



Sources of Korean Tradition: From Early Times Through the Sixteenth Century

Peter H. Lee (Editor)

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Drawn from Peter H. Lee's *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization, Volume I*, this abridged introductory collection offers students and general readers primary readings in the social, intellectual, and religious traditions of Korea from ancient times through the sixteenth century. *Sources of Korean Tradition* is arranged according to the major epochs of Korean history, including sections on: Korean culture - its origins, writing, education, poetry, song, social life, and rituals; religion - the rise of Buddhism and Confucianism; the economy - the land, agriculture, commerce, and currency; and its changing political structures.

A superb collection by the foremost scholars in the field, *Sources of Korean Tradition* is supplemented by a bibliography and prefaces by both editors. An impressive storehouse for the grand corpus of thought, beliefs, and customs held by people of Korea for centuries, this volume is a valuable companion for those interested in the history of Korea and East Asian studies.

Sources of Korean Tradition: From Early Times Through the Sixteenth Century **Details**

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Pancha says

Still not quite what I was looking for, but it was a little more linear than the other history I tried.

P Chulhi says

This book is a collection of primary sources accompanied by some good commentary that give clues to the development of Korean civil society from the Three Kingdoms period up to the early Chosun dynasty. This book avoids the modern nationalistic rhetoric that most East Asian histories suffer. I think its important to note that Peter H. Lee, a Korean, was also a lead editor (it says it right on the cover, I'm not sure why goodreads hasn't got it right).

Joseph says

Okay, so I'm doing books I love. This is a scholarly tome. It's a continuation of the great "Sources" books done by Ted DeBary (Chinese, Indian and Japanese Tradition). I am prejudiced because I love East Asian Studies, I spent a fair amount of time in Korea and my wife, now passed was born in Korea. I was so happy when this book was published. Finally, source documents laying out the rich, diverse tradition of Korean Intellectual history could be read in English. Finally, I could read about the great Confucian scholars whose images grace Korean currency. Here it was Yi Hwang (T'oegye) and Yi I (Yulgok, the two greatest philosophers of Chosun ... here was the great i-ki (principle) vs (material force). The debate raged in the 1500s. Hmm, a rich philosophical debate in the 1500s??? ... hmm, what was going on in Europe then? Nothing like this. The book begins with the foundation myth (Tangun) covers the Three Kingdoms period, the rise of governmental institutions, civil service, the rise of Buddhism and early poetry. From Silla it goes to Koryo and Confucianism. The book finishes in the Early Chosun period (16th century). This book is for those who have a real interest in Korean intellectual history and the roots of Korean culture. It's not really light reading, but if you are into this sort of thing it's for you.

Maria says

Reading this book gave me a broad idea of what Korean society (against the background of my basic knowledge about Korea's history) may have looked like. The book nicely combines translated documents, letters, scriptures, chapters, etc., with explanatory texts and background knowledge. It is also quite pleasant to read.

What I disliked about the book was its amount on Buddhist and Confucian scripture / teachings. About half of the volume (as far as I remember) deals with the Buddhist or Confucian thought. I am not a Buddhist / Confucianist, so I have close to no knowledge. Eventhough the information is so extensive, it is also quite dense and does not elaborate enough for me to understand any of it. Truth be told, if an entire faith was so

simply explainable in one book, it would not be able to mean so much to so many people for such a long time
;) So I give 4 stars on enjoyment.
