

HANBOK, HERE AND NOW!

MINISTRY OF
CULTURE,
SPORTS AND
TOURISM

ENG.

Hanbok, Here and Now!
Hanbok is not a relic
confined to the past, but a
vibrant and dynamic presence,
a celebration of beauty that enriches
our every moment.

Through hanbok, we honor
the past, cherish the present,
and imagine the future.



Hanbok knows no limits.
Effortlessly blending into every
moment and place,
blooming with beauty and
grace wherever it lands.

Reinvented with classic
sophistication and
contemporary flair,
hanbok unveils a fresh
perspective in
every setting
it graces.

REDEFINING
BOUNDARIES

HANBOK,
HERE AND
NOW!

Photographer. Kim Young-hyun
Director. Kim Youngjin
Hanbok. Tchae Kim
Model. Jang hyoin, Je Ye-Jin



Hanbok is never tethered to the past. It pulses with life, bringing vitality to every moment, turning the mundane into the magnificent.

Transcending the boundaries of time, hanbok weaves new tales into the tapestry of our lives, seamlessly intertwining history with the now.



**CRAFTING
NEW
NARRATIVES**

**HANBOK,
HERE AND
NOW!**



AN
ENDURING
LEGACY

HANBOK,
HERE AND
NOW!



Hanbok is a timeless masterpiece, a heritage that glows with unchanging brilliance across generations.

As a proud emblem of Korean identity, its elegance defies the passage of time, standing as an eternal symbol of beauty and pride.

Hanbok, Here and Now!
Hanbok is not a relic confined to
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Through hanbok, we honor
the past, cherish the present,
and imagine the future.

CONNECTIONS

FUTURE

GENERATIONS

TRANSFORMATIONS

This extraordinary attire
transcends the limits of space
and time, harmonizing the past,
present, and future in a seamless flow.

Step into the world of hanbok today
with 「Hanbok, Here and Now!」, and
embark on a journey of discovery
through time. An elegant tapestry
of stories and beauty awaits.



Ministry of
Culture,
Sports and
Tourism



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Hanbok is far more than just fabric and stitching; it embodies Korea’s deep-rooted culture, history, and identity. Once a daily presence in Korean life, Hanbok has gradually evolved into a symbol of cultural pride. Today, a movement known as “Hip Tradition” is reintroducing Hanbok with a fresh, contemporary flair. Hanbok has become more than just an outfit for special occasions; it’s now a bold, stylish statement in daily life. Through the eyes of a decade-long Hanbok enthusiast, this article delves into Hanbok’s transformation, meaning, and the cultural resonance it holds both in Korea and abroad. Hanbok holds cultural significance not only for Koreans but also increasingly for people worldwide, as its unique charm resonates across diverse cultures.

Written by Colin Marshall — Illustrated by ne_reu

HANBOK: FROM EVERYDAY BO WEAR TO GLOBAL ICON K

The Meaning of Hanbok

Hanbok is more than clothing; it’s an open door to Korean identity, a unique beauty that even those unfamiliar with Korea can appreciate. When I first encountered Korean culture, my fascination with the language naturally drew me to the term “hanbok.” In Chinese characters, 韓服 (Hanbok) simply means “Korean clothing.” Other terms, such as hansik (Korean food), hanok (traditional Korean house), and hanu (Korean beef), also unmistakably connect to Korea. Few other languages have words that convey such a direct sense of national pride.

For example, the globally known term “kimono” doesn’t mean “Japanese clothing” but rather “something to wear.” In English, you don’t encounter terms like “Am-food,” “Am-house,” or “Am-beef.” And it’s unlikely you’d ever hear someone say, “I’m going to wear Am-clothing today.”

In contrast, most Koreans still regularly enjoy hansik, and when they splurge, they often choose hanu. But few live in traditional hanok homes, and it’s even rarer to see Koreans wearing hanbok on a regular day.





Revival of Hanbok

At times, it can almost seem as though Koreans are a people who don't wear hanbok at all. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the people you'd see wearing hanbok around Gyeongbokgung Palace were foreign tourists. It wasn't uncommon to pass by Asians dressed in hanbok speaking languages like Chinese or Vietnamese rather than Korean.

For most Koreans, hanbok is now reserved for special occasions, and the chances to wear it seem to have dwindled over the years. You can see this shift in group photos on office walls; in older photos, employees are wearing hanbok, but at some point, everyone switched to Western suits. Observing these changes, one might feel that Korea's rapid modernization has left certain traditions behind. However, a new trend known as "Hip Tradition" has recently gained popularity. Combining the trendiness of "hip" with the depth of "tradition," this movement reinterprets traditional culture with a fresh, modern perspective. Watching young Koreans embrace hanbok—not as a relic of the past, but as a stylish and meaningful expression of identity—offers a hopeful glimpse into cultural revival.

Why Not Wear Hanbok in Hongdae?

Honestly, I never paid much attention to hanbok until I met my wife. Her unique style drew me in, and soon I found myself tagging along on visits to hanbok shops. We explored brands like Soosulhwa and Teterot Salon in Seoul, Sararack in Chuncheon, and Leesle in Jeonju. We even read *I Go to Hongdae in Hanbok* by Leesle's founder, Hwang Yiseul. Some might think Hongdae and hanbok make an odd pairing, but to me, it's a natural fit. Hongdae is packed with young people who live and breathe culture and fashion, making it the perfect place to showcase hanbok.

The daily hanbok from Soosulhwa, Teterot Salon, and Leesle is nothing like the traditional hanbok or the colorful rentals you see tourists

wearing around Gyeongbokgung. Instead of the bright, formal hues of traditional hanbok, daily hanbok comes in softer, more neutral shades that blend easily with modern clothing and accessories. For example, wearing sneakers with traditional hanbok might seem odd, but daily hanbok pairs well with everything from boots to loafers.

Women often drive fashion, and in Korea, that's especially true. It's fascinating to see how quickly trends change on Seoul's streets. Just a decade ago, daily hanbok was a rare sight, and modest clothing dominated. Today, in places like Hongdae, you'll spot more revealing styles everywhere. Personally, while I believe people should wear whatever makes them feel good, I'm glad daily hanbok offers an elegant alternative for those who prefer a bit more coverage.

Global Fans Welcome

Some daily hanbok designers are even branching out into menswear. I have a friend, an American who's lived in Korea since the '90s, who has been rocking hanbok-inspired outfits long before the idea of "daily hanbok" became a thing. As a cultural columnist who often writes about how men's fashion evolves more slowly than women's, I've come to appreciate the art of reinterpreting traditional garments. In my experience, timeless styles always seem to find their place, whether it's the Joseon era or the 2020s. Isn't it incredible that some clothing can feel at home across centuries?

Though I've gifted my wife a daily hanbok a few times—for birthdays or Christmas—I realized I've never actually bought one for myself. In fact, I've only worn hanbok once, during our wedding photoshoot at Gyeongbokgung. It might sound a little cheesy, but Gyeongbokgung is special to us—it's where I first struck up a conversation with her. As we posed in hanbok, complete with a traditional gat (Joseon-era hat) and gomusin (rubber shoes), I found myself thinking about

cultural appropriation, a hot-button issue in the U.S.

On American social media, perceived cultural appropriation can cause quite a stir. For instance, a white person wearing a Chinese qipao or a Mexican sombrero can spark outrage, mainly from Asian-American or Latinx communities. But interestingly, people from China or Mexico often love it when foreigners take part in their traditional culture. It's the same in Korea—if you watch Korean TV, you'll see how much Koreans appreciate it when foreigners wear hanbok or enjoy Korean food.

Looking Toward the Future

When I first arrived in Korea a decade ago, debates about cultural appropriation were blazing in the U.S. Korea has changed a lot since then—not all of it for the better. Back then, Koreans were widely considered more stylish than Americans—Korean Americans I know would joke that even a quick grocery run required dressing up. But lately, young Koreans seem to have embraced a more laid-back, sometimes sloppy style that's all too familiar in the States. Plain T-shirts and jeans are everywhere, but hanbok still has the potential to add a unique touch of elegance specific to Korea. Even clunky American Crocs are all the rage here, and one might even say they echo Korea's traditional gomusin in spirit.

The fashion world is always hungry for fresh ideas, and traditional Korean clothing is starting to turn heads. Just as *The New York Times* introduced gochujang (red chili paste) caramel cookies to the world in 2022, foreigners' reinterpretations of Korean tradition can produce some surprising results. But when promoting hanbok abroad, it's wise not to cater too heavily to foreign tastes. If Koreans first find joy and meaning in hanbok, foreigners interested in Korean aesthetics will naturally follow suit.

Too much direct promotion of hanbok to foreigners can actually backfire. In places like the U.S., trendsetters enjoy discovering new things on their own rather than through heavy advertising. So, while hanbok deserves global attention, a subtle approach might be the most effective in the long run.

In the U.S. today, people value authenticity, and there's a growing interest in exploring other cultures beyond the surface level. Why not help them see that hanbok is worth the time and effort to understand? If hanbok feels too inaccessible, it risks alienating people, but making it too easy may diminish its appeal.

Clothing is more than just something we put on—it's a bridge to history and cultural context. No matter where you're from, understanding a garment's history can help you wear or design it with greater meaning. It brings to mind an interview with a *Star Wars* concept artist from about 25 years ago, where they discussed reimagining robots through the lens of traditional African sculptures, suggesting that looking to the past is essential for envisioning the future. If the future of clothing draws from its past, then Korea might just be where the answers lie.



About. Colin Marshall

- Blog: blog.colinmarshall.org
- Essay Collection: *No Summarizing Korea*
- Podcast: *Colin's Korea*

Colin Marshall is a columnist who has spent the past decade in Korea, writing regularly about Korean culture for *The New Yorker*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, and other publications. Originally from California and raised just outside Seattle, he studied political science at UC Santa Barbara. His interest in Korea deepened while living in Los Angeles' Koreatown, where he first began writing about the country. In 2015, he moved to South Korea, the world's largest Koreatown, and has called it home ever since.



With Hallyu (the Korean Wave) sweeping the world, hanbok has found fresh energy and appeal through its connection to Korean pop culture, turning heads worldwide. Here, we spotlight some standout moments where hanbok’s beauty and cultural significance have taken center stage on the international scene.

K-FASHION REDEFINED: THE WORLD EMBRACES HANBOK

POPULAR AMONG CELEBRITIES

N

2024

NewJeans Illuminates “Korea on Stage” at Gyeongbokgung

In May, the K-Pop sensation NewJeans delivered an electrifying performance at the 2024 Korea on Stage, held at Heungnyemun Square in Gyeongbokgung Palace to celebrate the launch of the Korea Heritage Service. The idol group opened with a video of “Cool with You,” recorded at Geunjeongjeon Hall, and then stepped onto the stage dressed in vibrant hanbok in four striking colors to perform their hit songs “Ditto,” “ETA,” and “Super Shy.” For this occasion, NewJeans wore custom-designed hanbok with modern takes on the dansam jeogori (unlined jacket), seuran (layered or pleated) skirts, and daeran (wide and voluminous) skirts, paired with beoseon-inspired (socks) shoes and elegant hairpieces. During “Super Shy,” the hanbok’s flowing sleeves and skirts complemented their choreography, creating a breathtaking visual as the fabric swirled with each movement.

© Yonhap News



B

2023

Blackpink Headlines Coachella in Hanbok

Making history as the first K-Pop girl group to headline Coachella—one of the world’s most prestigious music festivals—Blackpink brought a touch of Korean elegance to the global spotlight. Their hanbok-inspired outfits, crafted by pattern design house OUWR and hanbok

brand Kumdanje, were designed with inspiration from cheollik (an overcoat with pleats at the waist of a skirt attached to a jacket). The designs featured motifs of sipjangsaeng (the ten traditional symbols of longevity), dancheong (vibrant decorative architectural motifs), peonies, and natural elements, all embroidered by hand for an added touch of sophistication. Blackpink’s stage set also drew attention with a traditional Korean giwa roof as a backdrop, while CNN and fans worldwide celebrated their stunning look. During their “Typa Girl” performance, the group used large feather fans in a dance that paid homage to Korea’s Buchaechum fan dance tradition. After their performance, online searches for “hanbok” skyrocketed, and fans across the globe joined in, recreating Blackpink’s dance routines in hanbok.

© Yonhap News



K

2022

Yuna Kim Brings Hanbok to London Fashion Week

Collaborations between hanbok and Korean celebrities are now gracing international runways. On September 27, 2022, hanbok co-designed by global figure skating icon Yuna Kim made its debut at London Fashion Week. Ten hanbok brands, including Geumuijae and Guiroe, created a total of 60 hanbok pieces to match Kim’s unique style and persona. The designs, inspired by symbols of the Joseon dynasty such as the dalhangari (moon jar) and Hunminjeongeum (manuscript that introduced the Hangeul writing system) script, ranged from traditional hwarot wedding attire to everyday hanbok styles.

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S

2023

Suzy's Hanbok Legacy Shines in Times Square for Christmas

Bae Suzy has long been celebrated for her striking hanbok looks. In the 2015 film *The Sound of a Flower*, she portrayed a sorikkun (folk music singer) from the late Joseon era, and her hanbok photoshoot for the role caused a sensation. This January, Suzy appeared on the cover of *Elle Korea's* New Year's issue in hanbok, captivating readers like no other cover had since the magazine's founding in 1992—it was the first time that hanbok had appeared on the cover. For the 2023 Hanbok Wave project, Suzy took part in a photoshoot wearing hanbok developed collaboratively by six Korean companies. Reflecting on the experience, she shared, "Wearing hanbok created just for me by so many designers made me feel even closer to this tradition. I hope I can play a small role in promoting hanbok." Suzy's stunning hanbok cover image later graced a giant billboard in Times Square, New York, mesmerizing fans worldwide across YouTube and fashion publications.

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J

2022

Korean Elegance Shines at the Emmys

Hoyeon Jung, the actress and model who delighted audiences as Kang Sae-byeok in *Squid Game*, brought a touch of Korean tradition to Hollywood's biggest stages. At the Screen Actors Guild Awards and the Emmy Awards, she accessorized her hair with a modern take on the traditional daenggri ribbon and cheopji ornamental hairpin, respectively. The daenggri she wore at the SAG Awards drew particular attention, as she requested a custom design from Louis Vuitton to highlight its Korean heritage.

© Louis Vuitton

D

2024

Hugh Jackman, Ryan Reynolds, and Director Shawn Levy: Newest Fans of Hanbok

© Yonhap News

Actors Ryan Reynolds and Hugh Jackman, along with director Shawn Levy, were thrilled to receive hanbok as gifts during their recent visit to Korea to promote *Deadpool & Wolverine*. At the event's close, the trio proudly donned their hanbok on the spot. The hanbok, inspired by the movie, was designed by Ha Eun Chang of OUWR, who also created hanbok-inspired outfits for Blackpink's Coachella performance.



T

2022

Tom Cruise Marvels at a Gonryongpo-Inspired Flight Jacket

© Yonhap News

Hollywood icon Tom Cruise, well-known for his appreciation of Korean culture, returned to Korea to promote *Top Gun: Maverick*. During the promo event, he and his co-stars each received a flight jacket inspired by the gonryongpo, the dragon-embroidered robe worn by Joseon-era royalty. Enthralled by the intricate Korean motifs, Cruise and his co-stars slipped into the jackets right away, capturing the moment with photos to mark the occasion.



2022

L
Leesle Makes History as the First Hanbok Brand on Milan Fashion Week Runway

Hanbok has officially arrived in Milan, the fashion capital of the world. The modern hanbok brand Leesle, known for collaborations with K-Pop icons such as BTS, Taemin, and Mamamoo, became the first-ever hanbok label to showcase at Milan Fashion Week, making waves in the industry. Leesle's collection included 12 unique modern

hanbok pieces that fused traditional Korean aesthetics with contemporary style, capturing the attention of the local media: bustiers and skirts inspired by the jeogori, along with tank tops and mini skirts featuring bojagi (wrapping cloth) motifs.

©Leesle



In the homeland of graffiti, Korean artist Chris Chanyang Shim (a.k.a. Royyal Dog) captured the admiration of American audiences with his photorealistic murals of Black women

in hanbok alongside Hangeul. Painted at The Container Yard, a renowned Los Angeles street art hub, Shim's work reflects his vision of harmoniously blending hanbok

S

2016

Graffiti Artist Brings Korean Beauty to Life on the Streets of LA

with diverse cultures. Adding Korean flowers and Hangeul script, Shim included a poignant line from poet Do Jong-hwan: "No flower blooms without shaking." The mural garnered admiration across social media, eventually earning him an invitation to a graffiti event in San Francisco, where he painted another image of a Black girl in a saekdong jeogori (a multicolored striped top). Now, his murals of Black women in hanbok grace three locations across LA and San Francisco.

©Korea Hanbok Promotion Institute

WV

2024

Disney Enchanted by Western Fairy Tale Characters in Hanbok

Illustrator Wooh Nayoung, also known as Heukyoseok or Obsidian, has dazzled fans worldwide with her Korean reimaginings of beloved characters from *Alice in Wonderland*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Frozen*, *Spider-Man*, and more. Her artwork, shared on social media, quickly gained international attention, drawing in fans from every corner. This viral success led to international exhibitions in France, Denmark, Brazil, Japan, and beyond, where her series *Western Fairy Tales in Hanbok* has showcased hanbok's charm on a global stage.

©Augustine Media





U

2022

U.S. Hanbok Day Gains Recognition, Congressman Embraces Hanbok

The celebration of Hanbok Day in the U.S. continues to grow in prestige. Recently, Fort Lee—home to the largest Koreatown on the East Coast—became the fifth city in the

country to officially declare October 21 as Hanbok Day, mirroring South Korea's own observance. This year's celebration saw U.S. Congressman Josh Gottheimer from New Jersey

make a striking appearance dressed as a Joseon Dynasty king.

©Yonhap News

B

2024

Christ the Redeemer Stands Majestically in Blue Hanbok

On June 7, Rio de Janeiro's iconic Christ the Redeemer statue was transformed by a projection-mapped blue hanbok, making it appear dressed in traditional Korean attire, complete with a dopo (overcoat) sash hanging gracefully from the waist. This impressive display was part of the *Lights of Korea—Jinju Silk Lanterns* exhibition in Brazil, held to wish for the successful hosting of the upcoming G20 Summit in Rio de Janeiro this November. It marked the first time the statue has appeared in a foreign country's traditional attire, adding even more significance to the occasion.

©Korean Cultural Center of Brazil



N

2024

Hanbok Takes Center Stage in Times Square

From May 6 to 8, New York's Times Square was brightened by a promotional video celebrating hanbok. It showcased pieces by designer Ham Eun-jeong, renowned for her hanbok shows worldwide, along with models from the Korea Hanbok Model Contest, an event that has drawn more than 100,000 participants globally.

©Korean Culture Association

P

2024

Hanbok on Display at Korea House for Paris Olympics

In anticipation of the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, Korea's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, in partnership with the Korea Craft and Design Foundation, hosted a hanbok fashion show in the garden of Korea House in Paris as part of the Korea Day pre-event. Titled *A Summer Outing of a Young Girl*, the show

envisioned a young girl from the 1900 Paris Exposition visiting Korea House at the 2024 Olympics.

©Korea Craft and Design Foundation



“Beauty appears when you look closely. It becomes more lovable the longer you gaze. The same goes for you.”
– From “Wildflower” by Ra Tae-joo, a poem beloved by Koreans
Wildflowers aren’t the only things that reveal their beauty over time and with care.
Anything we encounter frequently and come to understand deeply will naturally become dear to us.
This sentiment also applies to hanbok, Korea’s traditional attire, which has gradually faded from everyday wear.
If hanbok feels uncomfortable or unfamiliar, maybe it’s because we haven’t taken the time to truly understand and appreciate it.

Interviewees Designer Kim In-ja (Dangchomoon),
Designer Kim Youngjin (Tchai Kim), and Designer Kim Dan-ha (Danha)

THE PATH AHEAD &

THE PATH DESIRED

Reviving Tradition:
3 Designers on the
Future of Hanbok

HANBOK, HERE and NOW introduces three visionary hanbok designers leading the way in bringing hanbok to the global stage. In these conversations, we explore how hanbok can evolve from a cherished national tradition into a seamless part of daily life for all.

✦ On the Everyday Use and Globalization of Hanbok

Q. What drew you to hanbok, and how did you decide to make it your career?

Kim In-ja I first encountered hanbok in my thirties, and for the past 40 years, it has been the center of my life. The more I immerse myself in hanbok, the more I appreciate its depth and grace. I've always wanted to share this beauty with as many people as possible.

Kim Youngjin I have a background in performing arts and worked as a buyer and fashion advisor for a luxury brand. Hanbok first came into my life as a hobby, but as I started creating and studying it, I found myself naturally drawn deeper into the richness of our culture. Learning about everything from folk customs to royal court culture was captivating, and it helped me rediscover my heritage and identity.

Kim Dan-ha I've always loved hanbok and would often wear it on trips, hoping to capture special moments while I was still young and beautiful. However, whenever I commissioned a hanbok, I struggled to bridge the gap between the designers' vision and my own. I wanted my hanbok designs to be more than just beautiful—I wanted them to embody meaningful values like sustainability and education in every stitch.

Q. What do you think sets hanbok apart from Western clothing?

Kim In-ja Hanbok isn't just clothing—it's deeply rooted in history and culture. The colors and patterns are deeply tied to obangsaek (Korea's traditional five-color palette), reflecting traditional cultural values. The designs and decorations hold symbolic meanings, and the way it's structured and worn speaks to the lifestyle and social norms of the past.

This rich cultural heritage fascinates people

around the world and highlights the fact that hanbok is more than just a fashion statement.

Kim Youngjin Western clothing is typically tailored three-dimensionally, while hanbok is crafted using flat-pattern cutting. This method enables the silhouette to adapt naturally to the wearer's body, making it more versatile for different shapes. Flat-pattern cutting is also resource-efficient, minimizing fabric waste. Just as Japanese fashion designer Issey Miyake incorporated origami into his designs, hanbok's flat-cutting opens up creative possibilities. I focus on merging tradition with modern fashion to create hanbok that is both innovative and respectful of its roots.

Q. Kim Youngjin mentioned that flat-pattern cutting is eco-friendly because it reduces fabric waste. I understand that Danha is also committed to making hanbok with the environment in mind. Could you share some of the sustainable practices you're implementing?

Kim Dan-ha I sometimes worry that my work might be leaving a negative footprint, despite how much I love it. That's why I've taken small but meaningful steps toward making a positive impact, like repurposing discarded clothing and plastic. I often use reclaimed wedding dresses, recycled fabrics, and organic cotton to keep my designs as eco-friendly as possible.

Q. All three of you have shared hanbok with audiences abroad. How do people react when they encounter it?

Kim Dan-ha Whenever I wear hanbok abroad, people often admire its beauty. Many people ask to take photos with me or give me a thumbs-up. Each of these moments reminds me of the pride I feel in creating hanbok for a living.

Kim Youngjin I've been wearing hanbok

Western clothing is typically tailored in three dimensions, while hanbok is crafted using flat-pattern cutting. This method enables the silhouette to adapt naturally to the wearer's body, making it more versatile for different shapes.

Flat-pattern cutting is also resource-efficient, minimizing fabric waste.

internationally for more than 20 years now. Whenever I walk into a Chanel Fine Jewelry boutique in hanbok, they jokingly greet me with, "The princess has arrived." Even at hotels, there's a noticeable difference in how I'm treated with and without hanbok. In everyday clothes, I'm just another Asian visitor, but in hanbok, there's an air of respect.

Kim In-ja The unique beauty and rich heritage of hanbok captivate people's attention wherever it goes. When I wear hanbok abroad, people are often spellbound by its unique design and vibrant colors, showering it with compliments. That's why I make it a point to travel abroad to introduce hanbok and share our culture with the world. Watching people embrace hanbok allows me to share the pride of our heritage with Korean expats and international audiences alike. I truly believe that one day, hanbok will stand as a globally celebrated cultural icon.



Kim In-ja



Q. You've done extensive restoration work inspired by Ongojisin (embracing the old to create the new), and your modern interpretations are particularly intriguing. Could you share your approach and intentions behind this?

Honoring tradition while reshaping it for today's world is my primary focus. Take, for instance, the dapo (a side-slit, half-sleeve outer garment) unearthed from the tomb of Milchanggun Lee Jik. Originally crafted with a quilted silk outer layer and cotton lining without padding, this garment was recreated with a thin layer of cotton padding added to enhance warmth, making it a practical outer layer for contemporary use. This approach allows me to reimagine traditional pieces like the dapo, baeja (vest), and jeonbok (long vest) in a modern way that resonates with today's lifestyle and sensibilities.

Q. At the 2021 Jongno Hanbok Festival, you mentioned wanting to learn from the old, embrace the new, and pass down to future generations. With the challenges of learning new things these days, how do you keep that process alive?

Not many still retain memories of hanbok from the 1950s and 1960s, yet the recollections of that era are remarkably vivid in my mind. I distinctly recall my mother standing in a wide-open yard, dressed in a white jeogori and skirt. Back then, it was natural to wear hanbok for family gatherings or outings. I also recall a scene from the 1964 film *Dongbaek Agashi*, where actress Um Aing-ran walked elegantly in a hanbok made of mosi (a fine, airy fabric made from ramie fibers). These moments have deeply stayed with me. Even as an adult, I often wore hanbok in daily life, although people would often ask why I wore it outside of special occasions. Living in hanbok taught me a powerful lesson: the importance of preserving the essence of the old while subtly adapting it to our modern aesthetics. Learning is a fascinating

journey, much like realizing how certain frill details from the Three Kingdoms or Goryeo periods resonate with contemporary design. I continuously seek ways to connect tradition with the modern through study and exploration.

Q. How do you pass down your skills and values to younger generations?

The reason I've committed so fully to this work is because it holds such profound meaning for me. There are moments when I face uncertainty, solitude, or financial strain, but the interest and positive response from younger people bring me immense hope. I'm dedicated to sharing not only my skills but also the passion and challenges that come with this craft. I believe it's vital to embrace fresh challenges and keep an ongoing spirit of learning. My hope is that my efforts will inspire others to carry forward the legacy of tradition and its values.

Q. In your view, what is the most essential quality for a hanbok designer?

For any designer, the foremost quality is a desire to create garments of true excellence. It's not merely about following trends; it requires a finely honed design sensibility, superior technical skills, and the use of high-quality materials to produce remarkable work. I am always driven to elevate the quality and passion in my work, striving to create designs that leave a positive mark on the world.

Kim In-ja

CEO of Dangchomoon

With nearly 40 years of experience, Kim In-ja is not only a master of hanbok-making but also a devoted steward of its heritage, rigorously researching traditional hanbok while cultivating the next generation of hanbok artisans. Her work garnered international acclaim as early as 1998, following eight well-received fashion shows in Valence, France. Since then, she has tirelessly championed hanbok on the global stage, presenting her designs in prestigious settings from ASEM to the G20 Summit. Kim's creations are imbued with a refined simplicity and quiet sophistication, each stitch a testament to her commitment to cultural connection.

Q. You're often credited as Korea's pioneer in ready-to-wear hanbok. What inspired you to choose this path?

After a decade of studying hanbok, I developed a deep understanding of how this attire has evolved across different times and regions. I came to realize that hanbok's true essence couldn't be distilled through mere three-dimensional concepts or pattern techniques. This insight drove me to create a new form of hanbok—one that transcends traditional boundaries. Much like style icons who say, "Don't adjust yourself to clothes; make them fit you," I felt that fashionable hanbok deserved a tailored approach as well. Creating ready-to-wear hanbok allowed me to bridge tradition with modern sensibilities, opening new doors for hanbok.

Q. Tchai Kim seems to embody the concepts of Hwaibudong (unity in diversity) and Yurang (wandering), which resonate harmoniously with the global market. Was international expansion a consideration from the outset?

Tchai Kim started as an extension of my personal exploration. The brand's essence of wandering and romance draws from Korea's traditional performance culture, especially the Namsadangpae (traveling performance troupes), which influenced me through conversations with ethnologists. These troupes embody a rich tradition of community connection and diverse expressions, which naturally flowed into

Kim Youngjin

CEO of Tchai Kim Youngjin
& Tchai Kim

The name Tchai, meaning "difference," captures a philosophy of harmony through diversity. As the founder of Tchai Kim Youngjin, a bespoke hanbok label, Kim seamlessly merges traditional materials such as mosi and Sangju silk with imported lace and silk, crafting daring and contemporary hanbok designs. Her secondary label, Tchai Kim, has gained attention for its inventive approach to hanbok, transcending conventional boundaries. Kim has further expanded her influence by designing costumes for the opera *Dongbaekkkot Agassi* (a reinterpretation of *La Traviata*), the play *Hamlet*, and the film *Love, Lies*.

Tchai Kim's identity. I place a greater value on discovery and creation than on material success. While balancing the creative and business sides is challenging, I remain focused on innovating hanbok in ways that feel fresh and relevant.

Q. You're known for your skillful use of materials and color. Do you ever face dilemmas over costs associated with high-quality materials?

I often liken hanbok designers to chefs—both need a keen eye for exceptional ingredients. My time in fashion houses honed my ability to source premium materials, but managing costs is always a challenge, especially while sustaining the Tchai Kim brand. Alongside financial concerns, finding skilled labor is a constant hurdle. Many fashion schools in Korea don't teach even basic pattern-making, making it hard to recruit qualified talent. Despite advancements in AI, I firmly believe there's no substitute for the human element in honing and perfecting these foundational skills.

Q. Tchai Kim has collaborated with a wide array of productions, from theater and opera, to film and television. What drives you to pursue these diverse projects?

I'm grateful to have explored nearly every path I've desired. While I sometimes feel restricted by the traditional framework of hanbok and face business limitations, my passion keeps me moving forward. This drive is why I embrace new challenges whenever they arise. Currently, I'm planning a collaborative project with the National Dance Company of Korea, set for late August with An Hye-jin. Working with people from different fields is tremendously motivating; witnessing their dedication gives me fresh inspiration. Staying within my own world can obscure my areas for growth, but meeting others pushes me to keep improving. For me, the mutual encouragement and growth that come from these interactions are invaluable.

Kim
Youngjin



Kim Dan-ha



Q. Danha is often associated with Blackpink’s “How You Like That” music video. How did this collaboration unfold, and what was the global response?

Blackpink’s stylist team came across Danha through our photos from Vancouver Fashion Week and felt the group’s modern style aligned well with Danha’s distinctive hanbok. I heard that the members truly enjoyed wearing our hanbok, taking selfies, and even saying they’d love to wear it more often. This collaboration significantly boosted our young clientele and brought hanbok into the global conversation, especially for audiences more familiar with the Japanese kimono or Chinese qipao. Orders poured in from the U.S., Europe, China, and other Asian regions—largely from individuals rather than retailers—which made me realize once again the powerful resonance of media content. Traditional art holds an endless well of inspiration, yet the real artistry lies in presenting it in ways that are both inviting and engaging to a modern audience.

Q. The prints in your designs are truly unique. What inspires these choices?

Our fabric designs draw from traditional artifacts, including royal bojagi (wrapping cloth), wallpaper patterns, and dancheong (vibrant decorative architectural motifs). Hanbok’s ample silhouette and broad surfaces make fabric design especially impactful. Using hanbok as a canvas, we hope to introduce often-overlooked royal artifacts and elements of cultural heritage to a wider audience.

Q. Each F/W and S/S season, you present a central theme. What messages are you conveying through these themes?

We release new collections for each season, evolving from initially just recreating royal patterns to adding layers of meaning to create

richer concepts. For hanbok to captivate the global market, I believe it’s essential to gradually convey Korea’s distinct aesthetics. With multiple series in development, we launched Season 2 with the approachable and universal “Ribbon” theme.

Q. Approaching hanbok as content and intellectual property (IP) is innovative. What are your goals with this strategy?

I wanted a fresh, creative approach to Korean culture, which led me to structure Danha as a startup and explore IP possibilities, like pattern design licensing. This helps us raise brand value and bring Korean content into broader fields with a greater influence. My goal isn’t just to preserve Korean culture but to establish a distinct presence on the global stage.

Q. Your approach combines traditional materials with contemporary marketing. Was this intentional?

Absolutely. Before starting the brand, I gave careful consideration to customer experience, analyzing websites and shopping processes. Simplifying the shopping journey is vital for accessibility, especially for younger audiences. We’re now leveraging programs that enhance UI (user interface) and UX (user experience) design, which aligns perfectly with our goals.

Kim Dan-ha

CEO of Danha

At first glance, Danha’s hanbok might seem fusion-inspired, yet it steadfastly upholds traditional foundations. Essential details such as the rectangular goreum ribbon ties, collars, and badae (reinforced lining for high-wear areas) are preserved, even though they may be less functional today. Thoughtful modifications, such as tapered sleeves and the addition of pockets in skirts, bring a practicality suited to modern lifestyles. After Danha’s hanbok was featured in a Blackpink music video, the brand captured global attention, becoming an iconic representation of Korean fashion with a devoted international following.



Contemporary Heritage: The Revival of Hanbok



While global interest in hanbok is on the rise, its significance appears to be diminishing within Korea. What do you believe is driving this, and how might we address it effectively?

Kim In-ja Hanbok's limited practicality in daily life, coupled with its overshadowing by other fashion trends, makes it less accessible. That's why it would be wonderful to see cultural and fashion icons embracing hanbok more often. Imagine the elegance of hanbok at gala events or cultural performances—checking a durumagi (overcoat) at a theater would be quite a sight. Yet, because people seldom wear hanbok, they often feel shy or hesitant when they do want to try it. It takes a few daring individuals wearing it proudly to set a tone others will feel confident emulating.

Kim Youngjin Clothing holds profound ties to our identity and aids in self-reflection, which means it's crucial to deeply consider hanbok's significance. In Korea, social perceptions often overshadow individuality, making hanbok feel out of place. The mindset that hanbok is only appropriate if others wear it first creates an unnecessary barrier. Wearing hanbok should be a bold expression of self-assurance and autonomy. Likewise, for K-Culture to transcend trends and establish itself as a genuine cultural identity, we must search for the deeper values within it. Foundational cultural education, beginning from childhood, will enrich this cultural landscape and foster a sustainable appreciation for hanbok.

Q. **Ms. Kim In-ja, you teach traditional crafts to both Korean and international students. How engaged are they in learning?**

Kim In-ja Compared to international students, Korean students seem less inclined toward

traditional crafts. Many find even simple tasks like threading cumbersome or tedious. Faced with such a strong focus on college entrance exams, fewer Korean students are genuinely engaged with our cultural heritage. To truly embrace our unique traditions, we must introduce our culture to children from an early age. It would be lovely if families could come together in hanbok during holidays—it's a small but meaningful way to keep our heritage alive.

Q. **There seems to be a consensus that hanbok should evolve from an unchanging tradition into what might be called contemporary heritage. How do you feel about this?**

Kim In-ja My goal is to create clothing that is elegant and quietly beautiful. With changing times, people prefer ordering ready-made garments instead of tailored ones, or even renting outfits as needed. But my focus is on understated beauty, awaiting those who appreciate its value. I am committed to preserving hanbok in my own way, and I hope to continue sharing its traditional values.

Kim Dan-ha For hanbok to be recognized as a true contemporary heritage, we need innovative interpretations that balance practicality and style. Engaging in cultural exchanges and showcasing hanbok at international fashion events are vital steps toward enhancing its global appeal. I look forward to the day when my brand, Danha, is seen in renowned department stores in Paris or New York.

Kim Youngjin The generational gap influences our experiences and perceptions of hanbok. Kim In-ja holds memories of her mother's hanbok, while my journey was inspired by my grandmother's. Dan-ha recalls wearing hanbok as part of her school uniform. I believe today's youth also hold their own special memories tied to hanbok. Every generation has its role, and so



1. A vibrant and elegant Hanbok for the bride's mother, designed with Dangchomoon patterns



2. A sundress made from Tchai Kim's signature printed fabric, inspired by *Sugungga*, the traditional folktale also known as *The Tale of the Rabbit* or *Byeoljubu-jeon*



3. A reversible jacket featuring one of Danha's popular *Hwajodo* patterns and a waist skirt with the wallpaper motif from *Seokbokheon* in Changdeokgung Palace



do we. New designers will forge their own paths, and by respecting each role, we will elevate hanbok's place as a modern heritage.

#TOOK

THE OUTFIT OF KOREA: FROM TRADITION TO DAILY CHIC



@gat_seoyoung



“All about mixing & matching!”

Min
Seo
Young

Cartoonist



My love affair with hanbok began serendipitously while sorting through my grandmother’s wardrobe. I stumbled across a treasure trove: a durumagi overcoat in exquisite jacquard no longer in production, a jeogori top adorned with delicate embroidery, and a skirt with shimmering gold-leaf designs. These pieces sparked an immediate fascination, and now I regularly wear hanbok, for both casual outings and special events. My approach breaks away from convention; I blend hanbok with modern twist to craft a contemporary look. A magoja (long jacket) over jeans, a jeogori worn like a cardigan, or a high-waisted skirt pulled up for a daesyumchima-inspired silhouette (an underskirt designed to create a fuller look for ceremonial skirts)—these are just some of the ways I bring hanbok into the modern era. A tweed jeogori or perhaps a bright-colored hanbok skirt with a denim blouse. And draping a sleeveless trench coat over a jeogori can make for quite a unique look. Styling with hanbok can offer a delightful exploration of versatility.

Try

40



@suhjae.dev



“A little discomfort for immense beauty”

Suh
Jae
Woong

Student



My appreciation for hanbok took root after noticing its elegance in the K-Drama *Love in the Moonlight*. This led me to explore hanbok further, delving into texts and papers that celebrate its design and comfort. Living in my school dorm gave me the freedom to incorporate hanbok into my daily life—it has become a part of my identity. I go to an international school, and even if people don’t know my name, they recognize me as “the student who wears hanbok.” Although there are more comfortable hanbok options, my preference is for the graceful lines of the dopo overcoat. For added flair, I like layering it with dapo (a side-slit, half-sleeve outer garment) or kwaaja (a sleeveless outer garment) for a look that feels refined and distinctive.

Hanbok, Here and Now!

41

Now



@hanbok_kyung



“Endless combinations”

Lee
Hyeon
Kyong

Entrepreneur

My experiences studying and working in China, where people wore qipao as everyday attire, inspired me to embrace hanbok in my own life. I now wear hanbok to the office and make a point of choosing it for important meetings or events. My go-to brand is *AHHORN*, known for its blend of elegance and comfort, and recently popularized by the stage outfits of NewJeans’ backup dancers. I’m particularly drawn to their short pleated skirts for summer; they’re light, airy, and lend an ethereal quality to my style. At work, I often wear a baeja vest with hanbok touches, pairing it with a jokduri headdress or brightly colored norigae (knotted pendant with tassels) to perfectly balance traditional beauty with a contemporary flair.



@eins_hanyi



“Boundless allure”

Lee
Han
Yi

Office Worker

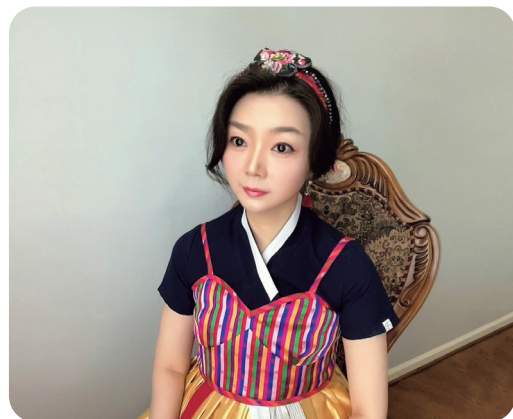
My connection with hanbok began in childhood during a visit to Dongdaemun Market, where I was instantly entranced by its vibrant colors. Later, as I began crafting hanbok myself, my appreciation deepened even further. To me, hanbok is not just clothing—it embodies the essence of Korean identity.

I wear it just about everywhere: traditional styles for visits to historic sites like Gyeongbokgung Palace, and daily hanbok when I’m cheering on pro-gamer Faker (Lee Sang-hyeok) at major events, catching a movie, or meeting friends. Wearing T-shirts or pants with traditional motifs lets hanbok’s elegance blend seamlessly into my everyday attire. Right now, hanbok is still a niche choice, but I hope to see more people embrace it with pride.





@oraemirae_jdu



“Hanbok is love”

(OraeMirae)

Jade

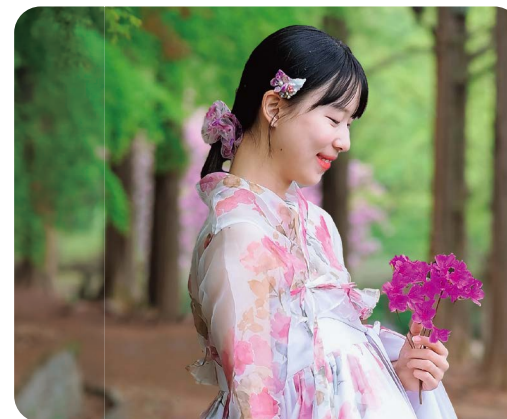
Yoo

Entrepreneur

Living in the U.S., I wear hanbok more frequently than I did back in Korea. Hanbok represents my identity, while also sparking curiosity and fostering conversations about Korean culture. I design my own hanbok using Tencel (lyocell) for casual wear, and for more formal settings, I select pieces in more luxurious materials like silk. I adapt my hanbok style to suit each occasion—whether it be donning a fireworks-patterned jeogori for the Fourth of July, or pairing a leopard-print jeogori with an autumnal hanbok dress for Thanksgiving. For a Snow White look, I combine a gold skirt with a multicolored striped saekdong corset. With each wear, hanbok has become an irreplaceable and comfortable staple in my life.



@pink_supia



“Exquisite craftsmanship”

Lee

Surim

Student

To me, hanbok’s charm lies in its rare, delicate beauty. The natural fabrics, intricate embroidery, and flowing silhouettes radiate elegance, purity, and a hint of mystique.

Although I don’t wear it frequently, I reach for hanbok on special occasions or when I want a change in mood—it reinforces my Korean pride. I’m particularly drawn to basic styles from the Joseon era, which I believe capture hanbok’s essence perfectly. Recently, I’ve started exploring modern interpretations suited for everyday wear. By blending various styles, from traditional to contemporary, I hope to share hanbok’s timeless beauty with a broader audience.



Hanbok Day

A DAY IN HANBOK



Redefining
Workplace Elegance

Korea
Heritage
Agency

Nestled in Incheon International Airport's Terminal 1, the Korea Heritage Agency's Visitor Center offers visitors an authentic welcome to Korea's cultural legacy. In an inspired nod to tradition, the staff uniforms embrace the timeless elegance of hanbok.

These uniforms, crafted in a dignified charcoal gray and elegantly accented with sky-blue and pink collar details, marry hanbok's classic beauty with a streamlined, contemporary design for everyday comfort. Lightweight and breathable, this contemporary hanbok seamlessly integrates traditional aesthetics with ease of movement, offering an elegant yet approachable style that feels perfectly at home in daily life. Far from being reserved for formal occasions, these uniforms reimagine hanbok as effortlessly accessible attire for every day, lending a fresh sophistication that dispels old conventions. Rarely seen in

professional settings, hanbok as work attire has ignited enthusiasm among employees, adding vibrant energy to the workplace.

This distinctive choice has also fascinated visitors, who often ask for the opportunity to capture the moment with hanbok-clad staff members. The Agency is committed to this unique initiative, hoping to enrich visitors' experiences while celebrating Korea's heritage.



Redefining
Workplace Elegance

Sangju City
General Civil
Service Office

The Civil Service Office of Sangju, driven by its mission of providing people-centric civil services, offers a seamless, one-stop solution for a vast array of public needs. Each Wednesday, more than 60 staff members, dressed in hanbok, welcome residents, infusing their roles with a distinctive cultural elegance. Since establishing the Korea Hanbok Promotion Institute in 2021, the city of Sangju has championed the integration of hanbok into daily routines by instituting Hanbok Day in its public offices. This initiative not only brings hanbok into a modern rhythm but also celebrates Sangju's esteemed heritage in fine silk.

Staff uniforms incorporate the baeja vest, balancing heritage with practicality. Initial concerns that hanbok might not suit the

active nature of civil service work quickly faded—hanbok proved to be both comfortable and revitalizing, enabling employees to embody cultural heritage in a professional setting.

Employees report a strong sense of pride in wearing hanbok, recognizing it as a meaningful statement beyond mere work attire. Intriguingly, reports even suggest that customer satisfaction rises noticeably on these designated days.

“Our commitment is to share the enduring beauty of hanbok and Sangju silk, connecting with the public in a way that’s both personal and rooted in our rich heritage.”





Located in Sangju, Gyeongsangbuk-do Hamchang High School is a private institution where 272 students, distributed across 12 classes (4 per grade), are afforded the unique opportunity to don hanbok as their everyday attire. In a region long celebrated for its fine silk, Sangju has embraced this legacy by incorporating hanbok as part of the school's uniform.

Yet, students aren't confined to tradition—they are given the choice to alternate between hanbok and standard school uniforms, fostering a blend of heritage and personal style. This thoughtful balance aims to normalize hanbok in modern life, easing any preconceptions students may have and making tradition effortlessly wearable. In developing the hanbok uniform, students and parents collaborated in the design process, resulting in garments that reflect their needs and tastes. Events like Hanbok Day, led by the student council, further integrate this attire into school culture.

Notably, hanbok offers a level of comfort unmatched by traditional school uniforms; while conventional schoolwear is known for its fitted structure, the fluid silhouette of hanbok provides ease, especially during warmer seasons when its lightweight fabrics enhance overall comfort. Plus, parents appreciate the practicality—these uniforms are both easy to launder and quick to dry. This thoughtful design has led some students to prefer wearing hanbok year-round.



Gangjin Jakcheon Middle School in Jeollanam-do has adopted hanbok uniforms with a distinct vision. Observing the students' casual approach to dress, the school introduced hanbok to encourage dignity and grace. In a region with a large multicultural community, the hanbok uniform fosters cultural bonding, allowing both students and their foreign-born mothers to connect more deeply with Korean traditions.

Though primarily worn for school events, these uniforms are crafted to retain traditional aesthetics while offering modern comfort. The upper garment features details such as classic collars and detachable collar accents, while the shirts resemble jeogori. While boys wear wide, loose-fitting sapok pants, the girls don voluminous A-line skirts.

Students appreciate the modernized design, praising its practicality, eye-catching style, and comfort. The stretch fabrics offer comfort during active movement, while durable, breathable, and sweat-wicking materials make the uniform well-suited for daily wear and frequent washing. The design prioritizes ease for students and simple maintenance for parents. In a progressive shift, female students are now given the flexibility to choose between a long dress, skirt, culottes (split skirt-pants), or pants, making a departure from traditional gendered uniform expectations.



A JOURNEY THROUGH KOREAN TRADITION

Traveling in hanbok can transform each journey into an unforgettable experience. From Gyeongju, where the spirit of the ancient Silla Dynasty lingers, to Seoul's fusion of palaces and skyscrapers. From the gourmet-filled streets of Jeonju Hanok Village to the vintage-meets-modern vibe of Daegu. These destinations invite you to walk slowly, take in the history, and embrace the soul of each place. Let's take the first step on this extraordinary journey.



GYEONGJU



SEOUL



JEONJU



DAEGU

History Woven into the Landscape

Gyeongju



Gyeongju, aptly called a “museum without walls,” is scattered with burial mounds, cultural relics, and treasures such as Cheomseongdae Observatory, Woljeonggyo Bridge, and Donggung Palace and Wolji Pond. Adorned in hanbok, visitors become part of the city’s historic tapestry, blending effortlessly with the preserved legacy of the Silla era. The streets near Daereungwon Tomb Complex and Gyocheon Traditional Village, known for hanbok and period attire rentals, let travelers savor the city in unique style. Choose one and capture a moment of time travel; an experience like no other.

©Gyeongju Tourist Attractions Images Download System



#Daereungwon

Home to the royal tombs of the Silla period, Daereungwon Tomb Complex provides a mystic backdrop for hanbok photos. The graceful curves of the burial mounds and the elegant flow of hanbok create an unforgettable harmony.

Hours 09:00–22:00 (last admission at 21:30);
Open year-round

Address 9 Gyerim-ro, Gyeongju-si,
Gyeongsangbuk-do



#DonggungandWolji

This must-see former palace and pond shines after sunset, with serene reflections on the water under gentle lights—no filter needed to capture this beauty.

Hours 09:00–22:00 (last admission at 21:30);
Open year-round

Address 102 Wonhwa-ro, Gyeongju-si,
Gyeongsangbuk-do



#Woljeonggyo

Linking Silla-era Wolseong and Namsan Mountain, Woljeonggyo Bridge reveals its charm both day and night. Catch a daytime glimpse of its full splendor, or step onto the stepping stones of Namcheon River below to take in the tranquil nighttime view.

Hours 09:00–22:00; Open year-round

Address 274 Gyo-dong, Gyeongju-si,
Gyeongsangbuk-do



#Cheomseongdae

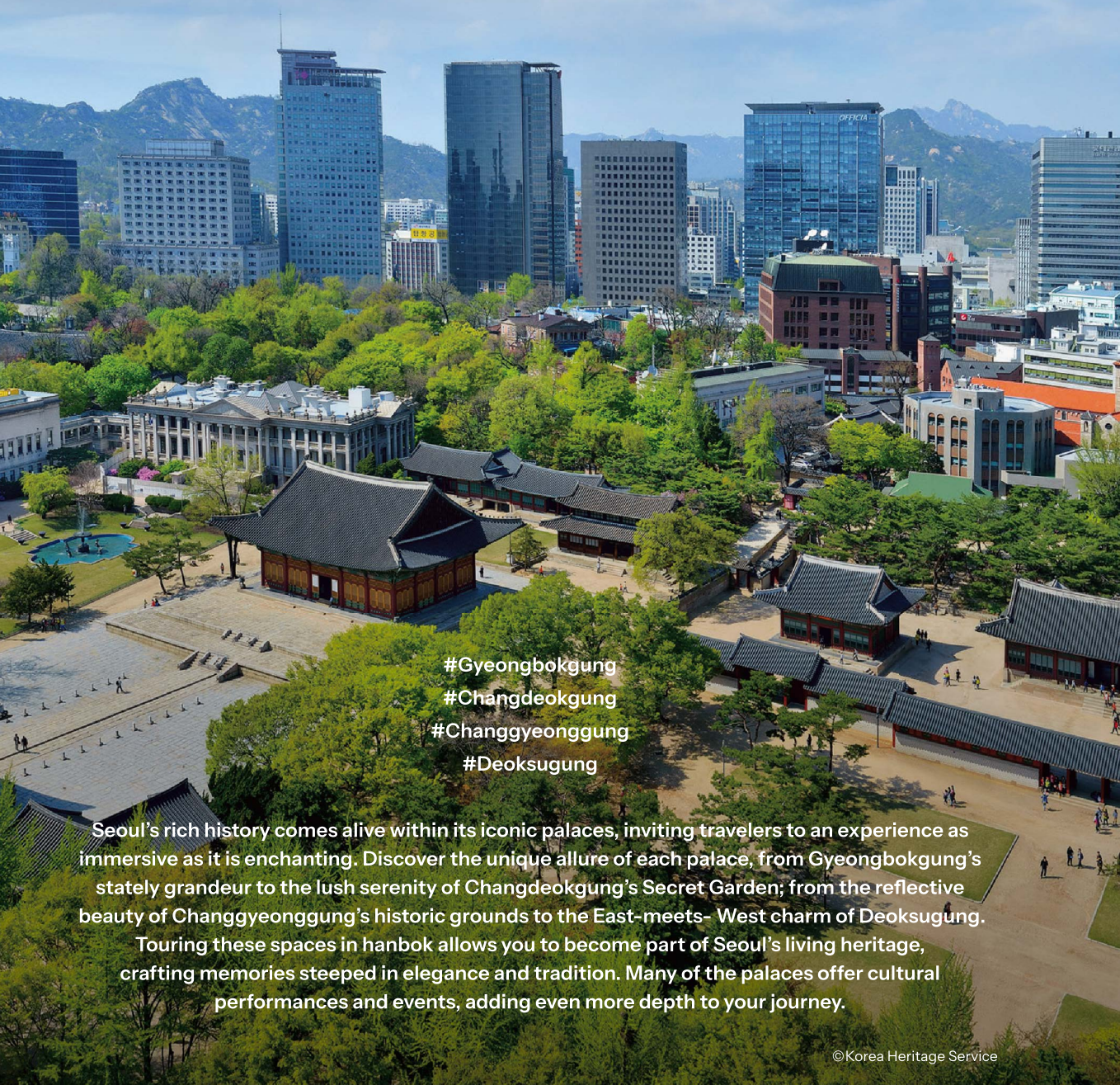
As East Asia’s oldest observatory, Cheomseongdae delights visitors throughout all seasons—from spring cherry blossoms and lush summer greenery to autumn foliage and serene winter snowscapes. Each season offers a picturesque backdrop for lasting hanbok memories.

Hours 09:00–22:00 (until 21:00 in winter);
Open year-round

Address 140–25 Cheomseong-ro, Gyeongju-si,
Gyeongsangbuk-do

A Stroll Through Seoul's Grand Palaces in Hanbok

Seoul

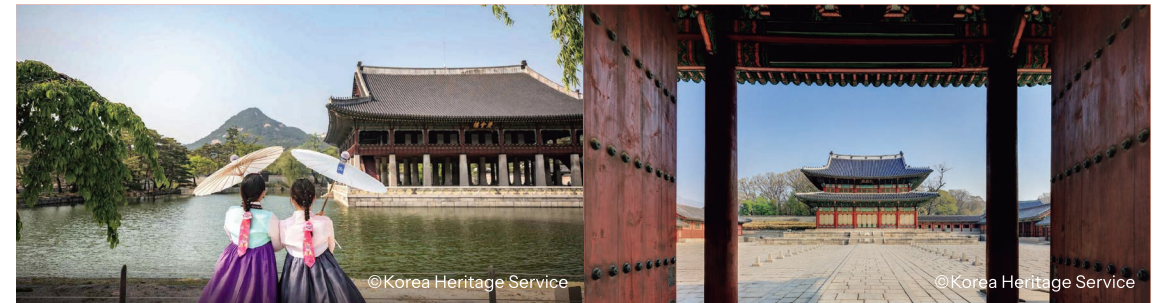


#Gyeongbokgung
#Changdeokgung
#Changgyeonggung
#Deoksugung

Seoul's rich history comes alive within its iconic palaces, inviting travelers to an experience as immersive as it is enchanting. Discover the unique allure of each palace, from Gyeongbokgung's stately grandeur to the lush serenity of Changdeokgung's Secret Garden; from the reflective beauty of Changgyeonggung's historic grounds to the East-meets-West charm of Deoksugung.

Touring these spaces in hanbok allows you to become part of Seoul's living heritage, crafting memories steeped in elegance and tradition. Many of the palaces offer cultural performances and events, adding even more depth to your journey.

©Korea Heritage Service



#Gyeongbokgung

The sprawling former heart of the Joseon Dynasty, Gyeongbokgung Palace spans two hours of exploration. Hanbok wearers enjoy free entry, and every corner provides the perfect photo backdrop. Nearby, the National Palace Museum offers fascinating exhibits.

Hours 09:00–17:00 (November–February),
09:00–18:00 (March–May, September–October), 09:00–18:30 (June–August);
Closed on Tuesdays

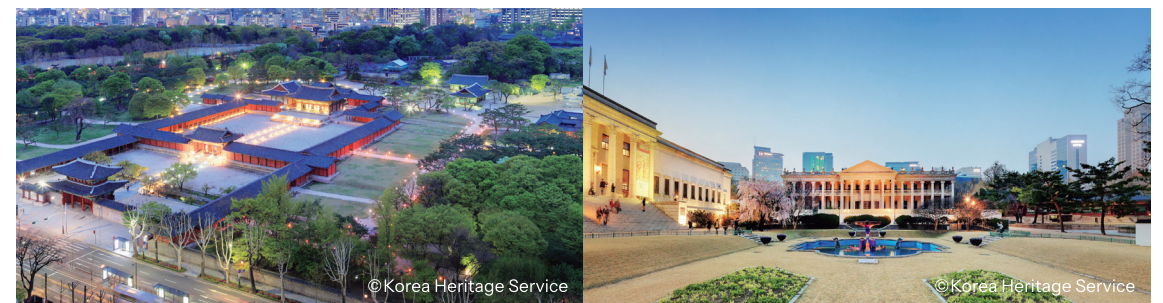
Address 161 Sajik-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul

#Changdeokgung

Changdeokgung Palace is often praised as the most quintessentially Korean, and its Huwon (Secret Garden) remains a masterpiece of natural harmony. Strolling through its lush landscapes and tranquil ponds feels like stepping into a serene painting.

Hours 09:00–17:30 (November–January),
09:00–18:00 (February–May, September–October), 09:00–18:30 (June–August); Closed on Mondays

Address 99 Yulgok-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul



#Changgyeonggung

Built by King Sejong for his father King Taejong, Changgyeonggung Palace has endured centuries of change. After multiple restorations following destruction from the Japanese invasions of Korea (Imjin War) and several fires, it has gradually taken on its current form. Its famed Daeonsil, a grand greenhouse filled with exotic plant life, offers a verdant contrast to its regal halls.

Hours 09:00–21:00 (last admission at 20:00);
Closed on Mondays

Address 185 Changgyeonggung-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul

#Deoksugung

The last palace of the Joseon era, Deoksugung Palace combines traditional Korean and Western architecture. Seokjojeon Hall, Korea's first Western-style building, is an ideal setting for photos of hanbok juxtaposed against a backdrop of antique Western furniture. Deoksugung is also renowned for its stunning evening illuminations.

Hours 09:00–21:00 (last admission at 20:00);
Closed on Mondays

Address 99 Sejong-daero, Jung-gu, Seoul



Where Tradition Embraces Modernity

Jeonju

#JeonjuHanokVillage

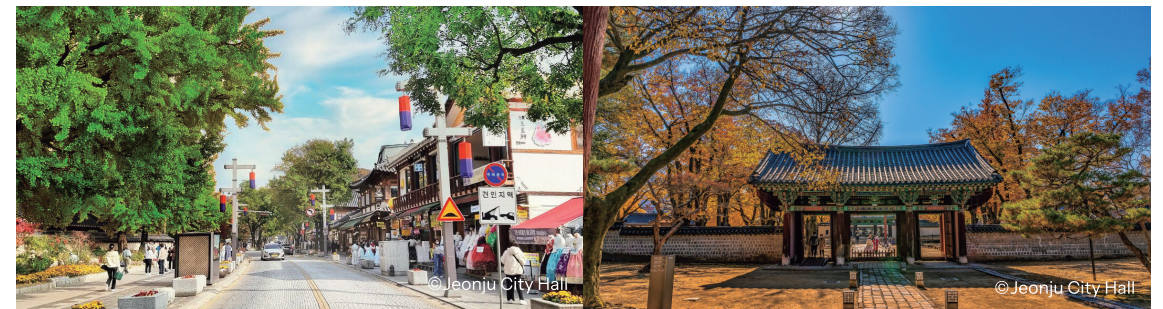
#Gyeonggijeon

#JeondongCathedral

#JeonjuHyanggyo

Known for its unique fusion of heritage and contemporary charm, Jeonju embodies the soul of Korean history. It's not uncommon to see visitors in hanbok wandering the city, particularly in the renowned Hanok Village, where one can rent a wide array of hanbok styles, from classic designs to royalty-inspired pieces. Gyeonggijeon Shrine, where a portrait of King Taejo is enshrined, is a cherished photo spot, while the stunning architectural marvel Jeondong Cathedral has featured in numerous films. This area offers both cultural sites and authentic traditional cuisine, making for an unforgettable journey through Korean heritage.

©sungkyungnoh



#JeonjuHanokVillage

With no fewer than 700 hanok structures, Jeonju Hanok Village is Korea's largest and most celebrated, recognized globally as a must-visit destination by media outlets such as CNN and the BBC. For a richer cultural dive, visitors can explore attractions like the Jeonju Crafts Exhibition Hall and the Hanok Living Experience Center, which bring the depth and beauty of Korean traditions to life.

Hours 24/7; Open year-round

Address 99 Girin-daero, Wansan-gu, Jeonju-si, Jeollabuk-do

#Gyeonggijeon

Housing the royal portrait of King Taejo, this picturesque setting harmonizes beautifully with hanbok attire. Its elegant tiled roofs and bamboo forest create the perfect backdrop for photos, while the on-site Jeonju Sago, a historical archive for the Veritable Records of the Joseon Dynasty, offers further exploration.

Hours 09:00–18:00; Open year-round

Address 44 Taejo-ro, Wansan-gu, Jeonju-si, Jeollabuk-do



#JeondongCathedral

One of Korea's three great cathedrals, Jeondong Cathedral impresses with its Romanesque architecture. Its distinctive façade and serene ambience make it a beloved spot for both visitors and devotees. Surrounded by red-brick buildings and thoughtful sculptures, it is ideal for a peaceful, reflective stroll.

Hours 09:00–17:00 (Subject to change)

Address 51 Taejo-ro, Wansan-gu, Jeonju-si, Jeollabuk-do

#JeonjuHyanggyo

Once a Confucian educational institution during the Goryeo and Joseon eras, Jeonju Hyanggyo is celebrated for its historical sites such as Daeseongjeon and Myeongnyundang, as well as its 400-year-old ginkgo trees that turn golden in autumn. A favorite location for K-Dramas, it has become a beloved photo spot for tourists.

Hours 10:00–17:00 (November–February), 09:00–18:00 (March–October); Closed on Mondays

Address 139 Hyanggyo-gil, Wansan-gu, Jeonju-si, Jeollabuk-do

Daegu, steeped in the rich legacy of Korea's modern history, is where pivotal movements took shape: the city is the birthplace of the National Debt Repayment Movement during the Japanese occupation, as well as the 2.28 Daegu Democracy Movement of 1960, which sparked the April Revolution later that year. These moments have firmly established Daegu as a powerful emblem of Korean democracy. Traces of these historic episodes remain, inviting visitors to connect with Korea's past while enjoying a distinctly modern charm. Strolling through Daegu's alleys in hanbok against the backdrop of early 20th-century architecture adds a layer of elegance to this immersive journey.

#March1stIndependenceMovementRoad

#CheongnaHill

#BulldongAncientTombs

#ApsanMountainObservatory

Where History and Hip Culture Converge

Daegu



#March1stIndependenceMovementRoad

This humble staircase once provided cover for students preparing for the March 1st Independence Movement, helping them evade Japanese patrols. Historic photos line the walls, echoing the courage of those who carried the Taegeukgi national flag into the heart of the city.

Hours 24/7; Open year-round

Address Along 102 Gukchaebosang-ro, Jung-gu, Daegu



#CheongnaHill

Cheongna Hill traces 100 years of modernization in Daegu alongside Christianity's early roots in the city. Set within Keimyung University Dongsan Medical Center, the meticulously preserved missionary homes and magnolia gardens draw crowds looking to take photos in spring when the blooms create an enchanting scene.

Hours 24/7; Open year-round

Address 2029 Dalgubeol-daero, Jung-gu, Daegu



#BulldongAncientTombs

Home to over 210 tombs from the Three Kingdoms period (5th–6th century), these rounded mounds lend a timeless quality to the landscape. The tombs make for stunning, fairytale-like photo ops, especially at sunrise and sunset.

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A symbol of Daegu, Apsan Mountain Observatory offers sweeping city views, accessible by both walking trail and cable car. At dusk, it reveals a breathtaking cityscape as the lights of Daegu shimmer against the evening sky.

Hours 10:30–19:00 (until 21:00 on Fridays, weekends, and public holidays); Cable car hours vary by month.

Address 574–114 Apsansunhwan-ro (Apsan Cable Car), Nam-gu, Daegu

Festivals & Events EMBRACING HANBOK



Simply scan the QR code for instant access to festival highlights and activity details.



2024
Hanbok
Culture Week



Hanbok Culture Week, held nationwide during the third week of October, celebrates hanbok as a cultural symbol and encourages its everyday usage. The event offers exhibitions, fashion shows, artisan awards, and interactive experiences at iconic sites such as the Seoul Museum of Craft Art, Changgyeonggung Palace, and the Blue House, which formerly served as the presidential residence.

©Korea Craft and Design Foundation

Location: Seoul Museum of Craft Art
Dates: October 14–20, 2024



2024
Jongno Hanbok
Festival



Set in central Seoul, this festival invites visitors to experience hanbok through artistic and cultural programs. Key highlights include a hanbok fashion show, a styling contest open to all participants, and thematic exhibitions tracing hanbok's history and diversity. Guided tours, cultural activities, and photo zones also enrich the experience.

©Jongno Foundation for Arts & Culture

Location: Gwanghwamun Square, Seoul
Dates: October 11–12, 2024

KOREAN CHARM IN FESTIVALS

Immerse yourself in hanbok's vibrancy through festivals that blend heritage with contemporary flair. From hanbok fashion shows and cultural performances to interactive experiences and culinary events, these gatherings bring Korean elegance to life.



2024
K-Royal
Culture Festival



At Seoul's five royal palaces and Jongmyo Shrine, a heritage festival brings history to life with seasonal exhibitions, activities, and royal ceremonies. In August and September, visitors can join the *Beautiful Hanbok Stories in the Palaces* photo contest or design hanbok-inspired characters in *Genre Painting for All*. October's K-Royal Culture Festival showcases gugak (traditional Korean music) performances, traditional games, and the *Gyeongbokgung Hanbok Banquet*. For an intimate glimpse into royal craftsmanship, the *Gyeongbokgung Sanguiwon* program reveals the meticulous art of crafting royal attire.

©Korea Cultural Heritage Foundation

Location: Gyeongbokgung, Changdeokgung, Deoksugung, and Changgyeonggung Palaces
Dates: October 9–13, 2024



2024
Chunhyang
Festival



Established in 1931 to honor the virtues of Lady Chunhyang, the heroine of the *Chunhyangjeon* epic, this festival stands as Korea's oldest celebration of traditional arts. Highlights include the Miss Chunhyang contest, alongside various cultural activities and concerts. In 2024, the Chunhyang Festival elevated its global appeal with new programs like the Global Chunhyang Pageant and the Chunhyang Ball, inviting locals and tourists to step into the characters from *Chunhyangjeon*. These additions are transforming the festival into a sophisticated cultural showcase of international stature.

©Namwon

Location: Gwanghallu Pavilion
Dates: May 10–16, 2024



2024
Haengju Night
Street Art Festival



Set against the historic Haengjusanseong Fortress, this renowned nighttime festival features historical and cultural activities, media art, performances, and restorative experiences. Wishing stones, drawing, lantern-making, hanbok try-ons, and other activities attract younger crowds, adding a modern twist to traditional Korean culture.

©Goyang

Location: Haengjusanseong (Fortress)
Dates: September 27–October 1, 2024

EMBRACING TRADITION

Step into hanbok and visit one of these curated cultural spaces where tradition comes alive. These destinations not only offer hanbok rentals but also provide immersive photo opportunities, etiquette workshops, and a range of interactive activities celebrating Korean heritage.

Hanbok Culture Creative Space, Gangneung



Created to rekindle appreciation for hanbok, this expansive three-story center includes exhibition halls, a conference room, a hanbok design studio, an archive, and education labs. Programs here emphasize hanbok artistry and traditional embroidery, with a focus on youth education. The center also hosts Hanbok Culture Week and showcases hanbok fashions in its retail space.



Korean Culture Theme Park, Andong



Set in Dosan-myeon, Andong, this 13,587-square-meter park is a hub for cultural immersion, offering activities covering archery, martial arts, scholarly life, and traditional games. The park's hanbok rental service offers visitors an immersive experience, providing an array of traditional, military, and royal attire that enhances the historical atmosphere of the grounds.



Korea Hanbok Promotion Institute, Sangju



Located in Sangju, Gyeongsangbuk-do, the Korea Hanbok Promotion Institute is a premier destination for all things hanbok, hosting exhibits and events such as "Top 100 Traditional Outfits" and the World Hat Festival. With themed sections—Discover, Engage, Apply, and Reflect—it offers hands-on experiences for all ages, including a children's hanbok playground, designed to foster familiarity with hanbok culture.



Sochang Experience Center, Ganghwa



Sochang Experience Center offers an in-depth look at the history and culture behind sochang, a traditional cotton fabric used for towels and diapers. Visitors can engage in hands-on crafts such as stamping towels or sewing handkerchiefs and pillow covers. The hanbok exhibit allows guests to try on both Goryeo-era and modern hanbok, adding visual depth to the experience.



Korean Cultural Exchange Center, Eunpyeong History Hanbok Museum



Situated in Eunpyeong Hanok Village, this center offers a hanbok rental service, cultural gift shop, and tourist information desk. Visitors can dress in hanbok and take photos against iconic backdrops, including the painting *Geumgang Jeondo* and the March 1st Independence Flag, preserving a moment of elegance in a historic setting.



Momyeongjae Korean Traditional Culture Center



Specializing in the unique heritage of Daegu's Suseong-gu, Momyeongjae Korean Traditional Culture Center offers a rich array of immersive cultural programs. Guests can don hanbok for tea ceremonies, try their hand at herbal cooking based on the *Dongui Bogam*, a 17th-century book of traditional Korean medicine, and participate in activities such as archery, cooking based on ancient texts, as well as making rice wine, soy sauce, and kimchi.



©Suseong Culture Foundation

HANBOK HITS ITS STRIDE IN K-CONTENT

Mr. Sunshine

2018

tvN

Director Lee Eung-bok,
writer Kim Eun-sook

Set against the richly complex backdrop of late 19th-century Joseon, *Mr. Sunshine* traces the journey of a Korean boy who escapes to America following the 1871 Shinmiyangyo incident (American military action on Ganghwa Island for the purpose of forcibly opening Joseon's ports, triggered by the General Sherman incident on the Daedonggang River in Pyeongyang) and returns years later as a U.S. Marine Corps officer. The series vividly captures the Joseon era grappling with the influx of Western influence while witnessing an intense rise in patriotic

anti-Japanese resistance. Beyond its poignant romance and powerful narrative, the series' costumes tell their own story. Go Ae-shin (Kim Tae-ri), a noblewoman, exudes timeless Korean elegance in her refined hanbok, while Kudo Hina (Kim Min-jung), the sophisticated owner of Hotel Glory, shines in Western gowns, embodying the era's stylistic transformations. The juxtaposition of traditional hanbok with European gowns and military attire vividly illustrates the cultural tensions and transitions of this historic period.

©StudioDragon, Hwa&Dam Pictures

Drama



Now

Watch



64

Kingdom

2019

2020

NETFLIX

Director Kim Seong-hun,
writer Kim Eun-hee

Netflix's *Kingdom* merges the Joseon-era setting with zombie horror. A resurrected king, a crown prince beset by treasonous charges, and the desperate undead all come together in a mystery thriller that slowly peels away at these haunting secrets. From its debut season, *Kingdom* has mesmerized audiences, not only with its meticulous storytelling but also its arresting, cinematic visuals. *Kingdom* places symbolic emphasis on accessories such as the gat men's hat and the flowing dopo overcoat, capturing an arresting balance between horror and historical authenticity. With its complex portrayal of an infected kingdom, the series has expanded across two seasons, with a special episode, *Kingdom: Ashin of the North*, adding depth to the story. ©Netflix



The Red Sleeve

2021

MBC

Creative directors Moon Ju-hee &
Oh Tteu-rak, writer Jung Hae-ri

The historical drama *The Red Sleeve* transports viewers to the Joseon Dynasty, drawing inspiration from the life of King Jeongjo and his consort-turned-concubine, Uibin Seong. The story explores their remarkable romance, made all the more intriguing by Uibin Seong's unique background as the only royal consort to have ascended from the position of a court maid. This artful blend of historical truth and fiction lends the narrative a rich, layered complexity. Perhaps one of *The Red Sleeve*'s finest achievements lies in its costume design. The hanbok capture the elegant colors and lines of traditional Korean attire while offering a glimpse into the customs of Joseon court life. ©MBC



Hanbok, Here and Now!

65

Director Lee Won-suk,
writer Lee Byoung-hak

In the Joseon Dynasty, the Sanguiwon was the royal atelier, responsible for crafting all garments for the royal family. *The Royal Tailor* brings this storied institution to life, centering on Jo Dol-seok, a master tailor who has served the court for 30 years, and Lee Gong-jin, a free-spirited artisan who designs for gisaeng (courtesans). Their rivalry unfolds amid a lush display of hanbok, each costume radiating richness and precision rarely seen on screen. A striking highlight is the queen's ceremonial gown, worn in a climactic banquet scene, featuring 15 layers that evoke the grandeur of a multilayered Western dress. With nearly ₩1 billion (approx. \$718,000 USD) dedicated solely to costume design from a total budget of ₩7.2 billion (approx. \$5.2 million USD), *The Royal Tailor* embodies a meticulous commitment to capturing the era's opulent fashion. ©Bidangil Pictures

K-Content offers a vivid palette of hanbok styles, from traditional aesthetic to modern reinterpretations that carry a unique allure.
Observing the hanbok in these works, especially within their historical settings, unveils an evolution in style that is as fascinating as it is beautiful.

Director Park Heung-sik,
writer Ha Young-joon

Set in 1943, *Love, Lies* follows the story of So-yul (Han Hyo-joo) and Yeon-hee (Chun Woo-hee), two gisaeng and close friends who become rivals as they compete to sing "Heart of Joseon," a ballad by renowned composer Yoon-woo (Yoo Yeon-seok). Against the 1940s backdrop of Daeseong Gwonbeon—the last gisaeng school in Gyeongseong (present-day Seoul)—this film showcases an array of hanbok styles, merging traditional and Western influences in unique, visually striking forms. The hanbok surprises not only with entirely novel silhouettes, but also with an opulent array of materials—from organza and silk to wool and lace, alongside traditional fabrics. These richly textured costumes become essential to the film's allure, immersing viewers in its gripping story. ©Lotte Entertainment

Writer/director Ahn Tae-jin,
writer Hyun Gyu-ri

The Night Owl is a "faction" thriller that reimagines events surrounding the mysterious deaths of King Injo and Crown Prince Sohyeon of the Joseon Dynasty. Following blind acupuncturist Gyeong-su (Ryu Jun-yeol), who becomes privy to the secrets behind the crown prince's death, the film emphasizes a tense and foreboding atmosphere over opulence, with muted, dark hanbok tones that complement its equally shadowy and suspenseful narrative. This restrained palette, a departure from hanbok's typical vibrancy, intensifies the characters' emotions and underscores the gravitas of court intrigue. ©Next Entertainment World

Movie



Mukhyang (Scent of Ink)

National Dance Company of Korea	Artistic director & troupe leader Kim Jong-deok, choreographer Yun Seong-ju, director & set/costume designer Jeong Gu-ho
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Since its debut in 2013, *Mukhyang* has enthralled audiences worldwide, establishing itself as a defining work for the National Dance Company of Korea. Inspired by the “Four Noble Plants” (plum, orchid, chrysanthemum, and bamboo) that embody Confucian scholarly ideals, this performance unfolds the elegance of traditional Korean dance in six movements. The first act, “Opening Dance,” introduces male dancers in a serene display of scholarly grace, marking the seasons’ cyclical passage. In “Plum Blossoms,” a female solo flows into a mesmerizing ensemble, while “Orchid” brings in a quartet of gayageum and geomungo zithers, capturing the poised

elegance of a scholar through delicate gestures. The fourth act, “Chrysanthemum,” celebrates the dignified beauty of Korean dance as skirts bloom like flowers in synchronized motion. In “Bamboo,” male dancers portray bamboo’s resilient strength through unified, fluid movements. The final act, “Closing Dance,” unites all dancers in a harmonious ode to the four seasons. Each aspect—choreography, costuming, and set—culminates in an experience as if gazing upon a living scroll of ink-wash art. ©National Theater of Korea

The fluid hues, elegant lines, and flowing silhouettes of hanbok blend with song and dance, forging a sensory experience that feels singularly alive on stage.



Rabbit's Eight Sufferings

National Changgeuk Company of Korea	Writer/director Go Seon-ung, co-creators Yu Su-jeong & Han Seung-seok, music director/composer Han Seung-seok, costume/accessory designer Kim Youngjin
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Rabbit's Eight Sufferings presents an intriguing spinoff from *Sugungga*, one of the five iconic pansori musical tales of Korea. In the original *Sugungga*, a clever rabbit is lured to the Dragon King’s palace by a terrapin who promises a cure for the king’s illness, but the rabbit, foreseeing his fate, skillfully evades danger and escapes. Picking up where the story leaves off, *Rabbit's Eight Sufferings* follows the journey of the rabbit’s son, Toja. Unlike his father, Toja seeks a way out of his harsh reality, embarking on a treacherous path to the Dragon Palace. After facing numerous perils, he comes to realize that the palace offers no relief from life’s trials. His journey back home leads him to a profound understanding of his roots and a newfound sense of hope. Blending the imaginative with the traditional, *Rabbit's Eight Sufferings* breathes new life into an age-old tale, beautifully merging the elements of ancient and contemporary storytelling. ©National Theater of Korea



Saturday Gugak Concert

National Gugak Center	Every Saturday, the National Gugak Center invites audiences to an enchanting showcase of traditional Korean music and dance, each performance uniquely themed to provide a fresh experience.
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For over 40 years, this esteemed institution has been committed to preserving Korea’s musical and dance heritage, giving audiences the opportunity to fully appreciate the beauty and depth of traditional Korean culture. *Saturday Gugak Concert* unites the National Gugak Center’s distinguished ensembles—the Court Music Orchestra, Folk Music Orchestra, Dance Company, and Creative Orchestra—in a single, mesmerizing performance. Each week offers a new theme, thoughtfully curated to engage both newcomers and seasoned enthusiasts, blending accessibility with artistry. Beyond the music and dance, the concert offers a visual feast: performers in exquisite hanbok that not only complement each genre, but also enhance the atmosphere and intensify the audience’s experience. Here, hanbok transcends being just a costume, harmonizing with each art form to deepen immersion. *Saturday Gugak Concert* truly celebrates hanbok’s visual splendor alongside the dynamic energy of Korea’s traditional music, dance, and song. ©National Gugak Center



Civilizations have flourished through mutual exchange, and Korea is no exception. Just as Greece and Rome laid the foundation for Western civilization, ancient Korean kingdoms have formed the backbone of Korea's cultural heritage. From the legacies of Gojoseon, Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla, Korean culture has developed a distinct identity that reverberates globally today as part of the Korean Wave, encompassing K-Pop, K-Drama, K-Food, and K-Fashion.

Interviewees Chae Keum-seok, Professor Emeritus at Sookmyung Women's University

Hanbok in Flux:



The Journey from Past to Future

With roots tracing back roughly 5,000 years to the Gojoseon era, hanbok evolved through continuous cultural exchanges with neighboring civilizations. The Silk Road, a vital artery connecting West Asia, Central Asia, and East Asia¹⁾ served as a primary channel for interactions that included the ancient Han (韓, Korean) people. Central Asia's grassland and oasis routes were particularly significant as they were frequented by nomadic tribes such as the Scythians and Xiongnu, shaping the flow of ideas and styles between the East and West.

Ancient Korean culture, in particular, had close ties with the Scythians (Fig. 1) and Xiongnu, who were active in Central Asia between the 7th and 3rd centuries BCE. This cultural connection is reflected in the enduring ibusik (two-piece) structure of hanbok—jeogori top with pants or skirt—dating back to this era.

Iconic Goguryeo murals (Fig. 2) vividly capture this attire: men and women alike wear a basic jeogori with baji (trousers), with women also layering a chima (skirt) over the baji, and both genders donning durumagi overcoats when outdoors. People of all social classes are shown in wide pleated- or open-hem pants, with pleated-hem pants bearing a striking resemblance to those worn by the Xiongnu.

1.
Ritual Vessel Excavated from
Scythian Chastye Tomb
No. 3, 4th Century BCE
(Enlarged Image) ©State
Hermitage Museum, Russia

2.
Nobleman and Attendant,
Goguryeo Muyongchong
Tomb, Late 4th–Early 5th
Century ©North-South
Copyright Office



The ancient hanbok comprised three primary elements: a jeogori, baji, and durumagi. The jeogori or durumagi covered the torso, while trousers or skirts covered the lower body. Traditional gokkal hats adorned the head, and belts cinched the jeogori at the waist. Footwear included short, flat l, similar to modern danhwa (low shoes), or taller Hwa boots made from pig leather or braided plant stems.

1) Kim, Chae-soo. *Altaic Civilization Theory*. Park ljeong Publishing, Seoul, 2013, p. 7.

Evolves
Ancient Hanbok

Along the Silk Road

Each era's distinct clothing styles reveal the refined fashion sensibilities of Korea's ancestors. In ancient Korea, men's and women's garments shared similar shapes, as illustrated by Goguryeo murals: jeogori, baji, and durumagi were not specific to any gender. Women sometimes layered skirts over pants, yet jeogori and baji were similarly worn across genders, suggesting that unisex fashion was already prevalent. During the Three Kingdoms period, the jeogori reached hip-length, but by the Goryeo era, it was shortened and tied with goreum, long rectangular ribbon ties.

The Joseon era, influenced by Confucian ideals, introduced clearer distinctions between men's and women's attire, and women's jeogori grew shorter over time. The straight, lively lines of Goguryeo-era jeogori evolved into waist-length cuts in early Joseon, later developing S-shaped curves that accentuated feminine contours. By the late Joseon era, jeogori took on a distinctly horizontal silhouette, with sleeves aligned to the shoulder line.

These shifts transformed skirt styles as well. In ancient times, skirts were typically pleated and fastened with long rectangular bands around the waist (Figs. 3 and 5). During the Unified Silla era, long skirts were worn over jeogori, while in the Goryeo period, skirts were aligned with the shorter waist-length jeogori. As the jeogori grew shorter in Joseon, skirts lengthened, and by the late Joseon period, women were wrapping skirt bands above the chest (Fig. 4), creating an iconic silhouette.



Ancient pants were constructed from two long rectangles of fabric, with triangular panels at the crotch. Wide-legged pants (Fig. 7) and pleated pants (Fig. 6), which gathered and cinched at the hem, were popular through the Goryeo period. In the Joseon era, pants evolved: for men, they became oeu (outerwear), while for women, they served as undergarments beneath skirts. Men's pants later adopted the wide, loose-fitting sapok style, tied at the waist and ankles, a design that endures today. Pleated pants from the Goryeo era have also found their way back into modern fashion, beloved by younger generations. The durumagi, an extension of the jeogori, was originally a unisex garment. However, as Confucian ideals influenced Joseon society, gender distinctions in dress became pronounced, and the durumagi ceased to be worn by both genders (Fig. 8). During early Joseon, royals and commoners alike wore the durumagi and jangot (headdress or veil)²⁾ as outer garments, but as Confucianism spread, women's use of these garments became restricted. Still, Joseon women continued to use the durumagi as a head covering, often draping

Silhouettes: The Art of From Vertical Lines



it over their heads for modesty when stepping outside.³⁾

The evolution of hanbok began in earnest in the late 19th century as Korea modernized and opened its ports. Gaehwa Sasang (Enlightenment Thought) spread among intellectuals, fueling interest in Western fashion and sparking adaptations in hanbok. Western attire was initially introduced among upper-class women and students studying abroad, with the clothing of missionaries further influencing hanbok's transformation. This era saw the coexistence of traditional hanbok, Western clothing, and banyangjang—a hybrid style blending both elements.

While these shifts unfolded, hanbok remained the preferred choice among ordinary women, though the rise of modesty when stepping outside of Western fashion gradually distanced it from daily wear. In men's clothing, gwanbok (official attire) was gradually replaced by suits, marking a period when hanbok and Western dress coexisted. By the 20th century, hanbok

to Horizontal Elegance

3. Mural of a Goguryeo Woman in Jeogori and Pleated Skirt, Goguryeo Ssangyeongchong Tomb ©Seoul Hanseong Baekje Museum

4. *Portrait of a Beauty* by Sin Yun-bok ©Kansong Art and Culture Foundation

5. Diagram of a Pleated Skirt, Goguryeo Period

6. Diagram of Narrow Trousers, Goguryeo Period

7. Diagram of Wide Trousers, Goguryeo Period

8. Figure Wearing Durumagi, 4th–5th Century, Goguryeo Muyongchong Tomb ©North-South Copyright Office

had largely transitioned into attire for special occasions and traditional rites.

Yet the late 20th-century Hallyu (Korean Wave) propelled hanbok onto the global stage, renewing worldwide fascination. As K-Pop, K-Dramas, and other K-Content rose in popularity, international audiences grew curious about Korea's traditional dress. Following Blackpink's June 2020 performance of "How You Like That" on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, Google searches for "hanbok" soared. Other K-Pop staples such as BTS, Zico, Oh My Girl, and Oneus have incorporated hanbok-inspired outfits in their performances, and K-Dramas have also helped spotlight hanbok. The Netflix sensation *Kingdom* gave hanbok fresh appeal, with the traditional gat hat stirring so much fascination in the U.S. that it became something of a fad. Growing curiosity has led to a surge in people wanting to experience hanbok firsthand. Today, travelers from around the world stroll through Korea's palaces in hanbok, transforming this practice into a global phenomenon.

2) *Seonjo Sillok* [Veritable Records of Seonjo], vol. 38, Year 26, Month 5, Day 29 of King Seonjo.

3) Chae, Keum-seok. *The Essence of Joseon Fashion*, p. 125. *Jungjong Sillok* [Veritable Records of Jungjong], vol. 45, Year 17, Month 8, Day 12 of King Jungjong.

In a world ever more integrated, the unique essence of traditional cultures holds renewed significance. Luxury fashion has long drawn from its roots, as seen in Christian Dior’s iconic “New Look”—a reimagining of the Western crinoline skirt in a shorter, knee-length style—or Ralph Lauren’s modern twist on British aristocratic dress, which became emblematic of contemporary American sophistication. The patterns, details, colors, materials, and artisanal techniques of traditional attire are reinterpreted, adapting timeless heritage to the continuously evolving language of modern fashion.

In Korea, designers are passionately reimagining hanbok with a fresh and contemporary spirit. They incorporate iconic elements such as the chima (skirt), jeogori (upper garment), durumagi (overcoat), and baeja (vest) into new designs, honoring tradition while progressing its aesthetic. Hanbok-inspired touches are also making their way into Western fashion, transforming hanbok into a sophisticated item that marries tradition with elegant modernity.

Unique hanbok features—such as the jeogori’s curved sleeves, goreum ribbon ties, the flowing doryeonseon hemlines, saekdong (multicolored stripes), and gathered pant cuffs—lend it an

9.
While jogakbo serves as a functional wrapping cloth, it is also an artistic creation made from leftover fabric scraps ©Seoul Museum of Craft Art



From
Tradition

to Trend

inimitable charm. The geometric simplicity of circular, square, and triangular patterns in the jeogori, skirt, and trousers complements today’s minimalist aesthetic.

Its recurring circles, squares, and angles echo modern fractal design, while the repetitive squares in jogakbo patchwork (Fig. 9) evoke the abstract harmony of Piet Mondrian’s art. This traditional aesthetic has even made waves in haute couture; in 2016, Karl Lagerfeld’s Chanel Cruise Collection reinterpreted Korean elements, including obangsaek (traditional five-color palette) and jogakbo, to critical acclaim.

In her 2011 S/S collection, fashion designer Carolina Herrera drew global attention by introducing dresses embellished with floral motifs, blending inspiration from 18th-century botanical illustrations with fabrics and details influenced by hanbok. Blending the jeogori collar and goreum ribbon ties with Western blouse designs and rounding the sleeves, Herrera struck a sophisticated harmony between hanbok’s graceful lines and Western fashion, creating an eye-catching “Han style” fusion.

The relaxed silhouette and effortless style of hanbok trousers have also inspired a Western adaptation in harem pants, which feature a

loose fit around the hips that tapers toward the ankle. This design trend has gained popularity in Korea, with global fashion critics frequently praising the originality and inherent modernity of traditional Korean dress, noting that Korean attire’s timeless qualities make it naturally contemporary.

Hanbok’s seamless adaptation into today’s fashion underscores its boundless appeal. To genuinely incorporate hanbok’s strengths into modern design, one must observe key aspects: hanbok’s historical evolution, its structural pattern principles, current trends, and elements of modern fashion, such as practicality, simplicity, and allure. Unlike Western clothing, hanbok’s pattern structure is distinct, so simply replicating hanbok’s aesthetic does not create true “Han style.” Real innovation emerges from a profound understanding of hanbok’s core, transforming it into a rich source of inspiration.



About. Chae Keum-seok

Professor Emeritus at Sookmyung Women’s University

Professor Chae, a specialist in clothing and textiles, studied at Sookmyung Women’s University and the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. She has been a visiting research professor at Gakushuin University in Japan and a professor in the Department of Clothing and Textiles at Sookmyung Women’s University, where she now holds emeritus status. Formerly on the Cultural Heritage Administration’s Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee, she currently serves on the Seoul Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee. Her publications include *Culture and Korean Design*, *Korean Attire Culture: Ancient Edition*, *Korean Jeogori: 2,000 Years*, *Traditional Hanbok and Korean Style*, and *Aesthetics of Modern Dress*.

Chimseon (needlework) is the art of binding fragments of natural materials, stitch by painstaking stitch in delicate threadwork, with each needle's passage revealing shapes and sketches that evolve into form. Park's introduction to this world came from her mother, whose embroidery adorned everyday objects with vibrant patterns—utensil cases, handmade aprons, and even iron stands bore her mother's graceful designs. She fondly remembers her mother stitching by the light of an oil lamp, a vision of quiet elegance. Now, years later, she finds herself echoing that image, carrying forward the tradition that captivated her as a child.

NATIONAL INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE MASTER OF NEEDLEWORK

PARK YOUNGAE



IN HER
HANDS,

STORIES
BLOSSOM
IN THREAD

The Art of Seamless Connections

In a society that placed great importance on propriety, Korean ancestors believed that etiquette began with one's attire. Thus, sewing became a vital skill and virtue for women. Park Youngae, recognized as a heritage impartation instructor of Korea's National Intangible Cultural Heritage for the art of chimseon, grew up in an esteemed traditional household where she absorbed the craft of sewing by watching her mother's meticulous handiwork.

"I often heard people say I had a keen eye and skillful hands," she recalls. "At first, I wanted to hand-sew costumes for my younger sister, who studied Korean dance, but soon my passion for the craft deepened."

In 1989, Park formally began her journey in hanbok-making at the Korean Traditional Craft and Architecture School under the guidance of the late Jeong Jeong-wan, Korea's first recognized master of chimseon. Under Jeong's mentorship, Park learned not only sewing and knotting but also dyeing and the broader art of traditional Korean craft. This mentorship evolved

with her next teacher, Jeong's daughter-in-law Gu Hye-ja, Korea's second master of chimseon, who guided Park through her twenties and beyond.

"My mentors nurtured me with such kindness and positive encouragement that I often worked through the night, convinced of my progress. Looking back, I realize they were giving me the courage to persevere," she reflects.

Her dedication to hanbok flourished, and she found herself coming and going from Jeong Jeong-wan's home day and night, marking the beginning of her true apprenticeship. "At the time, we received many hanbok orders for milestone celebrations—sixtieth, seventieth, or even first birthdays. We'd make sets for entire families, each color-coded for the occasion. When someone passed, we'd receive requests to make suui (burial clothes), completing the bedding, clothes, and accessories in a single day. Those experiences, helping with my mentors' projects, taught me through the rhythm of hands-on work."

Park's immersion in traditional craft extended far beyond sewing. Jeong, the eldest daughter of independence activist and Confucian scholar Jeong In-bo, married into the noble family of Prince Gwangpyeong, granting Park a rare glimpse into the noble customs of that era and the refined culinary traditions of Seoul's most prominent families.

"Working alongside over ten people in my mentor's sitting room, I absorbed the culture of the anbang (inner quarters) and gyubang (women's quarters), experiencing the domestic life of the past," she says. "Learning bokshik (attire) naturally brought lessons in etiquette. I wasn't just taught sewing techniques but was steeped in the customs surrounding life's milestones—birth, marriage, and special birthdays."

A Living Art Shaped by Time and Emotion

Chimseon transcends fabric manipulation; it encompasses the entire art of crafting garments from flat cloth, uniting every step from design to completion. Unlike in Western fashion, where cutters, pattern makers, and seamstresses perform distinct roles, a chimseon master undertakes each phase independently. "The process begins with fabric selection," Park explains, "whether it be silk, cotton, ramie, hemp, or satin. Choosing the right color is equally vital—just as personal color trends are popular today, color selection has always held significance. Summer typically called for bright hues, while winter saw darker shades. Decisions on details like padding or fur are all the work of the chimseon master."

Hanbok is a garment that comes alive when worn. While Western suits retain their form even when laid flat, hanbok opens up, taking shape based on the wearer—a flexibility that defines its essence. Master Jeong's advice captures this philosophy: "When making hanbok, don't press it too flat; let it breathe." Today, dry cleaners may steam hanbok to be flat, but its charm lies in its natural three-dimensional quality.



1.
Child's Dopo*, 19th-Century
(Exhibit from 2022 Legacy
Holder Showcase)

*The dopo is an outer garment traditionally worn by scholars as everyday attire, widely adopted from the mid-Joseon period onward.

2.
Pine Nut Pillow*
(Exhibit from 2018 Legacy
Holder Showcase)

*A pillow made with small, colorful fabric pieces folded into cone shapes, stitched in a circular pattern to form pine nut-shaped designs on the ends.



“In the past, hanbok was dismantled for washing and then reassembled. With starch and quick stitches, multiple outfits could be completed overnight. Ironing required a gentle touch to preserve hanbok’s shape, as excessive pressure could compromise its graceful drape. And light stitching ensured the wearer’s comfort, reinforcing hanbok’s natural ease.”

The flat-cut design of hanbok minimizes fabric waste. Children’s vibrant multicolored saekdong jeogori are crafted from smaller fabric pieces, and even the tiniest of scraps find purpose in patchwork jogakbo cloths or pillows. This frugality reflects a reverence for materials and a culture of resourcefulness.

“Among all Korean garments, I’m especially fond of children’s clothing,” Park shares. “These pieces carry a mother’s devotion, wrapping her child in wishes for health and happiness. Bibs are made thin to prevent stains, and traditional carrier blankets come with dongjeong (detachable collar accents) for easy washing. To shield against drafts, babies wear dureong chima (wrapping skirt), regardless of gender.” In

Park’s family, her mother made a soeppul begae (ox horn pillow) for her as a child. Its maguri (pillow ends), shaped like ox horns, are filled with unpolished barley grains. “The countless grains represent the hope for a long life, while the ox-horn shape symbolizes strength and resilience, embodying my mother’s deepest wishes for me.”

Life as Art: A Story in Every Stitch

Park Youngae dedicated eight years at the Seok Juseon Memorial Museum of Dankook University to restoring garments excavated from ancient tombs. This work was more than volunteer service; it was an immersive challenge that provided her with an invaluable opportunity to explore age-old sewing techniques.

“Excavated garments are fragile—often faded and damaged from centuries underground. They must be handled with extreme care. As I pieced together cleaned fragments, patching missing sections, I could see details that written records alone couldn’t capture. Every stitch heightened my appreciation for the preciousness of fabric in those times.”



3.
First-Birthday Saekdong
Baby Cap

4. 5.
Royal Quilted Swatch and
Cotton Swatch (Exhibit
from 2016 Legacy Holder
Showcase)

4

5

These ancient garments differ from today’s hanbok, yet hints of their former splendor endure. Traditional indigo-dyed fabrics retain their deep blue, while delicate pinks and other hues evoke the colors and styles once cherished.

“Sewing those pieces was an honor, but it was a responsibility that weighed heavily. Many nights, I lay awake, anxious over every stitch. As patterns took shape, I imagined the artisans before me and approached each stitch with reverence. Despite the challenges, the sense of purpose carried me through—it’s been one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life.”

Dedicated to sharing the beauty of chimseon, Park continues to hold exhibitions and lead educational programs. She currently teaches at the Korean Traditional Craft and Architecture School and also conducts online classes through the Hanbok Center’s “Hanbok Patterning” program, reaching a diverse audience nationwide.

“Teaching requires harmony with the students; it’s not something you do alone. I focus on helping them apply their skills actively. Finished

pieces—whether socks, skirts, or jackets—shouldn’t be mere “pretty clutter.” Hanbok should be worn and shared with family and children to enable our culture to flourish. Through exhibitions and education, I want to help others see its beauty.”

Park champions a clear distinction between traditional hanbok and shin hanbok (modern reinterpretations), advocating a dual approach. “It’s not enough to simply preserve cultural heritage for future generations. We must safeguard tradition while developing new styles that resonate with contemporary tastes. Modern hanbok often sparks interest in its traditional roots, eventually inspiring people to seek out authentic designs. Many think heritage impartation is dull or outdated, but the more they learn, the more they realize that there’s incredible depth and many tales to be told. My mission is to inspire curiosity about what lies beneath.”

Certainly, Park has faced her share of hardships. But in moments of struggle, she found solace in the rhythm of her needle, attentive to the stories in every stitch. What began as a love for sewing has evolved into a lifelong dedication to creating “special garments for every day.” For Park Youngae, many more stories remain, waiting to be told through her craft.

Park Youngae

National Intangible
Cultural Heritage Master
of Needlework

Park Youngae, a designated “Heritage Impartation Instructor” of Korea’s National Intangible Cultural Heritage Master of Needlework (chimseon), was born in 1964 with the childhood nameas So-yeong into a prominent family steeped in tradition. From a young age, she watched her mother deftly stitch and sew, raising her five children with skilled hands. Her younger sister’s career in Korean dance marked a turning point for Park; inspired to create her costumes by hand, she found herself drawn into the world of needlework. Beginning in 1989, she apprenticed under Master Jeong Jeong-wan and now continues her studies with Master Gu Hye-ja. Today, she teaches traditional needlework at the Korean Traditional Craft and Architecture School.

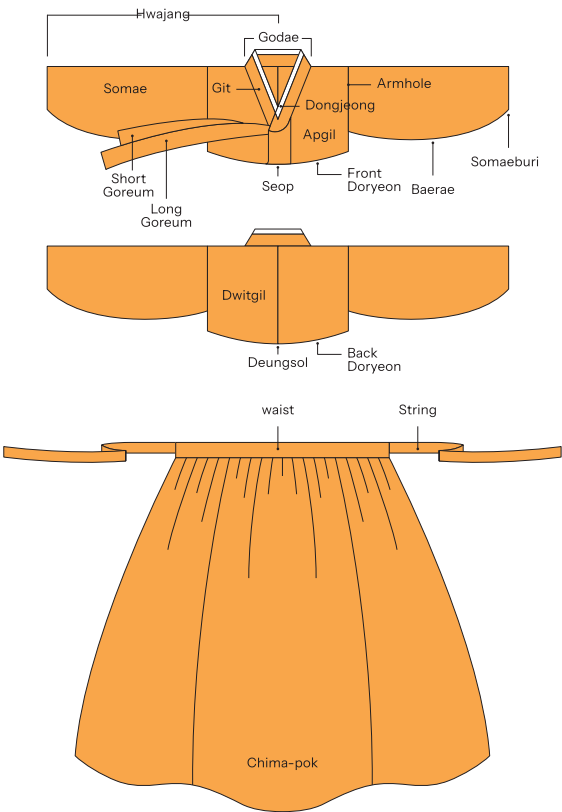
Cherished across generations, hanbok is a design that gracefully unites tradition with contemporary elegance. To fully appreciate hanbok’s beauty, one must understand its essential components, distinct features, and the cultural significance it embodies.

THE FINE ART OF WEARING HANBOK

Hanbok Essentials

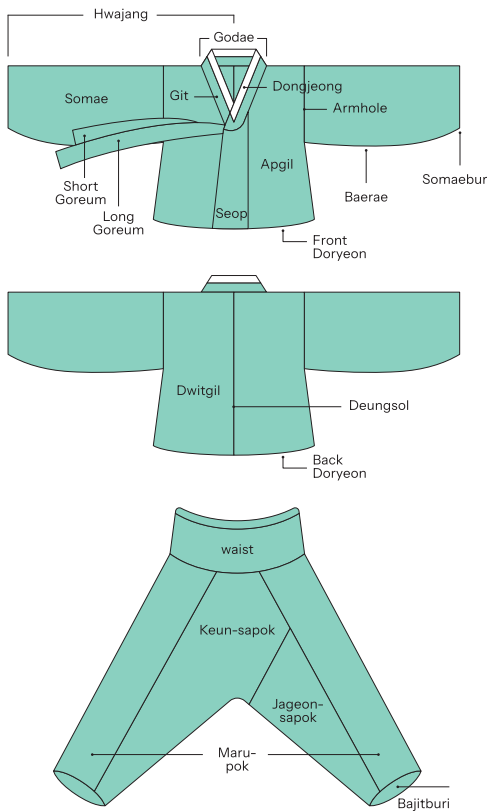
Hanbok’s structure divides into a top and bottom garment. For men, it includes baji (trousers), jeogori (jacket), jokki (vest), and po (overcoat), along with accessories such as a heoritti (waist belt), daenim (ankle bands), beoseon (socks), and shoes. Women’s hanbok consists of sokbaji (undershorts), sokchima (underskirt), chima (overskirt), sokjeoksam (undershirt), jeogori, po, beoseon, and shoes, as well as complemented by ornaments such as norigae (pendants), banji (rings), and dwikkoji (hairpins).

1 Key Elements of Women’s Hanbok



- 1 **Jeogori** : Comprising the gil (main body), somae (sleeves), git (collar), seop (overlap), dongjeong (detachable collar accent), and goreum (ribbon ties), this jacket fastens on the right side with a graceful bow.
- 2 **Chima** : A voluminous skirt, featuring the chima panel, waistline, and waist ties.

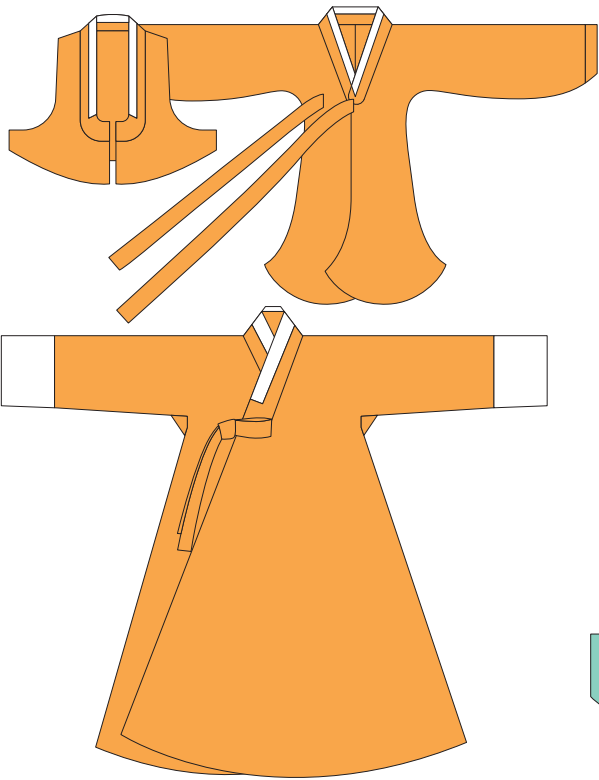
2 Key Elements of Men’s Hanbok



- 1 **Jeogori** : Similar to the women’s version, the men’s jeogori includes the gil, somae, git, seop, dongjeong, and goreum, also fastening on the right.
- 2 **Baji** : Wide-legged trousers with a structured cut, comprising the marupok (main section), sapok (side panels), and waistband.

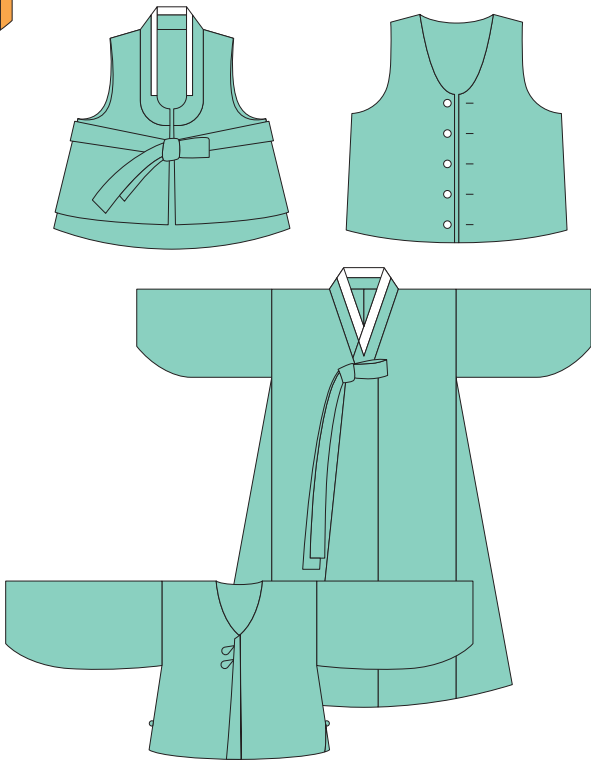
3 Women’s Hanbok Styles

- 1 **Baeja** : A sleeveless unisex outer garment worn over the jeogori for added warmth. The women’s baeja mirrors the jeogori in length but remains open, as it has no sleeves or ties.
- 2 **Dangui** : A ceremonial over-jacket from the Joseon era, longer than the jeogori and featuring rounded edges with deep side slits.
- 3 **Jangot** : A modest outer wrap worn by Joseon-era women, resembling the durumagi. Usually green with a white detachable collar accent, this garment would be draped from head to toe for outings.



4 Men’s Hanbok Styles

- 1 **Baeja** : This sleeveless layer worn over the jeogori has a collar of equal width on either side and closes with a tie or button.
- 2 **Jokki** : A vest added over the jeogori, usually made of traditional Korean fabrics, introduced after Western vests became fashionable during Korea’s modernization.
- 3 **Magoja** : Worn over the jokki, this jacket has no collar or ribbon ties, instead fastening with buttons. It was primarily worn for warmth.
- 4 **Durumagi** : A staple overcoat, it was essential for men to wear on formal occasions, regardless of the season. For women it was primarily worn for warmth.



Mastering the Language of Hanbok

- Godae** : The collar section running across the back between the shoulders.
- Goreum** : Twin ribbon ties on the chest, securing the front of the jeogori or durumagi.
- Git** : The collar element that gracefully encircles the neck.
- Gil** : The broad, elongated panels that define the central form of the upper garment.
- Kkeutdong** : Contrasting fabric accenting the cuffs of the jeogori.

- Daenim** : Straps that elegantly bind the ankles of men’s hanbok trousers.
- Baerae** : The gentle curve beneath the arm, running from the cuff to the arm gusset on the jeogori.
- Seop** : An overlay on the front of the jeogori or durumagi, keeping the garment securely closed.
- Hoejang** : Colored fabric accents adorning the collar, cuffs, or arm gussets of a jeogori.

Hanbok embodies a balance of simplicity and vibrancy, exuding an elegance that reflects both tradition and individuality. With its deceptively simple flat-cut construction, hanbok takes on a sculptural beauty when worn, reflecting the wearer's dignity and an appreciation for profound cultural values. Understanding how to properly wear hanbok is key to experiencing its full allure. Here's an elevated guide to hanbok attire.

A Step-by-Step
Guide to Wearing Hanbok

1

For Women

For women, layering each garment carefully from inner to outer layers reveals hanbok's flowing lines and refined silhouette.

Beoseon·Sokbaji·Sokchima

Chima

Sokjeoksam

Jeogori

1

Begin with undergarments (sokbaji, sokchima, and beoseon) →

2

Wear the skirt (chima) →

3

Add the undershirt (sokjeoksam) →

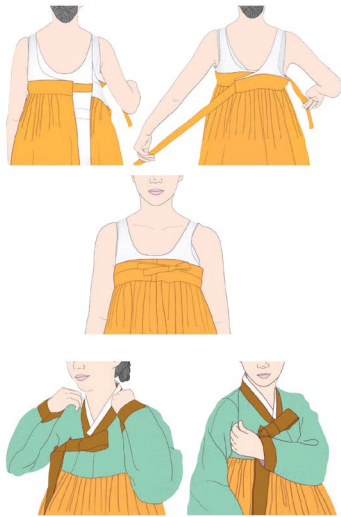
4

Layer the jacket (jeogori) →

5

Final adjustments

※ A basic undergarment, ideally a non-wired, non-padded bra, provides a seamless foundation. Start with a sokbaji (long underpants), followed by a sokchima (underskirt).



- Detailed Guide
- 2

Wear the Chima
 - Slip your arms through the shoulder straps and wrap the skirt, moving the right edge over the left in a clockwise direction.
 - Draw the left skirt strap through the right underarm, bringing it forward.
 - Wrap the right skirt strap around the body to the left, also bringing it forward.
 - Pull the skirt snug around the chest and secure it by tying the straps at the front. Tuck any excess straps neatly inside the waistband so they're hidden beneath the jeogori.※ Tip: While skirt-wrapping techniques vary, the standard approach wraps clockwise with the right edge on top.
- 4

Layer the Jeogori
 - Align the dongjeong (detachable collar accents), securing them with inner ties or snap buttons, and then fasten the goreum (ribbon ties).
 - Adjust the hem so the undershirt remains discreetly hidden.

2

For Men

Men's hanbok layering varies slightly with style, but when done properly, it ensures a distinguished, classic appearance.

Baji·Jeogori

Baeja

Durumagi

1

Start with undergarments (beoseon) →

2

Wear the trousers (baji) →

3

Add the jacket (jeogori) →

4

Layer with vest (baeja) →

5

Finish off with overcoat (durumagi) →

6

Final adjustments

※ Ensure the inner shirt does not peek through the jacket's V-shaped collar.

Baji·Jeogori

Jokki

Magoja

Durumagi

1

Start with undergarments (beoseon) →

2

Wear the trousers (baji) →

3

Add the jacket (jeogori) →

4

Layer with vest (jokki) →

5

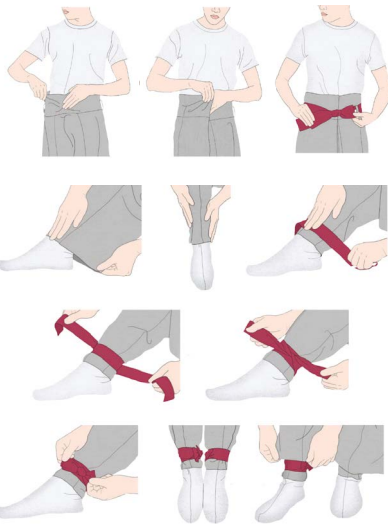
Layer the long jacket (magoja) →

6

Finish off with overcoat (durumagi) →

7

Final adjustments



- Detailed Guide
- 2

Wear the Baji -Tying the Waist
 - Position the large side panel on the right leg.
 - Use both hands to fold any extra fabric from the right to the left.
 - Wrap the waistband from back to front, and tie it securely to prevent slipping.
- 2

Wear the Baji -Tying the Daenim
 - Align the pant seam with the inner ankle.
 - Wrap any excess fabric from the inside outward around the ankle, aligning it with the outer ankle bone.※ Tip: The knot is tied on the inner side of the ankle to avoid discomfort while seated, a practice originating from Korea's traditional floor-seating lifestyle.
- 3

Position the daenim's center on the inner ankle.
- 4, 5

Wrap it around the outer ankle, ensuring the end returns to the inner ankle.
- 6, 7

Tie a firm knot on the inner ankle, as you would with the goreum.
- 8

Smooth out the pants to hide the daenim, for a seamless finish.
- ※ Tip: Match the daenim to the pants' color for a polished look.

3

Tying the Goreum

Basic Knot

- ① Hold a goreum in each hand, crossing the shorter goreum from the right side over the longer one.
- ② Loop the shorter goreum under the longer one and pull it up to form a simple knot.



Knot Style 1

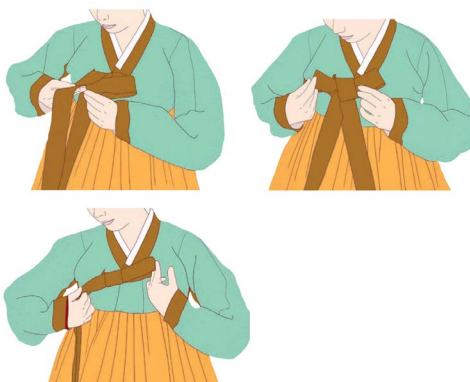
- ③ Make a small loop with the shorter goreum, creating a bow.
- ④ Pass the longer goreum through this loop.
- ⑤ Pull the longer goreum towards the left collar edge, securing the shorter goreum downward.
- ⑥ Let both ribbons hang neatly.



Knot Style 2

- ③ Fold the longer goreum into a left-facing loop.
- ④ Wrap the shorter goreum around the loop, tying firmly.
- ⑤ Pull the shorter goreum down to secure, allowing both ribbons to fall elegantly, with the left loop reaching just to the collar edge.

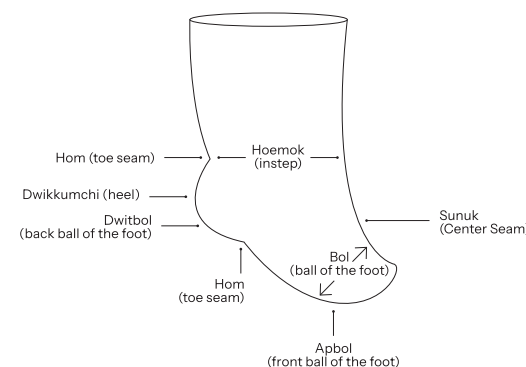
※ Tip: This technique applies to jeogori and durumagi ribbons, as well as waistbands and ankle ties.



With its understated beauty and Eastern grace, hanbok creates a tranquil aura, elevating the dignity of the wearer. This refined garment calls for a mindful presence, as well as natural, balanced hair and makeup that enhance the overall look. Choosing a hanbok style that fits the occasion and setting is essential.

4

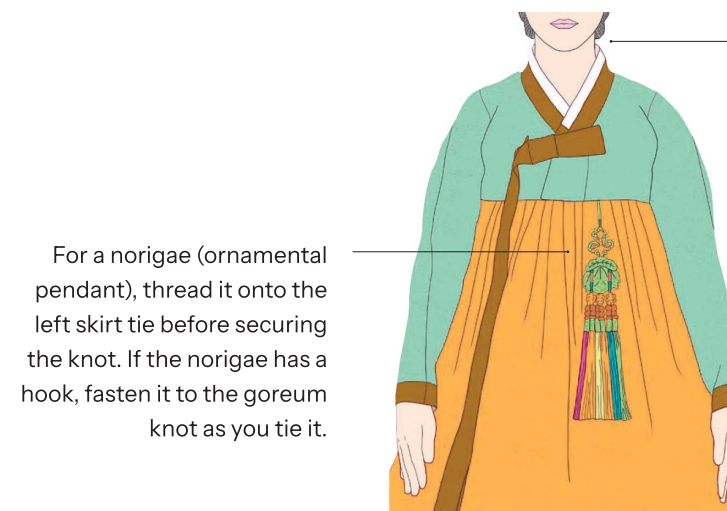
Wearing Beoseon



To distinguish left from right, look for the seam allowance on the center seam; it should face outward. A seam facing right indicates the right foot, and facing left indicates the left foot—resulting in a slender and elegant look for the feet.

5

Accessorizing



For a norigae (ornamental pendant), thread it onto the left skirt tie before securing the knot. If the norigae has a hook, fasten it to the goreum knot as you tie it.

Hanbok's beautiful neckline invites simplicity. Necklaces are best avoided; if earrings are worn, small studs or those close to the earlobe accentuate the jeogori's elegance.

6

Hair and Makeup

Hanbok pairs well with polished hairstyles that accentuate the neckline and collar. For adult women, medium to long hair is ideally styled in an updo, especially when adorned with a dwikkoji (decorative hairpin) that complements the hanbok. Short hair should be kept neatly styled, while children's hairstyles vary: long hair can be braided with a daenggi (ribbon),

medium-length hair neatly tied, and short hair brushed smoothly. For children, a baessi daenggi (geometric hair ribbon) adds charm. Makeup should be understated, with light, natural tones harmonizing with the hanbok. Lips look best with a gentle tint that either matches the natural lip color or subtly complements the hanbok's hues.

With a deep devotion to adornment,
Koreans expressed their social status and taste through unique accessories.
These adornments elevated the beauty of hanbok, reflecting
Korea's enduring elegance and cultural allure.

A TOUCH OF BEAUTY ON TIMELESS TRADITION



1

The Art of Women's Adornment in Old Korea

2



1 Norigae (Pendant)

Norigae is a unique women's accessory that complements the elegance of hanbok. Its proportion of elements—the main body, knot, and tassel—harmonizes with that of the jeogori (top) and chima (skirt), adding to the wearer's grace. Typically fastened to the jeogori goreum (ribbon ties) or the chima waistband, norigae was a cherished adornment embraced by all social classes, from the royal court and aristocracy to the common folk. Norigae is categorized by the number of ornamental elements as danjak (single), samjak (triple), or ojak (quintuple). Danjak styles were worn casually, while larger variations were typically reserved for formal events. Beyond its decorative appeal, norigae also served practical functions. The main body of the ornament could incorporate useful items such as jangdo (small knives), baneuljip (sewing needle cases), chimtong (acupuncture needle containers), or hyanggap (incense boxes), blending beauty with utility.

©National Folk Museum of Korea

2 Garakji (Ring)

Garakji, a pair of rings worn on the fingers, is an adornment unique to Korean culture. According to *A Dictionary of Traditional Korean Apparel*, garakji originally served as a token or seal, referred to as sinmul, to verify social status, later evolving into a symbol of affection and fidelity between men and women. Crafted from various materials, these rings were named according to their composition—geumgarakji (gold), eungarakji (silver), or okgarakji (jade)—and were typically worn in alignment with the seasons. While banji (half of garakji) were primarily worn by unmarried women, garakji held special significance as an emblem of marital status.

©National Folk Museum of Korea

3 Jumeoni (Pouch)

Since traditional Korean clothing lacked built-in pockets, pouches were a necessity for people of all social classes and ages, from infants to the elderly. Two main styles were common: the round durujumeoni (also called yeomnang) and the angular gwijumeoni (also called gaknang). Typically made from red silk or cotton, believed to ward off evil spirits, these pouches were adorned with su (embroidery) and gold leaf designs that symbolized prosperity and longevity. Jumeoni served a variety of practical purposes: sujeojip held spoons, pilnang carried brushes, hyangnang stored incense, and chimnang contained needles.

©K-Culture Portal, Korea Craft and Design Foundation



3

1 Jokduri (Headdress)

Jokduri is a formal headdress worn with traditional attire such as the wonsam (women's ceremonial robe, originally worn by royalty and nobility) or hwarot (women's wedding robe) in the Joseon Dynasty. It comes in various styles, including the plain minjokduri, crafted from six silk panels stitched together with cotton padding, the more ornate kkumimjokduri adorned with precious stones or amber, and the white huinjokduri, which was reserved for mourning.

©National Folk Museum of Korea

2 Binyeo (Hairpin)

A classic hair ornament for securing a hair bun or fastening a crown, the binyeo is functional yet elegant. The shape of the jamdu (head of the binyeo) gives each type its unique name, with styles designed to convey wishes for longevity, prosperity, or many sons. Materials and designs varied by social rank: simpler, shorter binyeo were used for daily wear, while longer, more elaborate ones were reserved for formal occasions.

©National Folk Museum of Korea

3 Dwikkoji (Hairpin)

An adornment worn alongside the binyeo in a hair bun, dwikkoji often featured decorative motifs such as chrysanthemums, butterflies, peaches, lotus flowers, and bonghwang (fenghuang; Chinese phoenixes). Usually made from silver or copper, this piece could also incorporate jade, coral, blue gemstones, or other similar materials, making it as functional as it was beautiful. Evolving into diverse forms, some dwikkoji even doubled as practical tools like ear picks or combs, adding utility to style.

©National Folk Museum of Korea

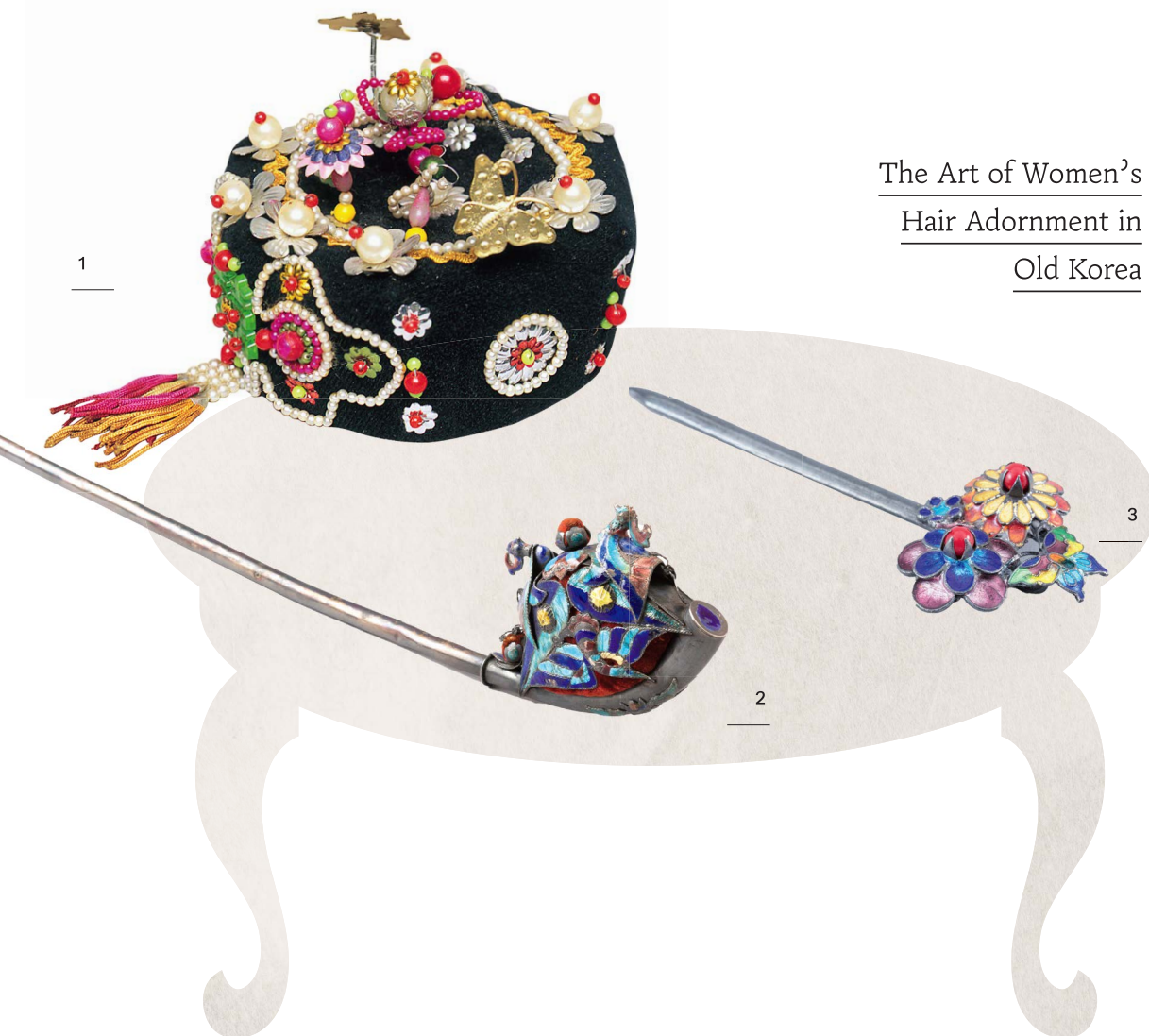
4 Daenggi (Hair Ribbon)

The daenggi is a long decorative ribbon tied at the end of a braid, the only textile accessory continuously used since the Three Kingdoms period. Worn across all ages and social classes, daenggi comes in many varieties based on function and rank, including the keundaenggi (large), apdaenggi (front), dwidaenggi (back), tteogujidaenggi (worn by queens and concubines), doturakdaenggi (formal), malttukdaenggi (similar to doturak but for children), and jebiburidaenggi (worn by young girls and boys with braided hair). One example, the doturakdaenggi, was

worn with wedding attire like the wonsam or hwarot, draped down the back as a symbol of formality and grace.

©National Folk Museum of Korea

The Art of Women's Hair Adornment in Old Korea



5 Tteoljam (Ceremonial Headpiece)

Also known as tteolcheolpanja, this ornate headpiece adorned the hair of queens and noblewomen in the Joseon era. Often placed in the center and on the sides of keunmeori or eoyeomeori royal or upper-class hairstyles, it features a jade base with floral or animal motifs crafted via chilbo (cloisonné) technique and mounted on a spring, giving it a quivering effect as the wearer moves.

©National Folk Museum of Korea

6 Cheopji (Ornamental Hairpin)

Placed along the part of a bun hairstyle, cheopji was a signature adornment worn by queens and noblewomen of the Joseon Dynasty. Different types were designated according to rank, with the yongcheopji (dragon) for empresses, bongcheopji (phoenix) for queens and concubines, and gaeguricheopji (frog) for lower-ranked court ladies. This ornament also served a functional role, anchoring headdresses such as the hwagwan or jokduri securely in place.

©National Folk Museum of Korea



The Art of Gentlemen's Adornment in Old Korea



❶ Gat and Gatkkeun (Hat and Hat String)

In the Joseon Dynasty, men completed their look with a gat, worn over a sangtu (topknot) covered by a tangeon (see below). The gat's lightweight, translucent structure, crafted from bamboo or horsehair, fascinated foreigners, who described it as a hat through which light and air flow. The gatkkeun initially served a practical purpose, holding the gat in place, but soon evolved into a lavish decoration, symbolizing status and elegance.

©National Folk Museum of Korea

❷ Tangeon (Headband-Style Cap)

The tangeon was a men's headpiece worn over a manggeon (headband) or beneath a gat. Made from horsehair, it featured a low front and a high back with a flat, semicircular crown. The top was woven in a diamond pattern and finished in a cross design, combining function and form.

©National Folk Museum of Korea

❸ Donggot (Topknot Ornament)

The donggot secured the sangtu, or topknot, keeping it from unraveling. Designs varied, and gold, silver, jade, coral, amber, and wood were frequently used as the main material. Some had a curved tip, others were straight, and some resembled small stakes.

©National Folk Museum of Korea

❹ Sejodae (Ornamental Cord)

Also known as siltti, bunhaptti, or sultti, the sejodae was a thin cord featuring tassels meant to be tied around the waist outside the dopo overcoat. The colors indicated rank: high-ranking dangsangwan officials wore reddish-brown or purple, while lower-ranking danghagwan wore blue or green, subtly conveying one's social standing.

©National Folk Museum of Korea

❺ Seonchu (Fan Decoration)

The seonchu was a prestigious decorative tassel attached to a fan. Even among the yangban aristocratic class, only those who had passed the state examination were allowed to use it, while those appointed to eumgwan through privilege or military officers below the rank of dangsangwan (senior) were prohibited. This ornament enhanced the fan's aesthetic appeal and served practical purposes, housing items such as a compass, acupuncture needles, and small tools like ear picks and toothpicks within a compact container called a chohyejip.

©National Folk Museum of Korea

❻ Eyeglasses

Eyeglasses became prominent in Joseon society after the 17th century, initially symbolizing authority among the aristocratic class. By the 19th century, they were widely worn across social classes. Lenses were often made from gyeongju namseok, a high-quality crystal from Namsan Mountain in Gyeongju, renowned for its clarity. Wealthy individuals preferred glasses crafted from this crystal or imported Chinese lenses, making them a symbol of sophistication and distinction.

©National Folk Museum of Korea



HANBOK THROUGH LIFE'S CEREMONIES:

A TAPESTRY OF TRADITION AND SENTIMENT



©National Folk Museum of Korea



From birth through the final farewell, hanbok graces each of life's defining moments in Korean culture.

Hanbok is woven into the rituals that mark these pivotal milestones: the 100-day and first-birthday celebrations, honoring a child's health and growth; wedding ceremonies, symbolizing the union of two lives; and funeral rites, paying homage to loved ones laid to rest.

These ilsaeng uirye (life-cycle ceremonies) have evolved in form over time, and while often simpler in modern practice, the profound sense of respect and commemoration endures unaltered.

Welcoming New Life

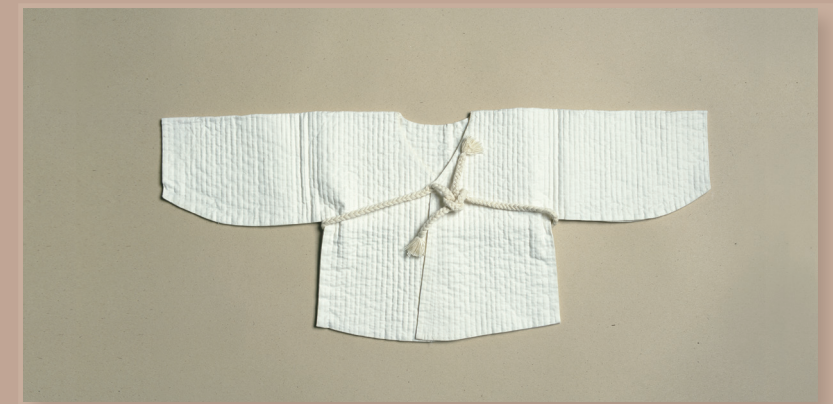
Chulsan Uirye (Birth Rites)

Around the time of a child's birth, traditional practices were observed to protect the health and safety of both mother and child. Fresh straw, a sickle, and scissors were set aside to cut the umbilical cord. Diapers and baenaet jeogori (newborn garment) were thoughtfully sewn from old fabrics, believed to carry good fortune. This first garment, often treasured and kept, might later be placed with the child during life's key moments to bring luck and blessings. ©National Folk Museum of Korea



Samsin Table
(A ceremonial table set for Samsin, the three deities believed to bestow children, oversee their upbringing, and protect the health of the mother). Miryang, Gyeongsangnam-do (1993)
A prayer scene invoking blessings for a child.

Baenaet Jeogori.
(Post-liberation era)



Growing Strong
and Healthy

Baegil (100-Day Celebration)

The celebration of a child's 100th day symbolically marks the completion of a year from conception. Relatives and friends gather for this milestone, with traditional rice cakes such as baekpyeon and baekseolgi served to all. Cotton threads are draped gently over the baby, bestowing blessings of a long and healthy life. ©National Folk Museum of Korea



100 Days.
Tongyeong,
Gyeongsangnam-do
(1937)

With Grandchild.
Bonghwa,
Gyeongsangbuk-do
(2004)

Dol (First Birthday)

On a child's first birthday, festivities begin with a table arranged to honor the Samsin (the three deities of childbirth), followed by a family breakfast of seaweed soup and rice. For the first-birthday celebration, the child is dressed in traditional dol attire and seated before a ceremonial table adorned with symbolic items. Boys wear light purple pungcha baji (baggy trousers for newborn) paired with a pink jeogori top tied with a navy goreum ribbon. They also don a jokki vest and long magoja jacket, layered with an obangjang durumagi (five-colored overcoat) and a jeonbok (long sleeveless vest). The ensemble is completed with a bokgeon (traditional hat) or hogeon (tiger-patterned hat), a sultti (tassel belt), tarae beoseon (quilted decorative baby socks), and taesahye (fabric or leather shoes). Girls are dressed in pink pungcha baji with a yellow or yeonbongmujigi sokchima (short underskirt dyed red at the edges) beneath a crimson chima (skirt) and a light green or yellow saekdong jeogori (multicolored striped jacket). Many also wear a dangui (ceremonial jacket) as a finishing touch. For headwear, they wear a gulle hat or winter jobawi hat, along with silk shoes and omoknubi beoseon (quilted socks). Each element of this attire is imbued with wishes for a life rich in longevity and prosperity. ©National Folk Museum of Korea

First Birthday.
Chuncheon,
Gangwon-do
(1939)

First Birthday
Celebration.
Joseon Folk Customs
Postcard



Coming of
Age

Gwallye and Gyerye (Coming-of-Age Rites)

Coming-of-age ceremonies marked the transition to adulthood, with customs shaped by era and class. In the Joseon era, young noblemen typically celebrated gwallye between the ages of 15 and 20, styling their hair into a sangtu topknot and donning a gat hat. They then changed into adult attire—daily wear, formal wear, and ceremonial dress—and received an adult name, or ja (a name used alongside their birth name). For young noblewomen, the gyerye ceremony, held around age 15, involved arranging their hair into a jjok (bun), securing it with a binyeo hairpin, and wearing adult garments such as the dangui ceremonial jacket or baeja vest.



Traditional
Coming-of-
Age Rites.

A Union for
Life

Hollye (Wedding Ceremony)

In the late Joseon era, weddings began when the groom's family sent the bride's family a saju—an astrological letter detailing the groom's birth date and time, which allowed the bride's family to determine the couple's compatibility and select an auspicious wedding date. This was followed by the bride's family setting the wedding date, and finally, the groom's family delivering a chest of gifts. On the wedding day, the groom wore a dallyeong (ceremonial robe) and samo (official's hat), while the bride wore a hwarot (wedding robe) or wonsam (royal robe), along with a jokduri headdress. The couple, meeting each other for the first time at the choryesang ceremonial table, exchanged bows and shared wine, sealing their union. ©National Folk Museum of Korea



Wedding Ceremony.
Tongyeong,
Gyeongsangnam-do
(1935)

Wedding Ceremony.
Gaeseong, former
Hwanghaebuk-do
(1950s)

Celebrating
Longevity

Suyeollye (Milestone Celebrations)

Suyeollye honored the milestone birthdays of elders, with family gathering to offer wine and wish them a long life. Hwangap (60th), chilsun (70th), and palsun (80th) birthday celebrations involved festive gatherings and well-wishing. In earlier times, hwangap celebrations were rather grand, as reaching 60 was a rare milestone. Today, with people living longer, chilsun or palsun has taken on this role. Descendants prepare a beautiful hanbok for the honoree and host a feast for family, friends, and neighbors, celebrating with toasts and bows. ©National Folk Museum of Korea



Chil's sixtieth birthday celebration.
祝 誕 遠 (俗風鮮俗)



60th Birthday
Celebration.
(Japanese colonial
period)

60th Birthday
Celebration of the Wife
of Lee Myeong-rae.
(Post-liberation era)

Honoring Life's
End

Sangjangnye (Funeral Rites)

Sangnye (funeral rites), the final passage, is deeply revered in oreaan tradition. The term sang means death, particularly a parent's death, a time during which immediate family and close relatives wear sangbok (mourning attire). Traditional sangbok styles varied based on the mourner's closeness to the mangja (deceased person). The suui (burial garment), usually white and made from silk, ramie, or hemp, was crafted without knots to symbolize a smooth journey in the afterlife.

©National Folk Museum of Korea



Funeral Ceremony,
Taeon,
Chungcheongnam-do
(1961)



Honoring
Ancestors

Jerye (Ancestral Rites)

Jerye ceremonies honor departed ancestors and are held during major holidays such as Seollal (Lunar New Year) or Chuseok (Harvest Festival) and on anniversaries of an ancestor's passing. The two main types are charye, which celebrates the seasons with newly harvested foods for ancestors, and gijesa, marking the anniversary of an ancestor's death. In traditional society, people wore special jerye attire instead of everyday clothes to reflect the reverence given to these rites. Men wore white dopo robes or durumagi overcoats with a gat hat or yugeon (Confucian cap), while women wore jade-toned chima jeogori (skirts and jackets) as a mark of reverence. ©The Academy of Korean Studies






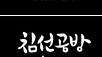


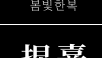

Chuseok Ancestral Rite.





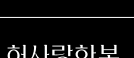


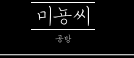





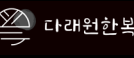

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






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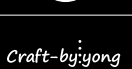











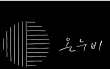
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more of You	smartstore.naver.com/moreofyou ① @moreof_you ⑦ +82-10-9807-2933 ④ #201, 2F, 58 Sanboncheon-ro 199beon-gil, Gunpo-si, Gyeonggi-do	
Upcycled hanbok cutting board & Plate·ZARACK	zarack.shop ① @zarack_hanbokboard ⑦ +82-2-485-2505 ④ #405, 4F, 1 Seohyeon-ro 210beon-gil, Bundang-gu, Seongnam-si, Gyeonggi-do	
RETROMANCE	retromance.co.kr ① @retromance_ ⑦ +82-10-9420-8600 ④ #612, Tower 2, 24 Jeongbalsan-ro, Ilsandong-gu, Goyang-si, Gyeonggi-do	
HANBOK COUTURE	① @hanbok_couture ⑦ +82-10-9941-2790 ④ 3F, 473-1 Dorim-ro, Yeongdeungpo-gu, Seoul	
i.rowa	smartstore.naver.com/irowamom ① @irowa.story ⑦ +82-10-4632-9009 ④ #205, B2814 Nambusunhwan-ro, Gangnam-gu, Seoul	
CRAFT BY YONG	① @craft_jiyongkim ⑦ +82-10-2802-8921 ④ #129, 32 Jeonwon-ro, Gimpo-si, Gyeonggi-do	
gazi	komok.kr ① @gazi.korea ⑦ +82-10-9809-7732 ④ 8F, 31 Bupyeong-daero 17beon-gil, Bupyeong-gu, Incheon	
OWL	① @l_hyeonmi0504 ⑦ +82-10-3900-5012 ④ 28-4 Jeolgol 2-gil, Gunsan-si, Jeonbuk-do	
nabi house	nabihouse.com ① @nabi_house_ ⑦ +82-10-8937-2354 ④ 5F, 29 Yeongsin-ro, Yeongdeungpo-gu, Seoul	
SHEEN:SEOUL	sheen-seoul.com ① @sheen_seoul ⑦ +82-70-8997-7226 ④ #401, 31-5 World Cup buk-ro 6-gil, Mapo-gu, Seoul	
Q millinery	qmillinery.com ① @q_millinery ⑦ +82-10-6271-4522 ④ B1, 29 Seongsan-ro 7an-gil, Seodaemun-gu, Seoul	
Hanboksin	smartstore.naver.com/comfortdelishoes ① @hanboksin ⑦ +82-10-9999-1649 ④ 2F, 128 Dongil-ro, Gwangjin-gu, Seoul	
LINIEK	liniej.com ① @liniek ⑦ +82-70-8887-1515 ④ #1102, 509 Baekjegobun-ro, Songpa-gu, Seoul	
Namkangsilk	① @namkangsilk ⑦ +82-2-2266-5580 ④ #1 Old Building, 88 Changgyeonggung-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul	
Re:n Hanbok	smartstore.naver.com/renhanbok ① @renhanbok ⑦ +82-10-4266-6123	
LLEEHWHA	lleehwa.com ① @lleeh_wa ⑦ +82-10-7638-0405 ④ 3F, 5-7 Myeongnyun-ro 236beon-gil, Dongnae-gu, Busan	
NESSMOM	smartstore.naver.com/nessmom ① @nessmom ⑦ +82-10-9744-4803 ④ B-104, 38 Beopjo-ro, Yeongtong-gu, Suwon-si, Gyeonggi-do	
onnoobi	onnoobi.com ① @on_noobi ⑦ +82-10-3815-9690 ④ 19-3 Dongchon-ro 11-gil, Dong-gu, Daegu	

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