

UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLMOUCI

Filozofická fakulta

Katedra asijských studií

MAGISTERSKÁ DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

How has the women's traditional Korean garment  
“hanbok” been modernized in terms of design in recent  
years?

Jak se v posledních letech modernizoval tradiční korejský ženský oděv hanbok z hlediska  
designu?

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Olomouc 2024

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## Prohlášení

Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně a uvedla veškeré použité prameny a literaturu.

## **Abstract**

Korean traditional clothing has become a popular source of inspiration for modern fashion designers in Korea and beyond. This study embarks on a quest to explore the motivations, inspirations, and creative processes behind the evolution of modern hanbok. Through an investigation of social media platforms, such as TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter, as well as newspaper articles, published interviews, and fashion publications, this study seeks to achieve a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon.

Through structural changes, including simplified designs for everyday comfort and the incorporation of a wider range of materials, modern hanbok has departed from its historical multiple-layered clothing construction. The quest explores the motivations behind these alterations, as expressed by the fashion designers themselves.

Heritage preservation plays a crucial role in designers' work. However, the concept of invented tradition comes into play when modern hanbok designers seamlessly infuse Western fashion elements, such as pockets and zippers. This intricate balance between preserving tradition and embracing innovation prompts intriguing questions. This study thus explores the larger context of this phenomenon, pondering the effects of this fusion on cultural authenticity and, generally the perception of tradition in the world of fashion.

Incorporating both Korean and non-Korean sources and considering the most recent relevant scholarship, a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the modern hanbok movement will be the outcome of this study.

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<b>Number of pages and characters:</b>	73, 120 815
<b>Number of used sources:</b>	78
<b>Keywords:</b>	hanbok, pattern, tradition, modernization

## **Abstract**

Korejský tradiční oděv se stal oblíbeným zdrojem inspirace pro moderní módní návrháře v Koreji i mimo ni. Tato studie se zabývá motivací, inspirací a tvůrčími procesy, které stojí za vývojem *moderního hanboku*. Prostřednictvím zkoumání platforem sociálních médií, jako jsou TikTok, Instagram a Twitter, a také novinových článků, publikovaných rozhovorů a módních publikací se tato studie snaží dosáhnout komplexního pochopení tohoto fenoménu.

*Moderní hanbok* se díky konstrukčním změnám, včetně zjednodušení designu pro každodenní pohodlí a použití širší škály materiálů, odklonil od své historické vícevrstvé stavby oděvu. Práce zkoumá motivace těchto změn, jak je vyjádřili sami módní návrháři.

Zachování kulturního dědictví hraje v práci designérů zásadní roli. Koncept vynalezené tradice se však dostává do hry, když moderní návrháři hanboků plynule vnášejí západní módní prvky, jako jsou kapsy a zipy. Tato složitá rovnováha mezi zachováváním tradice a přijímáním inovací vyvolává zajímavé otázky. Tato studie proto zkoumá širší souvislosti tohoto jevu a zamýšlí se nad dopady této fúze na kulturní autenticitu a obecně na vnímání tradice ve světě módy.

Díky zahrnutí korejských i nekorejských zdrojů a zohlednění nejnovějších relevantních vědeckých poznatků bude výsledkem této studie komplexní a diferencované pochopení moderního hnutí *hanbok*.

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<b>Počet použitých zdrojů:</b>	78
<b>Klíčová slova:</b>	hanbok, střih, tradice, modernizace

## Poděkování

I want to express my gratitude to several individuals who have supported me throughout the process of completing my thesis. First and foremost, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Dr. Andreas Schirmer, for dedicating his time to supervising my thesis and for providing me with valuable advice. My sincere appreciation also goes to Mgr. Lucie Fajtlová for her unwavering support and patience. I am deeply grateful to my mother, whose moral support has been my steadfast anchor. Lastly, my heartfelt appreciation goes to Jeff Satur, whose soulful songs were a beacon of sanity during this arduous time.

**Editorial note**

For a transcription of *hangeul* into the Latin alphabet, I used the Revised Romanization of Korean. Names of institutions and established names are kept in their official transcription. Names of Korean individuals are written according to the Korean convention - the last name followed by the first name.

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## 1. Introduction

Material culture provides great information about nations' political, symbolic, and cultural economy. The works of anthropologists and archaeologists examine this reality of which clothing and fashion are an important part. The distinction of culture by dress, however, works only up to a certain point in history, as later on the world started to be globalized and the differences between cultures of each nation started to blend together. Nevertheless, even in the globalized world the "national dress" still exists. These dresses can be, however, mostly seen on postcards, in museums, amusement parks, formal occasions, pageants, and beauty contests, not in the daily lives of people.

The traditional attire of Korea is no exception to this trend. As a result of the danger of forgetting the traditional clothes that *hanbok* faces and to preserve traditional clothes within Korean culture, much effort is put into preserving the attire by modernizing it. As such the traditional crafts are simultaneously modernized as the past is altered to meet the needs of the present (S. Cho 2018). Cultural clothing conveys information about a country's identity, history, and customs, as it evolves throughout time. National attire, such as the *hanbok*, has a meaning that goes beyond simple fashion; it offers insight into the philosophies and customs of a country and its people.

*Hanbok* has changed dramatically throughout the years, with the silhouette of the garments arguably exhibiting the most notable modifications. This work aims to describe the key changes in the silhouette of *hanbok* over the years, and how they mirror shifts in Korean identity and culture. By analysing these changes, we can piece together not just the development of fashion but also the complex structure of Korean identity and culture. (Ryu 2018) Due to the *hanbok*'s broad popularity and significance in Korean history, *hanbok* is valued by Koreans and is considered a symbol of their national identity. As a result, Koreans are keen to preserve the national attire *hanbok*, by making a modern version of it. The *modern hanbok* is a creation where traditional clothing is designed with young people in mind (S. Cho 2018).

Traditional clothing designers are creating new styles, employing new colour combinations, and using more varied and affordable fabrics, such as satin (Kim 2018). The objective is to discover in what ways are modern *hanbok* designers balancing traditional aesthetics with contemporary fashion trends. Due to *hanbok*'s designers creating these outfits incorporating modern components, including non-traditional materials, they are considered a type of "playful culture." The idea behind this is to provide fashionable clothing that offers a



new, modern interpretation of hanbok. Traditional forms may now be continually modified and brought into the present day due to this trend (S. Cho 2018). By shifting the focus on the modern hanbok, the work aims to capture the essence of this evolving tradition while at the same time highlighting its rich heritage and cultural legacy.

Nonetheless, the majority of Koreans, especially the younger generation between the ages of eighteen and thirty, prefer to wear brand clothing daily since they are more comfortable, better represent their identity, and come in a wider variety of styles (Kim 2018). That is why the Korean government makes an effort to hold special events to preserve and promote the garment, its availability is, however, restricted to South Korea's major cities and central regions.

The *modern hanbok* has evolved into several different styles, which, along with the challenges they pose to the recognition and understanding of traditional Korean clothing, are studied in this thesis. Since the traditional Korean attire has undergone several modifications, the most distinctive forms of *hanbok* can occasionally be exceedingly challenging for those who are unfamiliar with this subject to recognize.

## **2. Historical context of hanbok and emergence of modern hanbok**

This chapter reviews the main historical periods spanning the last two thousand years, listing evidence that we have about the clothing worn in that period and for reforms or modifications that have taken place, often reflecting the social and symbolical role of clothing in society. The chapter shows that understanding the evolution of clothing is crucial for comprehending the cultural and societal changes throughout history and in the present.

### **2.1. Earliest times and the three kingdoms era (57 BC–AD 668)**

The earliest available evidence of the clothing worn by the inhabitants of the Korean peninsula comes from the period of three kingdoms from descriptions, depictions in murals, and painted ceramics found in tombs.

According to archaeological findings, the first Korean settlers came to the peninsula during the Neolithic period, and from these findings, the Neolithic people were certainly the progenitors of current Koreans. The earliest written records of Korea may be found in Chinese writings. Overall, our knowledge of these early states is rather limited. Buyeo, one of these early nations, allied with China, and as such, there was Chinese influence, as demonstrated, among other things, by the Buyeo people's usage of the word wang (王 Chinese for "king") for their leader. Additionally, Koreans engaged in commerce with China, trading raw commodities like gold and hides for Chinese-made products like silk and bronze containers. Korea gradually

transitioned into the Three Kingdoms period. Prior to the sixth century, there were four countries, including the Gaya Federation, but the kingdoms of Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla survived until the seventh century (Peterson and Margulies 2010).

Although studies about the Three Kingdoms era are rare, they reveal that the Three Kingdoms period is when *hanbok* first appeared (Jeong 2006). The territory of the early states is now situated around the borders of North Korea, China, and Russia, making research challenging for political reasons due to limited access to material and visual sources. Three primary types of sources provide us with information on the attire of people from this era: written records, visuals of dressed individuals, and tangible artefacts. Murals on Goguryeo's tombs depict fully dressed tomb owners, standing officials, armoured guards, musicians, dancers, acrobats, sportsmen, soldiers in infantry processions, mounted hunters, and people in hospitality, housework, and other occupations (Kim 2023, 25).

Based on reports about the period from China and Korea, people are typically described as donning an upper garment called *yu* or *jeogori* with either pants or a skirt. Such textual sources are for example *Samguksagi* (三國史記), or *Samgugyusa* (三國遺事), histories about the Three Kingdoms era publicized later in the 12th century (Cho 2022, 42–44). Women wore long skirts called *chima*, while males wore wide, spacious pants called *baji*. Goguryeo murals demonstrate that *chima* was worn by both men and women. On festive occasions, both males and females wore the same type of skirt, called a *sang* (裳), while the *gun* (裙), a long, wide garment was worn solely by women (S. S. Lee 2013, 13).



Figure 1: *Ssangyeongchong byeokwa*. Photo of a mural tomb of Goguryeo in South Pyongan Province, North Korea. Date: late 5th century.

The murals reveal that the length of the jacket was sufficient to cover the hips and had wide, extended sleeves. The sleeves of a woman's *jeogori* varied in length and width. A woman's *jeogori* pictured in a Goguryeo mural, built in the late fifth century, has shorter and narrower sleeves than a man's one. The notion that *jeogori* varied in length during the course of the Three Kingdoms period is further supported by other murals. It was typical to apply bindings to the neckline, sleeve cuffs, front opening, and the hems of coats and pants, using textiles that were darker and contrasting in colour (S. S. Lee 2013, 12–13).

The jacket was closed with *dae*, a waist belt, in the front, however during the Goryeo and Joseon periods the length of *jeogori* decreased, resulting in a closure with *goreum*, right side ribbon fastening. Over the years, there have been alterations to the ways used to fold a *jeogori*. Initially, the *jeogori*'s frontal parts were put together in the centre, like a caftan, a type of tunic (J. T. Lee 2015). Later on, the method in which upper garments were wrapped evolved and shows a correlation with tomb locations: in the Pyeongyang region it is more likely to see left-over-right wrappings, while in the Ji-an region, it is more likely to witness right-over-left wrappings. Later on, left-over-right upper garments gradually started to be accepted as the norm in Korea (Kim 2023, 31–34).

Findings show that the Baekje *baji* were roomier and wider than the *baji* worn in Goguryeo, and it had bands attached to the cuffs that were not tied with *daenim*, the traditional trouser bands around the ankles. The common people's hanboks were made from cheaper materials such as hemp, they were also much less elaborate and colourful than those worn by the rulers (S. S. Lee 2013, 15).



Figure 2: A three-colour painted female figurine. Balhae, Jilin Province Yanbian Museum, China. Photo © Minjee Kim. Date: ca. 8th century.

This chapter reviews mainly the period of the Three Kingdoms, listing evidence that we have about the clothing worn in that period. *Hanbok*, the traditional Korean attire, first appeared during the Three Kingdoms period. The knowledge of hanbok comes from written records from China and Korea, murals, and tangible artefacts. The attire of the time consisted of an upper part called *jeogori* or *yu*, paired with pants or a skirt. The *jeogori* reached the hips and had bindings at the neckline, sleeve cuffs, front opening, and hems of coats and pants which can be seen in some of contemporary hanboks. While common people's hanboks were made from cheaper materials and were less elaborate and colourful, those worn by the higher class were more intricate and vibrant.

## 2.2. Unified Silla (668 – 935)

In the 7th century, the Silla Kingdom allied with Tang China and overthrew neighbouring states Goguryeo and Baekje, unifying Korea. Sea route expansion led to increased cultural interactions with the Tang Dynasty. Korean figurines excavated from a tomb in Gyeongju, the former Silla Kingdom capital, demonstrate that Chinese fashion and clothing styles were brought into Unified Silla, as they are portrayed wearing skirts over jackets characteristic of the Tang dynasty people style of donning dress <Figure 3> (S. S. Lee 2013, 16).

The hanbok of the Unified Silla was greatly influenced by the China. Unified Silla is the only period in history when the hanbok was worn in a manner where the skirt was firmly wrapped around the bust, on top of the jacket.



Figure 3: Female stoneware excavated from the ancient tomb of Yonggang-dong (historical site no. 328). Photo: Kim Ho-sang. Silla dynasty.

### 2.3. Goryeo (918 – 1392)

The Goryeo period was instrumental in shaping the cultural and sartorial identity of Korea, with significant developments in traditional clothing *hanbok* that continue to influence contemporary Korean fashion. One significant evolution was the start of gender differentiation in clothing, a shift from the preceding periods. Additionally, during the 13th century, some adaptations to Chinese clothing trends were made following Korea's integration into the Yuan dynasty's tributary system. This section will delve into these crucial developments.

One of the rebel leaders, King Taejo, established the Goryeo Dynasty, which ruled from 918 until 1392. The name Goryeo is the origin of the term "Korea". Korean historians argue that the Goryeo period was the time when the distinct cultures of Silla, Baekje, and Goguryeo were effectively combined to form a single unit that served as the foundation for the contemporary Korean identity (Peterson and Margulies 2010).

Many elements of Three Kingdoms hanbok were still present in Goryeo clothing. However, the skirt (*chima*) became more associated with clothing for women who wore several layers of it. The skirt was secured beneath the *jeogori* by long sashes that tied the *chima* at the bust, raising it above the waist (S. S. Lee 2013, 18). Both men and women were allowed to wear pants outside. This notion, that women were still allowed to wear pants, is reinforced by Goryeo's historical narrations mentioning ladies participating in the horse-mounted sport *gyeokgu* (Cho 2022).

In the 13th century, the influence of Tang China on the Korean peninsula was diminished by the rise of the Mongol Empire. Eventually, Goryeo was compelled to recognize a tributary relationship with the Mongol Yuan dynasty. The Yuan system of clothing was then adopted as the official uniform for both the military and the civilian population. The Chinese system of identifying rank by clothes and headgear superseded the custom of wearing a belt (*dae*), usually made of jade, leather, or cloth. However, the majority of Goryeo people continued to wear the *dae* until the *jeogori* (upper garment) became shorter in later years, and ribbons (*goreum*) took over the role of waist belts. During the Goryeo period, the custom of wearing an ankle sash as an ornament also vanished (S. S. Lee 2013, 17).

Elements of Three Kingdoms hanbok persisted in Goryeo clothing, however the skirt (*chima*) was becoming more associated with women's attire, while in the past both males and females were wearing it. Pants were, however, worn by both men and women. In the 13th century, the rise of the Mongol Empire diminished Tang China's influence on Korea, leading Goryeo to adopt the Yuan dynasty's clothing system in some parts.

## 2.4. Joseon dynasty (1392 – 1897)

General Yi Seong-gye brought an end to the Goryeo Dynasty in 1392. The new kingdom received the name Joseon by him, and it existed from 1392 to 1897. Neo-Confucianism overtook Buddhism which had been the de facto state religion of the previous kingdom Goryeo. The Joseon dynasty saw the continuation of hanbok's fundamental elements. Nonetheless, there was some change to conform to the Neo-Confucianist ideology which was chosen to be the new dynasty's governing philosophy. Official standards of attire were seen as visual symbols of Confucian philosophy, and in the event that a specific style of clothing for a certain occasion had not yet been established, precedents and examples from China were used as models (Park 2023, 70).

Sources about clothing from the Joseon dynasty include written texts, findings from tombs in the form of surviving hanboks, paintings, and many more. These sources provide valuable insights into the materials, construction, and styles of clothing worn during this period. Additionally, they reveal the ongoing discourse about fashion within the Joseon society. Debates were mainly led by Confucian scholars about what was appropriate to wear and what was not. We also learn about hanbok from texts written by women, but these do not discuss the debate but rather describe practical matters concerning hanbok, such as production and preservation. During the Joseon dynasty, the woman's *hanbok* evolved into extravagant forms which are discussed in this chapter.

A great source for understanding the clothing culture of the time is written records, which have survived to a large extent and often contain colourfully illustrated pictures <Figure 4>. Many entries about clothes can be found in late Joseon encyclopaedias such as “Encyclopedic Knowledge of Songnam” (Songnam japji 松南雜識), “Random Expatiations of Five Continents” (Oju yeonmun jangjeonsango 五洲衍文長箋散稿), and “Topical Discourses of Jibong” (Jibong yuseol 芝峰類說) (Park 2023, 81–83). The majority of literary sources from this era were written by Confucian intellectuals who claimed to emphasise facts supported by evidence, logic, and experience. Many intellectuals stressed that wearing appropriate attire helped maintain the fundamental tenets of *ye* 禮, that is propriety, proper etiquette, dignified ceremonial customs, and right behaviour. The primary objectives of the Confucian scholars' works were to rectify clothing developments that were deemed unpleasant by them, mostly seen in quite short *jeogories* and in exaggerated skirts, and to promote a return to customs that were believed to be more in line with venerated traditions that came from China (Lee 2023, 91–92).

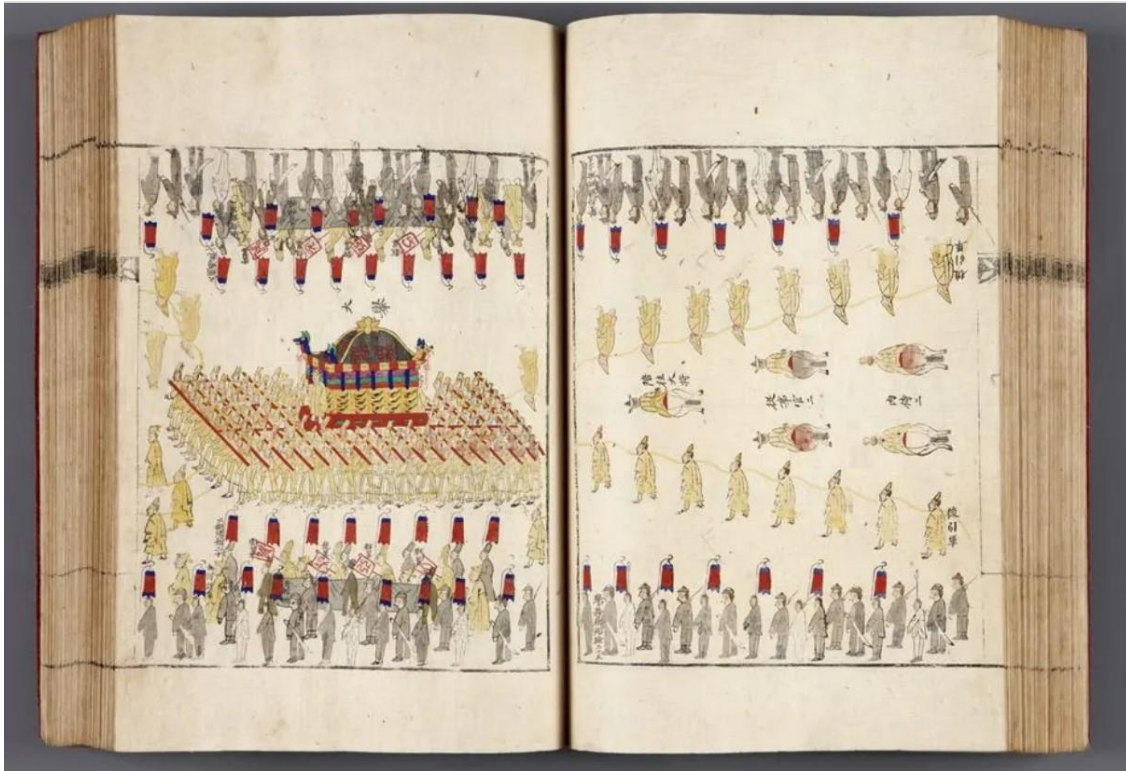


Figure 4: Scene from the manual of the royal wedding directorate for the wedding ceremony of King Yeongjo and Queen Jeongsun in 1759 (*Yeongjo Jeongsun wanghu garye dogam uigye* 英祖貞純王后嘉禮都監儀軌). National Museum of Korea.

Fifteenth-century government documents record an increase in the popularity of a new fashion that alarmed numerous intellectuals. The new fashion included mainly shortening the *jeogori*, which reached such a short length that the woman’s underwear was seen in some cases. Women also started to add more underskirts to increase the volume of the skirts. These new fashion styles, particularly the daring styles where underwear was showing, were popular mainly later during the eighteenth century and challenged traditional Confucian beliefs. By the eighteenth century, clear distinctions between classes had started to wane. Scholars of the period began to often comment on the new designs of the period. These fashions were referred to as “demonic style” (*bogyo* 服妖) by writers, an expression commonly used in the Joseon period to clothing that was believed to dangerously violate societal standards and the law (Lee 2023, 93–95).

Women were expected to limit their social activities in accordance with neo-Confucianist ideals. As a result, appearance started to take priority over usefulness in women’s upper wear. These looks, however, reflected widely held, socially created notions of what was appropriate to wear at that particular time, women actively pursued these looks. The findings of clothes from tombs, among other sources, show that *jeogori* has been reduced in length and

narrowed throughout time. For example, the *jeogori* from the tomb of Mrs Song (Eunjin clan, 1509–1580) was loose and measured 50 cm from shoulder to hem; however, the later *jeogori* from the tomb of Mrs Yun (Papyeong clan, 1735–1754) had already been shortened to a height of 31 cm (Lee 2023, 95-96). When the *jeogori* could no longer be shortened, the tendency to reduce it stopped. An example of this is only 19.5 centimetres long *jeogori* <Figure 5>, showcasing the smallest length possible from the armhole. Even a portion of the waistband that was utilised to knot the *chima* was exposed due to the *jeogori* being shortened so that it was unable to completely cover it <Figure 6> (Lee 2023, 100). Even though the upper garment was shortened over the years, it continued to have the colour contrast existing already during the Three Kingdoms era (Cho 2022).



Figure 5: A *jeogori* (woman's upper garment), silk and cotton. Minsok 006999. © National Folk Museum of Korea. 19th century.





Figure 6: *A Spring Outing of the Young*. by Shin Yun-bok. Korea Database Agency. Date: 1758/1858. It is possible to see the daring style of clothes of the time, where the chest white part of skirt is showing due to the shortage of jeogori.

The shortening of the *jeogori* caused resentment among Confucian scholars, one of whom, I Deokmu (1741–1793), in the book *Sasojeol* (士小節, Elementary Etiquette for Scholar Families, 1775), speaks of attempting to try one of these short, uptight *jeogori*:

When I put on a woman’s *jeogori*, it was very difficult to get my arms through the sleeves, and the seams burst open when I bent my arms. Even worse, I could not easily take it off because my arms had swollen from poor blood circulation just a few minutes after squeezing into the jacket. I had to rip off the sleeve to take it off. How wicked these *jeogori* are (Lee 2023, 96).

Women were not allowed to wear pants outside, which is why those pants seen in tomb paintings of Goguryeo were substituted with a form of trousers worn beneath the skirt. As the *jeogori* became shorter, the waistband of the skirt went up to the breast (Cho 2022) and the skirts’ length and volume were increased. Regarding this change, the scholar and diplomat Bak Gysu (1807–1877) noted: “Wearing around ten layers of underskirts beneath the outer skirt looks ugly, like an upside-down bell. <Figure 7>” (Lee 2023, 96).



Figure 7: “Pictures of Eight Beauties” by Chae Yongsin. early 20th century. Collection of OCI Museum of Art. It is possible to see the skirt’s “upside-down bell” shape as it is voluminous at the top and so much at the bottom.

Because the process of producing clothing required a variety of specialised skills, including cultivating, processing, and dyeing fibres, as well as weaving, stitching, and embellishing, women at this period had to dedicate a significant amount of time to its creation (Lee 2023, 102).

## 2.5. Open port era (1876 – 1910)

During Korea’s Open port era, people started to accept Westernized clothing and techniques of making the clothes, which was supported by the dress reforms of the time. Written texts, artefacts, and visual materials – particularly photographs – are the primary sources that provide details about the modifications in attire throughout this period.

The so-called Open Port era in Korea began in 1876 and lasted until 1910 when the Japanese colonial rule was established. The main developments regarding clothing were the Gapsin dress reforms (Gapsin uije gaehyeok 甲申衣制改革) of 1884; the Gabo dress reforms (Gabo uije gaehyeok 甲午衣制改革) of 1894 and the Eulmi dress reform (Eulmi uije gaehyeok 乙未衣制改革) of 1895. The Western influence led to the modernisation of clothes, which mostly happened in two ways: either by incorporating Western garments or by altering traditional clothing (Lee 2023, 161). The entry of Western goods into the Korean market was one of the factors that contributed to the hybridisation of Korean clothing (S. S. Lee 2013, 83). The adoption of Western-designed military and police uniforms in 1895 and later judicial uniforms in 1900 marked the beginning of the acceptance of Western suits as an emerging style that was also integrated into the state’s dress code. During this period, the changes did not include clothing reforms for women.

Joseon opened its borders to neighbouring nations in 1876 by forming its first modern treaty with ‘Westernised’ Japan. As a result, a new type of delegations (susinsa 修信使) were

dispatched to Japan, and since they were dispatched prior to the national clothing changes, they were dressed traditionally. Written texts in traditional Chinese are an important source of information regarding these travels. These sources include two government-published official histories<sup>1</sup> as well as notes and reports<sup>2</sup> written by envoys and their assistants. Specifically, the records<sup>3</sup> of Park Yeonghyo (朴泳孝 1861–1939) are helpful for learning about his diplomatic endeavours in Japan as well as his viewpoint on changes in garments.

In 1882, Joseon expanded to the United States of America after initially opening to Japan. Articles printed by the *New York Times* and other USA newspapers and magazines provide insight into the garments worn by the Korean emissaries (Lee 2023, 162–163) of the diplomatic delegation that was dispatched to the United States in 1883 called *Bobingsa* (報聘使). A photo of the members of this delegation <Figure 8> shows that their attire features a shorter *dopo*, a traditional overcoat, and shortened *jeonbok*, a type of long vest (M.-J. Lee and Kim 2011, 22). The *New York Times* from December 27, 1883, mentions the Korean missionaries' acquisition of numerous Western suits (Lee 2023, 163).



Figure 8: *Bobingsa*. Photograph from the George C. Foulk Collection. The Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System. Date: 1883. In the back row, it is possible to see gentlemen clothed in *dopo*, and *jeonbok*, with the traditional hat, *gat*. The Korean gentlemen in the front row are donned in *gwanbok*, official's attire, with a hat called *samo*. On the right, it is possible to see American Percival Lowell dressed in Western clothing.

<sup>1</sup> *Gojong sillok*, 高宗實錄, [The Veritable Records of Gojong]; *Seungjeongwon ilgi*, 承政院日記 [The Daily Records of the Royal Secretariat of Joseon Dynasty]

<sup>2</sup> *Bongmyeongseo*, 復命書

<sup>3</sup> *Sahwagiryak*, 使和記略, [Essential Records of My Trip to Japan], 1882

Simple, dark-coloured clothing was actively promoted by progressives and students who had studied abroad, which led to the modernization of the attire of the time (M.-J. Lee and Kim 2011, 26). The *jokki*, a vest in the Western style worn over the *jeogori*, and the *magoja*, an outer jacket originally worn by Manchurians, were new additions to the traditional hanbok at this time. Korean women started wearing it as well as it offered excellent warmth in chilly weather (S. S. Lee 2015, 84).

The first clothing reform since the opening of the ports was implemented by Joseon in 1884 and was known as the Gapsin dress reforms. There were two primary matters that the reform addressed. It classified the *durumagi* as an informal dress (sabok 私服) and the *heukdallyeong* (黑團領) as the standard attire of officials (gwanbok 官服) (Lee 2023, 163–165). The establishment of the *durumagi*, a coat with narrow sleeves and no slits in the side seams signalled the elimination of class distinction in clothing and the improvement of the garment's usefulness (M.-J. Lee and Kim 2011, 22).

The reforms were widely criticised, despite the fact that they avoided the adoption of Western dress. At the time *heukdallyeong* was perceived by the public as a reproduction of the black suits worn by Japanese and Westerners. A large number of individuals opposed the change and petitioned the government and King Gojong (1863–1907) to revoke it (Lee 2023, 165). The regulation was withdrawn and officials went back to their previous clothing standards after Gapsin's coup failed in the same year (M.-J. Lee and Kim 2011, 22).

A second clothing reform, known as the Gabo reform, was launched in December 1894. The Gabo reform re-introduced the *heukdallyeong* as the Great Court Uniform (daeryebok 大禮服); and instructed *durumagi*, *dopo*, *samo*, and *hwaja* as Semiformal Court Uniform. This led to the traditional Joseon costume being partially altered with the Japanized Western dress code (Lee 2023, 165–166). Foreign school learners of the time frequently dressed narrow-brimmed *gats* and narrow-sleeved *durumagis*, or occasionally western-style vests called *gaehwa* and western-style outer coats called *magojas* over pants and traditional jackets *jeogori*. The *gaehwa* vests were designed after Western vests with pockets. For this reason, the pocket is referred to as a “*gaehwa* pocket”, as the traditional *dopos* lacked pockets, and individuals were forced to store their belongings inside their large sleeves (M.-J. Lee and Kim 2011, 22).

The Eulmi clothing laws were introduced a year later, in 1895. They primarily addressed the Great Court Uniform, which was defined by a black robe with ‘wide sleeves’, the Half Court Uniform, which was defined by a black robe with ‘narrow sleeves’, and the Daily Work Uniform, which was defined by a cloak with ‘narrow sleeves’ (Lee 2023, 166). As a result, the

*dapho* — a long, sleeveless formal garment — was removed from the official dress code (M.-J. Lee and Kim 2011, 23). Commoners were supposed to dress as modestly as possible, and they were not permitted to wear wide-sleeved clothing unless it was for ceremonial events. Regulations regarding police and military uniforms were also introduced at this time (M.-J. Lee and Kim 2011, 23).

Part of the reforms was a royal decree “the Haircutting Ordinance” (danballyeong 斷髮令) issued by King Gojong requiring men to cut their hair short since January 1, 1896, of the solar calendar. Traditionally, men in Korea grew their hair long and tied it in a classic knot called a *sangtu*. Throughout most of the Joseon Dynasty, the removal of any part of the body, including hair, was considered a violation of filial piety, as the entire body was considered a gift from the parents in accordance with Neo-Confucian ideas. Subsequently, in an effort to promote political change, King Gojong cut his hair. After 1897, Gojong vowed not to carry out any of the clothes reform regulations, including the Haircutting Ordinance, and the reforms were once again annulled (Lee 2023, 167–169).

In 1897 the Greater Korean Empire was established elevating Joseon into an empire. The Chinese royal Dress Code served as the norm for the royal family’s and court officials’ attire during the enthronement ceremony. The black clothing was no longer forced on people. The Gabo and Eulmi reforms altered the clothes of military personnel and government staff, with the civil servants being the last to embrace Western-style attire (Lee 2023, 169). In April 1899, it was declared that government officials weren’t allowed to wear pale jade green outerwear. In 1899, the emperor and the crown prince reacted to these developments by changing their military uniforms to Western-style <Figure 9> (M.-J. Lee and Kim 2011, 23–24). Another notable shift in Korean clothing culture occurred in 1900 when people began to adorn themselves with an element of the Rose of Sharon, the national emblem of the Korean Empire. The Rose of Sharon motif <Figure 10, Figure 11> was used as a national symbol for the first time (Lee 2023, 175–177).



Figure 9: King Kojong and King Sunjong; Photograph from the collection of Willard Dickerman Straight and Early U.S.-Korea Diplomatic Relations, Cornell University Library. Date: ca. 1904.



Figure 10: *The Rose of Sharon*.



Figure 11: Emblem of South Korea, using the motif of *The Rose of Sharon*.

In 1903 the government began promoting dark-coloured clothing dyed with aniline, the first synthetic dye created by Englishman William Perkin; the majority of the aniline dyes used were imported from Germany. The aniline dye was created by synthesizing coal tar.

Beginning in January 1906, Japan used more forceful tactics to enforce the ban on white clothing (白衣), including writing with ink on Koreans' white clothing. The *Iljinhoi*, a pro-Japanese group, also joined the ban by dousing Koreans wearing white hanboks in black water

(M.-J. Lee and Kim 2011, 24). Although the photos from this period are frequently undated, they may be analysed with the changes reported in the written sources (Lee 2023, 177).

During the Open Port era (1876-1910) in Korea, several significant dress reforms took place, influenced by Western styles and the nation's interactions with other countries. The Gapsin dress reforms (1884) were short-lived and did not include an adaptation of Western dress. Later implemented the Gabo dress reforms (1894) partially altered the traditional Joseon costume with Japanized Western dress elements. This reform was more extensive and had a lasting influence on modernizing Korean attire. The Eulmi Dress reform (1895) defined various court uniforms and introduced regulations for police and military uniforms. It marked a significant shift towards Western-style uniforms and simplified everyday attire. These reforms collectively led to the modernization of Korean clothing.

## **2.6. Japanese occupation (1910 – 1945)**

Due to the loss of Korea's independence, many people began to return to the traditional Korean attire, *hanbok*. Especially the white attire that represented the nation's general sorrow for the lost motherland and was perceived by many as a national emblem. Clothing of this period was, however, influenced by Japanese fashion. Sources from which we can learn about clothing from this period include written texts, visual sources such as photographs, paintings, and later films, which in Korea were silent until the 1940s.

Korea was a Japanese colony for 35 years beginning in 1910. The Japanese colonial occupation is generally classified by historians into three main phases. Although the Japanese imposed strict military authority over the first ten years, they also provided modernity, new ideas, and innovative items. Relatively little censorship and oppression occurred throughout the second decade. Since the Japanese economy was growing at the time, numerous Koreans were able to enjoy new things from outside countries. The colony endured enormous difficulty throughout the third and a half decade of the 20th century due to a war that made life tough for the ordinary Japanese citizen nevertheless much worse for the colony's residents (Peterson and Margulies 2010).

A Japanese-style uniform has been introduced in Korea from the beginning of the colonial regime to help firmly establish Japanese rule. The colonial authority, Joseon Chongdokbu, actively participated in the Koreans' voluntary efforts toward modernity, which resulted in a darker clothing style among the Korean populace.

Hanbok was starting to regain recognition among regular Koreans, whereas Western suits started to lose their popularity when Korea's independence was taken away by the Korea-Japan Annexation Treaty of 1910. Western outfits were seen as a sign of shame by the common Koreans, who were strongly patriotic and wanted their nation back. These happenings had an impact on school uniforms, which were altered to hanbok. A lot of people donned in white mourning garments were observed during the last monarch Sunjong's burial in 1926. The white clothes signified the nation's collective grief over the lost homeland, and many perceived the white hanbok as the national emblem. Koreans were also described as white clothing people (白衣人) by Choe Namseon, owner of the *Sidae ilbo* (時代日報) in an article published on May 6, 1924. From the year 1930, the Japanese administration in Korea tightened its ban on white hanbok. In response to that two Confucian intellectuals committed suicide as a sign of their dedication to defend the Korean identity symbolized by the white hanbok. The first to commit suicide by hanging on a tree was Gim Ubang which was reported in the Dong-a Ilbo newspaper in 1934 <Figure 12>. After that Gaebyeok magazine wrote about suicide of the Jo Taejeong in the 1935 edition. Mister Jo lived in Pyeongsan-gun and due to the tightened regulations regarding white clothes, he had his attire painted black by the police to which he stated that that it would be better to die than to suffer such an insult and live in misery <Figure 13> (The Dong-a Ilbo February 13, 1934; Gaebyeok New Edition no.3, 1935).



Figure 12: The Dong-a Ilbo February 13, 1934. "An old man who kills himself because he doesn't want to wear colourful clothes".



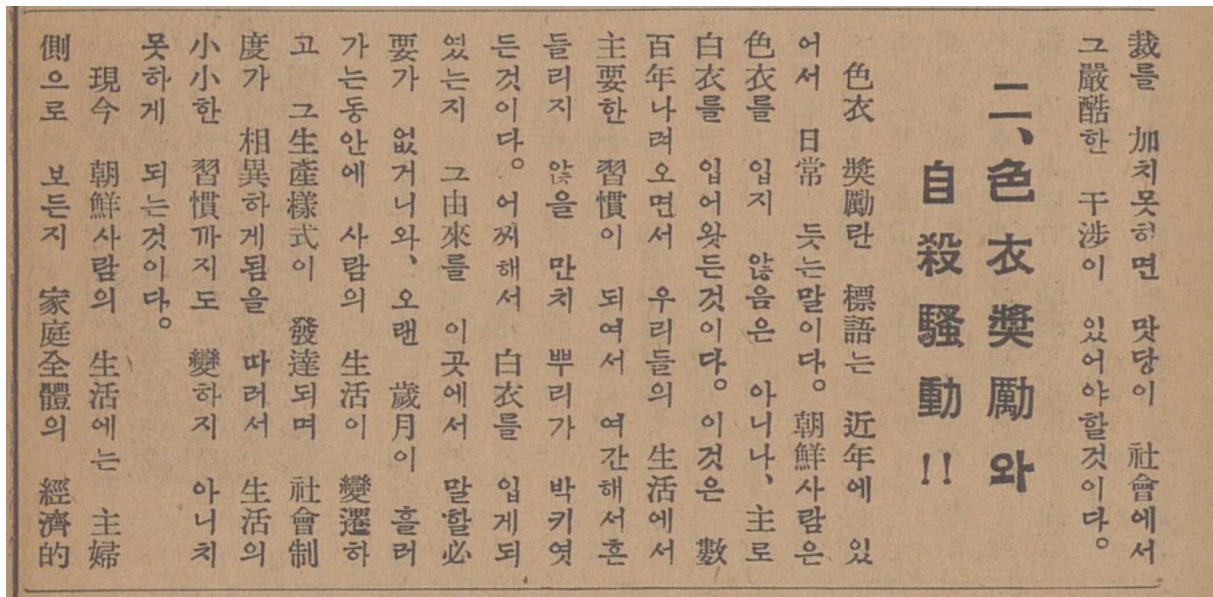


Figure 13: Gaebyeok. New Edition, no. 3, 1935. “Colorful movement and Suicide Riot!!”.

White has historically been a significant colour in Korean culture. The white hanbok was a complex symbol throughout the post-war period; it represented pride, resistance, loss, nostalgia, resentment, and shame. White is no longer the most common colour used in daily apparel, but it is still a significant colour that stands for traditional values and pride in the country. Modern hanbok and contemporary Korean fashion incorporate a wide range of colours and styles.

In 1940 Japan made the first European-style men’s civil uniform called *Kokumin-fuku* (国民服), which Koreans were also required to wear. In order to be recruited to work for the Japanese colonial government, Korean women were likewise compelled to don *monpe* (もんぺ) or in Korean called *ilbaji*, loose working trousers in the typical Japanese style. The return of white clothing (白衣) as the national emblem was caused by the Declaration of Independence in 1945 (M.-J. Lee and Kim 2011, 28).

## 2.7. After liberation

Japan’s defeat in the Second World War on August 15, 1945, resulted in the liberation of Korea. Due to the war, a large number of Koreans were relocated during this period. Following World War II, the superpowers split Korea into North and South Korea along the 38th parallel, which quickly sparked a new conflict. The Korean War began in June 1950 and continued until 1953. Thus, this chapter will primarily address how hanbok developed in South Korea following the Korean War (Peterson and Margulies 2010).

Korean fashion saw its rebirth with the end of the Korean War. Korean vogue had been influenced by the introduction of Western clothing as part of military supplies. The year 1953 saw the start of the importation of nylon, which was quickly widely utilized in outerwear and innerwear due to its strength and ease of care. Korea's first fashion education institution in the nation called the Choe Gyeongja Clothing Institute, was established by Choe Gyeongja (1911–2010), a pioneer of the early fashion industry in Korea.

Another quite influential figure in Korean fashion was Nora Noh who studied the fashion in United States returning as the first Korean fashion designer in 1949. She opened her shop in Korea, selling clothes and providing dancers' costumes for performances for US military personnel. In 1956 she held her first fashion show, however, due to the absence of professional models at that time Miss Korea contestants and female actresses walked the runway. Additionally, O Hyeonju, the first contender from Korea in the Miss Universe competition, had garments made by Nora Noh in 1959. The "Arirang dress" <Figure 14>, a hanbok-style ensemble, that she designed for the occasion, sparked a trend in which Western design was combined with traditional Korean clothes (M.-J. Lee and Kim 2011, 92).



Figure 14: *Satin Brocade Arirang Dress. National Registered Cultural Heritage. Date: 1959.*

Koreans were first introduced to the then-unknown profession of “designer” in 1961 when the country's first professional association for fashion designers was established. Apart from organic materials like cotton, silk, and wool, Korea started manufacturing synthetic materials like acrylic, polyester, and nylon in the 1970s. Consumers no longer depended solely on stylists or fashion guides for assistance. As more individuals discovered clothing that suited

their interests and passions, they started to embrace the idea of individualism. Later in the years, the younger generation experimented with punk and pirate styles to showcase their rebellious nature. Women's skirt length was also significantly reduced, which was indicative of the shifting norms of society in Korean culture. Miniskirts, hot pants, and pantaloons were among the bold fashion items that faced severe restrictions from the government. Simultaneously, the upper class in Korea developed a fixation on certain status symbols, such as furs, leather, and skins (Lee 2015).

The end of the Korean War (1950 – 1953) brought a profound transformation in clothing trends and the fashion industry in South Korea. Nylon, the first synthetic fabric, started to be imported and due to its properties, it was widely utilized. The profession of designer was introduced at this time. Nora Noh, Korea's first fashion designer, introduced Western-style fashion shows in 1956 and designed the "Arirang dress" for the Miss Universe in 1959, blending Western and traditional Korean styles, a trend that persists today.

## **2.8. Women's attire development in modern times**

This chapter explains how, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Joseon female *hanbok* evolved into its more contemporary forms. Originally, schools and missionary organisations were the primary means of carrying out this shift. Modernization has made women's *hanbok* more useful for social gatherings. With time, the skirt's length decreased, straps were added, and a one-piece skirt was designed instead of the traditional wrap style. The *jeogori* began to lengthen to cover the chest band of the skirt. For reasons of practicality, women also began to adopt Western clothing.

In the late Joseon Dynasty, the traditional Korean silhouette, consisting of a small top area and an expanded lower section, was taken into consideration for the design of women's hanbok (S. Cho 2018). The traditional hanbok worn by women mirrored the Confucian ideal of modesty, which held that "modesty" could be attained by hiding the feminine figure. Interestingly, though, hanbok was both exposing and concealing at the same time (Ja et al. 2005, 11). The upper garment of a woman's hanbok, the *jeogori*, has decreased in length in comparison to those worn in the middle of the Joseon Dynasty, sometimes reviling a woman's undergarment (S. Cho 2018). It was not allowed for women to lead active social lives during the Joseon period, but a new era for women began when Korea opened up to the outside world at the end of the 19th century (Lee 2013, 86). During that period of time, women's dresses were Westernised. This transition in clothes was promoted by the urban upper class and those who

studied overseas with their Westernized perspectives and social activities (M.-J. Lee and Kim 2011, 25).

The ideas of equality, freedom, and rights for women were introduced to Korean women by Western missionaries (Lee 2013, 86). Women in Korea who understood the need for gender equality declined to wear *seugaechima* or *jangot*, traditional veils to cover women's faces <Figure 15> (M.-J. Lee and Kim 2011, 25). The removal of the veil was also encouraged by women's organizations and the media, who argued that although hanbok had traditional beauty, it was impractical for social interactions (Lee 2013, 88). An article published on November 23, 1906, stated "*If women are to recover their equal rights and to engage in social activities, it is necessary to reform the dress codes. Abolishing Jangot altogether and letting women show their face in public is to conform to the norm of today.*" In reaction to this, a lot of women started to use parasols (M.-J. Lee and Kim 2011, 25). Ewha Girls' High School was the first school to abolish the veil. Due to the abolishment of the veil, a lot of women started to be interested in hairstyles and hair accessories.



Figure 15: Korean woman wrapped in cloak; Photograph from the collection of Willard Dickerman Straight and Early U.S.-Korea Diplomatic Relations, Cornell University Library. Date: ca. 1904.

Women's rights activist Yun Kora became the first woman in Korea to wear Western-style clothing in 1899. Before coming back to Korea, she had studied in Japan and the United States (Lee 2013, 88). Later on, Western-style clothing started to be worn by even women from aristocratic and royal families. "Gibson girl style", as their look was known, was created to give the impression of a tall, lean body. Nevertheless, females at the palace were more frequently

seen wearing Korean hanboks. The fact that some upper-class women choose to wear both *yangbok* and *hanbok* styles shows that their style of dress did not completely shift to Western fashion (Lee 2015, 136–138).

Sookmyung Women's College (淑明學院, initially named Myungsin 明新) was the first school that adopted western style uniform in 1907. The one-piece dress and hat uniform, inspired by Edwardian fashion, created a lot of discussions (Lee 2015, 134). However, this changed in only three years due to parents being reluctant to let their daughters wear Western uniforms. The Western-style uniform changed to a hanbok-style uniform, being white *jeogori* and black *chima*.

The reform of the female hanbok was led via schools and missionary institutions, during the late nineteenth century. Women were taught clothing and textile-related subjects in the schools. The first school to adopt hanbok-style uniforms was the Ewha School (梨花學堂) established in 1886 by American female missionary Mary Scranton. The uniform consisted from scarlet-coloured *jeogori* and *chima*, which drew people's attention as one-coloured hanbok skirts and *jeogories* at that time were quite uncommon. Following this trend, other women's schools also used the reformed hanbok as uniforms (Lee 2015, 133–134).

Women's groups were recommending alterations to hanboks from 1905 in order to make them more practical (Lee 2013, 88). One of the hanbok's problems of that time that was identified by the *Jeguk* newspaper (帝國新聞), on 31 May 1906, was the length of *jeogori*, which was too short causing female wearers' body parts to be exposed. It was also explaining why women wore *yanbok*, Western clothes, or Japanese clothes to avoid inconvenience (Lee 2015, 136). Proposed modifications included extending the jacket and switching the wrap skirt for a one-piece skirt. In the 1910s, the new skirt, whose length was reduced to reveal the ankles, started to be adopted as part of school uniforms. Another inconvenience of women's attire was the waistline of the wrap skirt, due to its position on the bustline needed to be tightly tied to remain in place. A new skirt with straps was created in 1914 by American teacher Jeannette Walter of the Ewha Girls' School. These straps became very popular across the country, and soon straps were added to both the new skirt and the traditional wrap skirt (Lee 2013, 88–90). Moreover, the skirt's top waist section could be detached, allowing for the washing of just part that needed to be rather than the entire long, broad *chima*'s panels (J. Lee 2017, 189).

It has been observed that even women who were living and working closely with foreign missionaries maintained their Korean-style look, although with adjustments to their hanbok. Typically, Korean nannies took care of missionary children throughout the day, often acting as

surrogate mothers. The nanny's outfit serves as an example of how women's hanbok may be modified to fit the needs of the wearer's lifestyle and place of employment. The nanny has *jegori* with rather short and narrow sleeves, compared to the traditional one, suiting the nanny's daily job (Lee 2015, 139).

Sinyeoseong, a Korean term for "new woman", was introduced in the 1920s, it represented educated, independent women who dressed in Western-style clothes. In 1928 the skirt's hemline rose to the knees as the Western-style dress gained in popularity. Initially including decorative embellishments, 1920s women's fashion gradually lost these components as the decade progressed, the silhouette diverted from the traditional A-line to a more straight one. During this period, women's clothing developed to include coats and capes, as well as one-piece dresses, jackets, sweaters, and numerous skirts. Handbags, sportswear, and swimsuits were also introduced. A feminine style gained recognition in the 1930s, which led to an increase in colour scheme variation. The popularity of handbags increased along with the introduction of sandals (Lee 2013, 86–87).

### **3. Transition from traditional to modern hanbok**

The transition from the traditional hanbok toward the modern one was mainly done during the end of the 19th century and through the 20th century. The change was mainly due to Korea's opening up to neighbouring countries and the West. The colonial period also had a great influence on the modernization of hanbok. This transition was influenced not only by technological advances but also by the leading ideologies and social norms. Hanbok, a traditional Korean garment that has undergone design and arrangement modifications over the decades while maintaining its core characteristics. Traditional Korean attire always consists of two primary components, namely the upper garment, *jegori*, and the lower garment, *chima* or *baji*.

#### **3.1. Traditional hanbok pattern**

The traditional *hanbok* is made by employing flat pattern cuts and sewing methods. A flat cut indicates that the design of the clothing does not include any type of darts, which when used make clothes three-dimensional (Han and Cho 2016). When laid down, clothing created with the flat technique lays perfectly flat on the ground. Garments made with the flat construction method have a looser fit since it highlights the simplicity and straight-line sewing techniques over-elaborate and skilled sewing of curves. Sharp curves and angles are avoided in traditional

Korean attire, emphasizing straight lines. Given that hanbok was made to fit individuals who were all around the same height, using flat cuts was more suitable. It is a feature of hanbok design that sets it apart from Western clothing, which allows each wearer to customize each garment to suit their own personal style (Park and Shim 2016). The flat-patterned hanbok is praised for its loose fit and low waste of fabric, however, it is criticized by many for discomfort and limited mobility (Han and Cho 2016).

Traditional hanbok seams are positioned strategically to avoid high-stress regions like the crotch and underarms. The probability of the seams ripping is considerably reduced by this construction, which makes sure the seams do not take the brunt of the movement of the wearer. Traditional Korean apparel is characterised by its slightly displaced sewing technique, which adds to its practicality and durability (Bykova and Guseva 2021).

The *jeogori* is composed of a main body which is decorated by a front bow, called *goreum*, a stand-up collar with a white strip (*dongjeong* 同正). The main body consists of two panels (Jeong 2006) serving as the back panels and front panels overlapping each other. This implies that there are no shoulder slopes. The sleeves that are cut as rectangles are attached to the main body creating the effect of a dropped shoulder, which is a design where the armhole position falls on the top of the arm area. Traditionally, when sewing the *jeogori* the pattern pieces are cut out with a wide seam allowance, which is later trimmed when the pieces are sewn together.

Nowadays, the hanbok made with traditional pattern is sewn by a sewing machine, which was not done in the past. First, the fabric is prepared for sewing as usual by pre-washing and ironing. Then the proper measurements are marked on the fabric to cut the parts for making *jeogori*. Four pieces are cut out of the fabric: two pieces for the sleeves and two pieces for the bodice, which is sewn at the back with a vertical seam. After sewing the bodice in one piece, the sleeves are sewn to it. The lining is prepared in the same way and then sewn to the fashion fabric. When sewing the lining together with the fashion fabric, the bottom seam of the *jeogori* is sewn curved. This curvature is slightly different for each manufacturer same as the curve made at the sleeves' seams. Then the neckline is marked, to which the collar is sewn, first by hand-basting stitch and then by machine. The collar is sewn by a machine from the right side and by catch stitch from the inside. Lastly, the *goreum* is sewn onto the *jeogori* (Made on Earth 2023, All process of world 2021, FactoryTrip 2023, Gyeolgoun 2022, DAOL Hanbok 2018)

The skirt is made out of a large rectangle, that is hemmed and sewn together with lining usually white coloured. This piece is then pleated to an appropriate size and connected together

with the bust panel, which is also constructed from a rectangular piece of fabric. The side seams each have a strip of fabric used for tightening the skirt to the body.

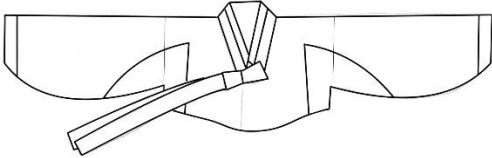


Figure 16: Fashion flat of traditional jegori. Monika Kočovská.

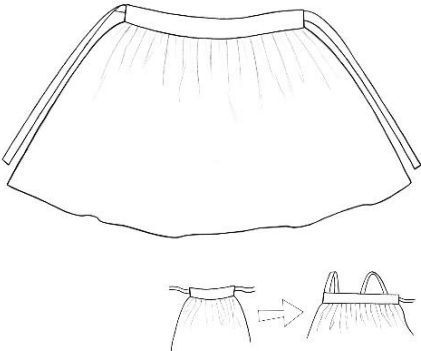


Figure 17: Fashion flat of skirt (chima). On the picture it is possible to see the addition of straps firstly made in 1914. Monika Kočovská.

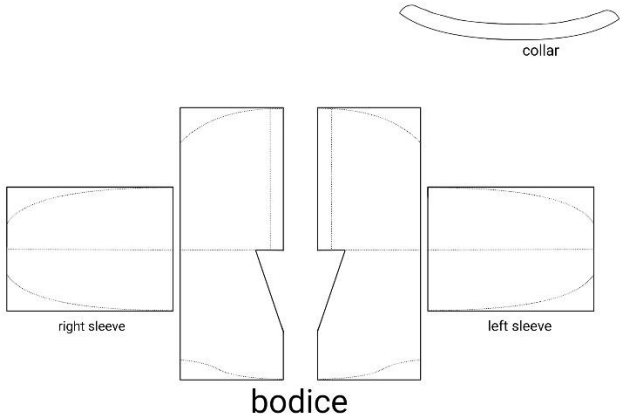


Figure 18: Pattern of traditional jegori. Monika Kočovská.



### 3.2. Changes in the pattern of hanbok

Until the beginning of the 20th century, the pattern of hanbok did not change greatly. In the past the *jeogori* was shortened from hip-length to chest length, however, other parts of the *jeogori* pattern were kept relatively unchanged. Over time the *chima* started to be worn on the chest instead of the waist but also did not change the pattern or construction method significantly. However, since the 20th century when Korea started to be modernized the pattern and construction methods of hanbok have developed greatly, with some major modifications, that are used even nowadays (Sihyun Lee and Younhee Lee 2019, 150).

After the introduction of Western fashion to Korea, the design of the hanbok underwent significant transformations. Influenced by Western dress styles and cultural shifts, hanbok evolved to incorporate elements of modernity while still retaining its traditional elements. The once simple attire started to take on more form-fitting designs and started to use more creative patterns, and unique colour and fabric combinations.

The 1950s saw a rise in the demand for Western clothes that were custom-fitted due to the large number of American military troops stationed there. However, when mass production clothing gained popularity and US military bases decreased, many tailors began making *hanbok* by integrating traditional and Western elements to produce comfortable *hanbok*. As a result, novel and comfortable dimensional patterned *jeogori* have been created (Han and Cho 2016).

The notion of darts, which are frequently seen in Western garments, was introduced in Korea in the late 1950s. Since *jeogori* was created using a flat pattern, numerous darts were needed to fit one's three-dimensional body, as Kim Nankong noted in 1955. The familiarity of Western clothing caused people to consider the ruching around the shoulders area, inherent in the flat structure, an unnecessary and uncomfortable feature, which led to the addition of darts to the *jeogories*. In the 1960s designers of hanbok sought to modernise and remodel the garment so that it would be suitable for daily use (Han and Cho 2016). The hanbok was worn in everyday life until the end of the 1960s, as Western clothing gradually took its place in everyday clothing, the wearing of *hanbok* gradually decreased from the 1970s (Sihyun Lee and Younhee Lee 2019, 150–151).

Another change to the hanbok was brought by the invention of the power loom thanks to which fabric in Korea started to be mass-produced and that is why among other things the colours of hanbok started to be changed (Lee 2017, 186). In 1953 the import of nylon, the first synthetic fibre, to Korea started. In 1963 the market with synthetic fibres was well developed, which led to the mass production of hanbok made from fabrics like satin and brocade. The textile

industry's developments in the 1970s produced a wider range of luxurious and various textiles, including printed silk with floral designs. The colours got brighter, and their patterns became large. The A-line skirt-cutting method was originally utilized in the 1970s by designer I Rija (李利子). This cut gives the skirt's bottom fullness while providing the chest a more slender appearance. This Western-style method gained popularity in the 1970s and is still in use today. (Han and Cho 2016).

Another significant modification was caused by the emergence of sewing machines, thanks to which the pattern and sewing style of hanbok changed. After the introduction of the sewing machine *hanboks* with pockets and sewed-in name-tags emerged, something that was not made before. (Lee 2017, 189–191)

In the 1990s number of hanbok designers increased. By 1998, *jeogori* — which employed Western tailoring techniques to incorporate traditional flat pattern with three-dimensional patterned sleeves—was becoming more and more popular. Since 2000, various collar designs, such as the so-called *mokpangit* (木版깃), and *kalgit*, started to be used, and jackets became longer while sleeve curves narrowed (Han and Cho 2016).

Based on the findings by Han and Cho (2016) the discomfort of traditional *hanboks* led to the creation of 3D designs, which are an essential development in a contemporary culture that emphasises practicality. Western influences changed the trends of Korean fashion, bringing in creative and diverse styles while still preserving the history of *hanbok* by maintaining traditional elements.

### **3.3. Influential factors driving the evolution of hanbok**

The development of Korean traditional dress has been influenced by several inventions, which are examined in this chapter. The chapter explains how Koreans made the gradual transition to contemporary clothes production technology while maintaining the traditional elements of clothes and modernising traditional designs to serve new purposes. New inventions of the time, such as the power loom or sewing machine, influenced clothing in South Korea.

Despite the large supply of materials from abroad, it can be seen that Koreans supported their Korean products in the case of the Gyeongseong Textile Manufacture Incorporated company which was led by a nationalist spirit.

During the Open Port period, a lot of new Western products and inventions that influenced the development of Korean fashion came to Korea. Turkey-red cotton, hempen fabric, English and Japanese shirtings, and Victoria lawns, a fine linen or cotton fabric, were

among the Western goods that Isabella Bishop listed in her book as being sold at the Pyeongyang market. The first German merchant, Sechang Company, was founded in Incheon in 1884 and exchanged Western goods for Korean ones. In addition to offering interesting Western items like buttons, and textiles in a variety of colours, coloured fabrics, vibrant pigments, needles, and threads, the firm was interested in all types of Korean goods including animal skins and leather. Up until the 1950s, Sechang was a well-liked source for needles and thread.

The buttons were in high demand while making the traditional waistcoat, *baeja*, given the alterations made to it by modern Western merchandise. The original upper and lower parts of the hanbok were closed by straps which were replaced by the buttons. Another change made to the hanbok was creating pockets as traditionally there were none and people had to carry a detached pouch instead. These changes provided modern ways of use and better function. (J. T. Lee 2015, 139–140)

In 1882 the court official Ji Seokyeong (池錫永, 1855–1935) proposed to import the power loom, which caused the establishment of the Weaving Department (織造國, Jikjoguk) in 1884. Previously textile manufacturing was made by hand at home until the 19th century when it started to be modernized, however, the modernization of the craft did not take place all at once, due to the machine-made fabric with lower prices becoming gradually used more and more in Korean society. In the late 1890s however a few textile companies emerged; such as the Great Joseon Ramie Spinning Company (大朝鮮苧麻製絲會社, Daejoseon Jeoma Jesa Hoesa) in 1897, and the Hansang Spinning Joint Investment Company (漢上紡績股本會社, Hansang Bangjeok Gobon Hoesa) in 1899 (Lee 2017, 186–187).

After the introduction of cotton to Koreans in the late 14th century it became a main textile source of Korean clothing. It was brought from China, and it had a revolutionary impact on the clothing industry in Korea (Jeong 2006). However, Korean cotton started to be replaced by cotton from abroad; until 1894 it was mostly imported through British traders, later half was imported from Britain half from Japan, and after 1905 the cotton imported from Japan completely replaced the British one. Upon discovering that around 27 million won was annually spent on Japanese cotton fabric, the founder of Gyeongseong Textile Manufacture Incorporated (京城紡織株式會社) Kim Seongsu (金性洙 1891–1955) established a capital fund based on the principle of “one man, one stock”, in hopes, that the company would become a national producer. The company was established in 1919 and although the first factory in Yeongdeungpo district, a region of Seoul, adopted Japanese weaving machinery, it was led by a nationalist

spirit which is why only Korean workers were employed. Beginning in 1923, the company started to produce Korean cotton fabric as a means of protecting the Korean cotton market from Japanese influence (Lee 2017, 186–187).

Korean cotton textiles survived due to their durable quality – they were manufactured in a traditional handicraft way, rather than mass-produced like Japanese cotton cloth with lower sale prices, and Korean silk, ramie, and hemp textiles were particularly competitive due to their resilience and unique tactile feel (Lee 2015, 231).

In colonial Korea, people’s choice of materials and dressmaking gradually changed as a result of the increasing availability of diverse textiles from Korea, Japan, and the West at variable costs made possible by modern machine manufacture. The textiles offered to Koreans vary up to 32 different fabrics, from silks and satins to linen and cotton, to ramie and hemp. The broad spectrum of textiles indicates that Koreans of the time had many choices when it came to selecting materials for sewing dresses. “Silk cloth” (명주) and “ramie cloth” (모시) were two of the typical hanbok textiles that were priced based on their quality: “Low” (下), “Medium” (中), “High” (上), and “Special” (特). Korean clothing was being manufactured in a range of designs based on different textures and colours of textiles, thanks to the growing availability of materials for hanbok. This would have enabled the emergence of new fashion trends and progressively increased the range of options for attire (Lee 2017, 187).

Due to the availability of modern ways of chemical pigment dyeing during the Japanese colonial period the white hanbok started to be coloured. This was caused not only due to new dying methods but also by pressure from the Japanese colonial government that was prohibiting white clothes and recommending coloured ones. Early in the 1920s, there were two discussions over the use of colour: the Japanese Government-General of Korea emphasized the benefits of wearing coloured clothing to enhance living circumstances, whereas the Joseon aristocracy highlighted the disadvantages of wearing white clothing (白衣).

The introduction of sewing machines in Korea was a pivotal point in the shift towards modern methods of clothing production. In the creation of clothing in both the commercial and home areas, the sewing machine had a slow but considerable influence. For example, automation allowed the straight stitch, which typically takes 35 stitches per minute, to be completed thirty times faster. Increasingly in a lot of households, the Singer sewing machine was considered an “object of desire.” The sewing machine, an effective new way of production, a source of money, and a desired commodity for consumers, transformed everyday life in colonial Korea, particularly for women. Furthermore, to the sewing machine invention, training

facilities, and classes were established to instruct Koreans in the use of this modern technology for garments and textile making. One of the established institutions to instruct Koreans in the field of sewing was the Seodaemun Sewing Embroidery Institute (西大門 裁縫刺繡院). They offered four types of courses “Machine Sewing General Class Two Months” (機械裁縫 普通科二個月), “Machine-sewing Advanced Class Three Months” (機械裁縫高等科 三個月), “Embroidery Class Three Months” (刺繡科三個月) and “Research Course Three Months Machine-sewing Class” (研究科三個月機械裁縫科). In addition to teaching housewives to make *hanbok* and *yangbok*, the program was created to help expand the skills of professional women who hoped to use their sewing machine talents to earn money. Due to these happenings, the previous custom of women making *hanbok* by hand at home eventually expanded to sewing both *hanbok* and *yangbok* at home by sewing machine. A household’s sewing machine grew in value due to the difficult financial circumstances of the colonial era. Newspaper reports about fraud cases and sewing machine theft were becoming more frequent (Lee 2015, 238–240).

#### **4. Methodology**

For the following, I use data collected from web pages, Instagram accounts, newspapers, and interviews (For a closer outline of these data see below). I take stock of changes made in the pattern and design of modern *hanbok* – compared to the classic historical *hanbok* – and typologize them. My approach involves closely examining descriptions, which serve as the foundation for abstractions that eventually form. While describing the works recurring aspects and similarities to and differences from the work of other designers become evident. The differences and similarities in individual designs were compared and motivations leading to change were described. Likewise, texts (product descriptions, promotional self-reflections, interviews, etc.) that accompany the visual material (photos) were read with the purpose of filtering out those statements that seem most relevant, representative and telling to answer my research questions.

#### **5. Data**

The data presented in the diploma thesis were drawn from official web pages and official Instagram accounts of *hanbok* brands, namely *Dorothy Hanbok*, *Gigibebe hanbok*, *Princess hanbok*, *Yeshanbok*, *Hanbok Girls*, *Haewadalhanbok*, *Ohnelharuhanbok* for the rental *hanbok* portion, and *Coreano*, *Seorinarae*, *Jote-ta* and *Kygs.id* for the daily modern *hanbok*. The study sample for daily *hanbok* consisted of 70 randomly selected designs at stores web sides

to ensure objectivity. For the fusion hanbok section, the web pages and official Instagram accounts of the brands *Tchai Kim Young Jin hanbok*, *Leesle*, and *Danha* were analysed. Interviews and articles about the brands from newspapers such as *Korea Herald*, and *Korea Times*, and fashion magazines such as *Kia Design Magazine*, *Vogue*, and others were also included. The brands were picked for their popularity making them a good representative sample. The research included YouTube videos about the process of making the hanbok.

## **6. Modern hanbok patterns**

When studying the development of traditional Korean clothes, the expression “modern hanbok” appears. However, other terms such as “new hanbok” or “neo hanbok” are also used in discussions regarding the changes in this historical garment. In this work, the term “modern hanbok” will be used rather than other terms to refer to these contemporary adaptations of this garment. Although all of the terms are frequently used, I have chosen to employ the term “modern hanbok” due to wanting to highlight the modernization of the traditional attire that is still continuing in modern fashion and cultural contexts.

The term “modern hanbok” represents Westernized style attire that is modified from traditional hanbok. It is characterized by preserving Korean features while adding modern techniques to increase functionality and usefulness (Sihyun Lee and Younhee Lee 2019).

A lot of *modern hanbok* designers create the hanbok to be dimensional, which is achieved by adding curved seams or darts. To create dimensional clothes designers use the technique of draping, which can be considered Western-oriented. This technique creates clothes that are fitted or “draped” precisely corresponding to the contours of the human body (S. Cho 2018). With this technique, the fabric is attached to the dress form in such a way that a true-to-size cut is created, which is achieved, among other things, through darts and curved seams. Since its introduction in the late 19th century, this technology has been employed in mass manufacturing. It requires complex mathematics and pattern construction. By using a curved shape instead of the conventional right-angle construction for the sleeves and armhole, the garment fits the contours of the body more precisely and prevents wrinkles (Han and Cho 2016).

The three-dimensional pattern *jeogori* employs Western tailoring techniques, such as shoulder slopes, curved armholes, and darts, which illustrate a significant departure from traditional patterns and bring the pattern closer to Western-style one. Based on the research of Han and Cho (2016) many producers of the “modern hanbok” are reducing the cost by outsourcing production to countries with lower labour costs, such as China and Vietnam. In

order to keep prices low, they also use synthetic fibres; on certain occasions, higher-end items will also include blends of silk. This makes it possible to use more vivid colours for the hanbok, emphasising the various designs with contrasting sleeves and body colours. Collar design variations are very frequent and might include various sizes and shapes.

Recently, a lot of new and modern fabric types started to be used, one of them being denim. The term denim refers to a fabric that is a mixture of linen and cotton, produced in the 18th century in the Languedoc, a former province of France. In the beginning, due to denim being a thick fabric, it was hard to dye it one solid colour. In the early 19th century denim started to be used to make the clothes of miners, workers, and slaves. Later, due to their durability, blue jeans, the original kind of jeans worn by the working class, were popular among workers. Women began to embrace denim as a symbol of unisex fashion in the 1970s, indicating opposition to conventional gender norms and symbolizing women's increased social engagement. Due to this, denim became a symbol of gender equality. Over time, jeans have become a symbol of equality and freedom and an item that anyone can wear; a new icon that highlights youth culture and society. Considering all these meanings of denim, modern Korean fashion designers started to incorporate it to showcase the change in Korean society and the equality of women (Sihyun Lee and Younhee Lee 2019).

The amount of dimensional patterned hanboks is increasing, despite the continued popularity of traditional flat-patterned kinds. Wall displays are common for flat-patterned hanboks, whereas mannequins are frequently used to display 3D-patterned versions. Experts concluded that the most significant benefits of dimensional patterned *jeogori* were improved fit, new design look, and the removal of discomfort from underarm wrinkles (Han and Cho 2016).

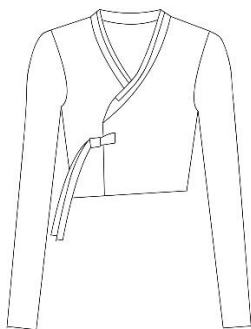


Figure 19: *Basic fashion flat of modern jeogori.* Monika Kočovská.

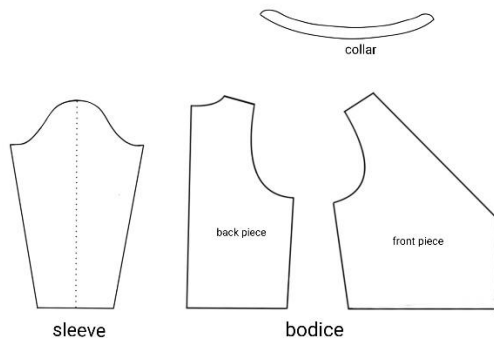


Figure 20: *Basic pattern of modern jeogori. Monika Kočovská.*

The development of *modern hanbok* can be distinguished into four different categories: classic, rental, daily *hanbok*, and fusion (Bykova and Guseva 2021).

### 6.1. Classic hanbok

The classic *hanbok* is worn by Koreans at special events such as weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, or traditional Korean holidays such as Lunar New Year or Chuseok (Korean Thanksgiving). The classic hanbok continues the most in the traditions of the past (Bykova and Guseva 2021). This type of *hanbok*, resembling Joseon *hanbok* in appearance, also includes elements of modernization.

The fabric of these *hanboks* is typically composed of ramie and silk. Unlike traditional *hanboks*, these garments do not adhere to conventional colour symbolism, meaning the colours are no longer indicative of the wearer's social status (Bykova and Guseva 2021).

Many hanbok specialists point to the sensation of flowing ornamentation of the *hanbok*, which disappears in these types. As can be seen in the picture <Figure 21> a decoration called a boutonniere is attached to the garment, which is often worn on a *hanbok* for weddings. Originally a decoration used in France, the boutonniere now identifies the wedding attendee as an honoured guest.

The traditional way of cutting and connecting the shoulder part to the bodice is not used. The traditional pattern creates a dropped shoulder effect which is not visible on these types of hanboks and creates a ruching around the underarm area which is perceived by many as uncomfortable. Rather the Western way of cutting and assembling is used where the head of the sleeve is curved, same as the armhole. Another modification in the design is the incorporation of shoulder slopes, which are cut at an angle to the fabric's grain. This contrasts with the traditional method, which features seamless shoulders (Han and Cho 2016).





Figure 21: Classic hanbok. Thumbnail of the video “My Parents Didn't Go to My Wedding”. Diannainkorea. 23. 12. 2019.

## 6.2. Rentals hanbok

The Korean government specifically the Ministry of Culture and Sports has undertaken initiatives to promote the traditional Korean attire known as hanbok. In 1996, they established “Hanbok Day”, celebrated annually on October 21st (Han and Cho 2016). In addition, the Ministry of Culture launched a campaign in 2017 to promote “Korean Style”, which part of was promoting the Korean attire *hanbok*. They implemented a promotional strategy by allowing free entry to palaces for visitors dressed in *hanbok*. This policy not only encourages the wearing of traditional attire but also enhances the cultural experience of visiting historical sites (Bykova and Guseva 2021). According to multiple studies, *hanbok* rentals account for a large portion of South Korea’s tourist industry, and both foreign and local visitors are encouraged to wear the *hanbok* when visiting various historical sites across the country. Individuals of various nationalities and age groups are seen wearing garments that emulate traditional Korean attire. Increased human, cultural, and communicational mobility has fuelled the travel and tourist industry, which is why globalization and *hanbok* tourism are closely related (Smith 2022). The “rental hanbok” is a distinguished type of hanbok, which comes to the mind of most people nowadays when talking about hanbok, which is why it was included in the study.

The “rental hanbok” is typically distinguished by its adherence to traditional patterns with minimal alterations. As a mass-produced item, it differs from the classic hanbok in terms of the materials used. Manufacturers often utilize polyester of varying quality, as this type of

fabric is significantly more cost-effective. As a consequence, a unique pseudo-historical image is created (Bykova and Guseva 2021; Han and Cho 2016).

In the vicinity of the old town centre, numerous shops offer hanbok rentals for women, men, and children. I conducted research and analysis on seven of these stores, namely *Dorothy Hanbok*<sup>4</sup>, *Gigibebe hanbok*<sup>5</sup>, *Princess hanbok*<sup>6</sup>, *Yeshanbok*<sup>7</sup>, *Hanbok Girls*<sup>8</sup>, *Haewadalhanbok*<sup>9</sup>, and *Ohnelharuhanbok*<sup>10</sup>. The research was conducted through their official web pages and official Instagram accounts. Multiple shops provide non-traditional hairstyling, purses, and hair accessories, like hair bands or hair ribbons in addition to the hanbok rental. For an additional fee, it is possible to rent various types of winter coats or winter fur vests, shoes, different types of hats for both men and women and other accessories. All of the shops offer several different styles of *hanboks*, divided into a few categories differentiated by price. The majority of reviewed stores classify their *hanboks* into three categories: “theme hanbok”, “special hanbok”, and “traditional hanbok”. The other stores’ *hanboks* are differentiated into slightly different categories. For instance, the “Princess Hanbok” rental company provides two categories: “special” and “premium”, the “Yes Hanbok” company offers “women’s premium”, “queen’s”, and “luxury” *hanbok* groups. The “Haewadalhanbok” firm offers “traditional”, “princess”, and “queen” *hanbok*. The rental price for each category varies depending on the duration of the rental period.

Despite the fact that many stores use the same names for their categories, the *hanboks* provided under those labels differ considerably. Therefore, I will identify various types of *hanbok* based on their appearance, which does not always align with the retailers’ established categories. Nonetheless, I will use the names designated by the retailers.

Three main types can be observed when studying rentals. The first one is most often called “traditional hanbok”. Such *hanboks* typically have very elaborate skirts, with the underlying fabric adding a colour and the upper layer of see-through, significantly decorative fabric. Lace with shiny applique is commonly used in these skirts. These skirts include hem-

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/dorothyhanbok?igsh=eTVlcWp6enFzMno0>

<sup>5</sup> <https://gigibebe-usa.imweb.me>; [https://www.instagram.com/gigibebe\\_hanbok\\_official?igsh=aG01MnkyOTQ3NTh4](https://www.instagram.com/gigibebe_hanbok_official?igsh=aG01MnkyOTQ3NTh4)

<sup>6</sup> <https://princesshanbok1950.modoo.at/>; <https://www.instagram.com/princesshanbok1950?igsh=OWhsaGw0MHpvNW41>

<sup>7</sup> <https://creatrip.com/en/blog/4290>; <https://www.instagram.com/yeshanbok/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.hanbokgirls.com/english>; <https://www.instagram.com/hanbokgirls?igsh=MWp5c3QyYWN2Y3A2MQ==>

<sup>9</sup> <https://haewadal.modoo.at/?link=68dn22c2>; <https://www.instagram.com/haewadalhanbok/>

<sup>10</sup> [http://ohnelharuhanbok.com/en/bbs/board.php?bo\\_table=m22](http://ohnelharuhanbok.com/en/bbs/board.php?bo_table=m22);

<https://www.instagram.com/ohnelharuhanbok?igsh=M3N2MmM2enRpN25k>

fabric decorations at the bottom, most often a different colour than the rest of the skirt with gold embellishments <

Figure 23>. The same gold fabric is also used for the chest band, which was traditionally made in white (Lee 2013, 26–29). The incorporation of these embellishments represents the departure from the historical style since the skirts of the past were rather plain and eschewed lace and other ornaments (Cho 2022).

Even in the present day, the skirt maintains its voluminous shape; this is accomplished by wearing a hoop skirt rather than layering undergarments as was commonly done in the past (Cha et al. 2020). Since American David Hough Jr. introduced the hoop skirt in 1846, it is evident that this is a very recent addition to the traditional hanbok. Likewise, the 20th century saw the addition of straps to the skirt's chest band, which is used nowadays as well (J. T. Lee 2015). The skirt remains wrapped around the torso and fastened with two strips of cloth attached at the side seam. Nevertheless, the strips are knotted in an unusual way at the back, resulting in a visible ornamental bow <

Figure 23>. Previously, the strips were fastened at the front and hidden beneath the *jeogori* (Park and Shim 2016).

The *jeogori* (jacket) has evolved from its traditional form. Typically, it is constructed from see-through, polyester fabric and embellished with glittery appliqué (Han and Cho 2016). The collar and cuffs are typically embellished with gold patterns and are designed in a distinct colour combination from the rest of the garment <Figure 22>. Some *jeogories* have buttons or “fabricated” *goreum* for closure to make fastening easier. The “fabricated” *goreum* is sewn to one side of the *jeogori*, which is closed by a snap fastener that is sewn from the inside, making it non-visible.

Modifications are similarly evident in the *jeogori* pattern. The front two panels and one back panel complete the main body which is cut from three sections. This is why these types of hanbok do not have the seam at the back as the traditional ones (Han and Cho 2016). This alteration was implemented as a result of the inclusion of shoulder slopes, thereby eliminating the ruching typically observed around the shoulders area, a feature inherent in the flat structure that is deemed uncomfortable by many in the design of the *jeogori*. The pattern of the sleeves has changed accordingly. The design of the sleeves is curved at the sleeve head and is implanted into the main body's curved armhole, which is a Western tailoring technique. The sleeves of this variation exhibit a narrower width in comparison to the sleeves of the traditional *jeogori*.

These changes illustrate a departure from traditional patterns and bring the pattern closer to Western-style ones.



Figure 22: Rental “traditional hanbok”,  
@dorothyhanbok.



Figure 23: Rental “traditional hanbok”,  
@dorothyhanbok.

Another category of hanbok available for rental in South Korea is commonly referred to as “special” or “premium”. This type of hanbok typically features a skirt with fewer decorative elements compared to the “traditional hanbok” previously discussed. The skirt is typically composed of two layers. The upper layer is made up of colourful textiles that are sewn in pleats in numerous stripes to the chest band <

Figure 24,

Figure 25>. This layer is frequently made out of ombre colours and folds into traditional knife pleats (Cha et al. 2020). The underlying layer commonly consists of a “layered skirt,” which, apart from serving decorative functions, provides a certain degree of volume to the skirt. <

Figure 25>. In some instances, the layered skirt is replaced by a plain white pleated skirt. To support the skirt and add even more volume the hoop skirt is additionally used. The chest band is made out of white fabric with strips of fabric at the sides that are wrapped around the body and tied to secure the skirt. The style of tying the strips varies, the strips are either tied

into the traditional Korean bow in front covered by a *jeogori* or to a decorative bow tied in the back.

The *jeogori* is less elaborate compared to the *jeogori* of “traditional” hanboks and is one-coloured. The most decorative ones are made of lace or have a shiny appliqué sewn on. The simpler ones are often composed of a single textile at times with a floral appliqué sewed closely to the collar. The pattern of these *jeogories* is the same as the one previously discussed, however, the *jeogori* maintains its traditional closure using the *goreum*.



Figure 24: “Premium hanbok”, @dorothyhanbok.



Figure 25: “Premium hanbok”, @princesshanbok1950.

“Themed hanbok” denotes to the third category of hanboks available for rental. These styles of hanbok are intended to replicate the clothes worn by the royal family or *gisaeng* (妓生), trained professional woman artists (Peterson and Margulies 2010). Based on the research, it is more common for rental services to provide hanboks resembling those worn by royalty.

The skirts are delicately decorated, with golden designs at the bottom of the skirt, which is typically plain. <

Figure 24>. The themed hanbok skirts have more vivid colours than the “premium hanbok”. For volume, there is once again used the hoop skirt.

The most notable distinction from the previously mentioned styles is the cut of the *jeogory*. The cut is similar to the Joseon period *jeogories* worn by the royals, where the frontal curve was much lowered <

Figure 25> (Gu 2009). Due to the extension of the front, the chest band alongside the tightening of the skirt is not visible. The shoulder area is constructed in a traditional manner

without the shoulder slopes creating rushing around the shoulder area. There are traditional ornamentations that extends from the collar to the sleeves, which are more narrow than the traditional ones (Han and Cho 2016). The *goreum* is used by the *jeogori* as the standard closure technique.



Figure 26: “Themed hanbok”, @hanbokgirls.



Figure 27: “Themed hanbok”, @yeshanbok.

One of the rental shops, *Gigibebe*, offers not only hanbok rentals but also photoshoots featuring hanboks inspired by Disney characters. <Figure 28, Figure 29>. The emergence of modified hanbok inspired by well-known Disney characters demonstrates how businesses have adapted to changing customer preferences. This innovative approach appeals to the younger generation, who are seeking new experiences in addition to giving traditional Korean apparel a modern feel (Sihyun Lee and Younhee Lee 2019). This service, though quite unusual for a rental shop, illustrates the evolution of *hanboks* over time. Integrating modern culture into the *hanbok* rental industry through innovative designs shows that the production and adaptation of *hanboks* continue to evolve even today.



Figure 28: *Disney character inspired hanbok*, @gigibebe\_hanbok\_official.



Figure 29: *Disney character inspired hanbok*, @gigibebe\_hanbok\_official.

### 6.3. Daily modern hanbok

In *modern hanbok* designs, there is a trend towards a more fitted upper part and a loose, flowing lower part, particularly evident in women's attire (Ryu 2018). The *hanbok* began to be modernized in the twentieth century to better suit contemporary lifestyles. These adaptations were influenced by Western fashion techniques and standards (Smith 2022).

The main distinction between Western clothing and *hanbok* lies in the style of cutting the fabric. Western attire is tailored to fit the wearer precisely and comes in a variety of shapes and sizes. In contrast, *hanbok* traditionally employs flat patterns that do not shape the attire into three dimensions, allowing a single dress to accommodate various body types (Han and Cho 2016).

I researched and analysed several stores that offer “modern hanbok” for everyday wear, through their official website and official Instagram accounts.<sup>11</sup> The studied sample consists of 70 designs. These *hanboks* are characterised by shortening the skirt, lengthening the *jeogori*, and adding Western elements. The majority of *hanbok* designs that these merchants provide are either updated renditions of the *jeogori* and *chima* as two distinct pieces or a single garment that is commonly inspired by the *cheollik* outfit (Victoria and Albert Museum 2022).

Compared to the *jeogori* from the late Joseon period, the modernized version undergoes significant transformations, notably in length, prints, colours, and pattern construction.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/kygs.id/>; <https://coreano.kr/>; <https://seorinarae.com/index.html>; <https://joteta.com/>

Designers experiment with a variety of prints and colours (Han and Cho 2016), diverging from the traditional palette, they also tend to use unconventional materials like polyester. There have been modifications in the pattern in all of the researched designs. The most commonly known traditional *jeogori* is from the Joseon period, when it was quite short, in some cases so short that the undergarment was showing (Lee 2023). Based on the research in contemporary interpretations, designers extend the length to reach either the waist or hip length in 16 cases out of 31 cases studied.

With the exception of one, every design examined incorporates a shoulder seam, and the sleeves are cut and sewn in a Western manner, departing from the traditional construction techniques. The only item “Watercolor Painting Pattern Modern Hanbok Dress” by “Jote-Ta” without the standard shoulder seam featured a seam that was moved slightly into the front, adding a decorative element.

In every example investigated, the sleeves of the *jeogori* do not include traditional sleeve curvature, meaning that designers do not limit themselves to classic sleeves. In terms of length, they incorporate  $\frac{3}{4}$  sleeves, short sleeves, or no sleeves at all. There is a wide range of different styles of sleeves; in addition to the basic sleeve found in 19 cases, the most popular types include short sleeves (in three cases), cuffed (in three cases), flutter sleeves (in two cases), and  $\frac{3}{4}$  sleeves (in two cases), different type of sleeves (in two cases).

The original hanbok collar was preserved in 30 designs out of 31 studied; however, the white element known as *dongjeong* was left out in 11 examples. When included in the style, the colour white was kept in three cases compared to 16 cases where the colour was different, symbolizing modernization in the colour schemes of the *hanboks*.

*Hanbok jeogories* feature collars in various shapes (Han and Cho 2016). The most popular ones are so-called *mokpangit* (木版炙) observed in 16 hanboks, and *kalgit* observed in five *jeogories*. The Chinese characters for “wooden plate” are the source of the name *mokpangit*, which resembles the end of the collar that, like a wooden board, is cut straight. On the other hand, the term *kalgit* translates to “knife”, drawing inspiration from the sharp, angular shape of the collar tip. The *mokpangit* and *kalgit* collar designs are examples of attention to detail that characterise modern hanbok creation (Han and Cho 2016). Some contemporary hanbok designs depart from traditional collar designs by omitting the collar and replacing it with a thin strip of cloth which was found in one design among the studied. This strip of cloth is chosen to provide visual interest and dimension to the outfit by contrasting with the rest of the hanbok, either in terms of colour or texture. The fabric strip can be



attached to form pleats or ruffles, adding a decorative touch. These embellishments give the collar area more depth and texture. This departure from traditional collar design highlights the always-changing character of hanbok fashion (Han and Cho 2016), as creators never stop innovating and experimenting with new techniques and ideas (Hwang 2016).

For the shorter variants of *jeogori*, the princess seams or darts were employed in 9 studied cases by the designers in order to highlight the female figures. This was not seen in any of the studied longer forms since it is presented tucked in the skirt or trousers to create a waistline. The original *goreum* continues to be used for the closing, although certain changes have been made to it in terms of fabric and design. In some styles, the buttons, that came from abroad in the 20th century (M.-J. Lee and Kim 2011), were used (10 cases).

There have also been observed alterations to the skirts although the basic structure remains mainly unchanged. Traditionally, the skirt length extended to the ankles (Cha et al. 2020), but in contemporary designs, it has been shortened in all examined cases; from which 11 were to middle-calf length, with some designers experimenting with even shorter lengths, 11 cases were higher than knee-length. Regardless of the variations in length, the skirt most often retains its classic knife pleats (20 cases), preserving an essential element of its traditional aesthetic. However, in four cases observed the knife pleats were not maintained. In one example “Strap Colored Modern Hanbok Skirt” by “Jote-Ta”, it is possible to see how Koreans are returning to their Chinese roots, by usage of the elements of the *mamian skirt* (馬面裙) <Figure 30>.



Figure 30: “Strap Colored Modern Hanbok Skirt”. Jote-Ta.

One of the most notable modifications in *modern hanbok* skirts is the way of wearing it. Historically, the skirt was worn below the *jeogori* (Cha et al. 2020), however in nine contemporary styles, it was secured over the *jeogori*, which was tucked in, compared to the 15

styles where the skirt was worn underneath the *jeogori*. Furthermore, there has been a shift in the method of fastening the skirt. Previously, skirts were typically fastened at the chest by wrapping it around (Cha et al. 2020). Modern *hanbok* designers have moved the fastening to the waist, as a reaction to the western fashion styles that came in the 20th century, creating a more flattering silhouette (M.-J. Lee and Kim 2011). Some designers also incorporated an invisible zipper as a closure for the skirt which was observed in three examples.

In addition to the two-piece modern *hanbok* sets, one-piece dresses have also emerged and were observed in 39 cases out of whole 70 cases studied. Based on the research these one-piece dresses can be divided into two different categories.

The first interpretation involves modernizing the traditional *chima* (skirt) to create a one-piece dress. Designers also include different lengths, cuts, and fabrics to transform the silhouette while still keeping elements of the traditional *hanbok* aesthetic. This modernized *hanbok* dress featured a straight neckline with straps in three cases, and a scoop neckline in five cases out of eight cases studied. In this type of dress designers frequently use princess seams (in three cases), or darts (in five cases), which shape the garment around the upper portion of the body to highlight its natural shape. Due to the addition of modern sewing techniques the traditional *hanbok* wrapping technique was not preserved in any of the designs. In all of the dresses, the invisible zipper was used instead of the traditional way of tying it. Out of these styles, three had straps wrapping around serving as a decorative element <Figure 32, Figure 33>. These modernised *hanbok* dresses frequently include traditional knife pleats at the waist (in six cases out of eight cases studied), the rest of the studied designs had different ruching techniques employed at the waist. These pleats help to create the classic A-shaped silhouette that is associated with *hanbok* clothing (Lee 2013). The dress's A-shape silhouette is achieved by adding pleats at the waist, that gradually spread out towards the bottom. In addition, the dress's waist pleats provide "comfort and fluidity of movement", making it suited to daily use (Cho 2022). These modernised *hanbok* gowns are available in a number of different printed patterns and colours. Six of the studied dresses were made entirely of one colour, and two were made in more than one colour without a pattern. <Figure 33, Figure 34, Figure 35>.



Figure 31: “Shell-Pink Holiday Mini Collection modern hanbok”. Danha.



Figure 32: “Modern Sleeveless Hanbok Dress in Navy”. Jote-Ta.



Figure 33: “Tweed Sleeveless Modern Hanbok Dress in Pink”. Jote-Ta.

The second style of hanbok dresses is a one-piece ensemble inspired by the *cheollik* outfit, which was traditionally worn by men primarily for horseback riding (Victoria and Albert Museum 2022). Currently, this style of clothes has been designed for women. <Figure 34, Figure 35>. The research shows that designers were frequently offering gowns that were influenced by traditional *cheollik* clothing (31 cases out of a total of 70 studied designs). The research reveals that designers use a wide range of materials, cuts, and colours. Most of the offered *cheollik hanbok* dresses kept the standard left over right closure with *goreum* which was seen in 20 cases, however in 11 cases it was possible to notice different Western style types of closure: buttons in six cases, zipper in two cases, other types of closure in three cases. In the case of the standard closure, the lower right section of the dress is secured with string inside, ensuring a secure fit. The left upper part of the dress is then secured on the opposite side with a drawstring in a traditional Korean knot, which is characteristic of traditional Korean clothing since Goryeo (J. T. Lee 2015). This traditional Korean knot serves both functional and decorative purposes. In 17 cases two straps were sewn in the side seams of the design. Due to this, the designers make the *goreums* thinner than those on *jeogori* which was observed in all cases having two strings.

The most observed length of the skirt in this type of dress was below the knee (in 23 cases). One of the studied stores, Jote-Ta, offered *cheollik* dresses in two types of lengths (six

cases), below knee or knee-length. In 18 designs pleats were incorporated into the pattern, compared to 13 cases where the skirt was either ruffled or just plain (no ruffle, no pleats). Changes in the colour or length of the skirt were observed in one case <Figure 34>.

The dresses were constructed with princess seams in five cases and in 24 cases they incorporated darts, only two observed dresses were made without any darts or princess seams. The *cheollik* hanbok dress maintained the traditional collar in all cases studied. However, designers were observed to use untraditional colours or fabric variations to it. In 17 cases the collar's white component known as *dongjeong* was absent. Eight cases retained the colour white, whereas six cases had a distinct colour.

According to the study, the sleeves of this type of modern hanbok dress come in a wide range of styles and lengths. Long sleeves were observed in 12 cases,  $\frac{3}{4}$  sleeves in eight cases, and short sleeves in 11 cases. The classic straight sleeves were employed in 23 cases, and other types of sleeves (in eight cases) for example puffed sleeves or circular cup sleeves. Based on the observation it is possible to note that the armhole of these dresses is rather large, due to the dress being mass-produced. In mass production, the armholes are often designed to accommodate different body types. In garments that are more figure-hugging, the armholes, however, cannot be large, given that larger armholes do not ensure flexibility and ease of movement, but rather prevent the wearer from moving arms freely without restriction. Tight-fitting garments require a more precise cut to maintain the ease of movement of the wearer. With the addition of princess seams and darts to *modern hanbok*, they have become more figure-hugging thus in need of precise size of armhole.

In response to the practical needs of modern consumers, some designers have incorporated pockets into hanbok designs, which was observed in four cases, offering a practical and functional feature that improves the garment's usability (M.-J. Lee and Kim 2011). The pockets were usually integrated into the side seams of the hanbok, hidden under the pleats of the skirt in all observed cases. By seamlessly integrating the pockets into the design, designers maintain the aesthetic of the hanbok while providing discreet storage space for everyday necessities. This thoughtful addition contributes to the lifestyle of today's wearers, allowing them to carry small items such as keys, phones, or lipstick without compromising the elegance of their attire (J. T. Lee 2015). Layering the hanbok skirt on top of the dress as a decorative feature is an innovative idea for less ornate modernised hanbok outfits which was observed in six cases.



Figure 34: “*Sinuihan cheolligwonpiseu*”.  
Coreano.



Figure 35: “*Deilli yeonpingkeu cheolligwonpiseu*”.  
*Seorinarae*.

#### 6.4. Fusion modern hanbok

According to many fashion articles Korean designers are striving to make traditional Korean clothing more known in the modern fashion scene (Kim 2023, Y. J. Kim 2023, “Bravo Hanbok Life Leesle” 2006). The study shows that in this category the creations range from pieces that closely resemble traditional attire to those that feature innovative interpretations that may be challenging for non-experts to identify. These designs are always Westernized to some degree. Regardless of the degree of resemblance to traditional hanbok, as the designers themselves mention they usually draw inspiration from Korea’s rich historical environment. While some designers are inspired by historical clothing, others are influenced by the rich colours and designs present in tapestries, paintings, wallpaper, and other ancient artefacts (“Tchai Kim Official Website” 2013, “Danha” 2018).

One of the famous modern hanbok designers is Gim Yeong-jin (Youngjin Kim), who established a custom-tailored Tchai Kim Young Jin hanbok brand in 2004, followed by ready-to-wear brand Tchai Kim in 2012. The name of the brand Tchai (차이 差異) means different, which goes along with the brand philosophy as they create clothes that are different and unique. At the heart of Tchai’s philosophy is, according to the designer, a desire to showcase “the modest beauty of Korea through their clothing” (“Tchai Kim Official Website” 2013).

The designer learned to sew in 2003 from the master needlework craftsman Park Gwang Hoon, who holds an Intangible Cultural Asset in South Korea (J. Y. Kim 2021). “Tchai Kim Young Jin is a traditional custom hanbok brand, and everything here, from petticoats to skirts

and jacket pieces, is hand-tailored” (Ryu 2018, 43). Due to the fact that custom-made clothes combine the customer’s wishes with the designer’s ideas, the designer does not have much freedom while creating new designs. For this reason, Kim founded her ready-to-wear brand, which, as she says, “embodies her imagination,” as in its creation “the designer’s creativity and sensibility play a significant role in creating ready-to-wear garments” (Y. J. Kim 2023). The ready-to-wear brand also offers more affordable designs, and not all items follow the traditional flat cuts of the hanbok. The pieces are created based on pre-made patterns and sewn using sewing machines, however some parts, such as neckbands or hems, still require to be hand sewn (Y. J. Kim 2021).

Gim Yeong-jin also addresses the issue of traditionality in her designs:

Being Korean, I wondered about what my ancestors wore in the past and what type of clothes I should design for the future. I wanted to make clothes that our ancestors wore; approach fashion design from an Eastern, not Western, perspective; and create designs from a Korean point of view (Y. J. Kim 2021).

The designer holds that in her *hanboks* she presents traditionalism from her own perspective. Hanbok has constantly changed and evolved throughout history, and according to Gim, the main feature of hanbok is the desire for beauty, which she tries to preserve in her designs (J. Y. Kim 2023). The designer herself compares her reinterpretation of the *hanbok* tradition to her “eating kimchi but also appreciating wine” (Y. J. Kim 2021). The designer is versatile and mixes traditional and modern methods of creation, adopting the useful and omitting the impractical. Gim also noted in her interview, “People should experiment with hanbok, and feel free like matching pieces with jeans or t-shirts. ... I do not think it is necessary to wear a full traditional outfit every time you want to wear hanbok” (Ryu 2018).

Gim takes inspiration for the silhouette from the 18th-century painting *A Beautiful Woman*, where the skirt is full and the top fits tightly. This painting portrays the *sangbakhahu* (literally: top-light, bottom-heavy) style, typical for the 18th century <Figure 36> (Y. J. Kim 2023). Most modern hanbok designers use Western pattern techniques to create dimensional clothes, this however is not the case of Tchai’s designs as she likes to combine the traditional flat patterns and draping technique, creating unique silhouettes (Y. J. Kim 2021). The modern touch is also reached by her choice of different fabric types. Traditional hanbok is made with fabrics such as silk, fine gauze, hemp, and ramie. She uses traditional fabric in combination

with non-traditional fabrics such as Italian silk organza, Liberty of London’s fabrics, French lace, or Indian and Thai taffeta silk to “create one-of-a-kind Kim Young Jin hanbok” (Y. J. Kim 2021). Regarding the fabric choice she states: “I like to be bold with fabric. If I limit myself to only using traditional materials for hanbok, I will forever be limited as a designer, too” (Ryu 2018). Fabrics dyed from natural raw materials have traditionally been used in the production of *hanboks*. The designer says that she tries to respect that, however does not hesitate to use bold pattern prints such as leopard and check (Y. J. Kim 2023).



Figure 36: *Portrait of a Beauty (Miyindo)*, painting on silk by Shin Yunbok. late 18th–early 19th. Treasure no.1937. © Kansong Art Museum, Seoul.

The signature piece of this designer is the *cheollik* dress. In one of her interviews, she speaks about the creation of the dress that came from the men’s wear of the Joseon dynasty. Due to society being male-dominated during the Joseon dynasty the clothes of males were more fashionable and varied more than the woman’s wear (Y. J. Kim 2023). The designer took inspiration from the *cheollik* dress which was an official robe for the military and created a modern version for women (Victoria and Albert Museum 2022). Her creation follows current womenswear trends by utilising an amalgamation of flat and three-dimensional cutting techniques to emphasise the waist and narrow the shoulders.

Pleats are not a must on every dress, and the skirt appearance may range from the traditional A-shape to a more modern, form-fitting design. Likewise, a variety of sleeve styles

are used. Tchai incorporates Western elements into her hanbok designs, such as pairing a hanbok dress with a turtleneck or stay. In some designs, Tchai uses buttons instead of the traditional *goreum* (Tchai kim 차이킴 한복 [@tchaikim\_official]). The brand Tchai is expanding internationally, which was supported by the exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (Victoria and Albert Museum 2022).

Leesle is one of the modern hanbok brands that was established by Hwang Yiseul. The brand is well known for the designs of hanboks for the BTS Jimin, Mamamoo, or KARD. The brand originally started as “Sonjjang Design Hanbok” in 2006 (“Bravo Hanbok Life Leesle” 2006). Prior to the creation of the brand Leesle Hwang studied and attained a Master’s degree in Clothing and Textiles after five years. Hwang Yiseul mentioned that initially, she drew inspiration from the comic book “Goong,” which motivated her to design hanboks that are practical for everyday wear and appealing to younger audiences (Hwang 2016).

The logo of Leesle incorporates geometric shapes — circles, rectangles, and triangles — taking inspiration from *hangeul*, the Korean alphabet, as it shapes after vowels and consonants of Hangeul. The logo is coloured in the traditional Korean mint colour, derived from ramie fabric dyed with Common Dayflowers (“Bravo Hanbok Life Leesle” 2006).

Starting with traditional hanboks, Leesle has evolved to globalize this attire by blending modern features with traditional elements (Hwang 2014). In one of her interviews she mentioned that she “hopes to be able to showcase the various sides of *hanbok*” (Hwang 2014). The brand’s owner and designer Hwang Yiseul has “invested over 100 million won in the dream of popularizing and globalizing *hanboks*” (“Bravo Hanbok Life Leesle” 2006). This ambition has led to the brand’s expansion into markets in Paris, Milan, and New York. To achieve the goal of establishing *hanboks* as a global fashion genre, the brand Leesle states that the creation of the designs is made with the zeitgeist philosophy in mind. Leesle’s products are now sold in 53 countries (“Bravo Hanbok Life Leesle” 2006), with the added benefit of worldwide free shipping for orders over \$99 USD.

According to designer Leesle, she draws inspiration for the patterns of their clothes from many aspects of Korean culture. As stated on the official webpage with each pattern decorating the clothes the designer was inspired by different Korean relics, for example, traditional Korean paintings, ceramics, and architectural motifs, among other cultural relics. Articles dealing with fashion describe that while incorporating modern designs and fashionable colours into the hanbok, the designer also undertakes the initiative to preserve traditional motifs (Ladner 2017).



“I will continue to combine oriental and Western styles to come up with my own unique creations,” declares Hwang (Hwang 2016).

Leesle’s hanbok collections demonstrate a range of skirt lengths, from floor-length to mini-skirts. One particular feature demonstrated in a number of the designs is the hidden bows inside the skirt, which, when tied, create fascinating layers and folds, resembling a practice from the Joseon era. This specific feature refers to the Joseon historical period when women pulled up their skirts and kept them in place using a belt; lower-class women often pulled up their skirts even further upwards, which exposed their underwear (Ryu 2018).

Different fastening techniques are used in Leesle designs, ranging from traditional *goreum* ties to buttons or zippers. Various fabrics are used in her creations of *jeogori*. Some designs use traditional materials while others incorporate contemporary materials like wool knits. The designer demonstrates modernity in her work by creating the *chima* in the style of a one-piece dress with a low-cut back (Contemporary Hanbok Leesle, @leesle\_official 2024). Compared to other designers, who mainly offer modernised *jeogori*, *chima*, or *cheollik* dresses, the Leesle brand offers a wide range of garments that mimic traditional women’s bras <Figure 37>. “My designs are unique because they represent the spirit of Korea, they are comfortable to wear and are trendy,” explains Hwang about her popular designs (Hwang 2016).



Figure 37: *Luck Happy Ribbon Top*. Leesle.

Another well-known brand producing modern hanboks is “Danha”<sup>12</sup>, which was launched by designer Danha Kim in 2018 (“Danha” 2018). The name Danha translates to “silk of summer,” with the word *dan* (緞) meaning silk and *ha* (夏) meaning summer (Kim, Danha 2023). Besides the ready-to-wear *hanboks*, the brand offers one-to-one consultation, with “the Maison Danha atelier creating special clothes on demand” (“Danha” 2018).

Danha Kim started her business by leasing hanboks online in which she was successful leading to the growth of her business (Kim, Danha 2023). Her ambition, she says, is to spread *hanbok* internationally, that is why she herself “wears hanbok while travelling”, with modifications, however, so that “it would be more comfortable” (Kim, Danha 2020). The challenge, according to her, is “to preserve the original form of the hanbok and fix the problems that cause inconvenience to the wearer,” Danha describes the challenge (Kim, Danha 2023).

Articles about fashion describe Danha’s designs as combining tradition and modernity, creating pieces that can be worn daily and for special occasions. By combining the traditional pattern with Western elements such as princess seams, zippers, or elastic that the designer uses extensively, the inconveniences that the designer mentioned can be removed (Kim, Danha 2023).

One of the themes of the designer’s collection was “transcendence”, which, among other things, was supposed to represent the merging of tradition with modernity in the designs. Danha declares that she derives motivation from knowing that her unorthodox collections surprise the public: “I’m having a lot of fun in my attempts to break people’s stereotypes about *hanbok*” (Kim, Danha 2023).

However, the designer presents herself as still inspired by traditional patterns, which she says form “the core of what is Korean” (Kim, Danha 2023). She mentions that she is inspired, for example, by symbols in the royal court that illustrate positive meanings such as great luck, fertility, and longevity. The patterns on fabrics inspired by the symbols were then used in the production of *hanbok*.

The brand Danha is also unique due to its clothes being made out of eco-friendly fabric, which helps protect the environment (“Danha” 2018). The brand mentions using woven fabric made out of thread from plastic waste. The use of eco-friendly materials is becoming a trend in fashion. Based on the brand most often their *hanboks* are made out of organic cotton or recycled

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<sup>12</sup> <https://danhaseoul.com/>; <https://www.instagram.com/maison.danha/>

polyester. The flat pattern method adopted by the brand is stated to result in less wasted fabric (Kim, Danha 2020).

## 7. Popularity of hanbok

Over time, Korean culture has become more and more famous. Korean dramas and K-pop initially sparked the interest, which has since grown to include Korean beauty and fashion, especially unique Korean attire (Sihyun Lee and Younhee Lee 2019). The *hanbok* was worn in everyday life until the end of the 1960s, as Western dress gradually took its place in everyday clothing, the wearing of *hanbok* then gradually decreased from the 1970s. (Sihyun Lee and Younhee Lee 2019)

The amount of money and attention devoted to the advertising of *hanbok* has increased steadily and significantly over the past decades. As part of its efforts to promote Korean culture and thrive on the “Korean Wave”, the Korean government has invested in *hanbok*. (Y. Lee 2017) That is why the Cultural Heritage Agency, allows people who wear *hanbok* to enter the palaces for free. This action has resulted in an increase in the number of young people wearing *hanbok* in the area of the palaces. Young people are sharing pictures of themselves on social media showing themselves in *hanbok* at historical locations, which has created a cultural phenomenon and increased interest in the garment. (Sihyun Lee and Younhee Lee 2019)

Many contemporary designers have introduced hanbok works on the global stage and organized fashion shows to promote the aesthetic possibilities of hanbok designs as a contemporary fashion design. Various hanbok fashion shows are held every year to raise awareness of this traditional Korean dress (Sihyun Lee and Younhee Lee 2019). Recently, even international designers such as Chanel and Carolina Herrera have incorporated hanbok designs into their collections (Han and Yang 2021).

In June 2007, Hye-gyo Song, a famous Korean actress, featured as a Korean *gisaeng* on the cover of *Vogue Korea*, a fashion and lifestyle magazine. Even though Song’s photos were very different from the typical portrayal of Korean beauty, it was the first time a Korean woman appeared on the cover of *Vogue Korea*. Song was wearing a Gu-ho Jeong designed hanbok skirt, but this was hardly noticeable due to Song’s exposed back and turned face being the main points of focus. An impression of exotic and mysterious beauty was created by the make-up and hairstyle (Y. Lee 2017). The creator of this image is Italian fashion photographer Roversi, who is said to look at Korean beauty and clothing from a European perspective (Y. Lee 2017). Later, *Vogue Korea* made a couple more covers with the hanbok theme. The most attention was drawn

to the August 2022 cover, which featured a model wearing an outfit resembling *hanbok* underwear <Figure 38>. However, this photo did not receive a positive reaction and can no longer be found on the web page of *Vogue Korea* today (Sang 2022). Due to the Korean traditional attire becoming more popular, the magazine *Vogue* also includes articles about hanbok.

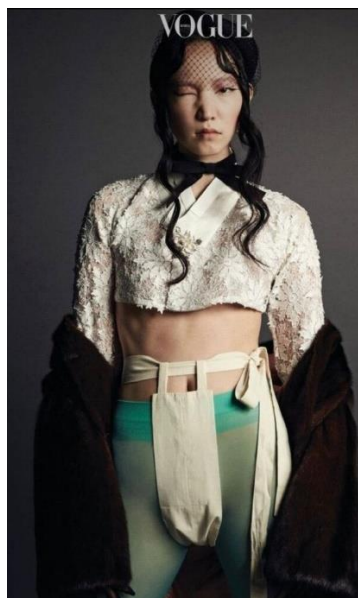


Figure 38: Cover of *Vogue Korea* August 2022. *Vogue*.

Famous fashion publications such as *Elle*, a global women’s magazine with French roots, have also featured covers in the hanbok style. The January 2024 edition featured six different types of coverage of the actress Suzy in traditional attire (‘BAE SUZY 수지 (@starbaesuzu) 2023). Apart from that the actress promoted the traditional attire on various occasions, such as being in the hanbok advertisement at Times Square, or by wearing it to the 2014 Sina Weibo Night in Beijing in China. Apart from Suzy, other famous K-pop idols in Korea and abroad have been wearing outfits based on hanbok designs in their music videos and daily lives, “changing the perception that hanbok designs are an outdated tradition of the past and that outfits incorporating hanbok designs can be stylish within modern fashion trends” (Han and Yang 2021). According to several newspaper articles<sup>13</sup>, BTS and BLACKPINK were among

<sup>13</sup> “The top 5 moments for BTS and hanbok.” *Korean Herald*, 4 December 2018

“Blackpink dazzles Coachella with Korean hanbok.” *Korean Herald*, 19 April 2023.

“BLACKPINK’s Hanbok designer shares insights on Coachella outfits.” *Korea.net*, 2 May 2023.

“Hanbok enjoys global popularity thanks to Korean Wave.” *The Dong-A Ilbo*, 11 July 2020.

“Thanks to BLACKPINK, hanbok is gaining popularity internationally.” *K-Sélection*, 9 July 2020.

“Hanbok sweeps global K-pop fans off their feet.” *The KoreaTimes*, 9 July 2020.

“How Blackpink and BTS are bringing back the hanbok, a traditional Korean garment that K-pop fans around the world are falling in love with” *South China Morning Post*. 15 July, 2020.

the most influential groups in making hanbok known to the world. The boy group BTS are nowadays often seen wearing hanbok-style outfits, which helped in promoting the clothing. The girl group BLACKPINK also brought great awareness to the garment by wearing a modernized hanbok by Danha in their music video *How you like that*.

### **7.1. Hanbok in social media**

Nowadays, as hanbok clothing gains popularity some influencers are also making their own unique hanboks, apart from fashion brands. One of which is SAIDA, a cosplayer with her own quite popular Instagram and YouTube channel. Despite the fact that she seldom employs hanbok costumes for her cosplay, she occasionally incorporates it into her works one of which is the hanbok inspired by the Disney fairy-tale *The Little Mermaid*. It is possible to notice that she is using a Western pattern to make the sleeves. Also, her take on the *chima* is quite untraditional as she creates pleats on the chest band based on her interpretation resembling seashells. She designed the skirt in two layers, where the top layer is cut diagonally to resemble a mermaid's tail, as the author says. Further, she embellished the attire with traditional Korean decorations. The final piece is a one-of-a-kind hanbok due to her using modernized techniques and taking inspiration from the Disney fairy-tale *The Little Mermaid*. (SAIDA 2022).

Another interesting account is planD, which is a YouTube account posting daily vlogs. This YouTuber is also Korean and apart from interesting daily vlogs about food and travelling it is possible to find a video where she is recreating BLACKPINK's hanbok for the cover dance of Dojin. Because she is recreating the hanbok that BLACKPINK wore in their video she does not add anything new. However, in the video, it is possible to see how non-professionals create the modern hanbok. She uses a lot of Western techniques; starting with quite a Westernized pattern and adding shoulder pads. She is also sticking the embroidery pieces on the jacket, which is quite a modern technique, instead of the more traditional way of securing it by sewing it in place. Due to the construction method and appearance, it is possible to say that the top piece is a Western jacket with traditional Korean decorations. The creator herself mentions that the method she uses to create this outfit is not traditional but rather modern with her interpretations. She also mentioned that in the past she created children's hanbok which was quite difficult due to having a lot of details (planD 2020).

Aanchal Aware is a fashion designer including hanbok elements in her creations, who can be found under the name mysterypalette. She is an emerging designer who comes from India and has an interest in South Korea. Aanchal's creative journey began with a focus on the

sari, a traditional Indian garment. While she continues to be inspired by the elegance and beauty of the sari, in recent years she started to combine it with the traditional Korean attire, hanbok. This fusion of two distinct traditional attire brings unique and unconventional clothing designs, that according to Aanchal, reflect her love for the cultures of both India and South Korea. In her view “her creations reflect the close relationship and mutual respect between these nations while honouring their rich cultural history” (@mysterypalette).

## 8. Conclusion

The evolution of hanbok provides a fascinating insight into the ever-evolving relationship between tradition and modernity in Korean culture. From its origins in the Three Kingdoms period to various transformations during the Goryeo and Joseon dynasties and subsequent modernizations in the 19th and 20th centuries, hanbok has continuously adapted to reflect socio-political and cultural shifts in Korea. Modernization efforts helped preserve this traditional garment while making it relevant to contemporary fashion sensibilities.

The modernization of hanbok, driven by innovative designers and supported by government initiatives, has ensured that this national dress remains a vibrant part of Korean culture. *Modern hanbok*, with its new styles, colour combinations, and materials connects the past with the present, offering a contemporary interpretation that appeals to younger generations. Each of the designers approaches *modern hanbok* culture from a different angle, demonstrating the richness and diversity of modern fashion that draws inspiration from traditional Korean clothing. Even while they may not be primarily focused on modern hanbok, their designs reflect their curiosity in and admiration for this traditional clothing. As demonstrated in the work *hanbok* has evolved into various distinctive forms. The most radical ones, however, raise the question from which point the so-called “modern hanbok” is just Western-style clothing with elements of *hanbok*. When designers and celebrities consider clothing with only minimal resemblance to hanbok still as examples of the “national attire”, this question can puzzle the observer. *Modern hanbok* styles range from elegant and simple interpretations to extravagant creations, all reflecting the unique views and creative inspirations of their designers. Individuals also contribute to the diversity of contemporary *hanbok* fashions by bringing their unique fashion tastes and preferences. *Modern hanbok* enthusiasts have plenty of ways to embrace this classic clothing and show their personality through it, regardless of whether they are inspired by global fashion trends, personal aesthetics, or traditional themes. All of the

*modern hanbok's* designers strive to keep at least some traditional features while doing modifications to suit their clientele.

Despite the widespread adoption of Western-style clothing for daily wear, *hanbok* continues to hold a special place in Korean society. It is prominently featured in formal occasions, cultural festivals, and special events, serving as a reminder of Korea's rich heritage and enduring traditions. The attire is evolving even nowadays as the gender distinction occurring during the Goryeo period is now blurring. The Joseon men's attire *cheollik* is nowadays created as woman's clothing and there are male celebrities donning women's *hanbok*. Moreover, contemporary designers are reimagining *hanbok*, blending traditional elements with modern aesthetics such as dimensional pattern to appeal to younger generations.

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## Index and definitions

**applique** – decorative needlework in which fabric pieces of various shapes are attached onto a primary piece to create decorations.

**armhole** – the opening in a shirt (top garment) where wearer's arm goes

**A-shape skirt (garment)** – a skirt or garment that is fitted at the hips, gradually widening towards the hem, creating the appearance of a capital letter A.

**bodice** – upper part of a clothes, covering the chest and back above the waist.

**circular cup sleeve** – sleeve created by using circle for the pattern

**collar** – the part around the neck of a shirt, blouse, jacket or coat

**cotton fabric** – natural fabric made out of protective case growing around the seeds of cotton plant

**cuffed sleeve** – sleeve utilizing the cuffs, general example is shirts sleeve

**cuff (sewing)** – the end part of a sleeve, where the material of the sleeve is turned back and enforced

**dart** – folds sewn into fabric to take in ease and provide shape to a garment

**fabric's grain** – the direction of threads in a woven fabric

**flat pattern** – creation of a two-dimensional pattern on a flat surface

**flutter sleeve** – a loose, usually short sleeve that flares out from gathered fabric at the top and falls in folds over the shoulder and upper arm.

**gauze** – a thin, translucent fabric with a loose open weave

**hem** – the edge of a piece of cloth or clothing that has been turned under and sewn

**hemp (fabric)** – natural fabric made out of the stem of the hemp plant (*Cannabis sativa* L.)

**hoop skirt** – a women's undergarment worn in various periods to hold the skirt extended

**knife pleats** – fabric folded sideways along the fabric length

**lace** – a delicate fabric made of yarn or thread in an open web-like pattern

**layered skirt** – skirts that have layers of fabric attached to each other at the hemline

**organza** – a thin, stiff, transparent dress fabric made of silk or a synthetic yarn

**pattern** – a template to cut out fabric to sew a garment

**pleats** – a type of fold formed by doubling fabric back upon itself and securing it in place

**princess seam** – long curved seams in women's top garments adding shaping

**puffed sleeve** – a short sleeve gathered at the top and cuff



**ramie (fabric)** – natural and strong fabric made out of a cellulose fibre

**ruching** – repeated pleating and folding of the fabric, give garment texture and dimension

**ruffles** – a strip of fabric, gathered along one edge to make an ornamental frill on a garment

**scoop neckline** – a deeply curved neckline on a garment.

**shoulder slope** – the angle at which your shoulders exit your neck point, down to the shoulder tip

**silk** – fabric made out of natural protein fibre by using silkworm

**sleeve head** – the top of the sleeve

**snap fastener** – a pair of interlocking discs, made out of a metal or plastic,

**stays** – stiff boned foundation garment that supported the bust and the gown worn on top, worn in history

**straight neckline** – created by cutting the fabric of the neckline straight

**taffeta** – a crisp, smooth, plain woven fabric made from silk, nylon, cuprammonium rayons, acetate, or polyester

**woven fabric** – any textile formed by weaving