

Refereed article

Remembrance in the Making: The King's Father and the Construction of Collective Memories of Crown Prince Sado in Late Eighteenth-Century Korea*

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Summary

The study of collective memory, cultures of memory, collective identity, and the relationship between memory, identity, and power has gained importance in recent years. In the Korean context, a growing number of studies primarily focus on issues and phenomena of the period since the end of the Second World War. However, research on premodern Korean cultures of memory has not only revealed major insights into developments in the past, but maybe more importantly has established a connection between Korea's past and present. This study focuses on the memory of Crown Prince Sado, and particularly on its construction by his son, King Chǒngjo. From the beginning of his reign, Chǒngjo followed a specific policy to restore the reputation and status of his father with the aim of reconciling his personal and the official memory — thereby securing his own legitimacy. Carefully navigating the political landscape as well as the Confucian principles of his time, Chǒngjo managed to follow up on his policy through the establishment of a variety of tangible as well as abstract sites of memory. The article shows how these sites were entangled and invested with a specific meaning for Chǒngjo's contemporaries, but also how they are still meaningful in present-day Korea too.

Keywords: Chǒngjo, Hwasǒng, Sado, collective memory, sites of memory, ūigwe

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