itself and in its physical context? We can pursue the answer in two different ways. First, the Monument embodies some fundamental values of the Party positively insisted upon by the authorities throughout the planning process. Second, its values are also realized negatively through the screening, rejecting, and criticizing of competing approaches (fig. 9). These two parallel processes, which had already become clear in deciding the Monument’s site and orientation, continued to control the planning. A third debate centered on the form. Some architects kept proposing their naive plans blind to the Party’s needs. They designed gatelike low buildings with a heavy roof and open passages (fig. 9d); the idea was still to har-
monize the Monument with the old city. These plans were most severely criticized as attempts to “restore ancient ways”; the Monument, according to the official approach, should be a solid high rise, a form that could “best represent the lofty spirit and unsurpassable achievements of the people’s heroes.” In the next stage of selection, therefore, only vertical shapes were considered (figs. 9e–l). Two types of plans were again eliminated. The first kind, derived from Stalinesque prototypes to place heroic figure(s) on top of a stone column (figs. 9e–f), was rejected on the grounds that such three-dimensional statues would unavoidably overshadow Mao’s inscription, which could only be engraved on the column base under the figure’s feet. The second type of design, made by those who tried hardest to follow the Party’s line, translated Mao’s words into images. Once Mao had stood above the Gate and said that he hoped one day to see hundreds of chimneys (symbols of China’s modernization) from there. In a hurry, some designers drew diagrams showing a “monument” consisting of three chimneylike high rises (fig. 9g). Even the Party could not accept such a plan.

After the low terraces, classical building styles, and anthropomorphic images had all been eliminated, the designers’ minds were now focused: the Monument had to be a vertical form suitable for Mao’s inscription (figs. 9 m–n). In other words, they finally realized that what they should look for was not a monument but a “monumental medium” for the Chairman’s writing; the ancient stele then became a logical solution. Such a process ran throughout the designing of the Monument and was repeated on different levels at different stages. Even when the “stele” form was agreed upon, new debates started all over again about details: should the Monument be hollow inside so visitors could climb onto it? Should its terrace be a platform for reviewing mass assemblies? Should its base be turned into an exhibition hall? Again these plans were one by one rejected: “To permit people to enter the Monument would harm its dignity; to combine the Monument with a museum would confuse its purpose; to design it as a platform would contradict the primary status of the Gate.” We must realize that such a process, no matter how lengthy and tedious, was considered necessary because the designers themselves could be educated and reformed. Through it, the inevitable outcome was a correct and unanimous understanding of Mao’s inscription written on 30 September 1949:

Eternal glory to the people’s heroes who laid down their lives in the people’s War of Liberation and the people’s revolution in the past three years. Eternal glory to the people’s heroes who laid down their lives in the people’s War of Liberation and the people’s revolution over the past thirty years. Eternal glory to the people’s heroes who from 1840 laid down their lives in the many struggles against internal and external enemies for national independence and the freedom and well-being of the people.

To those who are not familiar with Mao’s rhetoric, this passage may seem redundant and almost meaningless. But to the Chinese who have been schooled in the Confucian tradition, a sacred text always implies secret codes. Mao’s riddle

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has three key words: the dates “three years,” “thirty years,” and “from 1840.” The last two dates, in Mao's historiography, periodize China's modern history into two phases: “the democratic revolution of the old type” from 1840 to the 1920s, and “the democratic revolution of the new type” since the 1920s (it differs from the previous type in being under the Communist Party's leadership). The last date refers to the Civil War period against Chiang Kai-shek from 1946 to 1949.

The inscription has other key words that do not periodize history but link separated historical phases into a continuum. The monotonous phrase “Eternal glory to the people's heroes who laid down their lives in the people's War of Liberation and the people's revolution” is repeated over and over. To the Communist theologicians and their converts, the repetition itself signifies a universal theme running through China's modern history. Still, the inscription contains yet a third secret code in its narrative structure: the “revolutionary history” is told in flashback. It is, therefore, a retrospective reconstruction of the past from a present vantage point—it is Mao's vision of history.

The ten reliefs on the lower plinth of the Monument represent the “revolutionary history” by mimicking these codes. (In fact, unless one deciphers these codes it is impossible to comprehend these pictures.) The subjects of the reliefs were selected not by artists but by Fan Wenlan, the leading historian of the Party's history during the 1950s. The principal scene of the series (fig. 10), entitled “Crossing the Yangzi River (1949),” appears on the front side of the Monument and documents Mao's final victory over the Kuomintang. Two smaller reliefs—“Supporting the Front” and “Welcoming the People's Liberation Army”—flank this principal carving just as in ancient art donors surround a king or a god.

This central scene, which stands for the three-year War of Liberation from 1946 to 1949, leads the spectator to trace the previous chapters of the “revolutionary history.” The sculptured frieze on three other sides of the plinth is divided

**Figure 10.** The principal relief on the Monument to the People's Heroes, *Crossing the Yangzi River*. From Liu Kaiqu, *Liu Kaiqu diaosuji* (Sculptures by Liu Kaiqu; Beijing, 1961), fig. 4.
into two equal parts. The two reliefs on the east side and the first one on the south side depict the three most important events during "the democratic revolution of the old type": "Burning opium" in Canton (1840), which initiated modern Chinese history; "the Jintian Uprising," which began the Taiping Rebellion (1851); and "the Wuchang Uprising," which ended China's dynastic history (1911). To the west, opposite these reliefs, are three other scenes that stand collectively for "the democratic revolution of the new type": the anticolonial march on 30 May 1925, the birth of the Communist military force in 1927, and the guerrilla war against the Japanese during World War II. A scene connecting these two sub-sequences in the middle of the south side represents the May 4th Movement (1918); its position corresponds to its historical status as "the turning point from the democratic revolution of the old type to the democratic revolution of the new type."  

While Mao's vision of history is presented by selected flashbacks, the historical "continuum" expresses itself in the repetition of forms. Some sculptors first thought to portray historical figures—leaders and participants for each event. But this plan was soon ruled out because the Monument, and hence its carvings, were supposed to stand for a collective body of people. Instead of drawing portraits, therefore, the artists' major task became to cast a single idealized archetype, which was then repeated and multiplied, and whose manifestations were combined into ten compositions. The result is almost surreal: a single actor seems to appear both synchronically and diachronically one hundred seventy times in ten acts of a lengthy drama. No matter how busy he is, however, his face remains expressionless and his gesture(s) and movement(s) highly disciplined. The monotony of the reliefs perfectly echoes Mao's charmlike inscription. 

This investigation leads us back to our original question: What is the Monument? It seems that although the structure was not unveiled until 1958, it was *established* the day before 1 October 1949, when Mao laid its foundation stone south of the Gate and when his inscription was approved by the congress. All later decisions were already implied, and the final form of the Monument grew from this seed. Our question can be thus rephrased: Why did the Monument have to precede the People's Republic, and why did it have to be located before the Gate? What is the relationship between the timing and the placement? 

The precise timing signifies an attempt to put a punctuation mark in the flow of history, to separate the past from the present. It means that at that very moment the previous chapters of history were frozen into a permanent form (an "implied" monument whose existence was attested by its foundation stone and inscription). The possibility of summarizing the past—to fix and affirm it—further indicates a present-minded vantage point that, in this case, was attributed to the victorious people who were to build this monument for their collective pre-
decessors. But what is the people's past? While in traditional historiography the past encompasses (at least theoretically) all previous happenings, in Maoist historiography the past is explicitly dualistic: one past is heroic and virtuous, the other decadent and evil. The former is “the revolutionary history of the people”; the latter is China's twenty-four dynasties (of the Slave Society, the Feudal Society, and the Semi-Feudal and Semi-Colonial Society). Before the triumph of the people only the second history could be and had been documented, but now it was time to forge a new history.

This new history was necessary because it would legitimate and corroborate the establishment of the People's Republic. It was a “revolutionary calendar” that served to “provide an a priori frame of reference for all possible memory.” In fact, logically speaking nothing but the past can assume the role as witness of the present. But in Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai’s minds the issue was far more practical and visual. Neither of these two men had much knowledge about city planning. What they did have was a point of view: the Monument had to be measured according to the presence of the Gate, where the Chairman would soon announce the regime's birth. While the Monument embodied the past of “the revolutionary history,” the opposing Gate, with all its newly bestowed glory, stood for the present and future of that same history. The timing and the placement of the Monument, therefore, meant that when Mao ascended Tiananmen on 1 October the Monument was already “there,” as a witness and legislator. It was understood that all the mortal beings gathered in the Square would die, so that the Monument would eventually become the only witness and legislator of the event.

The Monument is dedicated to the deceased heroes, but these heroes remain impersonal and conceptual. The monotonous inscriptions and reliefs do not bear people's living memories, and no veteran of the revolution has ever dedicated a wreath to the Monument in the memory of his dead comrade-in-arms. If the Monument has any commemorative value, the subject of commemoration is the founding of Mao’s China. Its reliefs and inscriptions are copied in textbooks to be memorized and to inspire awe. In fact, the Monument is not intended to be connected with any individual except Mao. The inscriptions and reliefs, as we have learned, all manifest his interpretative paradigms. When he stood above the Gate he faced his own words in his own calligraphy, and when he was not there his huge portrait stared down at them. The opposition of the Gate and the Monument thus stemmed from Mao's own bifurcation: as he had created both the past and the present of the people's history, he stood for both past and present, the people and history.

For more than twenty-five years this official ideology dominated the construction and interpretation of the Square. All new structures were added to confirm it. The Great Hall of the People and the Museum of National and Revolutionary History were hurriedly built before the regime's tenth anniversary, during the period of the Great Leap Forward that, in a prevailing view, foresaw the Great
Harmony of Communism. While these two new monuments continued to periodize "the revolutionary history," they opposed each other along the east-west axis and formed a second pair of juxtapositions between the past and present (figs. 11 and 13). Figure 12 shows the symbolic structure of the Square in 1959:

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
\text{Present} & \text{Public} & \text{Past} \\
(\text{Tiananmen}) & (\text{Great Hall of the People}) & (\text{Museum of History}) \\
(\text{the Square}) & (\text{the Monument}) & \\
\end{array}
\]

The strict and static scheme of this monumental complex externalized Mao's vision of revolution, history, and people on a geographic plane. The Square was surrounded and defined by the monuments, as were the public gatherings surrounded and defined by the past and present assigned to them. It seemed that once this structure was fixed and affirmed it would last for all time, and indeed it remained unchallenged even during the most chaotic period of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76). But in 1976 the situation began to change. In January Zhou Enlai died. While the Gang of Four, led by Mao's wife, was pushing the bloody
“class struggle” to another limit, Zhou, who had become the only hope for rationality and peace, was condemned, and people were prohibited from mourning him. All the anxiety, frustration, disillusion, and anguish that had troubled Beijing residents for more than a decade merged into a shared feeling of grief, and from this shared feeling a grass-roots movement began to take shape. “When Premier Zhou died,” one mourner said, “many people were weeping—in the streets, on the buses. A mournful silence reigned [in the city]. It was uplifting, really uplifting. There was a sense of relief. In the past, for so long in China, there had been no occasion when you could feel your feelings uplifted. . . . But with Zhou’s death, you came to realize when other people were weeping that your grief was their grief, too. We were isolated before, but then people became close.”

On 23 March, a single wreath of white paper, the traditional symbol of mourning, was placed at the foot of the Monument. The two ribbons streaming from the wreath bore an inscription in commemoration of Zhou Enlai. For the first time in its history, the Monument was associated with the intimate memory of an individual. Further dedications and gatherings were forbidden, but the prohibition only brought more wreaths, people, and finally the protest on 4 April, the day of the Qingming Festival (the day for holding memorial services to the dead in traditional China). One hundred thousand people came in this and the following days, on their bicycles and with their children. The assembly had no organizer and no plan; if there was a single factor that attracted people to the

Square, it was not the Gate but the Monument. Gradually, white wreaths were covered by red flags and slogans, and weeping was replaced by songs, the beating of drums, the celebratory popping of firecrackers, and poems:

China is no longer the China of before
Its people are no longer wrapped in ignorance
Gone for good is the feudal society of the First Emperor.  

Then, on the night of 5 April, the bulbous lights around the Square suddenly flashed on the Monument and the demonstrators surrounding it. Some ten thousand armed police, soldiers, and “worker militiamen” rushed into the Square. Some demonstrators tried to explain; they were beaten to the ground and taken away. Before dawn the stains of blood on the Monument were carefully cleansed (though some were missed). The meaning of the Monument, however, was never the same. This historical fabrication had come to life, and its empty inscription—“Eternal glory to the people’s heroes”—had gained real meaning. It was now a living monument that wove people’s recollections of their struggle and death into a whole. Surrounding it a new public emerged.

From the Mausoleum to the Goddess
Both the Square and the Monument are ironies because in a changing political discourse their intact physical forms (like repeated visual “quotations”) destroy their previously established meanings.  

Mao’s Mausoleum (fig. 14), which was unveiled in 1977 at the anniversary ceremony of the Chairman’s death, is again an irony, but its becoming so took no time: by adding this monument to the Square its patrons had unconsciously undermined the symbolic system they had established and tried to perpetuate.

Fewer words are needed to comment on this monument. Three detailed official reports on its symbolic structure and decoration have enabled a number of Western scholars to write on it. Above all, this monument is insignificant, even to document some substantial beliefs of the Party in the late 1970s. It was a product of pragmatism, established to strengthen the short-lived Hua Guofeng government.  

As Hua’s reign soon terminated, the monument has been largely ignored if not openly loathed. If it possesses any importance, it is that this 1977 addition, quite unexpectedly, acknowledged the achievement of the mass movement in the previous year. The Mausoleum changed the map of the Square as it took over the Monument’s original role to become the counterpart of the Gate. The opposition and connection between the past and the present of “the revolutionary history” was then most graphically expressed by this new juxtaposition: while the living Mao’s image was still hung on the Gate, his embalmed corpse dwelt in the Mausoleum (fig. 15). Thus we find a new scheme of the Square (fig. 16):

1) Tiananmen; 2) Monument to the People’s Heroes; 3) Great Hall of the People; 4) Museum of History; 5) Mao Zedong’s Memorial Hall. From Jianzhu xuebao, 1977, no. 4, p. 7.

FIGURE 16 (bottom). Tiananmen Square in 1977.

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Comparing this structure with the old one (fig. 13), one fact becomes immediately recognizable: the Monument no longer defined the southern limit of the Square but stood in the middle of the public space (which had now been expanded to hold an assembly of 600,000 instead of 400,000). The Monument was now isolated inside a ring of encirclements consisting of the four structures in the four directions. As ordinary people were restricted from entering these buildings in 1977, the Monument became the only place in the Square that they could freely visit, and they did go there with their recollections of the recent demonstration and its tragic ending. In fact, after the 1976 demonstration and the 1977 addition of the Mausoleum, the Monument had become superfluous in the official symbolism but indispensable for a growing dissident public. The Party seemed to have been controlled by some invisible force to establish a monument for this public or to yield a monument to it. Its glorious past was now symbolized by Mao’s corpse, leaving the Monument to the living.

In a recent article, Pierre Nora classifies monuments into two types called “dominant and dominated lieux de mémoire (sites of memory)”: “The first, spectacular and triumphant, imposing, and, generally, imposed—either by a national authority or by an established interest, but always from above—characteristically have the coldness and solemnity of official ceremonies. One attends them rather
than visits them. The second are places of refuge, sanctuaries of spontaneous devotion and silent pilgrimage, where one finds the living heart of memory." The Chinese case allows us to see that a single monument can be either type depending on what kind of memories associated to it and what kind of activity related to it. The Monument to the People’s Heroes was built as a “dominant” monument, but in time it has become a “dominated” monument—dominated by other “dominant” monuments surrounding it.

Once the Monument was imbued with new memories, it was re-interpreted. In official documents the Monument derived its shape from ancient stele recording important political events or authorizing standard versions of the Classics, but in an ordinary person’s eyes it began to look like a tablet that would be built in the family graveyard (fig. 17). Just as one visits and revisits a family graveyard to trace one’s origin, so people visited and revisited the Monument to refresh their memories of previous struggles and sacrifices. The Monument gradually became the place for protests. A kin feeling linked it to the protestors: someone they knew had died there, and like them, the Monument was also isolated and imprisoned. Gathering around the Monument they could feel hostile eyes secretly watching them from all sides, and armed soldiers about to rush out from the Gate, the Great Hall, and the Mausoleum to punish them.

The 1989 student movement began as a repetition of the 1976 demonstration. On 15 April Hu Yaobang died; like Zhou Enlai he was believed to be an open-minded leader and a supporter of the people, and again like Zhou Enlai he had been condemned and ousted by the Party before his death. But unlike 1976, by 1989 a disillusioned public had gradually formed, and the Monument had assumed a new identity. The 1976 protest occurred a hundred days after Zhou’s death, but only a few hours after Hu’s death wreaths and white flowers had already appeared before the obelisk. What we find here is an intimate connection between “memory” and “event.” Memory, though invisible and hidden, bridges separated events into a continuous process. The memory of the 1976 movement resurfaced and was revitalized during the first few days of the 1989 demonstration. But soon new demands were raised and people gained new momentum. In the same way this movement will again provide future demonstrations with a new point of departure.

Similar processes also operate within a single mass movement and interweave it into a whole. During a political explosion, events are often not determined by conscious plans or explicit logic; they seem to occur individually without much premonition. No one—neither the central committee of the protesting students nor any political group—commissioned the statue of the Goddess of Liberty. It appeared suddenly—as several pieces shipped to the Square on tricycles. With amazement the crowd watched a ten-meter statue gradually take shape and began
An important change in the 1989 demonstration took place four days after Hu Yaobang’s death. On 19 April, a portrait of Hu made by students from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, the top art school in the country, was carried to the Monument. Placed above the plinth it directly opposed Mao’s portrait on the Gate (fig. 18), and under the new image representatives of different colleges gave memorial speeches. Around 6 p.m., a man climbed onto the plinth and introduced himself as a veteran of the 1976 demonstration. He said to his audience that the movement should not stop at commemorating the dead. More importantly, he suggested, people should speak openly about the future. His appeal was welcomed by the crowd and his own lecture, which was on democracy, initiated a long series. Among those who followed him, a student read a poem entitled “A Stele”: “Like a stele that remains silently under wind and rain, you—my countrymen—have been only taught to know how to meekly submit to oppression.”

The rapid development of the movement during the following days proved that the poem could only refer to the past. From 22 April, scattered activities were
consolidated into an organized political protest. "Democracy" and "freedom" became the most frequent catchwords. In response to the government's announcement to "clear" the Square, more than 200,000 people poured in, occupied the Square, and established their headquarters beside the Monument.38 Martial law was declared on 20 May, but the number of people in the Square increased to more than one million; a giant white banner appeared on the Monument, whose four-character inscription read: "Long Live the People." On 23 May, three young men from Mao Zedong's birthplace defaced the Chairman's portrait on the Gate (fig. 19); one of them was a twenty-two-year old artist. On 25 May a replica of the Statue of Liberty was paraded through the streets of Shanghai and was set in front of City Hall (fig. 20). On 30 May, after three days of preparation, students of the Central Academy of Fine Arts erected the statue of the Goddess of Democracy in the Square before Mao's portrait (fig. 21).

Although these events seemed to have no direct connection, they signified consecutive stages in a pursuit for a visual symbol of the new public. This image-making movement began by portraying a new, public hero (Hu Yaobang) in protest against the old, official hero (Mao Zedong). This act implied further developments of the movement in two directions; the first was to forge a more general symbol and the second was iconoclasm. The Statue of Liberty was a ready-made general symbol as she externalized the protestors' shared demand.

**FIGURE 19.** Mao's portrait splashed with paint.  
Photo: Shunsuke Akatsuka; reproduced from ibid., by permission.
for freedom. As this foreign image was replicated (as were the English words “democracy” and “freedom” on numerous banners and flags), the iconoclastic tendency was vented in a physical defacement of Mao’s portrait. The appearance of the Goddess of Democracy represented the final stage of the process: a borrowed symbol was modified into a new image. No matter how much the Goddess owed its form and concept to the Statue of Liberty or other existing monuments, it was not a copy. According to Tsao Hsing-yüan, who closely observed and recorded the making of the Statue, the Federation of Beijing University Students first suggested that the sculpture be a replica of the Statue of Liberty, like the one that had been made by Shanghai students a few days earlier. But a Chinese image—a healthy young woman—was preferred instead. A female student posed for the Goddess and some pictures of the Statue of Liberty were consulted.

But the question arises: Why did people not stick to the Monument as their symbol? Probably because even the Monument was still a borrowed monument. It seems that the movement had reached such a heated stage that political messages could no longer be implied: these messages had to be shouted out loud so people could be heard. The giant memorial stele could no longer convey such messages. In fact, there had been an attempt to transform it into a more vivid
and forceful icon: white flowers buried its plinths, Hu's portrait was placed there, and the banner inscribed “Long Live the People” covered Mao’s “Eternal Glory to the People’s Heroes.” A new symbolic form was demanded, a human figure for the living rather than a gravestone for the dead. And here was the Goddess of Democracy, a young woman who stood bravely against Mao to challenge the whole bureaucratic and ideological system. Soaring above the cheering demonstrators, she was immediately understood by everyone in the Square: “She symbolizes what we want,” explained a young worker. Then, stabbing his chest, “She stands for me.”

The message was also received by the authorities and the matter was dealt with as a great emergency. For several days People's Daily, the Party's official newspaper, denounced the statue; the evidence, however, was still the old Tiananmen myth:

Someone erected a statue of the “Goddess of Democracy” without authorization in dignified Tiananmen Square and this evoked various comments among the people. According to people's common sense, the erection of any monument in Tiananmen Square must first be approved by the government and must be based on a relevant government decree.

In the Square the Tiananmen rostrum, the flag poles, the Monument to the People’s
Heroes, the memorial hall, the museum, and the Great Hall of the People are all built in
good order and the layout is serious and solemn. The Square is a site to hold grand cere-
monies and major state activities and is an important place for domestic and foreign tour-
ists to visit with reverence. It is the heart of the People's Republic and is the focus of the
world's attention.

All citizens have the duty to cherish and protect Tiananmen Square. This is equal to
cherishing and protecting our motherland and our nation and to cherishing and pro-
tecting our own rights. The Square is sacred. No one has the power to add any permanent
memorial or to remove anything from the Square. Such things must not be allowed to
happen in China!42

Three days after this article was published the Goddess was destroyed: “A tank
like a roaring crazy beast ran over the students' tents. It then drove full speed
ahead toward the statue of the Goddess of Democracy. With a loud crash the
Goddess fell on the ground into fragments. She was dead, lying together with
those murdered youths.”43

When I heard about the destruction of the Goddess I recalled an earlier
report: one of the sculptors said they had made the statue as large as they could

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\FIGURE 22. Suicide Project No. 1, by Wei Guangqing and
others. Photo exhibited at the First Modern
Art Show, February 1989, Beijing. Photo:
Institute of Fine Arts, Academy of Literature
and Arts, Beijing.

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so the government would not be able to simply remove it: “If they decide to do this they’ll have to smash her into pieces, thereby exposing their antidemocratic faces.” I remembered that some leaders of the demonstration had predicted the massacre and suggested retreat, but the majority of students answered that only their blood could provoke the Chinese people and inspire further struggle. I recalled also an “art event” staged at the first national Avant-Garde Exhibition held in Beijing a few months before the Tiananmen Movement: a young artist and her boyfriend shot at her sculpture, which depicted a man and a woman making calls (to each other?) in two separated telephone booths. The work was damaged and the artist and her boyfriend were arrested. Recently I was able to see some two hundred slides of works exhibited in or submitted to the show. One work again caught my eye. Created by a group of Beijing students, it is entitled “Suicide Project No. 1” (fig. 22): a wounded man swathed in white bandages is lying across railroad tracks, waiting for a train to run him over.

None of these incidents seem coincidental. Together they indicate an attempt to carry out a kind of “planned” suicide. This attempt emerged either from an absolute disillusion or from desperation, that suicide had become one’s only means to influence the future. The statue of the Goddess of Democracy was a monument that was intended to be destroyed, because its monumentality would derive from such self-sacrifice. In this way, this statue separated itself from those permanent “revolutionary monuments” whose photo images fill a textbook. These permanent monuments are consequences of revolutions—like the Monument to the People’s Heroes built to mystify a glorious past—but not revolutions themselves. The very concept of “permanence” seems so alien to the idea of revolution, which, after all, means to rebel against supposed “permanence.” The construction of such monuments, therefore, announces the end of revolution and the beginning of a “permanent” order. The statue of the Goddess of Democracy is different because what it intended to invoke were not memories of the past but memories of itself; and to leave such memories to the future, it was prepared to be destroyed.

In this way, the Goddess of Democracy became a “martyr.” But unlike those murdered demonstrators, her image could be replicated and through replication she could be reborn. We have heard about so many replicas of the Goddess built around the world. In Hong Kong’s Victoria Park, replicas of the Goddess and the Monument were placed face to face. A single traditional symbol—the Chinese character for memorial—replaced Mao’s inscription on the Monument, while the living stood together with the Goddess and paid their silent homage to the dead.

The war of monuments is still continuing in Tiananmen Square. Even though the Goddess of Democracy was destroyed, her image still haunts the triumphant regime in Beijing. We have learned that for the victory march commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the regime, another statue—a unity of a worker, farmer, soldier, and intellectual—was built in front of Tiananmen Gate
FIGURE 23. The new statue erected by the government in Tiananmen Square after its crackdown on the student demonstrations. From Newsweek, 9 October 1989, 54.

(fig. 23). The figures are submissive: their eyes and hands are no longer raised; and expressionlessly they hold a steel rod, grain, a gun, and a book to signify their assigned duties. The political map of the Square has thus changed again: this new symbol of “the people” is now placed right below Mao’s restored portrait, in the shadow of the Gate. Like an abandoned battlefield, the vast and now deserted Square has been left behind. A sense of tightened security has been achieved, but at the price of retreating to a smaller enclosure. This new statue is, in fact, a weak and forced response to the democratic movement. Most tellingly, it was built at the very spot where the Goddess once stood. No other act can better reveal the regime’s intention of repression and its fear, and the subject of this fear is again the memory of the Goddess of Democracy.

Notes

I want to thank Tsao Hsing-yüan and James Cahill for providing me with a firsthand record of the making of the Goddess of Democracy. My gratitude also goes to Judith Zeitlin, John Fairbank, John Czaplicka, Neil Levine, Irene Winter, John Shearman, James Acherman, Froma Zeitlin, and Ellen Widmer, who have read the drafts of this paper and have given me their suggestions and encouragement.

2. Sir Claude MacDonald, the commander of the army, reasoned that this march was necessary “lest the Chinese, with their infinite capacity for misrepresentation, should infer that some supernatural power had intervened, so that the Allied forces had been affected by fear of the consequences of invading the sacred precincts”; Peter Fleming, *The Siege at Beijing* (Oxford, 1986), 245.

3. The Outer City of Beijing, which encloses the south of the Inner City, was built during the sixteenth century. The original plan was to construct a city wall that would surround the entire Inner City. The plan was never completely realized, but it showed the intention to continue expanding Beijing based on the ancient model.

4. Before the Ming, Beijing had been the capital of the state of Yan (403–221 B.C.), the Liao Dynasty (916–1125), the Jin (1115–1234), and the Yuan (1279–1368), but Tiananmen was first built during the Ming Dynasty in 1420.


6. These walls actually created endless “extrinsic spaces” that, in Rudolf Arnheim’s words, “control the relation between independent object systems and provide them with standards of reference for their perceptual features”; *New Essays on the Psychology of Art* (Berkeley, 1986), 83. For applications of this architectural device in early Chinese city planning, see Wu Hung, “From Temple to Tomb,” 80–86.


9. *Emblem* is used in the following sense: “Those nonverbal acts which have a direct verbal translation, or dictionary definition [which] is well known by all members of a group, class or culture”; Paul Ekman and Wallace V. Friesen, “The Repertoire of Nonverbal Behavior: Categories, Origins, Usage, and Coding,” *Semiotica* 1, no. 1 (1969): 1.

10. Part of the walls of the Imperial City had been destroyed during the Republican period. See Zhu Qie, *Ming-Qing liangdai gongyuanjianzhi yan'getu kao* (An examination of the constructions of Ming and Qing palaces and gardens based on old diagrams; Shanghai, 1947), 85. The destruction of the walls of Beijing’s Inner and Outer Cities, as Simon Leys suggested, lasted for twelve years, from 1950 to 1962; *Chinese Shadows* (New York, 1977), 55.


13. Ibid., 19.


15. Ibid., 25. 16. Ibid.

17. This piece of stone was found in Shandong province for this particular purpose. Its original weight was 280 tons, which was then reduced to 103 tons after rough processing. By all possible means of transportation this stone was shipped to Beijing, where it was further embellished into a slab of 60 tons.

19. This pine forest was destroyed in 1977 to make room for Mao's mausoleum.
22. Wu Liangyong, "Renmin Yingxiong Jinianbei." As the author notes, his article represents the official view.
29. Ibid., 21. In this poem the First Emperor of the Qin alludes to Mao Zedong.
30. Roland Barthes: "Stated by the discourse itself, the ironic code is, in principle, an explicit quotation of what someone has said; however, irony acts as a signpost, and thereby it destroys the multivalence we might expect from quoted discourse"; *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (London, 1975), 44.
32. Although during this period Mao's widow and other members of the Gang of Four were arrested and put on trial, Hua needed to prove that he was the legitimate successor of Mao. Mao's Mausoleum was part of his propaganda.
33. Even the Museum of National and Revolutionary History was closed during the Cultural Revolution.
34. During Deng Xiaoping's reign this mausoleum has become a collective memorial hall for deceased Party leaders, including Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, and Liu Shaoqi.
35. Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History," 23.
36. During each political demonstration in the Square there were rumors that the Communist leaders were watching the demonstrators from the top of the Great Hall and Tiananmen, and that soldiers were shipped to these buildings through secret tunnels.
38. "Students declared," we read in a report, "that they will continue to occupy the Square and that even death cannot threaten them to leave"; ibid., 1:27.
40. *New Yorker*, 23 October 1989, 43; Liang Tieshan, "Minzhu Nüshen yongzai woxinzhong" (The Goddess of Democracy will always live in my heart), *Zhongguo zhichun*
But according to Tsao Hsing-yüan, stylistically the Statue was more strongly influenced by "the Russian school of revolutionary realism and specifically the style of the woman sculptor Vera Mukina, whose monumental statue of 'A Worker and Collective Farm Woman,' placed originally atop the Soviet Pavilion at the 1937 Paris World's Fair, is still much admired in China"; "Beijing Chronicle," 5.


43. Liang Tieshan, "Minzhu Nüshen," 76.