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'A landmark volume – destined to be a classic in the expanding field of memory studies'

— **James V. Wertsch**, *Marshall S. Snow Professor in Arts and Sciences and Director, McDonnell International Scholars Academy, Washington University in St. Louis, USA*

Asia's 'Memory Problem' is unique. Chinese, Japanese and Koreans assign great significance to their national pasts; disagreements about one another's history and commemorative practices are heated and affect diplomatic and economic relationships. Honour and shame societies teach their members to think about the past differently than do societies of dignity and guilt. In Northeast Asia, the events judged most negative reveal weakness or incompetence, and they induce shame. For this reason, the Western 'politics of regret', which include practices based on violations of dignity and a sense of collective guilt, cannot be directly generalized to Northeast Asian cultures. These cultures are, thus, privileged sites for the study of memory. In no other regional setting is the interdependence of history, commemoration and belief so significant and problematic. In no other setting is the Memory Problem so acute.

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