

Document Set Guiding Note Questions and Summary Statements

UTILIZING BELIEF SYSTEMS TO STRENGTHEN LEGITIMACY

Document Set 1: Korea's Goryeo Dynasty, 918-1392 CE

1. Guiding Question for Notes:

Principal Source 1: How was a belief system utilized by Wang Geon to strengthen his legitimacy?

2. Guiding Question for Notes:

Supplemental Sources 1A, 1B, and 1C: What does this document say about utilizing belief systems to strengthen legitimacy during the Goryeo Dynasty? What does this document reveal about the effects of Chinese cultural traditions over Korea during this period?

3. Group Summary Statement (post to discussion board to share with class):

Write a quick summary statement about utilizing belief systems to strengthen legitimacy and the effects of Chinese cultural traditions over Korea during this time period.

Document Set 2: Korea's Joseon Dynasty, 1392-1897 CE

1. Guiding Question for Notes:

Principal Source 2: How was a belief system utilized by Yi Seong-gye to strengthen his legitimacy?

2. Guiding Question for Notes:

Supplemental Sources 2A, 2B, and 2C: What does this document say about utilizing belief systems to strengthen legitimacy during the Joseon Dynasty? What does this document reveal about the effects of Chinese cultural traditions over Korea during this period?

3. Group Summary Statement (post to discussion board to share with class):

Write a quick summary statement about utilizing belief systems to strengthen legitimacy and the effects of Chinese cultural traditions over Korea during this time period.

Document Set 1

DOCUMENTS: KOREA'S GORYEO DYNASTY (918-1392 CE)

Principal Source 1

Wang Geon, first king of the Korean Goryeo Dynasty, Ten Injunctions, 943 C.E.

1. The success of every great undertaking of our state depends upon the favor and protection of Buddha. Therefore, the temples of both the Meditation and Doctrinal schools should be built, and monks should be sent out to those temples to minister to Buddha.

2. Temples and monasteries were newly opened and built upon the sites chosen by the monk Toson according to the principles of geomancy.* He said, "If temples and monasteries are indiscriminately built at locations not chosen by me, the terrestrial force and energy will be sapped and damaged, hastening the decline of the dynasty."

6. I deem the two festivals of Yondung and P'algwan of great spiritual value and importance. The first is to worship Buddha. The second is to worship the spirit of Heaven, the spirits of the five sacred and other major mountains and rivers, and the dragon god.

* *Geomancy* is the belief that the Will of Heaven came from a certain arrangement of mountains, near a certain part of a river, and from facing ideal directions.

Peter H. Lee and William Theodore de Bary, eds., with and Yŏngho Ch'oe Hugh H.W. Kang. Sources of Korean Tradition, Vol. 1: From Early Times Through the Sixteenth Century (Introduction to Asian Civilizations), Columbia University Press, 1996. Used with permission of Columbia University Press.

Supplemental Source 1A

History of King Injong (1133-1146), from the Official History of the Korean Goryeo Dynasty written in the early 1400s.

The official astrologer memorialized [the King]: "Recently as shamanism has been widely practiced, its indecent sacrifices have increased daily. I request the king to instruct the offices concerned to expel all the shamans." The request was granted. Many shamans were grieved by this. The powerful officials thereupon wrote the king: "Spirits being formless, we cannot know whether they are fake or real. To ban them completely is never advantageous." The king, agreeing with this argument, rescinded the earlier prohibition.

Peter H. Lee and William Theodore de Bary, eds., with and Yŏngho Ch'oe Hugh H.W. Kang. Sources of Korean Tradition, Vol. 1: From Early Times Through the Sixteenth Century (Introduction to Asian Civilizations), Columbia University Press, 1996. Used with permission of Columbia University Press.

Supplemental Source 1B

Brian Hogarth, scholarly article titled "Goryeo Buddhism," 2003.

Buddhism was introduced to Korea from China in the fourth century. [...] For the ruling class, it represented a sophisticated model of statecraft, with universal deities acting as protectors of the state. Kings acted as beneficent monarchs with the consent and advice of spiritual leaders. [...]

There was a natural tendency for Korean monks to sift through these many [Buddhist] schools looking for common denominators. This was especially true during the Goryeo dynasty, when concerns about Korean national unity and security made such principles even more appealing.

Brian Hogarth, "Goryeo Buddhism," in Goryeo Dynasty Educator Workshop, presented in conjunction with the exhibit Goryeo Dynasty: Korea's Age of Enlightenment (918 to 1392), 2003, <http://education.asianart.org/sites/asianart.org/files/resource-downloads/Goryeo.pdf>.

Supplemental Source 1C

Charles Muller, scholarly article titled "Korean Buddhism: A Short Overview," 1997.

The general trend of the Buddhism of the latter half of the Goryeo [dynasty] is that of decline due to corruption and the rise of strong anti-Buddhist political and philosophical sentiment. But on the other hand, this period of relative decadence would produce some of Korea's most renowned Seon* masters. [...] [Some Buddhist monks] showed an unusual interest in scriptural study, as well as a strong understanding of Confucianism and Taoism, due to the increasing influence of Chinese philosophy as the ground of official education.

**Seon* is a form of Buddhist practice originating in China that emphasizes meditation

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Document Set 2

DOCUMENTS: FROM KOREA'S JOSEON DYNASTY (1392-1897 CE)

Principal Source 2	Yi Seong-gye, first king of the Joseon dynasty (1392-1897), Founding Edict.
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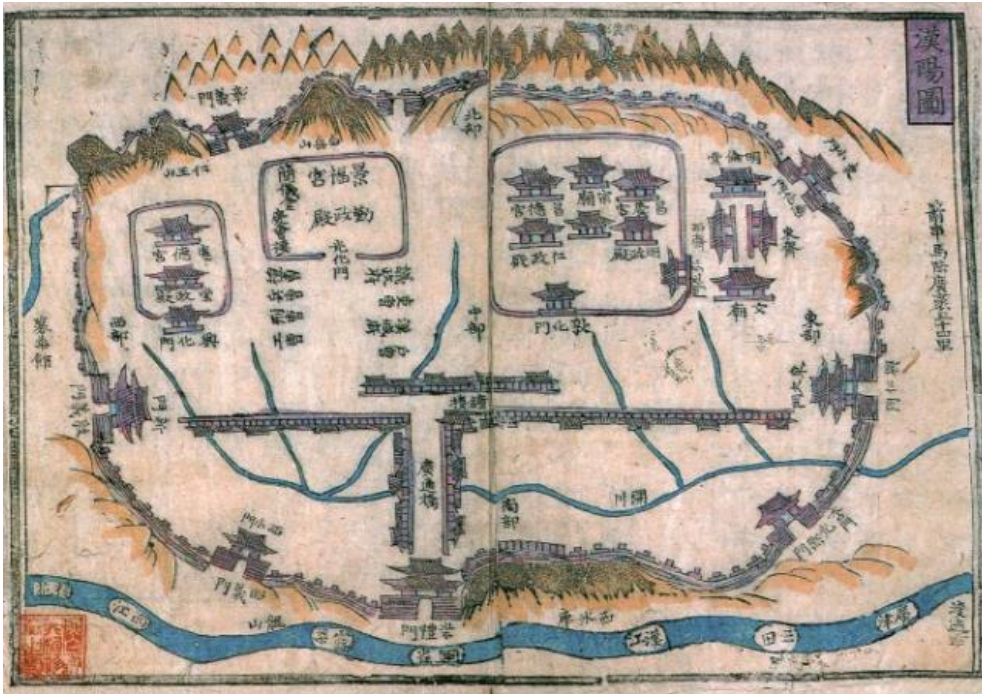
It is Heaven which created all the people of the Earth, Heaven which ordains their rulers, Heaven which nurtured them to share life with each other, and Heaven which governed them so as to enjoy peace with one another. There have been both good and bad rulers, and there have been times when people followed their rulers willingly and other times when they turned against them. Some have been blessed with the Mandate of Heaven and others have lost it. This is a principle that has remained constant.

The Privy Council and all ranks of officials together urged me to take the throne, saying: "The ancestral shrines and institutions should only be entrusted to one who is worthy, and the throne must not be left vacant for long. People's minds are all looking up to your meritorious achievements and virtue, and you should accept the throne to rectify the situation, thereby satisfying the people's desire." Because the people insisted so steadfastly, I yielded finally to their will and ascended the throne.

Peter H. Lee and William Theodore de Bary, eds., with and Yôngho Ch'oe Hugh H.W. Kang. Sources of Korean Tradition, Vol. 1: From Early Times Through the Sixteenth Century (Introduction to Asian Civilizations), Columbia University Press, 1996. Used with permission of Columbia University Press.

Supplemental Source 2A

Map of the capital city, Hanyang, recreation of a woodblock print from 1822.



This map of the capital city of Hanyang (now Seoul) shows the main Confucian political institutions—such as the king’s palaces, the Confucian National University, the Confucian Ancestral Shrine, and the Six Ministries—all surrounded by mountains and rivers in a harmonious arrangement.

Supplemental Source 2B

Mark Peterson, scholarly article titled “The Neo-Confucian Foundation of The Joseon Kingdom.”

When Yi Sŏngkye [Yi Seong-gye] set out to found a new dynasty, he did one absolutely remarkable thing. Rather than turning to other military men for support, he turned to civilians, specifically Neo-Confucian scholar-officials, as the backbone of his dynasty. From the outset, he spoke of setting up a dynasty that would last five hundred years. It lasted 518.

How could he even dream of successfully setting up a five-hundred-year dynasty? He could see the strength of the previous dynasty that lasted nearly five hundred years, Goryeo (918-1392 = 476 years). He knew the history of the Goryeo dynasty that had suffered through a military takeover that nearly toppled the dynasty. He knew, and apparently believed, that civilian rule was more stable than military rule as well as the Confucian dogma that put the military in a subordinate position to the civilian. Thus, he turned to the Neo-Confucian scholars to support his new dynasty.

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At the core of both belief systems is the emphasis on *virtue*.*ren* – benevolence (care for others)*li* – ritual propriety (knowing one’s role)**Gentleman/Sage:** Supreme moral person*yi* – righteousness (doing the right thing at all times)*zhi* – wisdom (seeing the truth in others)**Petty Person:** Person lacking virtue in some way

Confucianism	Neo-Confucianism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thought to have come from the Zhou Dynasty (1046-256 BCE). • Classical Scholars: Kongzi/Confucius (551-479 BCE); Mengzi/Mencius (372-289 BCE) • Is a belief system and not a religion; to “speculate” on the afterlife is “beside the point.” • One should sacrifice to ancestors for the sake of virtue, not out of concern for the afterlife. • Based on relationships: ruler to subject; father to son; husband to wife; elder brother to younger brother; friend to friend. • Belief that man behaves better when given a “constant livelihood.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started as a reaction to the popularity of Buddhism. • Neo-Classical Scholars: Zhu Xi (1130-1200) • Considered more metaphysical than Confucianism • Focuses on a “personal path to sagehood” rather than relying on sages. • Contains more radical views on the dangers of desire and internal thought. • Added <i>xin</i> (faithfulness) • One must act virtuously without “a second thought.” The natural urge to rationalize our behavior must be trained out of us. • Believe that joy comes from being one with the universe • Emphasized that we can alter our view through ritual (e.g., intentionally longer mourning periods for high officials). • Virtue is best shown under pressure (e.g., refusing a large bribe or speaking up against an unjust ruler).

Based on Justin Tiwald, "Confucianism vs. Neo-Confucianism," in The Oxford Handbook of Virtue, ed. Nancy Snow. Oxford University Press, 2018.