

Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations (Contemporary Asia in the World)

By Zheng Wang

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How could the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) not only survive but even thrive, regaining the support of many Chinese citizens after the Tiananmen Square crackdown of 1989? Why has popular sentiment turned toward anti-Western nationalism despite the anti-dictatorship democratic movements of the 1980s? And why has China been more assertive toward the United States and Japan in foreign policy but relatively conciliatory toward smaller countries in conflict?

Offering an explanation for these unexpected trends, Zheng Wang follows the Communist government's ideological reeducation of the public, which relentlessly portrays China as the victim of foreign imperialist bullying during "one hundred years of humiliation." By concentrating on the telling and teaching of history in today's China, Wang illuminates the thinking of the young patriots who will lead this rising power in the twenty-first century.

Wang visits China's primary schools and memory sites and reads its history textbooks, arguing that China's rise should not be viewed through a single lens, such as economics or military growth, but from a more comprehensive perspective that takes national identity and domestic discourse into account. Since it is the prime raw material for constructing China's national identity, historical memory is the key to unlocking the inner mystery of the Chinese. From this vantage point, Wang tracks the CCP's use of history education to glorify the party, reestablish its legitimacy, consolidate national identity, and justify one-party rule in the post-Tiananmen and post-Cold War era. The institutionalization of this manipulated historical consciousness now directs political discourse and foreign policy, and Wang demonstrates its important role in China's rise.

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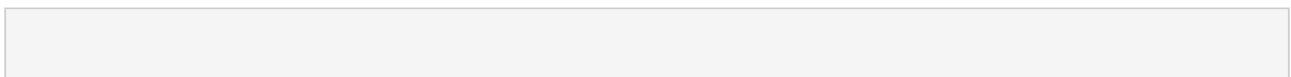
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Editorial Review

Review

A valuable, and often lively, account of a crucial aspect of modern China.

(Gideon Rachman *Financial Times*)

A future world where the Chinese are at peace with their own past seems a long way away. But that is the place, as this useful study of such a difficult area, where we need to get to.

(Kerry Brown *Asian Review of Books*)

This work is highly recommended for general readers as well as Asia scholars. It is a must for any serious library collection on Asia. Essential.

(*Choice*)

A must-read for anyone interested in post-Tiananmen Chinese nationalism.

(Robert Weatherley *e-IR*)

Wang gives us a critically important book that provides a solid blueprint for understanding contemporary China.

(Daniel Metraux *Virginia Review of Asian Studies*)

A timely addition to the fast-expanding literature on Chinese nationalism.

(Xiangfeng Yang *Pacific Affairs*)

a vivid and well-informed study of post-Mao nationalism and Chinese foreign policy...

(Edward Friedman *China Quarterly*)

A timely and well-researched book, *Never Forget National Humiliation* qualifies as a landmark in the study of Chinese nationalism.

(*H-Diplo*)

Review

Zheng Wang's *Never Forget National Humiliation* presents a powerful, convincing, and timely discussion about one of the most important and sustaining factors shaping China's modern history and its tortuous course of integration into the international community. Based on extensive and solid research, his is a study with critical scholarly values and pivotal contemporary relevance. For those who want a deeper understanding of the Chinese conceptual realm still profoundly penetrated by the Chinese 'victim mentality' in the era of 'China's rise,' this is a book they cannot afford to ignore.

(Chen Jian, The Michael J. Zak Chair of History for U.S.–China Relations, Cornell University)

Why are young Chinese so patriotic and anti-Western? Because of historical memory, says Zheng Wang. His book reads like a revelation. It is at once an insider's account and a masterful scholarly analysis of how history is taught in China and how this shapes its foreign policy outlook.

(Stein Tønnesson, leader of the East Asian Peace program, Uppsala University)

Even though a great deal has been published on Chinese nationalism in recent years, Zheng Wang's careful treatment of this important subject has a great deal to offer. And to his credit, the author makes the most of the fact that, unlike many authors of scholarly works on related themes, he grew up being exposed to and has childhood memories of the patriotic myths that he takes pains to dissect.

(Jeffrey Wasserstrom, author of *China in the Twenty-first Century: What Everyone Needs to Know*)

About the Author

Zheng Wang is an associate professor in the School of Diplomacy and International Relations at Seton Hall University and a global fellow of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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Margie Turner:

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