

The Development of Suryukjae in Goryeo and the Significance of State-sponsored Suryukjae during the Reign of King Gongmin

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Introduction

Suryukjae (水陸齋), the “rite for deliverance of creatures of water and land,” refers to a Buddhist ritual to placate evil spirits and console lonely souls wandering the waters and land of the earth by guiding them to heaven through dharma lectures and offerings of food. It is both a Buddhist ceremony for directing souls to the next world (薦度, *cheondo*) and an offering of food to hungry ghosts (施餓鬼會, *Siagwihoe*), both of which emerged as widespread practices throughout East Asia during the Tang dynasty (618-907). According to the sixth century text *Repentance Ritual of the Great Compassion* (慈悲道場懺法, Ch.Cibei daochang chanfa), a Suryukjae was first held by Emperor Wu (武帝, r. 502–549) of the Liang dynasty of China. However, this is considered simply an element of the legend surrounding their origin; no record confirms that such rites were actually held prior to the Tang dynasty. In China, Suryukjae (Ch. Shuilu rite) had become firmly established and practiced among the ordinary people during the Song dynasty (960–1279). Its popularity was driven by the ruling class, the Tiantai school of Buddhism, and the followers of the Pure Land cult. In Korea,

Suryukjae was being held by the reign of King Gwangjong (光宗, r. 949–975) at the latest. **027**

Historical research carried out in Korea on Suryukjae is mainly focused on the Joseon dynasty (1392–1897). Not only does the bulk of the surviving documentary provide evidence on the rite date to that period, but around the final years of Goryeo and early years of Joseon, Suryukjae became an important issue relating to the suppression of Buddhism. While most Buddhist rites were removed from state ceremonies after the foundation of Joseon, Suryukjae, as a ritual praying for the souls of the dead, continued to be held on the grounds that it was needed to help save those suffering from diseases and to assuage public sentiment. Indeed, in 1395 King Taejo (太祖, r. 1392–1398), the founder of the Joseon dynasty, held the first regular state-sponsored Suryukjae to appease the souls of King Gongyang of Goryeo (恭讓王, r. 1389–1392) and other members of the Goryeo royal family. King Sejong (世宗, r. 1418–1450) gradually incorporated the rites held on the forty-ninth day after a person’s death and the Buddhist ancestral memorial rite (忌晨齋, *Gisinjae*) into Suryukjae, and Suryukjae became the only Buddhist ceremony to be recorded in Joseon’s *Gyeongguk daejeon* (經國大典, National code) (Fig. 1). Suryukjae continued as the only state-sponsored Buddhist rite during



Fig. 1. *Gyeongguk daejeon*. 33.6 x 21.9 cm. National Museum of Korea

the early Joseon period until its discontinuation in the early sixteenth century under the persecution of Buddhism initiated by King Yeonsangun (燕山君, r. 1494–1506). While Suryukjae had been held by the state and the royal court during the early years of Joseon, it became widely practiced in private homes. The fundamental Suryukjae ritual procedures handed down to the present are said to have been established at this time.

As a state-sponsored rite of the early Joseon period, Suryukjae is an important research subject for understanding the court ceremonies of the era and the relationship between Buddhism and the state during the first half of the dynasty. Despite the growing body of research on Suryukjae as it were held at the time, it has yet to be confirmed when Suryukjae was first included among the funeral rites of the Joseon court, and indeed proper research on Joseon's acceptance and adoption of the Buddhist rite remains to be pursued.

This paper examines the process of the acceptance of Suryukjae by the state in the first half of the Goryeo dynasty and its broad diffusion during the latter half in order to illuminate how Suryukjae became established as a key component of court funeral rites by the late Goryeo period. It also shows how Suryukjae naturally came to be conducted as a state rite in the early Joseon period by examining its continuity as an official event in the relationship between the state-sponsored Suryukjae held for the funerals of King Gongmin (恭愍王, r. 1351–1374) and his consort Princess Noguk-daejang (魯國大長公主, ?–1365) of Goryeo and Suryukjae included as a part of Joseon state funerals. It is necessary to this end to understand how Suryukjae were conducted during the Goryeo dynasty, so the development of Suryukjae across the Goryeo period and its transmission from China as a state-sponsored rite during the first half of the dynasty is discussed. Next, the diversification of Suryukjae in the latter half of Goryeo is explored and shown

how the rite was held with the specific objective of directing souls of the dead to the paradise (*cheondo*). After reaching this understanding of the context in which Suryukjae was held as a court *cheondo* rite during the reign of King Gongmin, the paper examines the relationship between state-sponsored Suryukjae during this reign and the Suryukjae held as part of court funeral rites and as a state-sponsored rite during the early Joseon dynasty.

Suryukjae in the First Half of Goryeo and the Transmission of Ritual Texts

Buddhist rites accounted for a significant proportion of state-sponsored rites and ceremonies during the Goryeo dynasty and were held on a regular and irregular basis. Some of these rites were held for the first time during this period. The diversification of Buddhist rituals is a distinctive feature of the Buddhist culture of the time and reflects the multiplicity and richness of such faith during the Goryeo period and its importance both to the state and in the everyday lives of the people.

Suryukjae is presumed to have been adopted in Goryeo during the tenth century through exchanges with the Wu-Yue Kingdom (907–978) in China. Originating in the Indian Buddhist ritual of making food offerings to hungry ghosts (施餓鬼會, K. Siagwihoe, Ch. Shieguihui), it became established in China. It is believed that around the tenth century, when the term *suryuk* (水陸, Ch. *shuilu*, lit. “water and land”) came to be applied, Suryukjae was distinct from the rite for hungry ghosts. The oldest record of Suryukjae is found in the tract *Rectifying the Term “Food Bestowal”* (施食正名, Ch. Shishi zhengming) authored by the Song dynasty monk Ciyun Zunshi (慈雲遵式, 964–1032) of the Tiantai school of Buddhism. The rite first became popular in the Wu-Yue region around the tenth century and was established as an independent rite with its prayers and procedures during the Song dynasty when the legend emerged of Emperor Wu of Liang as the creator of Suryukjae and dedicated ritual texts (儀式文, Ch. *yishi wen*) appeared. When the rite later spread to the provinces and ordinary homes, it became the definitive Buddhist rite of China. Transmission of Suryukjae to Korea soon followed its establishment in China. In this regard, it should be noted that the earliest recorded performance of Suryukjae in Korea dates to the reign of King



Fig. 2. Stele of National Preceptor Beobin (Tanmun). 978. 240 x 116.5 cm

Gwangjong of Goryeo, that Buddhism during Gwangjong's reign was characterized by exchanges with the Wu-Yue region, and that the Wu-Yue kingdom is thought to be where Suryukjae first took hold in China.

King Gwangjong of Goryeo is renowned for implementing various systems and institutions aimed at strengthening the royal authority and laying the foundation for a robust central government. However, as pointed out by the Goryeo scholar Choe Seungno (崔承老, 927-989) and reported in the record on the nineteenth year of the king's reign in the *Goryeosa* (高麗史, History of Goryeo), Gwangjong was criticized in his later years for excessive patronage of Buddhist rites and ceremonies, too often holding the Ceremony of the Release of Fish (放生法會, Bangsaeng beophoe), the Food Offering Rite (功德齋, Gongdeokjae), and others. Choe Seungno particularly censured a Suryukjae held at Gwibeopsa Temple (歸法寺). Gwibeopsa Temple was established in 963 (the fourteenth year of the reign of King Gwangjong), so the rite must have been convened there at some point after that year. One figure who should be noted in this regard is Tanmun (坦文, 900-975) (Fig. 2), who was appointed abbot of Gwibeopsa Temple by Gwangjong in 968 to accompany its adoption as a royal temple. Tanmun was an elderly monk of the Hwaom (Avatamsaka) school of Buddhism who had been closely connected to the Goryeo court since its foundation and had presided over numerous food offering rites for the royal family. Taking all of these conditions together, it can be deduced that the rite criticized by Choe Seungno was held at Gwibeopsa Temple after 968. The status of Gwibeopsa Temple during the reign of King Gwangjong and the conditions

in which Suryukjae were held indicate that the rite was still limited to the court at this point and not yet practiced in ordinary homes.

During the reign of King Seonjong (宣宗, r. 1083-1094), the Suryukjae ritual text (*uisikmun*) was introduced to Goryeo and a hall named Suryukdang dedicated to the performance of the rite was built at temples. According to *History of Goryeo*, Choe Sageom (崔士謙) obtained the Suryukjae ritual text from Song China and requested that King Seonjong build a hall where the rite could be held. However, while such a hall was under construction at Bojesa Temple (普濟寺) in the Goryeo capital Gaegyeong during the first month of 1090, a fire broke out in the temple. This indicates that Suryukjae would have been held according to the procedures laid out in the ritual text from the reign of King Seonjong at the latest. It also tells us that Goryeo Buddhist temples included a separate building called a Suryukdang for the purpose of holding the rite. As King Seonjong planned to build such a hall at Bojesa Temple, it appears that, like King Gwangjong, he intended to hold Suryukjae as a state or court ceremony. Moreover, since the hall was being built at the request of Choe Sageom, who had obtained the Suryukjae ritual text from China, the building was evidently intended for the performance of Suryukjae according to the Chinese litany. The surviving records go no further on this subject, but based on conditions in Goryeo around 1090 and the manner in which Suryukjae were held in the Song dynasty from where the ritual text was imported, we can gain a rough idea about Goryeo Suryukjae and the halls built for them.

Following the Liao (Khitans) invasion of Goryeo in 993 (the twelfth year of the reign of King Seonjong), the Goryeo and Song dynasties repeatedly severed and then resumed official diplomatic ties. During the reign of King Seonjong, when Choe Sageom was said to have traveled to Song China, Goryeo sent two missions in 1086, but none over the next five years. It was not until the seventh month of 1090 that Goryeo dispatched another mission. Hence, if Choe Sageom traveled to Song as an official envoy, it is likely that he took part in the 1086 mission and presumably brought the Suryukjae ritual text back to Goryeo around that time. This date is important for identifying the Suryukjae ritual text upon which the construction of Suryukdang was based. The period is also of interest as a time of active exchanges of Buddhism and books between the Song and Goryeo dynasties, including contacts between National Preceptor Uicheon (義天, 1055-1101) of Goryeo and his disciples with Song Buddhist figures. Uicheon's *Sinpyeon jejong gyojang chongnok* (新編諸宗教藏總錄), a catalog

of all the Buddhist sects' commentaries on the Tripitaka drawn up during the publication of *Gyojang*, the canon of doctrinal teachings, includes *Shishi xuzhi* (施食須知, Essential knowledge on feeding hungry ghosts), a volume on the rite for hungry ghosts written by the Song dynasty monk Renyue (仁岳, 992–1064). Although there are no known examples of the use of *Shishi xuzhi* as a ritual text or evidence of its being widely distributed in Goryeo society, it has been confirmed that ritual texts on the Rite of Feeding Hungry Ghosts had indeed been transmitted to Goryeo by its middle period.

Notably, Choe Sagyeom served as an official called an *ilgwan* (日官) at the Taesaguk, Goryeo's bureau of astronomy and divination. *Ilgwan* officials were specialists in matters related to astronomy, geography, weather observation, water clocks (clepsydra), divination, geomancy (風水, K. *pungsu*, Ch. *fengshui*), and calendrical science. As geography and geomancy experts, they were often called upon to decide the site for the construction of a temple, and when a given temple was elevated as a national or royal temple, they were dispatched to take charge of efforts such as funerals or the erection of monuments and stupas. In major state Buddhist ceremonies such as Yeondeunghoe (燃燈會, Lotus Lantern Festival) and Palgwanhoe (八關會, Festival of the Eight Vows), they announced the time or attended the king during the royal procession. They were also involved in rites to avert calamity (祈禳, *giyang*) and various other state ceremonies. Evidently, overseeing official state Buddhist events and projects made up a large proportion of the work of Taesaguk officials.

When Choe Sagyeom went to Song China in the latter half of the eleventh century, the publication of Suryukjae-related texts was flourishing and the ritual was taking root as an independent rite with its own history and ritual texts separate from the Rite of Feeding Hungry Ghosts. The legend had been established that Emperor Wu of Liang had written the first Suryukjae ritual text and held the first such rite. Reflecting this, related buildings such as Shuilutang (水陸堂, K. Suryukdang), Shuiluyuan (水陸院, K. Suryukwon), and Shuiludian (水陸殿, K. Suryukjeon) were built at Song dynasty temples from the eleventh century. "Jinshansi shuilutang ji" (金山寺水陸堂記, Record of Shuilutang at Jinshan Temple) was produced by Zeng Gong (曾鞏) at Jinshan Temple in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu Province, where Emperor Wu is said to have held the first Suryukjae rite. A temple hall dedicated to Suryukjae was built there in 1049. From "Chengtianyuan ji" (承天院記, "Record of Chengtianyuan") by Li Gou (李覲), it can be confirmed that a hall for Suryukjae was operated even earlier, around 1036, at

Chengtian Temple in Quanzhou, Fujian Province. Additionally, the anthologies of Song literati, such as the poet Mei Yaochen (梅堯臣, 1002–1060) and the scholar-official Ouyang Xiu (歐陽脩, 1007–1072), confirm that separate halls dedicated to Suryukjae were being built within temples during the Song dynasty.

In eleventh-century Song China, Suryukjae were actively held in the royal court with support from the scholar-official class. The writer and poet Su Shi (1036–1101) opened a Suryukjae temple in 1093 for his deceased second wife and compiled "Shuilu faxiang zan" (水陸法像贊, Eulogy of the iconography of the Water Land Rite). The historian Sima Guang (司馬光, 1019–1086) held the Offering Rite to Monks (飯僧會, Ch. Fansenghui, K. Banseunghoe) or Water Land Assembly (水陸大會, Ch. Shuilu dahui, K. Suryukdaehoe) to mark the 49th-day anniversary or first anniversary after death. The Song court also held a Suryukjae in the royal coffin hall (殯殿, Ch. *bindian*, K. *binjeon*) on the 49th day after a death and on major seasonal divisions such as the winter solstice, Cold Food Day (寒食, Hansik), or on the death anniversary of a deceased empress, empress dowager, or emperor who had not yet received their temple names. Also, in the belief that disasters and epidemics could be caused by wandering souls caught in *bardo*, a condition between death and rebirth from which they were unable to reach heaven, the state would hold rites to guide those souls to heaven whenever calamity, plague, or pestilence struck. They would also gather the bodies of any dead who had not been buried and hold Suryukjae for them. In this regard, Suryukjae were in general events organized by the court, the state, or the ruling class during the Song dynasty rather than a rite for ordinary people.

Considering Goryeo Suryukjae in relation to the characteristics of Suryukjae held during the eleventh century in Song China, it is likely that Goryeo court during the reign of King Seonjong intended to organize the rite according to the ritual texts that were being circulated through Song China at the time. The fact that the astronomy bureau official Choe Sagyeom brought the Suryukjae ritual text from China and pursued the construction of a Suryukdang as a separate hall for the rite is not unrelated to the role played by *ilgwan* officials like Choe in forecasting or preventing shifts in the weather under the belief that extraordinary phenomena in the heavens and on land arose out of harmony between yin and yang and the five elements. Also, that a Suryukdang was built by royal command during the reign of King Seonjong and that it was constructed at Bojesa Temple in the capital, Gaegyeong, indicate that Suryukjae had



Fig. 3. Baengnyeonsa Temple (Photograph by the author)

Diversification of Suryukjae in the Late Goryeo Period

Goryeo dynasty records related to the Suryukjae rite begin to increase in number from the period of the Yuan intervention. Compared to records from the first half of Goryeo, predominately limited to *History of Goryeo*, Suryukjae is mentioned in the latter half of the dynasty in a wider range of texts, including literary anthologies. Moreover, these records describe concrete reasons for holding Suryukjae and relate how the rite was adopted and held as a state ceremony during the early period, but over time emerged as a rite performed by common people. They also confirm that a variety of ritual texts for holding Suryukjae were compiled, published, and distributed.

Suryukjaeso (水陸齋疏, Memorial on Suryukjae), written by Cheonchaek (天頊, ?-?), the fourth patriarch of the White Lotus Association (白蓮結社, Baengnyeong Gyeolsa), is the earliest text from the latter Goryeo period to be written on Suryukjae. It is estimated that Cheonchaek held Suryukjae at Baengnyeonsa Temple (白蓮社) (Fig. 3) around the time the war ended with the Mongols, most likely as a rite to guide the souls of in the dead from war to heaven. The fact that Suryukjae were being organized and sponsored by Baengnyeonsa Temple, a temple of the Cheontae (天台, Ch. Tiantai) school of Buddhism, is linked with the traditions of the Song dynasty Tiantai school, which published Suryukjae ritual texts and first systemized the rite. Like Tiantai Buddhism in the Song dynasty, the Cheontae school in Goryeo emphasized repentance according to the ideological and religious characteristics of the White Lotus Association, which pursued the original Tiantai ideas and methods of spiritual practice. Cheonchaek stated in his book that the rite should not be held using state funding, but based on contributions from individuals, which seems to indicate that the Suryukjae at Baengnyeonsa Temple were not state-sponsored events.

Suryukjae held during the latter to late Goryeo period following the recorded Suryukjae at Baengnyeonsa Temple share several characteristics: the rites were held regardless of the school of Buddhism; they were held not only by the court but also by members of the aristocratic official class who regarded them as an important ritual for guiding souls to heaven; and the distinction between Suryukjae and the Mucha Daehoe (無遮大會, Ch. Wuzhe Dahui), or Great Assembly of Non-discrimination, had eroded to the point that the two events were often perceived to be the same. Such changes suggest that the

been adopted as a state or royal Buddhist ceremony at the time.

The question remains as to the identity of the ritual text brought back from Song by Choe Sagyeom. Despite the lack of documentary evidence, it is highly likely to be either Yang E's (楊鏐, 974–1020) *Ritual Text* (儀文, Ch. *Yiwen*, K. *Euimun*) or the ritual text compiled by the Tiantai monk Ciyun Zunshi (慈雲遵式, 964–1034), considering the timeframe. The reign of King Seonjong, when the ritual text was adopted and a Suryukdang constructed according to its contents, should be seen as the period when the Goryeo Suryukjae was being systematized, so the rites held at the time would have been almost identical to those held in the Northern Song dynasty. The Northern Song Suryukjae rite is described in detail in Su Shi's *Eulogy of the Iconography of the Water Land Rite*. In the ritual as held by Su Shi, the altar contained two tiers serving as an upper and lower altar. Enshrined on the upper altar were eight icons: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, the Great Bodhisattva, Pratyeka Buddha, the Great Arhat, the Five Transcendentals, Dragon-god defending Dharma. Another eight were enshrined on the lower altar: Officials and Minor Officials, Tian (天, Heaven), Asura, Ren (人, Man), Hell, Preta (餓鬼, Hungry Ghosts), the Beast, and Beings Outside the Six Realms, making up sixteen icons in total. This system of upper and lower altars became the customary manner of holding Suryukjae in China during the Song dynasty, and it is highly likely that Goryeo Suryukjae rites based on the ritual text introduced through Northern Song China featured the same composition of upper and lower altars.



Fig. 4. *Cheonji myeongyang suryuk euimun (Jungnyemun)*. Published in 1533 at Songgwangsa Temple. 25.1 x 18.9 cm (Photograph by the author)



Fig. 5. *Naong gip*. 26 x 16.8 cm. National Museum of Korea

early-Joseon tendency to equate Suryukjae with Mucha Daehoe emerged at this time.

When King Chungmok (忠穆王, r. 1344–1348) fell ill in 1348, his mother, Princess Deongnyeong (Irinjinbal, ?–1375), sent former state councilor Yi Haegun to Mt. Cheonmasan to hold a Suryukhoe, or Water Land Assembly, to pray for her son. This is a case of a Suryukjae being held to relieve diseases, indicating a diversification in the purpose of their performance beyond funeral rites or Buddhist ancestral memorial rites. During the reign of King Gongmin, the Seon (Zen) priest Naong Hyegeun (懶翁惠勤, 1320–1376) preached at a state-sponsored Suryukjae held in honor of the deceased consort Princess Noguk-daejang. As a Suryukjae was also held upon the death of King Gongmin, it can be deduced that the rite had been established as a court ritual for guiding the souls of the dead to heaven at least this time. During the latter Goryeo period, Suryukjae were held as a Buddhist ritual for the mourning period in the form of a sermon for the souls of the dead and sentient beings of the six realms.

Suryukjae were held for similar purposes by ordinary officials as well. In “Memorial on a Suryukjae Held on the Death Anniversary of a Young Boy” (童子忌日水陸齋疏, Dongja gil suryukjaeso), a text by the late Goryeo-early Joseon civil official Yi Cheom (李詹, 1345–1405) about Suryukjae held on the anniversary of the death of a son at the age of five, Yi prays not only for the soul of his son, but also for other souls to

be guided to heaven through the rite. He prayed for all sentient and non-sentient beings, including souls who died after being attacked by a tiger or falling, souls who died on a roadside, bleached bones blown about by the wind and rolling in the sand, creatures with wings, and creatures with scales, to be freed from all kleshas (mental states that disturb the mind) and attain enlightenment. Finally, he prayed for the happiness of his young son in the other world.

Suryukjae were also held actively in the Seon (禪, Ch. Chan, J. Zen) school of Buddhism. Evidence of this is found in *Newly Compiled Text for the Water Land Ceremony* (新編水陸儀文, Sinpyeon suryuk uimun), collected by Ven. Hongu (混丘, 1251–1322), one of Goryeo’s most famous Seon monks. In the latter half of the Goryeo period, Seon monks wrote prayers or memorials for their deceased teachers and parents, or for others upon request, for use in funeral or memorial rites. Most of these prayers expressed wishes that the deceased attain enlightenment and meet Amitabha Buddha, who resides in the Pure Land, and basically emphasized the concept of the mind-only Pure Land, that is, “the Pure Land is the mind.” There is no mention of sentient beings in the Six Realms of Samsara or any expression of concern for the Six Realms of Samsara or Hell in the prayers (祭文, *jemun*) or memorials (疏文, *somun*) written by Seon monks. However, the fact that the prominent Seon monk Hongu published a ritual text related to the performance of Suryukjae is an indication that shifts took place within the



Fig. 6. Portrait of Three Priests (Jigong, Naong, and Muhak). Naong is on the right. 1782. Color on silk. 121.7 x 241.4 cm. Daegoksa Temple in Euseong-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do

Seon school itself. Moreover, as the title shows, the ritual text that he wrote was a newly compiled edition, or *sinpyeon*. This book has been lost in history and its contents cannot be clearly confirmed, but if a figure such as Hongu compiled and published a Suryukjae ritual text, it must mean that Suryukjae were indeed being held irrespective of the school of Buddhism during the latter half of Goryeo. The Goryeo monk Jugam Yugong (竹菴 猷公) identified the differences among existing Suryukjae ritual texts and published *Jungnyemun* (中禮文), a simplified version of Zikui's (仔夔) *Tiandi mingyang shuilu yiwen* (天地冥陽水陸儀文) from the Jin dynasty in China (Fig. 4).

Suryukjae were also broadly popular in the Yuan dynasty and held in the capital of Dadu and Huabei (Northern China), from where they spread across the country. In records such as *History of Yuan* (元史, *Yuanshi*) or *Biographies of Prominent Monks of the Great Ming* (大明高僧傳, *Daoming gaosen zhuan*), there are many examples of Suryukjae being sponsored by the Yuan court. The court sponsored Suryukjae in Dadu and on Mt. Wutai and built Suryukjae halls around the Huabei region. The Suryukjae ritual text was also republished several times by Yuan monks. *Journey to the West* (西遊記, *Xiyouji*), which was completed during the Yuan period, shows how widespread Suryukjae had become among the ordinary people. In the fourteenth century, many Goryeo monks and other individuals returned from long periods of residence in Yuan China and experiences with Yuan Buddhism, giving rise to a

new ambiance in their home country. This situation can be seen as the background for the broad popularity of Suryukjae in the late Goryeo period, a time when diverse ritual texts were being compiled or published. In addition, while it is unknown whether the ritual text brought back to Goryeo by Choe Sageom in the early part of the dynasty was later distributed, a wide variety of Suryukjae ritual texts were published during the Joseon dynasty, particularly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, based on the ritual texts that had been adopted or published during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

033

State-sponsored Suryukjae as Part of Royal Funeral Rites during the Reign of King Gongmin

Two of the points discussed above should be noted regarding the performance of Suryukjae in the latter half of Goryeo: of the fact that Suryukjae were held as part of funeral rites to guide to heaven not only the deceased but also the sentient beings of the six realms provides clear evidence that Suryukjae had been established as an important funeral rite; and the Seon priest Naong Hyegeun (Fig. 5) presiding over state-sponsored Suryukjae in the late Goryeo period as a royal rite for guiding



Fig. 7. Portrait of King Gongmin and Princess Noguk-daejang. Joseon. Color on paper. 99.2 x 82.5 cm. National Palace Museum of Korea

souls to heaven.

After receiving the dharma from Dhyanaabhadra (指空, Zhikong) and Pingshan Chulin (平山處林) in Yuan China, Naong returned to Goryeo in 1358 (the seventh year of the reign of King Gongmin). He received royal orders in 1361, to travel to Gaegyeong, where he lectured on the dharma and was appointed abbot of Singwangsa Temple (神光寺) in Haeju. When King Gongmin's consort Princess Noguk-daejang died in the second month of 1365, Naong presided over a state-sponsored Suryukjae rite. King Gongmin mourned Princess Noguk-daejang deeply and held a grand funeral in her honor that continued for a considerable period. Unlike the funerals for other queens of Goryeo, this one is described in relative detail in *History of Goryeo*, which also contains a reference to the words of Naong Hyegeun (Fig. 6). At the funeral, Naong preached his "Sermon on the Six Gati Starting with Suryukjae." The exact date of this state-sponsored Suryukjae rite during which Naong Hyegeun offered a series of sermons on the six *gati* (道, destinies of rebirth), transfer of merit, and lecturing to the souls of deceased ones, is unknown. However, the fact that the small assembly for lecturing to the souls of deceased ones took place in the royal coffin hall indicates that the Suryukjae

must have been held during the period when the coffin hall was active, falling between the second month of 1365 when the queen died and the Injin day in the fourth month when she was buried at Jeongneung.

According to *History of Goryeo*, rites for the dead were held every seven days after the queen's death, and the funeral took place on the forty-ninth day at her tomb, Jeongneung. This confirms that the tradition of Chilchiljae (七七齋, literally "seven-seven rites") was being observed, which meant that rites were performed every seven days, and the funeral was held on the occasion of the seventh rite. The holding of a Suryukjae as part of Chilchiljae means that it constituted one of the procedures of the funeral rites. It should be noted that the funeral of Princess Noguk-daejang is the first among the recorded funerals of Goryeo kings and queens to have been conducted with the full set of seven rites over forty-nine days. When King Gongmin died in the ninth month of 1374, a Suryuk assembly was held on the sixteenth day of the twelfth month of the year to guide his soul to heaven. On that occasion, Naong Hyegeun held the small assembly for lecturing to the souls of deceased ones and preached a sermon on the six *gati*. If we calculate the day on which the Suryukjae was conducted, it appears to have been held separately from the rites on the forty-ninth or one-hundredth day after death. While it is unclear whether rites for King Gongmin were held every seventh day until the forty-ninth day, this is likely to have been the case considering that they were held for Princess Noguk-daejang and in the royal funerals immediately after the foundation of Joseon.

Hence, the funerals of Princess Noguk-daejang and King Gongmin can be considered to be characterized by the performance of Chilchiljae and Suryukjae and by the fact that the ceremonies were presided over by the monk Naong Hyegeun. The Suryukjae held for Princess Noguk-daejang is particularly notable as the first state-sponsored Suryukjae confirmed in historical records. The common features of the state funerals for Princess Noguk-daejang and King Gongmin (Fig. 7) attest to the adoption of Suryukjae as an element in state funeral rites during the reign of King Gongmin of Goryeo. In addition, given that one of the major Buddhist priests of the day, Naong Hyegeun, presided over the state-sponsored ceremony, Suryukjae appears to have been established as both part of the royal funeral rites and as a royal rite to guide souls to heaven. The state sponsorship of Suryukjae indicates that they were held as official state events in accordance with the attendant norms and with all expenses borne by the state, further underlining how Suryukjae had been adopted as a



Fig. 8. Hyeolleung (Tomb of King Gongmin) and Jeongneung (Tomb of Princess Noguk-daejang) in Kaesong

formal aspect of state funerals.

With Naong Hyegeun overseeing the Buddhist component of King Gongmin's funeral, which took place nine years after the death of Princess Noguk-daejang, the two funerals would likely have been much the same, at least in terms of Buddhist ceremony. *History of Goryeo* makes special mention of the state funeral of Princess Noguk-daejang being modeled on the funeral for Princess Jeguk-daejang, the consort of King Chungnyeol (忠烈王, r. 1274–1308) of Goryeo. Due to the scarcity of pertinent materials, the details of Princess Jeguk-daejang's funeral are unknown. However, based on the fact that Princess Noguk-daejang was the first to be given the title "daejang princess" (a posthumous title for wives of Goryeo kings who were of Yuan origin, indicating the highest level of kinship with Yuan) after Princess Jeguk-daejang and Princess Gyeguk-daejang (the consort of King Chungseon [忠宣王, r. 1275–1325]), and that her funeral was modeled on that of Princess Jeguk-daejang, it is thought that Princess Noguk-daejang's funeral would have differed in some way to the funerals of previous figures of the Yuan intervention period. Given that systems and institutions were being reorganized during the reign of King Gongmin, the funeral of Princess Noguk-daejang, the only state funeral

conducted during this period, would likely have provided a model for the Goryeo royal funerals that followed.

Meanwhile, having arrived in the Buddhist milieu of the capital under the patronage of King Gongmin, Naong Hyegeun maintained close relations with the king and royal court of Goryeo. The king's strong support allowed him to take on the role of royal preceptor, and he presided over Buddhist rites at state funerals through the reigns of both Gongmin and his successor King U (禡王, r. 1374–1388). Thanks in large part to his active involvement in royal funerals, Naong Hyegeun and his disciples maintained leadership of the late Goryeo and early Joseon Buddhist community in close connection with the royal court.

King Gongmin and Princess Noguk-daejang were the last rulers of Goryeo to be buried with a full state funeral (Fig. 8). As these funerals were directly observed and attended by the power elite who later founded Joseon and arranged its cultural systems and institutions, they provided a model for a royal funeral for the founders of the new dynasty. Immediately after Joseon's establishment, the ruling forces intended to reorganize the state Buddhist rites held during Goryeo, but funeral rites were an area that could not be easily reformed. Furthermore, the Confucian

cultural institutions that were adopted in the early Joseon period had yet to be fully delineated. This meant that when inauspicious rites (funeral rites) had to be held suddenly, there would have been little choice but to organize them according to Goryeo precedents. Joseon royal funeral rites would, therefore, have been reorganized gradually across the process of holding several state funerals and emplacing related cultural systems.

Starting with the funeral of Queen Sindeok in 1396 (the fifth year of the reign of King Taejo), when the founders of Joseon were first faced with the task of holding a state funeral, they were most discomfited by the Buddhist ritual components which remained intact in royal funerals. Buddhist rituals were mainly represented by the rite for guiding the soul to heaven (薦度齋, Cheondojae). As a Buddhist-style expression of the Confucian value of filial piety, this would have been difficult to sever from the funeral procedures. Moreover, because Confucian ideology and systems were not yet fully assimilated, there was an inherent conflict in the funeral rituals between the public perspective of the need to lead the nation based on the Confucian ideology, and the private perspective of wishing to properly send off parents or children.

Amid this discord, *sambaeng* and the establishment of *dogam* and *saek* provide evidence of elements from the funeral rites for Princess Noguk-daejang held in the late Goryeo period being maintained in early Joseon state funerals. This is apparent through a comparison of records on Princess Noguk-daejang's funeral in *History of Goryeo* with those on Queen Sindeok's (神德王后) funeral in the *Annals of King Taejo* (*Taejo sillok*) and those on King Taejo's (Fig. 9) funeral in the *Annals of King Taejong* (*Taejong sillok*). The rites for the funeral of Princess Noguk-daejang were composed of "three acts," or *sambaeng*, meaning they were composed of three events: the state-sponsored rite held officially by the government, the internal rite held privately within the court, and the bureaucratic rite held by the court officials making up the Supreme Council of State (Dopyeonguisa [都評議使司] or Dodang [都堂]). This tripartite system was applied for the funeral of Queen Sindeok, the first state funeral of the Joseon era. When the rites marking the second year after the death (大祥齋, *daesangjae*) for Queen Sindeok were held at Heungcheonsa Temple (興天寺) in Hanyang, the capital of Joseon, in 1398 (the seventh year of the reign of King Taejo), a separate ceremony was performed by the Dodang on the same day at Heungboksa Temple (興福寺). The rite of Heungboksa Temple by the Dodang corresponds to the Dopyeonguisa ceremony mentioned in *History of Goryeo*. In the fifth month of 1411 (the eleventh year of the reign of King Taejong [太



Fig. 9. Portrait of King Taejo. 1872. Color on silk. 218 x 150cm. Gyeonggijeon

宗, r. 1367–1422]), when the court hosted a private memorial rite (*gisinjae*) for the deceased King Taejo at Heungdeoksa Temple (興德寺), some meritorious subjects (功臣, *gongsin*) also held a separate memorial rite. It is said that some of them requested that King Taejong distribute incense to the attendants. Therefore, we conclude that the memorial rite held for King Taejo at Heungdeoksa Temple also consisted of two acts: an internal ceremony put on privately by the court and a council ceremony held by the meritorious subjects. For the state funeral of Princess Noguk-daejang, temporary organizations—four *dogam* (都監, special office or superintendency) and thirteen *saek* (色, task force)—were set up to manage the event. These temporary offices continued to be established for state funerals until the system was abolished in 1420 (the second year of the reign of King Sejong).

The performance of *Suryukjae* as part of the funeral rites and Buddhist ancestral memorial rites of the court and the fact that they were comprised of three separate ceremonies are surviving Goryeo elements found in early Joseon royal funerals. However, these Goryeo-style Buddhist elements were not repeated in all funeral rites. They were stressed or



Fig. 10. Suryukjae held at Samhwas Temple

deemphasized according to the times and based on the extent of the current ruler's intention to suppress Buddhism in favor of Confucianism. The Buddhist elements surviving in Joseon royal memorial rites as traces of the royal funeral procedures of Goryeo, were simplified and incorporated into Suryukjae during the reign of King Sejong when a wide variety of systems and institutions were reorganized. They were finally excluded from royal funerals altogether during the reign of King Yeonsangun.

As a rite to guide souls to heaven during the late Goryeo and early Joseon period, Suryukjae had become established within the royal funeral rites and Buddhist ancestral rites of the Goryeo court by the reign of King Gongmin at the latest. During the early Joseon period, they were recognized as the main royal Buddhist rite for guiding souls to heaven and held as an official state-sponsored ceremony. These official Suryukjae were also a rite to appease vengeful spirits. The first state-sponsored Suryukjae to be held after the foundation of Joseon were those that took place at three temples around the country in 1395 (the fourth year of the reign of King Taejo): at Gwaneumgul Grotto in Gaegyong; Gyeonamsa Temple in Geoje; and Samhwas Temple in Samcheok. These rites were held to appease the souls

of the Goryeo royalty who were killed during the process of the establishment of Joseon. These Suryukjae were held as a rite to appease vengeful spirits and guide the souls of those who died unjustly to heaven. The state sponsorship of these ceremonies attests to the establishment of Suryukjae as the most common rite for guiding souls to heaven and appeasing vengeful spirits in the late Goryeo and early Joseon period.

Conclusion

During the Goryeo dynasty, Buddhist thought and faith diversified and active exchanges were held with Buddhist circles in other countries, leading to an increase in the performance of new Buddhist rites. Some of these rites were adopted as state rituals and spread to the common people over time, continuing throughout the Joseon dynasty even to the present, Suryukjae being the primary example (Fig. 10). The relationship

between how Suryukjae were held during Goryeo and Joseon is important for understanding how this rite was convened in Korea. Moreover, the issue of Goryeo's adoption and performance of Suryukjae is also significant in the context of the Buddhist exchanges between Goryeo and China and their influence.

It is presumed that Suryukjae were transmitted to Goryeo from China through Buddhist exchanges with Wu-Yue during the reign of King Gwangjong, and were held as a state or royal Buddhist rite. During the reign of King Seonjong, the Suryukjae ritual text was introduced to Goryeo from the Song dynasty. The king accordingly commanded that a Suryukdang, a hall dedicated to the performance of the rite, be constructed at a temple, indicating that Suryukjae were being adapted as a Goryeo state rite. Judging by the status of the two temples at the time, the fact that King Gwangjong held a Suryukjae rite at Gwibeopsa Temple and that a Suryukdang was constructed by order of King Seonjong at Bojesa Temple indicate that the adoption and reorganization of Suryukjae during the first half of Goryeo were driven by the state as they were being held as either a state-sponsored or royal rite. In the latter half of Goryeo, changes took place in the parties holding the rite. Records show that diverse Suryukjae ritual texts were published at the time, reflecting the spread of Suryukjae to the ordinary people and the frequency of their performance. Suryukjae are also characterized by their transcendence of schools of Buddhism and the diversity of the purposes involved, for example both for combatting epidemics and for guiding souls to heaven. Suryukjae were thus adopted as a rite to guide souls to heaven and included as one of the procedures for funeral rites. This point confirms that from at least the latter part of the dynasty, Suryukjae were widely being held among the ordinary people of Goryeo. This contradicts the existing literature that suggests the ritual only became widespread during the Joseon dynasty when it was officially adopted as the Buddhist ancestral rite of the royal court and held as a state-sponsored event.

During the reign of King Gongmin of Goryeo, Suryukjae had become established as both a state funeral rite and a royal rite for guiding souls to heaven. The early Joseon court later adopted it as a funeral rite and as a Buddhist ancestral rite. It was maintained in this format until the reorganization of royal funeral rites as Confucian rituals. Changes to Suryukjae during the reign of King Gongmin were first seen in the funeral for Princess Noguk-daejang, which later became the model for Goryeo royal funerals, a format that was sustained until royal funeral rites were newly organized based on Confucian

principles during the early Joseon dynasty. The performance of Suryukjae as a royal court rite during the reign of King Gongmin and as a state-sponsored ritual calls attention to the role of Royal Preceptor Naong Hyegeun, who maintained a close relationship with the court at the time. Naong Hyegeun presided over many rites such as Suryukjae to guide souls to heaven, as confirmed in the writings that he left behind, and this point should be considered in relation to shifts within the Seon school of Buddhism during the late Goryeo period when the Pure Land faith was beginning to flourish.

Translated by Cho Yoonjung

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