In Poland there are still not many academic works dedicated to Korean history, not to mention the history of Korean law. When J.P. Rurarz wrote her book “Historia Korei”\(^2\) (eng. History of Korea), in the very first sentence she expressed her reflection that the book is “a fruit of irritation” connected with the still too small interest in Korea in our country\(^3\). One attempt to fill the void was the book “Korea w oczach Polaków”\(^4\) (eng. Korea in the eyes of Poles) edited by J. Włodarski, K. Zeidler and M. Burdelski, professors of the University of Gdańsk. Within that work R. Tokarczyk compared legal cultures of South and North Korea\(^5\) and M.M. Wiszowaty analyzed the political and constitutional system of Republic of Korea writing about its contemporary history and “Confucian constitutionalism” phenomenon\(^6\).

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\(^3\) About Korean studies in Poland: http://www.koreanistyka.orient.uw.edu.pl/historia_sekcji1.htm (in Polish) (accessed: 23.05.2015). Among the few scholars who dedicated their lives to Korean studies, H. Ogarek Czoy (1931–2004) stands out. She researched Korean culture, language, literature, religion and mythology; see: B. Zakrzewski, H. Ogarek Czoy (1931–2004) – Koreaństka, tłumaczka, pedagog, “Azja-Pacyfik” 2007, nr 10, s. 239. Among the scientific journals, the author would like to draw attention to “Przegląd Orientalistyczny”, a journal of Polish Oriental Society and “Rocznik Orientalistyczny” of the Committee of Oriental Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences (both of them do not focus only on Korea).


\(^5\) R. Tokarczyk, Próba zarysu komparatystycznego kultur prawnych Korei Północnej i Korei Południowej [in:] Korea w oczach Polaków..., p. 311–326.

This article is the fruit of author’s interest in the Korean history and culture. The topic of Confucian influence on the Korean legal thought is not entirely new\textsuperscript{7}, but given its significant importance in understanding Korean history, it is still worth recalling. The topic of the article is also related to the subject of Chinese cultural influence on Korea in broader sense.

Author chose 93 years period from the beginning of the Joseon Kingdom under Yi dynasty rule (1392) until the enactment of the State Code (Gyeonggukdaejeon) by its ninth king – Seongjong (1485) as the time frame for the paper. First century of Joseon was the period when Confucianism clearly achieved domination over the nation’s political ideology, which was reflected in the legal and jurisprudential aspects as well. King Seongjong (1469–1494) managed to compile the State Code started by his predecessors, thus consolidating Joseon’s Confucian form of law and government\textsuperscript{8} and for this reason the paper is limited to year 1485. The 16\textsuperscript{th} century (generally speaking) can be regarded as the period of great development of Korean Confucian thought by its most renowned sages – Yi Hwang (Toegye) and Yi I (Yulgok)\textsuperscript{9}, but the biggest change in favor of Confucianism occurred during the age specified as the initial period of Yi dynasty.

Jung Geung Sik, noted, that “on the one hand, history proceeds according to the orientation of the law, which acts as an overarching structure restricting the actions of human beings, while on the other, certain events can transform these laws (…) In this sense, laws lay bare the historical characteristics of a nation (…) by examining the flow of history in its laws, as well as by making comparisons with China, one may grasp certain characteristics of Joseon society”\textsuperscript{10}.


\textsuperscript{8} King Sejo ordered the codification of Gyeongguk Daejeon that was completed in 1468, in the first year of king Yejong’s rule. Version with Seongjong’s revisions is the only one preserved, because the previous versions were disposed of. Jung Geung Sik, The Codifications…, p. 182.

\textsuperscript{9} Toegye stressed the importance of a principle called “I” which he believed governs human nature and behaviour. Yulgok put emphasis on the principle of energizing element called “gi”. A. Nahm, Introduction to Korean History and Culture, Seoul 1993, footnote 26.

\textsuperscript{10} Jung Geung Sik, The Codifications…, p. 176.