

What lessons can we learn from King Sejong's leadership for our own lives and actions in society?

King Sejong, also known as Sejong the Great, served as the fourth king of the Joseon Dynasty in Korea. In contrast to the countless kings who had obtained their 'greatness' through their predecessors, King Sejong's 'greatness' did not depend on brutality or the capturing and oppressing of the people. Instead, King Sejong's legacy was forged through the fulfilment of social and cultural aspirations that have continuously benefitted Sejong's nation across generations and those yet to come, allowing the people of recent times to continue to prosper. Even today, the lessons presented by Sejong's reign remain profoundly relevant, offering timeless insights for individuals navigating the obstacles of modern society.

One of the most influential teachings that can be taken away from King Sejong's legacy is the values of compassion and empathy. He was notable for his concern for the well-being of his people and implemented numerous laws and policies only to improve the quality of life for ordinary citizens. One of the ways in which he did this was through the establishment of an entirely new alphabet, Hangul, to increase literacy rates among the public as it was developed to be easy to learn. This illustrates how he was aware of the difficulties and struggles of less fortunate people and demonstrates that he understands and empathises with how difficult it is to afford necessities. Furthermore, he had expressed his desire to 'not burden the people with needless expense' indicating that he empathises with the citizens of his nation and makes an effort to implement their views into his policies. His commitment to making education accessible to all levels of society inspires individuals of differing backgrounds to contribute towards the nation's success.

King Sejong was known for his unbreakable virtues of ruling with fairness and justice.

Sejong sought to establish a government that would treat all citizens equally, irrespective of

their place in society. The dedication to justice he employed, encouraged his subjects to adopt a sense of stability and trust. Within the King's circle, many believed that if the public had become well-informed of the law, they would find ways to overthrow the monarchy and find faults within the judicial system with the belief to change the way things are run. Whereas King Sejong considered it a means of securing values in lower classes and preventing the commitment of misconduct among his subjects. He only aimed to preserve the well-being and culture of common people. Consequently, Sejong allowed the grievances of individuals to be considered once more, enabling commoners to appeal for what they believe is moral while also maintaining the authority of the judges, satisfying both sides: the public and the ruling class. Leaders today can learn the significance of empowering their citizens through education, allowing them to understand morality in law to enable the personal and collective growth of society.

Throughout his reign, King Sejong countlessly supported the talent and innovations of the lower classes, providing opportunities regardless of their social status. An example of the many times he had done this is in the situation of Chang Yong-sil. Chang's parents raised him while working in the least respected occupations within society. His parents came from the poorer areas of China; they were a part of the Chonin ("Lesser Commoners"), the lowest social status in China in the early 15th century. Irrespective of this, he showed great interest and exhibited remarkable talent for engineering and science, demonstrating outstanding knowledge and his capability to develop technology. Once King Sejong had learned this, he sent Chang abroad to become familiar with the latest technology and new formulae, immediately releasing Chang of the title of Chonin and enabling him to have royal status in society despite his origins. King Sejong acknowledged his people's strength and let them grow, resulting in the invention of several scientific innovations. Chang's situation is one of the many instances where Sejong promoted success through his subjects, encouraging them

to make technological advancements and breakthroughs. By observing King Sejong's selfless acts, individuals can encourage themselves not to underestimate others only due to their background and origins but rather embrace a person's capabilities and potential.

Upon exploring Sejong's reign from multiple perspectives, we can conclude that the lessons offered by him continue to stay pertinent within society, even in modern times. The encouraging qualities and understanding he demonstrates towards each of his subjects inspire individuals today to do the same and follow in his footsteps to become successful leaders. We can learn from Sejong's legacy that a good leader does not always have to demand authority over their subjects or use violence to solve conflicts but instead will enforce policies in favour of citizens, irrespective of their background, and empathise with their grievances, and allow them to participate in education for the collective growth of society.