

Yulgok's view on Kija(箕子)

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Yulgok Yi I (1536-1584) wrote in 1580 the famous *Veritable Record on Kija* (*Kija silgi* 箕子實記) that has been commonly regarded as a clear illustration of the special emphasis put on the figure of Kija 箕子 (Jizi in Chinese) in Chosŏn Korea by the State and the Neo-Confucian literati.

The Vicount of Ji, personal name Xu Yu 胥余, was an uncle of King Zhou 紂, the bad last ruler of the Shang dynasty (7th to 11th cent. BCE), and occupied the position of Grand Preceptor. After the fall of the Shang, he is said to have transmitted the forgotten secret of Yu the Great, the *Hongfan/Hongbŏm* 洪範, to King Wu of the Zhou (11th. cent.-221 BCE) who conquered the Shang kingdom but refused to serve the new ruler. Some sources added that he thus came to the Korean peninsula where he was enfeoffed by King Wu. He then "civilized" the people in the peninsula and established the Korean state known as Kija Chosŏn.

Yulgok was not the first scholar who has shown a special interest for this cultural hero in Korea, since an official worship used to be rendered to Kija in Koguryŏ and then in Koryŏ and several scholars-officials from the beginning of the Chosŏn dynasty such as Chŏng Tojŏn(鄭道傳 : 1342-1398) and Kwŏn Kŭn(權近 : 1352 -1409) also stressed Kija's role in bringing civilization to ancient Korea. Yulgok actually wrote the *Kija silgi* to condense the *Kija chi* 箕子志 written by Yun Tusu(尹斗壽 : 1533-1601) between 1577 and 1580 when the latter came back from a diplomatic mission to China. In his text, Yulgok explains that Korean emissaries have been regularly asked by Chinese scholars about the history of Kija in Korea but are not able to answer properly since they lack knowledge on the topic. The purpose of his *Kija silgi* is then to clarify the history of this master and his legacy, in order to build a unique Korean memory about the beginnings of the civilization and to trace back the origin of the Confucian Way in Korea.

This paper will examine six various texts dating from 1568 to 1580 selected from the *Yulgok chŏnsŏ* 栗谷全書 where Yulgok dealt with Kija with a special attention paid to the *Kija silgi*. All these texts will be analysed in relation to Yulgok's view on history and the Transmission of the Way (*Daotong/Tot'ong* 道通) but also in relation to the Chosŏn-Ming relationships in the late 16th century.