

Maritime Ritual Ruins of Korea

Tahk Kyung-Baek¹

¹National Research Institute of Maritime Cultural Heritage, Korea.

Corresponding Author: jsa461@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Since ancient times, the sea has been an important transportation route and a place where food can be obtained. However, there were various dangers, which were personified as a fear of supernatural beings. As supernatural beings were gradually elevated to gods who ruled over danger, humans relieved their fears and gained comfort for themselves through the rituals. Rituals include all activities of praying for a wish to a god they are reasonable (Yu 1997, 1-2). The space where the ritual ceremonies took place is the ritual rite site, and the ritual site related to the sea can be called the maritime ritual ruins. The remains of marine ritual ruins are formed by a tangible space where sacrifices are held while worshipping gods, and a *jejang* (a limited site related to sacrifice), an intangible space around it. So far, studies on the remains of ritual ruins have been conducted, focusing on archaeological sites, historical records, excavated artifacts, and intangible elements of ritual ruins. However, only the intangible space was maintained as a heritage of the village community, and the altar and other facilities were changed several times, so research on them was difficult to conduct. However, the sacred building continued to be maintained despite the change in appearance. Accordingly, this study focused on the rituals and identified the meaning of the ritual ruins along with the rituals by dividing them into one-building and two-building types.

Keywords: *Maritime, Ritual ruins, Altar, Records*

LISTS OF TABLE

Table 1: Characteristics of ritual ruins

1. INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, maritime rituals have been performed in the area of maritime activities. People wanted to overcome danger by praying for safety and a good catch of fish. The space where the ritual ceremonies took place is the ritual rite site, and the ritual site related to the sea can be called the maritime ritual ruins.

In Korea, many maritime ritual ruins have been confirmed along the coast, showing many forms of ritual faith. Maritime ritual sites can be classified into three types: sites where ritual ruins are held at sea; remains where ritual ruins are held in the open air on land close to the sea; ruins where ritual rites are held in designated spaces with buildings such as altars. Archaeological excavations of the ruins of Susungdang in Jukmak-dong, Buan, revealed ritual ceremonies had been performed from the second half of the third century to the present.

A sacred building where the god is believed to have settled was constructed close to where the ritual ceremonies were held. Two types were adopted: one-building and two-building types. These systems were found within the ruins of Jukmak-dong of Buan, Oryongmyo shrine, Sangdea harbor ruins, etc. The systems involved construction with mostly one- or two-sided three-fronts. It was minimal in size compared to traditional Korean buildings. However, the space of influence is extended towards the sea in addition to the space where the ritual ceremony is held, and it appears as a sacred space with considerable dominance. The sacred building had an important role in maritime ritual ruins and can be considered central to maritime ritual heritage.

2. TYPES OF MARITIME RITUAL RUINS

There are many maritime ruins that can be classified into three types in Korea, which is surrounded by the sea on three sides. Among them, there are ritual ruins revealed through excavation and research, including shell mounds in Gungok-ri, Haenam, Neuk Island in Sacheon, Yongdam-dong in Jeju Island, and Jukmak-dong in Buan (Jeonju National Museum 1995, 8-13). In addition, ritual ruins and various auxiliary facilities are set up at Wondang on Dae-ri Wi Island, where ritual ruins related to the sea are held, and at Yeongdang in Hwang Island's Big Fish Festival. Or, using the difference between the high tide and the low tide, some ritual ceremonies are performed in the open air on the seashore.

As such, maritime ritual sites can be classified into about three types: relics where ritual ceremonies are held at sea; remains where ritual ceremonies are held in the open air on land close to the sea; The ruins where ritual rites are held in designated spaces with buildings such as altars. Among them, buildings such as altars were built, and where ritual ruins were held, they have been maintained by village residents or groups praying to gods. It is mostly found on the west coast, and it is thought to be a phenomenon that has been used as a sea route to China for a long time. Considering the excavated relics, Suseongdang in Jukmak-dong can be known to have begun in the late third century. And it is possible to estimate the time when the ritual started through the origin of the gods enshrined in some altars.

3. TYPES OF SPACES FOR ALTARS

The altar is a space where gods related to the sea are enshrined and where rituals are still held, and it is the core space of the ritual ruins. However, until now, altars have been regarded only as a part of folk religion, and research has been incomplete. The marine ritual ruins with nine altars were investigated, and the ritual ruins built in these ritual remains will be reviewed.

3.1 Sizes and Structures

A total of 13 altars in nine ruins were identified, including cases where only one altar was installed in the ritual ruins site and where two were installed. The number of bays generally does not exceed one to three bays on the front and two bays on the side. However, when viewed from the side, Cheonghaejin-castle, Wan Island, consists of a half-bay open to the outside, Wondang Dae-ri, Wi Island of a half-bay divided into spaces from the inside, and Jeonhoeng Shrine in Dangsan, Oeyeon Island, of one and a half bays. In particular, the smaller the altar is, the larger space is, and the case of one altar is generally larger than the case of two.

Columnar brackets are mostly Mulikgong-style (undecorated in Korean), while Jangjwa-ri Cheonghae Castle Shrine is Choikgong-style (one-sided decoration in Korean). Wondang, the main shrine of the Yeongdang for the festival of good catching of fish is two-Ikgong-style (double-sided decoration in Korean), and Sanshin-dang, the vice-shrine is Choikgong-style. However, it is somewhat difficult to classify it as a typical columnar bracket form because the form is excessive and used as a subtraction.

Table 1: Characteristics of ritual ruins

Location	Name	Size (front×side)	Size of one bay (m)	Structure	Direction	Situation	Open-air altars	Worshipped god	Construction date (CE)
Jukmak-dong, Buan	Susungdang	2×1	front: 2.1 side: 3.1	3 purlins	west	on the cliff	○	Gaeyanghalmi Grandmother	(1801) 1996
Dongho-ri, Gochang	Yeongshindang	3×2	front: 1.85 side: 1	3 purlins	west	on the hill	○	Soulgod	1841
Cheonghaejin-castle Wan Island	Sadang	3×1.5	front: 1.5 side: 1/2.8	5 purlins	west	on the hill	×	Jang Bo-Go	2009
Dae-ri Wi Island	Wondang	2×1.5	front: 2.6/2.4 side: 1.1/2	5 purlins	west	top of Mt.	○	8 gods	2000
Gyodong Island	Sashindang	1×1	unknown	unknown	north	on the hill	○	Jashindang halabuji Grandfather	1969
Seonyu Island	Oryongmyo (Araetdang)	3×2	front: 1.8 side: 1.52	3 purlins	east	below the ridge	×	Ohguyuwan g king et al.	(Before 1123) 1947
	Witdang	1×1	unknown	unknown	east	below the ridge	×	Lim family from Naju City	unknown
Yeongdang Hwang Island	Wondang	1×1	unknown	unknown	north-west	on the hill	×	Im Gyeong-Eop General	After 1945
	Sanshindang	1×1	unknown	unknown	north-west	on the hill	×	Mt. god	After 1945
Dangsan Heuksan Island	Jinridang (Bd. Near gate)	3×1	unknown	3 purlins	north	on the hill	○	Danggaksi Bride et al.	1938 2009
	Yongshindang	1×1	unknown	unknown	east	on the hill	○	unknown	2009
Dangsan Oeyeond Island	Jeonhoeng sadang	1×1.5	front: 3.3 side: 0.6/1.6	3 purlins	unknown	in the forest	×	Jeon Hoeng et al.	1936
	Sanjedang	3×1	unknown	3 purlins	unknown	in the forest	×	unknown	unknown

While the structure is generally three purlins when the side has one bay, Yeongsindang in Dongho-ri, Gochang has two sides but three purlins. In addition, Cheonghaejin castle, Wan Island, and Daeri Wondang and Wi Island have a side of one and a half bays and a structure of five purlins. Gable roofs are generally dominant, but Yeongsindang in Dongho-ri, Gochang, Oryongmyo in Seonyu Island, and Wondang in Yeongdang and Hwang Island have gabled roofs. Witdang in Seonyu Island has a hip roof, and Sanshindang in Yeongdang, Hwang Island, has a pyramid roof.

3.2 Locations and open-air altars

The direction is generally westward, and the reason is assumed to be to look at the West Sea. However, Sashindang on Gyodong Island faces north, and you can see the sea while looking at the altar. It is

located on the top of a hill or mountain with a good view of the sea. Open-air altars are usually present when only one altar is situated, but only Dangsan on Heuksan Island has two of those.

3.3 Records of constructions interpreted through worshiped god

The gods enshrined in the ritual ruins are different for each ritual rite, and the objects in the ruins vary by region. First, a record indicates that Suseongdang was built in 1801, so the construction record is different from the actual excavated artifacts. It is presumed that the ritual ruins were reused after they stopped being used. Gaeyanghalmi's grandmother is the main sea deity of the Chilsan Sea seen from Suseongdang. Jangjwa-ri Shrine is said to have held ritual ceremonies with the portraits of great monks, including Song Jing, Jeong Nyeon, and Hye Il, but it has now been changed to the portraits of Jang Bo-go. The current altar was built in 2009, but its location is within Cheonghaejin Castle (installed in 828), so its origin is presumed to be old. Wondang on Dae-ri Wi Island is located facing Suseongdang and is also a place where ritual ceremonies are held to pray for a good catch in Chilsan Sea. Originally, there were paintings of 11 gods, but now only paintings of eight gods remain (National Folk Museum 1984, 10). Oryongmyo on Seonyu Island, where Ohguyuwang, whose name means five dragons, is enshrined, unlike other shrines that pray for the safety of the sails and success in trade. In particular, the record remains in *Xuānhwafengshi Gaolituji* (宣和奉使高麗圖經) (Seo 1124, 1-7). Originally, the main hall of Yeongdang on Hwang Island was dedicated to the snake god, but it was changed to enshrine General Im Gyeong-Eop in the seventeenth century. There are two theories: one that it was made after 1945, when it was demolished during the Japanese colonial period, and the other that it has been there for 140 years. Dangsan on Oeyeon Island is related to Jeon Hoeng (? - BCE 202), and the current altar was built in 1936.

4. CONCLUSIONS

So far, the value of cultural heritage has been relatively underestimated in Korea. In this paper, the characteristics of nine altars were reviewed, and the records of their establishment were examined, especially through the enshrined god. In the future, it is expected that the cultural heritage value of ritual ruins in Korea can be re-evaluated by conducting research on ritual ruins throughout the country.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Seo, Gung. *Xuānhwafengshi Gaolituji*, Hangzhou, 1024.

Ha, Hyo-Gil. *Folklore of Wido Island-Ritual ceremony of Wondang, Dae-ri*, Seoul: National Folklore Museum, 1984.

Jeonju National Museum. *Relics of Ritual ceremony of Jukmak-dong, Buan*, Jeonju: Jeonju National Museum, 1994.

Jeju National Museum. *Sea and Ritual ceremony- Relics of Ritual ceremony of Jukmak-dong, Buan*, Jeonju: Jeonju National Museum, 1995.

National Research Institute of Maritime Cultural Heritage. *Sea routes in the Southwest Sea region seen through maritime exchanges*, Mokpo: National Research Institute of Maritime Cultural Heritage, 2014.

Yu, Byung-Ha. *Sea god and ancestral rites of Relics of Jukmak-dong, Buan - Focused on a comparative review of the ancestral rites-*, Master's, Seoul: Seoul National University, 1997.

Korean Society of History and Folklore. *History and Folklore*, Seoul: Korean Society of History and Folklore, 2005.

Choi, Jung-Gi. *Gyodongdo Island*, Seoul: Folk Garden, 2015.