doi: 10.25024/review.2025.28.1.84

Where Rites Meet Power: Venues for State Sacrificial Rites in the Goryeo Dynasty

Introduction

East Asian dynasties had sacrificial rite systems centered on the ruler. Such systems were called *yeje* 禮制, *uije* 儀制, or *jesa* (dynastic sacrificial rites 祭祀) that provided legitimacy to the rulers was essential in the systems.1 The state rites centering on *jesa* reflected the world view and cultural characteristics of the times and presented the political orientation of the ruler in operating the state. These dynastic sacrificial rite systems provide crucial clues to scholars to examine the worldview and cultural characteristics of the times.

The Goryeo dynasty established a sacrificial rite system as part of the state administration and repeatedly practiced rites. The most significant rites were *hwangu jesa* and *sajik jesa*. The former manifested the mandate of heaven 天命 given to the ruler by heaven or the Heaven God, while the latter prayed for the prosperity and agricultural productivity of the state. These two rite systems were first established during the Tang dynasty, and Goryeo modified them to reestablish its own system.

There are limitations in researching the *jesa* venues of the Goryeo dynasty. First, researchers have limited access to Kaesong (formerly

1 It is tricky to translate the term referring to the dynastic sacrificial rites in each East Asian language appropriately into English. In European and English-speaking countries, "ritual" is traditionally used to refer to a Christian one. In this sense, it is appropriate to use the Korean term *jesa* in this paper without English translation to representatively refer to such rites conducted in the area. *Jesa* performed on a national scale may be translated into "dynastic rituals" or "dynastic ceremonies." However, "ritual" and "ceremony" have differences in their meanings, making it difficult to use these terms generally. The two terms are used to refer to a subcategory of a rite (ritual) or manners and etiquette (decorum). For these reasons, there are limitations in specifically referring to *jesa* using the two terms alone. Examining the characteristics of the *jesa* carried out in East Asia, especially in medieval China and Korea, it can be understood as a kind of rite 典禮 that included the one held at the imperial ancestral shrine (*taemyo*), which uses sacrifices and had ancestor worship as its primary purpose. In light of this, "rite" is the most appropriate English term for *jesa*, and therefore, this paper uses the term "dynastic sacrificial rites."

Gaegyeong, the capital of the Goryeo dynasty), currently located in North Korea. In addition, the site where studies had been conducted on Ganghwado Island serving as the capital of Goryeo for 36 years was determined to be the site of Oegyujanggak, a Ganghwado branch of the Joseon Royal Library, Gyujanggak, not that of the Goryeo Palace. This requires a reexamination of previous archaeological research (Hong 2023; H. Lee 2016). The Manwoldae site in Kaesong was just for the palace of the Goryeo king, and an archaeological survey of the entire capital site was first conducted only in 2014 (National Authority for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, DPRK, and École française d'Extrême-Orient 2014). In this sense, this study was carried out based on the chronological records; sacrificial rite procedures written in *Goryeosa* (*History of Goryeo*) related to the *hwangudan* and *sajikdan*, meaning a round altar and an altar of territory and agriculture, respectively, which are representative examples of *jesa* venues in Goryeo; and the historical site surveys performed by the Japanese Government-General of Korea during the colonial rule.

Second, although the venues for state sacrificial rites of the Goryeo dynasty were given meaning through repetitive practices, they were classified simply as *rite venues* and not paid attention to as subjects of research. This results from the limitations that the previous studies of dynastic sacrificial rites including *jesa* were conducted by Korean historians mainly from the perspectives of *strengthening royal authority* or Neo-Confucianism of the Joseon dynasty. This research trend has led to interpretations of those rites based on Confucian perspectives—some scholars even use the term "secular Confucianism" to deny its religious aspect—or to a lack of research on *jesa*'s complex purposes and specific procedures. Against this backdrop, insufficient research on *jesa* itself has hampered research on *jesa* venues from advancing to clarify the significance contained in the composition and location of such venues. However, some studies on *jesa* venues have sufficiently clarified that, for the Goryeo people, *jesa* venues were special places that contained sacred meanings, while being part of everyday life (Han 2006, 2023; Kim 2012, 2016), and have also led to research on how the structure and location of *jesa* venues were given significance and how such significance was combined with political and cultural purposes (Yi 2024a). Research on Korean *jesa* and *jesa* venues is still in its infancy, and thus diverse interdisciplinary research is required.

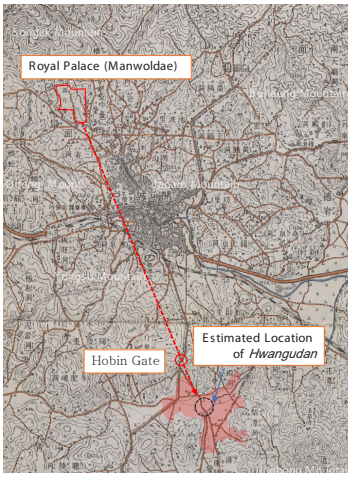
This study explores the location and composition of the *hwangudan* and *sajikdan* altars and the venues for *hwangu jesa* and *sajik jesa*, respectively, and examines them specifically through antique maps, surveys of the Japanese Government-General of Korea, and geographic information system (GIS) data. In addition, this study compares them with the sacrificial rite venues of the Chinese dynasties that existed at the same time as Goryeo, thereby shedding light on how Goryeo established its unique *jesa* procedures.

Location and Composition of the Goryeo *Hwangudan* Altar

Location and Meaning of the Goryeo Hwangudan Altar

Hwangu jesa in the Goryeo dynasty was a rite where the king treated and offered a sacrifice to the worshiping deities in a prescribed manner to confirm that he was granted the mandate of heaven (Han 2006; Kim 2019; Yi 2022, 2024a. Goryeo's *hwangudan* altar was built in a specific area of the capital city, symbolizing the (ideological) communication with heaven. It was a spatial device that emphasized the king of Goryeo as a being who ruled the dynasty according to the mandate of heaven. In addition, *hwangu jesa* visually revealed the uniqueness of royal authority and the centrality of the state.

Hwangu jesa was a rite to inform the ruled class that the king of Goryeo had been given the mandate to rule, or mandate of heaven, by Heaven God, the Founder (*taejo*) of the dynasty (i.e., Wang Geon in Goryeo), and the Deities of the Five Directions. The *hwangu jesa* of the Tang dynasty was held four times a year (the first Xin day of the first lunar month 正月 上辛日, the fourth lunar month 孟夏, the tenth lunar month 季秋, and the winter solstice 冬至) (Wechsler 2014; Chang 2012). However, Goryeo enacted only *gigoksa*, a dynastic sacrificial rite for a bountiful harvest, to be held on the first Xin day of the first lunar month, and *maenghausa*, a rite praying for timely rain. Both were conducted as *hwangu jesa* on a regular basis, while *maenghausa* and other rain-calling ceremonies were performed irregularly during droughts and repeated until it rained (Lee 2023). *Hwangu jesa* was first conducted in Goryeo in January of the third year of King Seongjong's reign (984) and continued until the fall of the dynasty. Afterward, it displayed a tendency to be ritualized in terms of the purpose and procedure of the rite and the use of rite objects



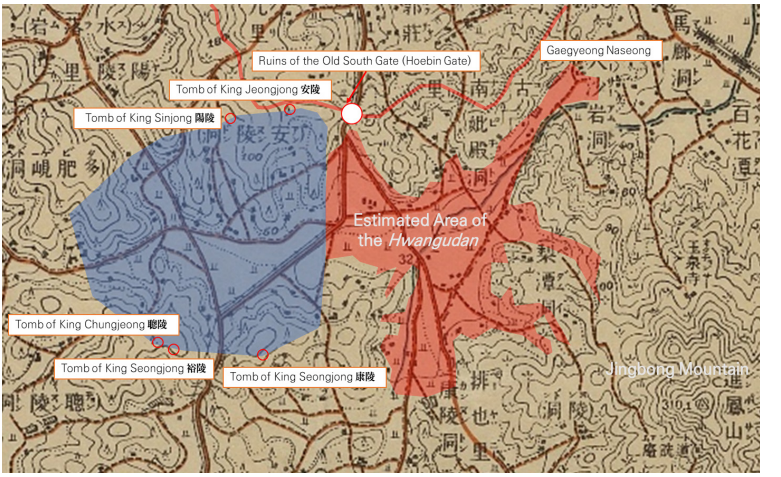


Figure 1. Location of the *Hwangudan* in the Goryeo Dynasty

under the influence of the Song dynasty and the Yuan empire (Yi 2024a).

Goryeo's *hwangudan* altar was outside of the Hoebinmun Gate (south gate) of Nasung, the outer wall of the capital city of Kaesong. The altar formed the capital's north-south axis, and in this sense, the *jesa* held at the altar was also called the southern suburban sacrificial rite. The exact location of the Hoebinmun Gate was confirmed by a joint survey by North Korea and France in 2014, providing an assumption that the *hwangudan* altar site is located to the south of the gate site. The altar has a symbolic location showing that the Goryeo dynasty adopted the ruling ideology of the Tang dynasty. The capital of Goryeo represented the *center of the world*, and the symbolic north-south axis was formed penetrating the palace area (Gungseong), the outer area (Hwangseong), and then the most outer area encompassing the entire capital of Gaegyeong (Naseong). This provides an understanding of the art of rule that connects royal authority with territory.

Structure and Layout of the Goryeo Hwangudan Altar

The interior of the *hwangudan* altar has the *sindan*, a main platform, at its center. The circular platform is 19 meters in circumference, approximately 6.06 meters in diameter, and 29 square meters in area when the measurements recorded in the *History of Goryeo* are converted to the current units. On top of the *sindan* platform, a rite table and a drinking table 尊所 were prepared

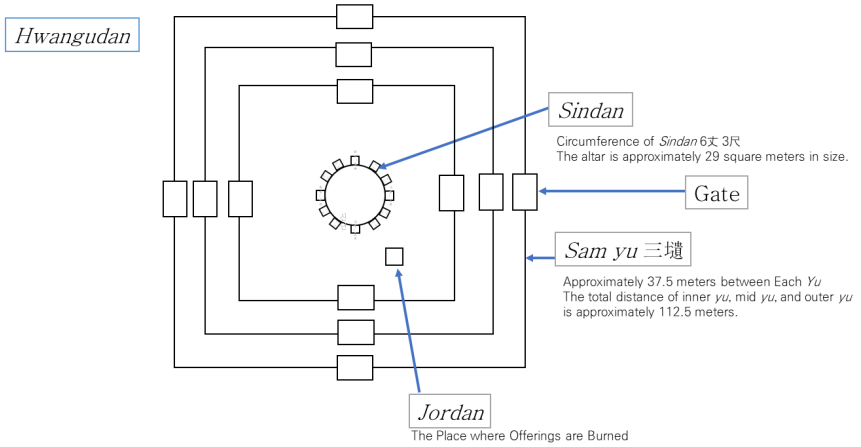


Figure 2. Layout of the *Hwangudan*

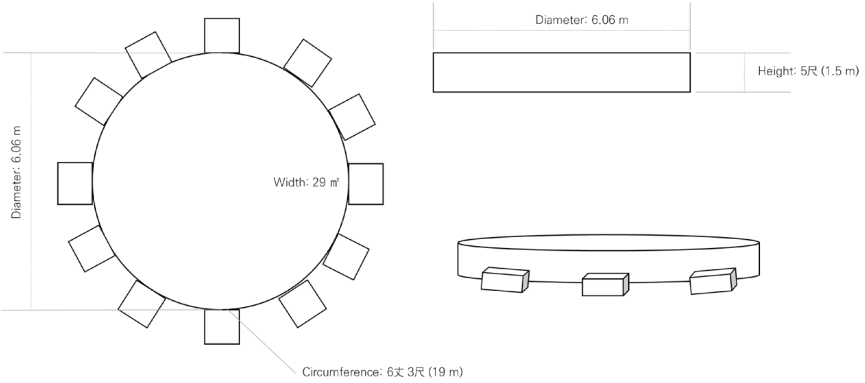


Figure 3. Specifications of the *Sindan*

for the Heaven God and the Founder, and while, under the platform, tables were arranged according to the five directions signifying the five deities. The platform was a single-story structure, which was differentiated from Tang's three-story altar (Jiang 2013; Zhao 2017) and Song's four-story altar.

Sindan was enclosed by low walls called *yu* 壝, consisting of the inner, middle, and outer walls. The walls divided the inner *jesa* space into smaller sections where the king and rite performers stayed separately. Those walls separated the altar into the *sindan* as the center of the rite and the rest accessible to the general public. This arrangement played an essential role in ensuring that the king could establish the order of state administration.

The *hwangudan* altar was built on a flat land surrounded by mountains, and arrangements were made to ensure that the *jesa* procedures and the king's movement could proceed smoothly. Sections were divided according to the deities to worship, and rite objects and sacrifices were efficiently arranged. This shows that the *hwangudan* altar functioned as a symbolic venue of state rule. However, in 1405, the altar in Gaegyeong was abolished, and after that, the site was used as a hunting ground.

Location and Composition of the Goryeo *Sajikdan* Altars

Location of the Goryeo Sajikdan Altars

Sajik jesa of the Goryeo dynasty was performed for Taesa (Great Spirit of the Land 太社), Taejik (Great Spirit of Agriculture 太稷), Hou Tu (Deified Lord of Warfare and Water Control 后土氏), and Hou Ji (Deified Lord Ancestor of Agriculture and Grain Cultivation 后稷氏). By conducting the rite, the ruler symbolized his territory and prayed for abundant harvest. Although *sajik jesa* originated in China, it is unclear when it began. In ancient China, altars were installed for *sajik jesa* at the village level, and *jesa* itself had a hierarchy according to the village size.

Unlike China, where *sajikdan* altars were set up in the capital as well as local areas, Goryeo *sajikdan* altars were installed only in the capitals, i.e., Gaegyeong and Ganghwado (Yi 2024a). In February of the 10th year of King Seongjong's reign (991), a *sajikdan* altar was first built in Gaegyeong and later repaired at the suggestion of General Gang Gam-chan during the reign of King Hyeonjong. In the 6th year of King Munjong's reign (1052), the altar was *rebuilt* in the western part of Hwangseong. After that, the *sajikdan* altar must have been located in the west of Hwangseong between Seohwamun Gate of Gungseong and Yeongchumun Gate that connects Naseong and Hwangseong.

There are two different opinions on the location of the *sajikdan* altar in Goryeo. Though some argue that the altar was sited outside Naseong, this seems to have resulted from the wrong records of the Joseon dynasty stemming from misunderstanding. According to the *Revised Augmented Survey of the Geography of Korea* (*Sinjeung dongguk yeoji seungram* 新增

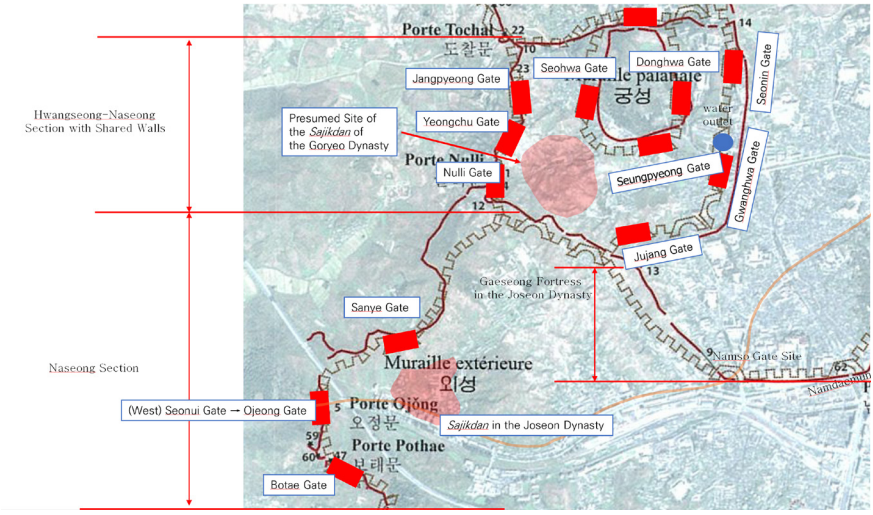


Figure 4. Location of the *Sajikdan* Altar during the Goryeo Dynasty

東國輿地勝覽), the altar was located at the foot of Ogongsan Mountain in the west of Kaesong (Gaegyeong in Goryeo). However, over time, changes were made in part of the wall structure and the names of the gates of Hwangseong and Naseong, and as a result, the records created in the Joseon dynasty on the location of the *sajikdan* altar ended up being different from its original location.

The survey records of the Government-General Museum of Chosen in 1935 show that the actual measurements of the Goryeo *sajikdan* altar remaining in Kaesong were identical to the local *sajikdan*s altars of the Joseon dynasty. Although the exact location of the Goryeo *sajikdan* altar is currently unknown, it is presumed to have been sited near the Manwoldae site. To determine its exact location requires archaeological surveys of the Goryeo ceremonial venues.

The location of the Goryeo *sajikdan* altar is related to the concept of the east-west axis adopted in the capital architecture of the East Asian dynasties. The axis was formed by placing the palace at the center, the royal shrine (*taemyo* or *jongmyo*) in the south, and the *sajikdan* altar in the west. The altar served as a venue that represented the political ideology of the king and symbolized agriculture and abundance—the state's economic foundation (Yang 2019; Han 2007).

Composition of the Goryeo Sajikdan Altar

The Goryeo *sajikdan* altar consisted of *taesadan* and *taejikdan* platforms. On the north side of these smaller platforms was the *yegam* for burying sacrificial offerings, while entrances were set up on all four sides. The layout of the internal space of the *sajikdan* altar was created to reflect the significance and hierarchy of the rites. *Taesadan* and *taejikdan* were designed in a square shape. The top of *taesadan* was covered with earth colored in *obangsaek* (five colors symbolizing the five directions), while the top of *taejikdan* was covered with yellow earth, revealing the difference in the significance of the deities to worship. Each platform measures approximately 15.75 meters, 248.0625 square meters in area, and 1.134 meters in height.

On the north side of each platform, two *yegam*s were installed. These pits were made to ensure that the deities could accept the offerings buried in the ground since they have the qualities of earth symbolizing territory and agriculture.

Entrances were erected on all four sides to surround the platforms. Outside the *sajikdan* altar's east gate were *saengbang*, a place used to prepare for offerings, and *chanman*, a tent storing prepared offerings and rite objects. The south gate was used to bring food to offer to the deities, and the west gate was the passage through which attendees came in and out. The north gate was not used since it was considered an entrance for the deities. In this way, each entrance was used considering the movement of rite objects and attendees.

Unlike those of the Chinese and Joseon dynasties, the Goryeo *sajikdan*

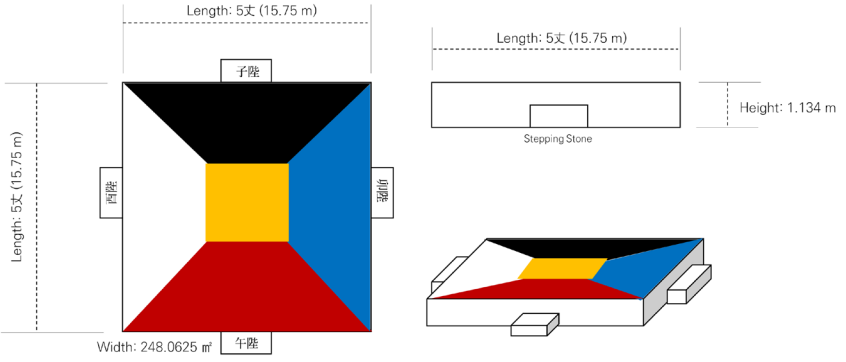


Figure 5. Specifications of the *Taesadan*

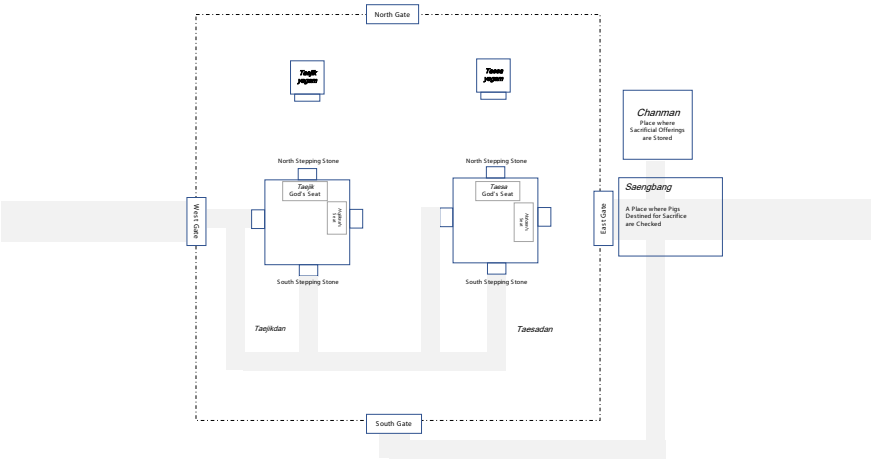


Figure 6. Layout of the *Sajikdan*

altar had no *yu* installed. In China, *yu* was a boundary separating the deities and rite attendees and played a role in emphasizing the deities and the acts of the ruler who presided over the rite. However, there was no *yu* set up in the Goryeo *sajikdan*, since the king did not preside over the rite himself and had his subjects perform it on his behalf. This resulted in displaying the political authority of the king, instead of his acts. In addition, there was no separate space for ceremonial purification, which shows the dynasty's unique way of *sajik jesa*.

Comparison of the *Hwangudan* and *Sajikdan* Altars and the Possibility of the East Asian Perspective

The Meaning of the Sacrifice to Heaven and Earth

In East Asia, *hwangu jesa and sajik jesa* were important rites that reflected the political ideology of the king. The *hwangudan* altar was established to offer sacrifices to the deity of heaven, but *sajikdan* to the deity of earth and grain. The two types of *jesa* served to emphasize and reproduce the prosperity and stability of the state, as well as the legitimacy of royal authority. In China, the two types of altars took root as symbols of the rule of state, and the rites

continued consistently through the ages. Goryeo had a similar tradition of sacrifice but differed in how the rites were carried out.

In the Chinese dynasties since Tang, rites to heaven and earth consisted of *hwangu jesa* and *banggu jesa* 方丘祭祀, literally those enacted at round and square altars, respectively (Wechsler 2015). In many cases, such ceremonies were presided over directly by the emperor, thereby reaffirming the order of the state (Chang 2012). In the Goryeo dynasty, on the other hand, the king himself did not preside over *hwangu jesa* and *sajik jesa*, which clearly shows that the way the rites were performed was different from that of the Chinese dynasties. In China, rites were essential procedures for reaffirming the authority and order of the state. In Goryeo, however, *hwangu jesa* and *sajik jesa* symbolized royal authority, which implies that they served as a means to justify royal authority, presented the direction of state administration, and at the same time, reflected the worldview of the Goryeo people.

Spatial and Ritual Differences between the Hwangudan and Sajikdan Altars

The locations of *hwangudan* and *sajikdan* altars were important factors that reflected the symbolic characteristics and practical functions of *hwangu* and *sajik jesa*. A *hwangudan* altar in China, located east of the south gate outside the capital, was a venue highlighting the authority and centrality of the state and visually revealing the ruling structure and authority of the state. Goryeo also placed the *hwangudan* altar in a similar location to those of China and accepted the *hwangudan jesa* system of the Chinese dynasties, although implementing it in a way that reflected the dynasty's unique characteristics. In particular, an exceptional location was chosen for Goryeo's *hwangudan* altar based on its mutual arrangement with the royal tombs and the east-west axis of Naseong, forming the political and symbolic venue of the Goryeo dynasty.

Goryeo modeled its *hwangu jesa* on China's but changed its way of implementation into its own style. This can be seen from the fact that the dynasty interpreted the altar to fit regional characteristics, though the location was the same with those of China (east of the south gate outside the capital) (Funo 2015; Yu and Yu 1989; Yang 2019; Watanabe 2010; Kim 2015). When it comes to the significant difference between China's imperial tombs and Goryoe's royal tombs, the former appears in clusters at a certain

distance from the capital (Yang 2019), while the latter was located around the boundaries of the capital to ensure that the functions and the symbolic characteristics of *hwangu jesa* were appropriately combined. Through this, the Goryeo dynasty adopted the Tang-style rite system while developing its unique elements in the implementation methods.

The size of the *hwangudan* altar also shows significant differences from China's. While China's altars were designed to be grand to display the state's authority, Goryeo's *hwangudan* was relatively small. This indicates that Goryeo arranged the altar differently to suit their political situation and symbolic needs, though it followed China's political symbolism.

Another difference can be found in the fact that Goryeo's *sajikdan* altar did not have *yu*, which is seen in the Chinese *sajikdan* altars. Since, in Goryeo, the king only ordered officials to perform the *sajik jesa*, instead of going to the altar and performing the ceremony himself, *yu* displaying the king's direct participation seems unnecessary. This suggests that the Goryeo dynasty adopted the Chinese rite system yet showed differences in how to display royal authority directly.

The differences in the locations, sizes, and forms of Goryeo and China's *hwangudan* and *sajikdan* altars demonstrate that Goryeo adopted the Chinese rite system and that the Goryeo people modified and applied it to suit their political and social circumstances. Although it appears to have followed the Chinese ceremonial system, it established its own rite system that reflected the uniqueness of its political authority and royal power.

Uniqueness of Altar Locations Stemming from Goryeo's Methods of Performing Dynastic Sacrificial Rites

The arrangement of the altar locations in the Goryeo capital has a unique meaning. First, the *hwangudan* and *sajikdan* altars had symbolic locations in the arrangement of the capital designed by the king: the former sat in the east of the south gate outside the capital, and the latter was located in the west inside the Hwangseong. The capital of Goryeo consisted of the Gungseong (the palace), Hwangseong (the outer area), and Naseong (the most outer area). The *hwangudan* altar was established in the east outside of Naseong and the *sajikdan* altar was built in the west inside of Hwangseong to ensure they were placed on the crucial axis of the capital. This arrangement

was not a simple spatial placement but also contained political and symbolic meanings. The *hwangudan* altar represented heaven, and the *sajikdan* altar represented the territory directly ruled by the king and the agricultural productivity from the earth (Han 2006, 2007). Through the rites, the king, as the primary agent of the rites, established social order and prayed for the stability and prosperity of the state.

The Goryeo dynasty placed the *hwangudan* and *sajikdan* altars in similar locations to those of the Chinese dynasties, further emphasizing their spatial symbolic characteristics. Their locations, one inside Hwangseong and the other outside Naseong, showed not only the centrality of royal authority but also the unique nature of the rite system adopted by Goryeo. In the Chinese dynasties, *jesa* was an essential rite that the emperor had to preside over, and accordingly, the altars were built in locations that emphasized their authority and symbolic characteristics. On the other hand, considering that not the king but high government officials enacted the rites in Goryeo, it can be seen that the arrangement of the altars had a pivotal function that enabled the rites to not simply convey a symbolic meaning but also to play political and social roles.

In Goryeo, the king did not perform any direct role during *jesa*, and high-ranking officials presided over the rite on his behalf. Accordingly, the arrangement and size of the altars show their distinctive characteristics compared to those of China. The Goryeo *hwangudan* was placed east outside Naseong, and the *sajikdan* west inside Hwangseong. This resulted from the intention to maintain the symbolic nature of *jesa* while reflecting the political and social uniqueness stemming from the fact that high-ranking officials, not the king, conducted the rites. Not limited to a mere spatial arrangement, the locations of the altars more clearly revealed the primary agent of the rites and their significance and served as an essential element in emphasizing the rite performance methods and uniqueness of the Goryeo dynasty.

The differences in the rite performance methods of the Goryeo and Chinese dynasties were clearly reflected in the arrangements of the altars. In the Chinese dynasties, the emperor stood at the center of the altar and presided over the rites himself, and the altars were placed in locations that emphasized his authority and symbolic nature. *Hwangudan* and *sajikdan* altars were important symbolic venues where the emperor's authority was clearly demonstrated in the capital, and since the emperor's direct

participation was essential, these venues were closely related to the centrality of the capital (Watanabe 2010; Funo 2015; Yang 2019). On the other hand, in Goryeo, the king did not directly preside over the rites, and high-ranking officials took on the role on his behalf. Accordingly, the arrangement and scale of the altars also showed characteristics different from those of China. The smaller scale of the *hwangudan* and the absence of *yu* at the *sajikdan* in Goryeo were the results of maintaining the symbolic nature of the rites while reflecting the political and social uniqueness brought about by the fact that high-ranking officials, not the king, conducted the rites. This was not a simple spatial arrangement but also more clearly revealed the primary agent performing the rites and the significance of the arrangement, thereby serving as a crucial element emphasizing the rite performance methods and uniqueness of the Goryeo dynasty.

Goryeo's Jesa in the East Asian Context

The East Asian perspective proposed in this review goes beyond mere geographical scope and serves to explain how common political, cultural, and religious traditions—particularly the concept of the mandate of heaven given to the ruler, reflected in the Chinese rite system, rather than religious characteristics seen from the Confucian perspective—were accepted and transformed in each country. While imitating Chinese rite traditions, Goryeo developed its own sacrificial rite system by adding its regionally unique characteristics, which can be interpreted as an example of cultural interaction and independent reinterpretation that occurred across East Asia.

Hwangudan altars of the Chinese dynasties were usually built east outside the south gate of the capital. It was not a mere rite venue but was recognized as a kind of *palace* that included a place for the emperor to stay and a waiting area for his entourage. In contrast, the *hwangudan* altar of Goryeo was sited east outside Naseong. There was no separate space for the emperor to stay, while officials purified themselves at government offices or their own homes, or tents pitched there. This shows that, unlike the Chinese dynasties that conducted *hwangu jesa* as a state rite focusing on the emperor, Goryeo performed it in a strongly bureaucratic manner. This difference demonstrates how the role of the king and his symbolic characteristics in state rites were adjusted in each dynasty, as well as the physical arrangement of the altars.

In addition, in China, the *sajikdan* altars sat in the west part of the capital and were used as a venue where the emperor presided over the rites. On the other hand, in Goryeo, the altar was located west inside Hwangseong, but there are no records that the king himself performed the *jesa*. This suggests that, although Goryeo followed the same spatial arrangement of the altar as that in China, there were differences in the way the rites were conducted. In other words, *sajik jesa* in Goryeo was offered by high-ranking officials, on behalf of the king, which shows that in the state's political structure, the *jesa* played a symbolic role in maintaining the authority of the king and state order, while granting officials a practical political role. This case of Goryeo is an important example that demonstrates that the primary agent of the rite and the way of performing it can be transformed according to the political and social situations of a state while maintaining the common elements of East Asia.

Goryeo's way of performing *jesa* is not a simple imitation of the Chinese system but can be understood as a process of transformation that reflected the state's unique political and social characteristics while keeping common elements of East Asia. In other words, although *jesa* was used as a critical means to justify power, Goryeo kings, unlike Chinese emperors, did not preside over all dynastic sacrificial rites and instead had government officials performed them on behalf of the kings. This highlighted that the king had political influence and acted as a driving force for the operating of the state. In this respect, Goryeo's dynastic sacrificial rite system shows unique characteristics that are different from those of China and can be evaluated as a case that demonstrates the possibility of studying the transformation and acceptance of sacrificial rites in the East Asian context.

Conclusion: Significance of Previous Research and Direction of Follow-up Research

Focusing on Goryeo's *hwangudan* and *sajikdan* altars, this paper analyzed the spatial arrangement and unique performance methods of Goryeo rites by comparing them with the sacrificial rite systems of the Chinese dynasties. Goryeo formed its own sacrificial rite system by accepting Chinese rite traditions and modifying them to fit its political and social situations. In

particular, the spatial arrangement of *jesa* altars and the rite performance methods differ from China, providing essential clues to understanding the ruling system and bureaucratic operation of the Goryeo dynasty.

The spatial arrangement of *hwangudan* and *sajikdan* altars is not simply a formal element of rites but is also closely related to the dynamics of rites. Rite altars are not fixed structures, but venues in which various elements interact and change over time. In Goryeo, the *hwangudan* altar was located on the capital's outskirts and served as a symbolic space that shed light on the king's authority. However, the role of performing the rite itself was delegated to officials, demonstrating that the visual representation of royal authority was combined with rule through the bureaucratic system. The *sajikdan* altar was placed within the capital, but the lack of records of the king's direct participation shows that Goryeo's way of performing rites differs from that of China. This suggests that rites were not a simple occasion that occurred in that venue but rather a tool that visually reproduced and reinforced political power and social order.

Regarding the dynamics of rite, a rite venue is not merely the background for performing rites but acts as the rite itself. Rite venues determine the movement of attendees, the order of rites, and the visual experience of those watching the rites, thereby maximizing the effect and function of the rites. For example, the location of the *hwangudan* altar spatially visualizes the relationship between the king and the people, conveying a specific political message to both participants and viewers of the rites. This shows that the function of rites goes beyond a simple symbolic representation to forge social relationships and reaffirm the power structure.

This study contributes to understanding how the spatial characteristics and procedures of rites functioned in the ruling system of the Goryeo dynasty. Although rites consist of repetitive formal acts, change and adaptation occur even through that repetitiveness and are revealed through the selection of altar locations and rite performance methods. Goryeo's case shows that the dynasty did not simply imitate the tradition of Chinese ceremonies but transformed them to suit its political needs through its own interpretation. This highlights that *jesa* was not simply a religious ceremony or custom but a means of realizing the state's political goals and ruling strategies.

Future research should explore how the spatial characteristics of Goryeo rites were linked to regional areas, and what social and cultural significance

the performance of such rites had for the people. In addition, if a deep analysis is made of what kind of experiences the visual elements and spatial arrangement of the rites provided to the participants and viewers, a more multifaceted understanding can be made possible of rites' function in governance in Goryeo culture. Furthermore, this study can be expanded to discuss how rites were transformed and accepted in various forms in the cultural and natural environmental contexts by comparing Goryeo's *jesa* system with similar rite systems in East Asian countries. Such research will serve as essential basic data that facilitates deep insight into the complexity and governmental function of state sacrificial rites.

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Translated by Hayoung LEE