

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-74687-8 — The Great Exodus from China
Dominic Meng-Hsuan Yang
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

The Great Exodus from China

Dominic Meng-Hsuan Yang examines one of the least understood migrations in modern East Asia – the human exodus from China to Taiwan when Chiang Kai-shek’s regime collapsed in 1949. Peeling back layers of Cold War ideological constructs, he tells a very different story from the conventional Chinese civil war historiography that focuses on debating the reasons for Communist success and Nationalist failure. Yang lays bare the traumatic aftermath of the Chinese Communist Revolution for the hundreds of thousands of ordinary people who were forcibly displaced from their homes across the sea. Underscoring the displaced population’s trauma of living in exile and their poignant “homecomings” four decades later, he presents a multiple-event trajectory of repeated traumatization with recurring searches for home, belonging, and identity. This thought-provoking study challenges established notions of trauma, memory, diaspora, and reconciliation.

Dominic Meng-Hsuan Yang is Assistant Professor at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-74687-8 — The Great Exodus from China
Dominic Meng-Hsuan Yang
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

The Great Exodus from China

*Trauma, Memory, and Identity
in Modern Taiwan*

Dominic Meng-Hsuan Yang

University of Missouri, Columbia



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-108-74687-8 — The Great Exodus from China
 Dominic Meng-Hsuan Yang
 Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 314-321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre, New Delhi - 110025, India
 103 Penang Road, #05-06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108746878

DOI: 10.1017/9781108784306

© Dominic Meng-Hsuan Yang 2021

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2021

First paperback edition 2021

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication data

Names: Yang, Dominic Meng-Hsuan, 1976– author.

Title: The Great Exodus from China : Trauma, Memory, and Identity in Modern Taiwan / Dominic Meng-Hsuan Yang, University of Missouri, Columbia.

Description: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2020. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2020013543 (print) | LCCN 2020013544 (ebook) | ISBN 9781108478120 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108784306 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: China – History – Civil War, 1945–1949 – Veterans. | China – History – Civil War, 1945–1949 – Refugees. | China – History – Civil War, 1945–1949 – Personal narratives. | Zhongguo guo min dang – Biography. | Soldiers – Taiwan – Biography. | Veterans – Taiwan – Biography. | Refugees – Taiwan – Biography. | Homeless persons – Taiwan – Biography. | China – Emigration and immigration – History – 20th century. | Taiwan – Emigration and immigration – History – 20th century.

Classification: LCC DS777.542 .Y36 2020 (print) | LCC DS777.542 (ebook) | DDC 951.04/2–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020013543>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020013544>

ISBN 978-1-108-47812-0 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-108-74687-8 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-74687-8 — The Great Exodus from China
Dominic Meng-Hsuan Yang
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

For my parents, sister, and the people of Taiwan

Contents

<i>List of Figures, Maps and Tables</i>	<i>page viii</i>
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>Note to the Reader</i>	<i>xv</i>
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	<i>xvi</i>
Introduction	1
1 The Exodus	40
2 Wartime Sojourning	86
3 Cultural Nostalgia	127
4 The Long Road Home	168
5 Narrating the Exodus	214
Epilogue	259
<i>Bibliography</i>	<i>278</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>295</i>

Figures, Maps and Tables

Figures

1.1 Nationalist troops retreat to the Yangtze River following their defeat in the Huaihai Campaign, January 1949.	page 46
1.2 A train loaded with war refugees arriving in Shanghai, May 1949.	47
1.3 Nationalist military personnel and their families taking a break by the roadside during the withdrawal from Shanghai, April 1949.	49
1.4 A ship taking families out of China, November 1949.	50
1.5 Population pyramid of the mainlander population in 1956 (military personnel excluded).	53
1.6 Population pyramid of the native Taiwanese population in 1956 (military personnel excluded).	53
1.7 A twelve-year-old Nationalist soldier drinking from another soldier's canteen.	57
1.8 Percentages of Chinese civil war exiles entering Taiwan, 1945–1956 (military personnel excluded).	60
1.9 Mainlander crime rates versus total crime rates in Taiwan, 1958–1972.	70
1.10 Suicide rates in Taipei City: Mainlanders versus native Taiwanese, 1948–1973.	71
2.1 The specter of air raids and invasion from Communist China, 1955.	99
2.2 The KMT White Terror in the 1950s.	105
2.3 The negotiation for the 1958 Sino-American Joint Communiqué in Taipei.	124
3.1 The first issue of <i>Sichuan wenxian</i> (1962).	147
3.2 An assortment of <i>difang wenxian</i> (local references) magazines funded and published by the mainlander native-place associations.	150

List of Figures, Maps and Tables	ix
3.3 The <i>huiguan</i> building for the Jiangxi native-place association in Taipei.	158
3.4 The Black-Faced General Temple in Shaanxi Village, Hsiushui Township, Changhua County, central Taiwan.	162
3.5 The three-story Shaanxi Cultural Museum.	163
4.1 Teenage Jiang Sizhang in cotton military uniform, 1951.	170
4.2 In August 1982, Jiang Sizhang sneaked back to China and reunited with his parents in his home village on Daishan Island.	171
4.3 Jiang Sizhang celebrated with his parents and family members during the 1982 trip.	172
4.4 The 1987 Mother’s Day demonstration in Taipei.	185
4.5 Jinhua Junior High School rally, late June 1987.	186
4.6 Jin Feng.	193
4.7 Xu Pingdao.	196
4.8 Elation, disorientation, and melancholy: mixed feelings of the return experience.	203
4.9 Graveside rituals.	205
4.10 The “homecoming” in China for Taiwan-born <i>waishengren</i> : the end of a journey or the beginning of a new one?	208
5.1 The memorial tablet of the Taiyuan’s Five Hundred Martyrs Cenotaph, Yuanshan, Taipei.	233
5.2 The main temple of the Taiyuan’s Five Hundred Martyrs Cenotaph.	234
5.3 Sisinan Military Families’ Village near the Taipei 101 building.	251
5.4 A corner of the Sisinan Village.	252

Maps

1 China	page xvii
2 Taiwan	xviii

Tables

1.1 Chinese civil war exiles entering Taiwan, 1945–1956 (military personnel excluded)	page 59
1.2 Mainlander crime rates versus total crime rates in Taiwan, 1958–1972	69

Acknowledgments

This book, which grew out of my PhD dissertation, has been a decade-long intellectual marathon. Producing it has been a trying experience, albeit an extremely rewarding one, not only intellectually but also personally, for reasons that will be expounded in the epilogue. During the past ten years, I benefited from the advice and help of many individuals and received support from a number of institutions. I would like to express my deep gratitude to them. This project would not be what it is today without their encouragement, camaraderie, insight, inspiration, guidance, and endorsement. Their involvements have made this book infinitely better; any and all errors and shortcomings are solely my own responsibility.

I want to begin by thanking my mentors at the University of British Columbia (UBC). My dissertation supervisor Glen Peterson, whose research then focused on the opposite migration flow to the great exodus of 1949, provided sage advice, astute tutelage, and unconditional backing. Steven Hugh Lee taught me the importance of comparative history, while Henry Yu first acquainted me with the intellectual debate revolving around the concept of “diaspora.” Diana Lary, who has devoted most of her academic career to studying the impact of modern warfare on Chinese people and society, remains a constant source of inspiration, guidance, and support. It is Diana who first prompted me to explore the theories concerning trauma and memory, and I am eternally in her debt for doing so. In the same vein, I am beholden to Timothy Cheek who suggested that my research on the social history of the mainlanders in Taiwan should start with reading the daily newspapers – a suggestion that has benefited this work tremendously. My appreciation also goes to Josephine Chiu-Duke, Paul Evans, Timothy Brook, Leo Shin, and Christopher Rea for their comments and words of encouragement at different times. Furthermore, I am grateful to Christopher Lee for reading the manuscript at its earliest stage and offering some wise counsel. My heartfelt thanks also goes to my peers at UBC, whose fellowship has helped sustain the project’s momentum: David Luesink, Laura Madokoro, Guo Weiting,

Acknowledgments

xi

Karl Wu, Desmond Cheung, Anna Belogurova, Wu Yang, Szu-Yun Hsu, Hua Rui, and Sandy Chang.

At Academia Sinica in Taipei, where the bulk of the archival research for this project was conducted, I would like to express my profound gratitude and appreciation for Chang Mau-kuei – one of the pioneering scholars for research on the mainlanders in Taiwan. I learned so much from Mau-kuei and received so much help from him and his assistant Chen Li-jing over the years that words simply cannot describe my sense of indebtedness. The same can be said for Wang Fu-chang, whose expertise on Taiwan's ethnic relations/identities and great knowledge of the archival documents produced in postwar Taiwan were immensely beneficial. I can't even count the amount of times Fu-chang allowed me to barge into his office uninvited just to discuss my latest findings in the libraries and archives. I miss these long, stimulating, and mutually inspiring conversations, which contributed immeasurably to the making of this book. I would also like to acknowledge a number of research fellows at the Institute of Sociology (IOS), Academia Sinica, from whom I received advice, assistance, and emotional support: Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao, Tsai Shu-Ling, Wu Nai-teh, Hsiao A-chin, Wang Horng-luen, Yang Wen-Shan, Wong Ting-Hong, Lin Thung-hong, Tsai Yu-yueh, Lee Zong-Rong, and Michelle Fei-yu Hsieh.

At the Institute of Taiwan History (ITH), my "second home" in Academia Sinica, my sincere thanks goes to Huang Fu-san, Hsu Hsueh-chi, Hsieh Kuo-hsing, Chang Lung-chih, Lin Yu-ju, and Michael Shiyung Liu, who has now left the ITH. At the Institute of Modern History (IMH), I would like to acknowledge Lin Man-houng, Chang Li, Chen Yi-shen, and Chang Jui-te. At the Institute of Ethnology (IOE), I am grateful to Hu Tai-li, Allen Chun, and Derek Sheridan; at the Institute of European and American Studies, I tip my hat to Andy Chih-ming Wang. The staff at the IOS, ITH, IMH, and IOE, as well as the archivists working in these institutes' affiliated libraries/archives, have shown remarkable courtesy, efficiency, and professionalism throughout my multiple research visits during the past decade. This book would have been impossible without their kind assistance. I am forever in their debt.

This book would also have been impossible, or at least not in its current form, without the one-year postdoctoral fellowship offered by the Institute for Historical Studies (IHS) at the University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin), where most of the theoretical arguments for trauma and memory were formulated. I am truly grateful beyond words to Madeline Y. Hsu. Madeline, more than anyone else, saw the potential of this project early on. She not only provided sagacious comments on my manuscript, but also constantly prodded and encouraged me to get it

xii Acknowledgments

done sooner rather than later. Others at UT Austin also read part or all of the manuscript and offered invaluable suggestions: Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, Li Huaiyin, Tracie Matysik, Seth Garfield, Yoav Di-Capua, and Benjamin Claude Brower. My intellectual rumination on trauma and historical memory was also aided enormously by my weekly discussions with three other external IHS fellows at UT Austin for the theme of “trauma and social transformation” in 2013–2014: Carel Bertram, Leslie M. Harris, and Ronen Steinberg. I thank Carel, Leslie, and Ronen from the bottom of my heart. As “trauma fellows,” we will indeed “haunt” one another’s memory forever. Lastly, at Austin, I would also like to give thanks to Jeremi Suri, Chung Mung Ting, Zeng Zhaojin, and to Tsai Chien-hsin who kindly opened up his home to me.

Turning to my home institution at the University of Missouri-Columbia (Mizzou), I must convey my boundless gratitude to my colleagues in the Department of History. They have provided a nurturing environment and an unfailing sense of support for a junior scholar working on his first book. In particular, I would like to give credit to Linda Reeder and Ilyana Karthas for reading part of the manuscript in its final stage and offering some much-needed suggestions. I would also like to acknowledge Jonathan Sperber for his penetrating remarks on history, memory, and commemoration. For their insights, collegiality, and words of encouragement, I am grateful to John Wigger, Catherine Rymph, Lois Huneycutt, A. Mark Smith, John Frymire, Robert Smale, Jeffrey Pasley, Michelle Morris, Victor McFarland, Kristy Wilson-Bowers, Keona Ervin, Jerritt Frank, and Devin Fergus. Thanks are also in order to Michael Volz in the German and Russian Studies and to Harrison Cheehyung Kim and Daniel Domingues, who have now left Mizzou. Last but not least, a word of appreciation for Sheena Greitens in the Political Science Department.

During the past decade, this project received financial assistance from a number of institutions. This book would not have come to fruition without such generous support. I would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the UBC Graduate Fellowship, the Government of British Columbia’s Pacific Century Graduate Scholarship, the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange, the IOS of Academia Sinica, the IHS in UT Austin, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROC. I also like to thank the Research Council of the University of Missouri for providing me with summer research salary and travel grants.

At conferences, invited talks, and workshops, I met other scholars whose research and comments contributed to my work. I would first like to recognize Stéphane Corcuff, Antonia Chao, Scott Simon, and

Acknowledgments

xiii

Joshua Fan. Their exceptional knowledge of the mainlanders in Taiwan has greatly benefited this book. David Der-wei Wang and Jeremy Brown deserve my earnest gratitude for helping this project along the way at key moments. I am also grateful to Melissa Brown, Helen Zia, Evelyn Hu-Dehart, Rebecca Nedostup, Liao Ping-hui, Shih Shu-mei, Julia Strauss, Yeh Wen-hsin, Michelle Yeh, J. Bruce Jacobs, Lien Pei-te, Michael Berry, Michelle King, Asano Toyomi, Amae Yoshihisa, Leo Ching, Matsuda Hiroko, Adina Zemanek, Meredith Oyen, Deng Jian-bang, Hsu Hsin-wen, and Elaine Lynn-Ee Ho. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge a cohort of junior historians from whom I drew constant support and inspiration: David Cheng Chang, Philip Thai, Tan Ying Jia, James Lin, Shirley Ye, Kung Chien-Wen, and Wang Xian. My thanks also goes to Shelly Chan and Lin Yen-Yu for thought-provoking discussions on diaspora and collective memory respectively. Core members of the Ethics of Historical Memory study group hosted by the Institutum Iurisprudentiae, Academia Sinica should be credited with reading and commenting on the last chapter of the book: Jimmy Chia-Shin Hsu, Huang Cheng-Yi, Shi-chi Mike Lan, Hung Tzu-wei, Yeh Hao, Shaw Yung-Djong, and Chen Po-liang.

Another group of people I would really like to convey my profound gratitude to is my interviewees in Taiwan and their family members, friends, and associates who helped to facilitate these interviews. Thank you for sharing your personal stories. In accordance with the agreement I signed with them, I will keep their names confidential by using pseudonyms. The only exception is Jiang Sizhang (Chiang Ssu-chang). Jiang's story has already been published in Taiwan due to his leading role in the 1987 Veterans' Homebound Movement. I am grateful to the assistance of the Mainlander Taiwanese Association. I will never forget the day that the Association's staff Chou Ssu-nuo took me on my very first tour of a *juancun* (military families' village) in Taipei. I appreciate Wu Hsin-yi for her remarkable insights on *juancun* literature. My colleagues from the North American Taiwan Studies Association also deserve a word of thanks for their wonderful friendship and partnership.

The list seems endless. One has to come to a stop at a certain point. A main theme of this book is that human memory is selective and also fallible at times. I wholeheartedly apologize to anyone whom I have left out.

There remain several individuals whose contributions to this book are too significant to be left out. I am indebted to two anonymous readers for providing constructive feedback on the manuscript. I would like to acknowledge Kelli Hansen of the Special Collections in Ellis Library at the University of Missouri-Columbia for her consultation on the Chinese

xiv Acknowledgments

civil war photos. I am eternally grateful to Jeffrey Wasserboehr, who volunteered his precious time and energy to proofread the entire manuscript. Last but certainly not least, my most sincere gratitude goes to Lucy Rhymer of Cambridge University Press. Lucy has been a staunch supporter of this book since day one, when we first discussed the proposal. Over the years she has been a patient, accommodating, and reassuring editor to a first-time book author like me. I really cannot thank her enough. My appreciation also goes to the production team at Cambridge: Ian McIver, Karen Oakes, Natasha Whelan, Allan Alphonse, and Emily Sharp.

My final thanks are personal in nature. First, to my good friend Tony Shen and his family for their kind assistance and wonderful hospitality every time I visited Taiwan. Second, I am grateful to my wife Sydney Yueh, who has been my anchor and my most honest critic. And finally, I cannot end the acknowledgments without thanking my parents. They worked extremely hard and made enormous personal sacrifices for their children to have a better future in Canada and beyond. I therefore dedicate this book to my parents.

Note to the Reader

Romanization of Chinese Characters

I use the Pinyin system for most of the Chinese characters in the book. Wade-Giles and other alternative forms are adopted in the following three situations: (1) well-known historical figures/terms, such as Chiang Kai-shek, Pai Hsien-yung, Peng Ming-min, and Kuomintang, etc.; (2) geographical names of cities, towns, and counties in Taiwan; (3) the Taiwanese scholars who published in English or whose names I have mentioned in the acknowledgments.

English Translation of Chinese Works

Many of the Chinese books and articles I cite provide an English translation for their titles. I try to stick to these original translations as they appear in print. But I have also made some minor changes as I see fit.

Abbreviations

CCK	Chiang Ching-kuo
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CCRM	Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement
CF	Compensation Foundation
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party
KMT	Kuomintang (Nationalist Party)
NPC	National People’s Congress
NTD	New Taiwan Dollar
NTUH	National Taiwan University Hospital
PLA	People’s Liberation Army
PRC	People’s Republic of China
PTSD	post-traumatic stress disorder
ROC	Republic of China
SSCLR	Society for the Study of Chinese Local References
VAC	Veterans Affairs Council
VHM	Veterans’ Homebound Movement

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-74687-8 — The Great Exodus from China
Dominic Meng-Hsuan Yang
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)



Map 1 China
Source: CIA Maps
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/cia-maps-publications/China.html>

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-108-74687-8 — The Great Exodus from China
 Dominic Meng-Hsuan Yang
 Frontmatter
[More Information](#)



Map 2 Taiwan

Source: Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, the University of Texas at Austin.

https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/taiwan.gif