

A Reconsideration of Koryŏ Meat-eating Culture*

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This paper aims to reconsider Koryŏ meat-eating culture. In the field of Korean culinary culture studies, scholars argue that Koryŏ meat-eating culture was underdeveloped or restricted due to Buddhism on three basic grounds: 1) prohibitions of hunting, fishing, butchery, and meat eating; 2) references to the aversion to killing and poor skill at butchery in the *Gaoli tujing*; and 3) the supposed resurrection of meat-eating culture under Yuan rule. First, Koryŏ records reveal that a minority of Koryŏ prohibitions were rooted in Buddhist thought, while the majority were rooted in rituals and principles of Confucian governance from the *Book of Rites* and “Monthly Ordinances.” Second, the aversion to killing and poor skill at butchery described in the *Gaoli tujing* reflect a compromise between the desires for meat and to avoid the responsibility of taking a life. Finally, the Koryŏ ruling class ate both livestock and game and the common people made a living through hunting and fishing and paid taxes through deer and fish prior to Yuan rule. In Koryŏ society, despite Buddhist faiths, hunting, butchery, and meat eating were universally practiced and accepted. It thus appears that Koryŏ society did not internalize and socially stratify the Buddhist prohibition of meat eating to the degree apparent in Indian and Japanese societies.

Keywords: Koryŏ, Meat-eating culture, “Monthly Ordinances,” *Xuanhe fengshi Gaoli tujing*, internalization and social stratification of meat eating, *Yangsuch’ŏk*

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