

Rulers of Korea

Korea has been ruled by a number of kingdoms/empires and republics over the last several millennia. Listed below are the rulers and leaders of the major Korean dynasties and states from the beginning of the recorded history to the present day.

Notes

Kingdoms/Empires are listed in the order of their fall. Thus, Baekje, Goguryeo, and Silla are listed an order that is the reverse of their traditional order of formation.

Names have been romanized according to the South Korean Revised Romanization of Korean.

McCune-Reischauer romanizations of names may be found at the articles about the individual rulers.

Go-Joseon (2333 BC - 239 BC)

The mythical founder of Go-Joseon was Emperor Wanggeom.

The time for the end of Joseon is disputed. Some record records the abdication of last emperor, Emperor Koyulga, in BC 239. Other accounts record the date as BC 1137. The period of reign for each emperor is not listed as neither account currently prevails. According to one account, the dynasty's name was changed to Daebuyeo in BC 425. The emperor used the title of Tanje, which literarily means emperor under the birch.

Emperor Wanggeom

Emperor Buru

Emperor Gareuk

Emperor Osagu

Emperor Gueul

Emperor Dalmun

Emperor Hanyul

Emperor Usuhan

Emperor Aseul

Emperor Noul

Emperor Dohae

Emperor Ahan

Emperor Holdal

Emperor Gobul

Emperor Daeum

Emperor Wina

Emperor Yeoul

Emperor Dongum

Emperor Gumoso

Emperor Goheul

Emperor Sotae

Emperor Saekbullu

Emperor Aheul

Emperor Yeonna

Emperor Solna

Emperor Churo

Emperor Dumil

Emperor Haemo

Emperor Mahew

Emperor Naehew
Emperor Deungowl
Emperor Chumil
Emperor Kammul
Emperor Orumun
Emperor Sabul
Emperor Maereuk
Emperor Mamul
Emperor Damul
Emperor Duhol
Emperor Dalum
Emperor Eumcha
Emperor Eulwujji
Emperor Mulli
Emperor Kumul
Emperor Yeoru
Emperor Boeul
Emperor Koyeolga

Buyeo (239 BC-494)

Buyeo is believed to have risen from the areas of Joseon in 2nd-3rd century BC. They claimed the inheritance of Joseon, and the rulers continued to use the titles of Tanje or the emperor. According to some accounts, Buyeo was divided into two countries, Bukbuyeo and Dongbuyeo, in 108 BC. Bukbuyeo was later succeeded by Goguryeo, but Dongbuyeo, ruled by the heirs of Emperor Haemosu, was shattered by Goguryeo in 22 AD. Dongbuyeo declined to meagre existence until 494, when they capitulated to Goguryeo.

Emperor Haemosu (239 BC-195 BC)
Emperor Morisu (195 BC-170 BC)
Emperor Gohaesa (170 BC-121 BC)
Emperor Gowuru (121 BC-86 BC)

Bukbuyeo (108 BC-58 BC)

The rulers of Bukbuyeo retained the use the title of Tanje, or the emperor.

Emperor Godumak (108 BC-60 BC)
Emperor Gomuseu (60 BC-58 BC)

Dongbuyeo (86 BC-AD 22)

The rulers of Dongbuyeo submitted to the overlordship of Bukbuyeo in 86 BC and thus used the title of Wang, which means king.

King Haeburu (86 BC-48 BC)
King Geumwa (48 BC-7 BC)
King Daeso (7 BC-AD 22)

Gaya (Garak) (42-532)

Gaya (also called "Garak") was a minor state (that is, not one of the three major kingdoms) during the Three Kingdoms Period. Gaya was absorbed into Silla in 532.

All kings of Gaya had the Korean title Wang, which means "king." This list represents the Kim Dynasty of Geumgwan Gaya.

King Suro (42-199)
King Geodeung (199-259)
King Mapum (259-291)
King Geojilmi (291-346)
King Isipum (346-407)
King Jwaji (407-421)
King Chwiheui (421-451)
King Jilji (451-492)
King Gyumji (492-521)
King Guhyung (521-532)

Baekje (18 BC-AD 660)

Baekje was one of the Three Kingdoms of Korea in the 1st millennium AD (along with Goguryeo and Silla), and fell to Silla in 660.

All kings of Baekje had the Korean title Wang, which means "king."

King Onjo (18 BC-AD 29)
King Daru (29-77)
King Giru (77-128)
King Gaeru (128-166)
King Chogo (166-214)
King Gusu (214-234)
King Saban (234)
King Goi (234-286)
King Chaekgye (286-298)
King Bunseo (298-304)
King Biryu (304-344)
King Gye (344-346)
King Geunchogo (346-375)
King Geungosu (375-384)
King Chimryu (384-385)
King Jinsa (385-392)
King Asin (392-405)
King Jeonji (405-420)
King Guishin (420-427)
King Biyu (427-454)
King Gaero (454-475)
King Munju (475-477)
King Samgeun (477-479)
King Dongseong (479-501)
King Muryeong (501-523)
King Seong (523-554)
King Wideok (554-598)
King Hye (598-599)
King Beop (599-600)
King Mu (600-641)
King Uija (641-660)

Goguryeo (37 BC - AD 668)

Goguryeo was one of the Three Kingdoms of Korea in the first millennium AD (along with Baekje and Silla), and fell to Silla in 668.

Goguryeo was ruled by Go Dynasty and was the only one of the three realms that is described as the Empire, and its vassals used the title of king. Its rulers had the title of Taewang, which when literally translated means the greatest of the kings or emperor. Here the rulers are all styled as the emperors, with the era name in bracket when applicable.

Emperor Dongmyeongseong (Damul) (37 BC-19 BC) (also known as Jumong)

Emperor Yuri (19 BC-AD 18)

Emperor Daemushin (18-44)

Emperor Minjung (44-48)

Emperor Mobon (48-53)

Emperor Taejo (Ryeungmu) (53-121 / 146) (also known as Emperor Gukjo)

Emperor Chadae (121 / 146-165)

Emperor Shindae (165-179)

Emperor Gogukcheon (179-197)

Emperor Sinsang (197-227)

Emperor Dongcheon (227-248) (also known as Emperor Dongyang)

Emperor Jungcheon (248-270) (also known as Emperor Jungyang)

Emperor Seocheon (270-292) (also known as Emperor Seoyang)

Emperor Bongsang (292-300) (also known as Emperor Chagal)

Emperor Micheon (300-331) (also known as Emperor Hoyang)

Emperor Gogukwon (331-371) (also known as Emperor Gukgangsang)

Emperor Sosurim (371-384)

Emperor Gogukyang (384-391)

Emperor Gwanggaeto the Great (Youngrak) (391-413)

Emperor Jangsu (Gunheung) (413-491)

Emperor Munjamyong (Myungchi) (491-519)

Emperor Anjang (519-531)

Emperor Anwon (531-545)

Emperor Yangwon (545-559) (also known as Emperor Yanggang)

Emperor Pyeongwon (Daeduk) (559-590) (also known as Emperor Pyeonggang)

Emperor Yeongyang (Hongmu) (590-618) (also known as Emperor Pyeongyang)

Emperor Yeongryu (618-642)

Emperor Bojang (Kaehwa) (642-668)

Silla (57 BC - AD 935)

Silla was one of the Three Kingdoms of Korea in the 1st millennium AD, along with Baekje (which it conquered in 660) and Goguryeo (which it defeated in 668). Silla fell in turn to Goryeo in 935. The post-668 kingdom is often referred to by academics as Unified Silla, since it was the first unified state to rule over most of the Korean peninsula.

Silla was ruled by the Bak, Seok, and Kim Dynasties. Rulers of Silla had various titles, including Isageum, Maripgan, Wang, and Yeowang, as explained in the list below. For the sake of consistency, all rulers in the list below (except for the first two) are given the titles "King" or "Queen."

Bak Hyeokgeose (57 BC-AD 4)

Namhae Chachaung (4-24)

King Yuri (24-57) (Kings Yuri through Heurhae had the Korean title Isageum, an old word for "ruler")

King Talhae (57-80)
King Pasa (80-112)
King Jima (112-134)
King Ilseong (134-154)
King Adalla (154-184)
King Beolhyu (184-196)
King Naehae (196-230)
King Jobun (230-247)
King Cheomhae (247-261)
King Michu (262-284)
King Yurye (284-298)
King Girim (298-310)
King Heulhae (310-356)
King Naemul (356-402) (Kings Naemul through Soji had the Korean title Maripgan, an old word for "ruler")
King Silseong (402-417)
King Nulji (417-458)
King Jabi (458-479)
King Soji (479-500)
King Jijeung (500-514) (Kings Jijeung through Gyeongsun had the title Wang (the modern Korean word for "king"), with the exceptions noted below)
King Beopheung (514-540)
King Jinheung (540-576)
King Jinji (576-579)
King Jinpyeong (579-632)
Queen Seondeok (632-647) (Queens Seondeok and Jindeok had the title Yeowang, meaning "queen")
Queen Jindeok (647-654)
King Muyeol (654-661)
King Munmu (661-681)
King Sinmun (681-691)
King Hyoso (692-702)
King Seongdeok the Great (702-737) ("King Seongdeok the Great" is a translation of Seongdeok Daewang, "Daewang" meaning "great king")
King Hyoseong (737-742)
King Gyeongdeok (742-765)
King Hyeogong (765-780)
King Seondeok (780-785)
King Weonseong (785-798)
King Soseong (798-800)
King Aejang (800-809)
King Heondeok (809-826)
King Heungdeok (826-836)
King Huigang (836-838)
King Minae (838-839)
King Sinmu (839)
King Munseong (839-857)
King Heonan (857-861)
King Gyeongmun (861-875)
King Heongang (875-886)
King Jeonggang (886-887)
Queen Jinseong (887-897) (Queen Jinseong had the Korean title Yeowang, which means "queen")

King Hyogong (897-912)
King Sindeok (913-917)
King Gyeongmyeong (917-924)
King Gyeongae (924-927)
King Gyeongsun (927-935)

Jin (Barhae) (669-926)

Jin (진), (Barhae (발해)) (Bohai in Mandarin) was an empire that occupied territory in Korea, Manchuria, and modern-day Russia during the Unified Silla period. See Bohai (Barhae) for an alternative list of rulers with their names in both Mandarin and Korean. Jin is the name of the country chosen by the rulers, and Barhae (Bohai) is what China named the empire. The rulers of Jin used the title of Hwangje, which is translated to be emperor, and they claimed the inheritance of Goguryeo. They had the temple name of either -jo or -jong, though there are exceptions for deposed rulers. Their era names are in bracket when available. Emperor Sejo Yeol (Joongkwang) (669-698)

Emperor Taejo Ko (Chuntong) (698-719)
Emperor Kwangjong Mu (Inan) (719-738)
Emperor Sejong Mun (Daeheung) (738-794)
Emperor Daewonui (794)
Emperor Injong Sung (Joongheung) (794-795)
Emperor Mokjong Kang (Chungryuk) (795-809)
Emperor Uijong Jung (Youngduk) (809-812)
Emperor Kangjong Hui (Jujak) (812-817)
Emperor Cheoljong Kan (Taeshi) (817-818)
Emperor Sungjong Sung (Kunheung) (818-832)
Emperor Jangjong Hwa (Hamhwa) (832-858)
Emperor Sunjong Ahn (Daejong) (858-871)
Emperor Myungjong Kyung (Chunbok) (878-894)
Emperor Daewihae (894-906)
Emperor Aeje (Chungtae) (901-926)

Goryeo (918-1392)

The kingdom of Goryeo was founded in 918 and defeated Silla in 935-936, making "Goryeo" the name of Korea. (Incidentally, "Goryeo" is the source of the English name "Korea.") In 1392, the kingdom fell to the Joseon Dynasty.

Goryeo was ruled by the Wang Dynasty. The first king had the temple name Taejo, which means "great progenitor" and was applied to the first kings of both Goryeo and Joseon, as they were also the founders of the Wang and Yi Dynasties respectively. The next 23 kings (until Wonjong) are also referred to by their temple names, which had the title jong in them. Beginning with Chungnyeol (the 25th king), all the remaining kings of Goryeo had the title Wang—the standard Sino-Korean word for "King"—as part of their temple names. Era names are in bracket where available

King Taejo (Chunsu) (918-943)
King Hyejong (943-945)
King Jeongjong (945-949)
King Gwangjong (949-975)
King Gyeongjong (975-981)
King Seongjong (981-997)
King Mokjong (997-1009)
King Hyeonjong (1009-1031)
King Deokjong (1031-1034)

King Jeongjong (1034-1046)
King Munjong (1046-1083)
King Sunjong (1083)
King Seonjong (1083-1094)
King Heonjong (1094-1095)
King Sukjong (1095-1105)
King Hyejong (1105-1122)
King Injong (1122-1146)
King Euijong (1146-1170)
King Myeongjong (1170-1197)
King Sinjong (1197-1204)
King Heuijong (1204-1211)
King Gangjong (1211-1213)
King Gojong (1213-1259)
King Weonjong (1259-1274)
King Chungnyeol (1274-1308) (Chungnyeol was the first king of Goryeo to have the title Wang, which means "King")
King Chungseon (1308-1313)
King Chungsuk (1313-1330; 1332-1339)
King Chunghye (1330-1332; 1339-1344)
King Chungmok (1344-1348)
King Chungjeong (1348-1351)
King Gongmin (1351-1374)
King U (1374-1388)
King Chang (1388-1389)
King Gongyang (1389-1392)

Joseon (1392-1897)

Joseon was the name of Korea during most the Joseon Dynasty, which ruled from the fall of Goryeo in 1392 until the beginning of the Republic of Korea in 1919. In 1897, the country became the Korean Empire. Some of the kings were posthumously raised to the rank of emperors.

Joseon Dynasty kings/emperors had temple names ending in jo or jong. Jo was given to the first kings/emperors of new lines within the dynasty, with the first king/emperor having the special name (Taejo), which means "great progenitor" (see also Goryeo). Jong was given to all other kings/emperors. Two kings—Yeonsangun and Gwanghaegun— were so disgraced in the eyes of later official historians that they were deprived of their temple names after their reigns ended. Each king/emperor had a posthumous name—which was different from his temple name—that included either the title Wang ("King"), Hwangje ("Emperor"), Daewang ("King X the Great") or Daeje ("Emperor X the Great"). For the sake of consistency, the title "King/Emperor" has been added to each monarch's temple name in the list below.

Emperor Taejo (1392-1398)
King Jeongjong (1398-1400)
King Taejong (1400-1418)
King Sejong the Great (1418-1450)
King Munjong (1450-1452)
King Danjong (1452-1455)
King Sejo (1455-1468)
King Yejong (1468-1469)
King Seongjong (1469-1494)

Yeonsangun (1494-1506)
King Jungjong (1506-1544)
King Injong (1544-1545)
King Myeongjong (1545-1567)
King Seonjo (1567-1608)
Gwanghaegun (1608-1623)
King Injo (1623-1649)
King Hyojong (1649-1659)
King Hyeonjong (1659-1674)
King Sukjong (1674-1720)
King Gyeongjong (1720-1724)
King Yeongjo (1724-1776)
Emperor Jeongjo (1776-1800)
Emperor Sunjo (1800-1834)
Emperor Heonjong (1834-1849)
Emperor Cheoljong (1849-1864)
Emperor Gojong (1864-1897)

Korean Empire (1897-1919)

In 1897, Korea was renamed Daehan Jeguk (Korean Empire, or literally, "Great Han Empire"). King Gojong of the Joseon Dynasty became the first emperor (Hwangje in Korean). Technically, the emperors should be referred to by their era names rather than their temple names, but the latter are commonly used.

Emperor Gojong's reign was given the era name "Gwangmu," while Sunjong's reign had the era name "Yeonghui."

Emperor Gojong (Kwangmu) (1897-1907)
Emperor Sunjong (Yeonghui) (1907-1919)

(Main article: Governor-General of Korea) From 1910 to 1945, there was a Japanese Governor-General of Korea who formally exercised Japanese sovereignty over Korea, then was succeeded by Soviet and US Governors of Korea who exercised rule from 1945 to 1948. After 1948, power passed to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea.

Presidents of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea (1919-1948)

The Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea was based in Shanghai, China. Although the current South Korean government insists on being its successor to assert legitimacy, and indeed some countries recognised the government, including China, the government was not internationally recognized by all great powers..

Rhee Syng-man 이승만 (1919-1925) Park Eun-shik 박은식 (1925) Yi Sang-ryong 이상룡 (1925-1926) Hong Jin (Hong Myun-hui) 홍진 (홍면회) (1926) Yi Dong-nyung 이동녕 (1926-1927) Kim Ku 김구 (1927-1948)

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (1948-present)

1948-1993 President Kim Il-sung

1993-present Chairman of the National Defense Commission Kim Jong-il

Republic of Korea (1948-present)

Main Article: Presidents of South Korea

1948-1960 1st, 2nd, 3rd President Rhee Syng-man (The 1st Republic)

1960-1962 4th President Yun Bo-seon (The 2nd Republic)

1963-1979 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th President Park Chung-hee (The 3rd/4th Republic)

1979-1980 10th President Choi Kyu-ha

1980-1988 11th, 12th President Chun Doo-hwan (The 5th Republic)

1988-1993 13th President Roh Tae-woo (The 6th Republic)

1993-1998 14th President Kim Young-sam (The Civil Government)

1998-2003 15th President Kim Dae-jung (The Government of the People)

2003-present 16th president Roh Moo-hyun (The Participatory Government)