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HANBOK, KOREAN TRADITIONAL DRESS:
A SELECTED ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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I. INTRODUCTION

Hanbok (한복) is a type of dress traditionally worn by all ages of people of Korean heritage. The basic dress design is comprised of two parts, an upper component, i.e. jacket, and a lower segment, i.e. pants or skirt. Each individual hanbok, however, possesses unique characteristics suited to the wearer’s tastes and preferences. The hanbok has a rich, storied past, and its structure and form have evolved along with the developmental changes in the cultural climate of the Korean people.

The origins of the Korean two-piece hanbok can be traced back to the Three Kingdoms period (57 B.C.-668 A.D.). During this period, the Korean peninsula was divided among three kingdoms: Koguryo in the north, Paekche in the southwest, and Silla in the southeast. The royalty and the aristocracy of these states created a demand for luxury goods, including daily costumes, which became symbols of political authority.

Traditionally, the woman’s hanbok is composed of a jacket, known in Korea as the chogori, and a long skirt that wraps around the body, called a chima. The chogori is made up of two front panels, sleeves extending from dropped shoulders, a stand-up collar with a detachable paper collar strip (tongjong), and front bow (goreum). The fullness of the chima makes it wearable during pregnancy, and for added undergarments during the winter season. The men’s hanbok consists of a longer chogori and paji, which are baggy trousers that are tied at the ankles.

A small purse is also carried with the women’s hanbok, and hangs from the waistband of the hanbok. The opening is a gathering of five folds of fabric. Purses are often embroidered with plums and lotus flowers. Additional elements of the hanbok include socks (poson), long bloomers (sok paji), a one-piece slip (sok chima), a removable white collar (tongjong), and an overcoat (turumagi).

Over the centuries, the length of the jacket has undergone many transformations. Paintings from the mid-Choson period illustrate women wearing chogori reaching to the waist. However, by the late Choson dynasty, the length of the chogori shortened to the armpit and possessed longer front panels.

Cotton was introduced in Korea in the late 14th century by Ik Jam Moon, a Korean envoy to China. The introduction of the cotton seeds to Korean farmers produced a revolutionary impact in the clothing industry of Korea. Cotton yarns and cotton textiles soon emerged, and cotton has become the main textile source of Korean clothing.

Today, the hanbok continues to be patterned after the style worn during the Choson dynasty (1392-1910). Many garments from the Choson Dynasty have survived. In this bibliography, many of the specialized sources on hanbok focus on the Choson dynasty.

In the United States, men, women, and children in the Korean-American community wear hanbok to celebrate the spirit of Korean national holidays, such as Lunar New Year and the Chusuk moon festival, Korea’s equivalent to Thanksgiving in the United States.

This selected annotated bibliography includes some of the most notable scholarly works, representing multiple genres, presently available on the subject of hanbok. The historical, aesthetic, psychological, and sociological aspects of Korean hanbok are covered in this collection of information sources.
The author and her mother in traditional Korean dress
II. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS SUBJECT HEADINGS

The term “Hanbok” is not listed in the Library of Congress Subject Headings. Among the major subject headings available, the most useful terms are “Clothing and dress,” “Costume,” and “Dressmaking.” The following list includes some useful primary and secondary subject headings.

LC Subject Headings
Clothing and dress
   -- Korea
   -- Korea - History

Costume
   -- Asia - Exhibitions
   -- Korea
   -- Korea--History
   -- Korea - History - Exhibitions

Dressmaking
   -- Korea

Korea
   -- History--Yi dynasty, 1382-1910--Exhibitions

Textile design - Korea -- Exhibitions

III. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CLASSIFICATION

The Library of Congress Classification scheme positions Korean studies in the “DS 904” and “DS 902” region. In addition, the Library of Congress groups the subject headings Costume, Clothing and dress, and Textile design in the “GT 1565” area. However, some references regarding Asian costume are located in the “NK 4772” area. One can also find information sources on Embroidery in the “TT 770” area. Furthermore, autobiographical memoirs of prominent Korean rulers can be found in the “DS 913” section.

IV. DEWEY DECIMAL CLASSIFICATION

The following list of numbers is helpful in starting a search in the Dewey Decimal Classification system. This list of Dewey Decimal Classification numbers was compiled with assistance from the reference source, People, Places, & Things: A List of Popular Library of Congress Subject Headings with Dewey Numbers (Dublin, OH: Forest Press, A Division of OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc., 2001). This book lists Dewey Decimal Classification numbers (DDC) and corresponding Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>DDC</th>
<th>LCSH</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>951.9</td>
<td>Korea -- Civilization, Social life and customs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>646.404</td>
<td>Dressmaking, Clothing and dress, Costume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>709.519</td>
<td>Korean Art -- To 1900, 20th century</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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V. INFORMATION SOURCES

Dictionary


한복 (Han-pok): n.--Korean clothes (costume, dress, attire).

General Encyclopedia and Online General Encyclopedia


This article describes the elements of the modern hanbok. A historical overview of hanbok and illustration are also presented. The article is listed in Volume 17 on p.503, under the major subject heading “Dress and Adornment,” and the secondary subject heading, “Korea.” This article can also be found online under the subject heading, “The history of Eastern dress - Korea,” at Encyclopedia Britannica Online (http://www.eb.com/).

Subject Encyclopedias


This work is primarily useful for its extensive bibliography of English-language resources. The bibliography consists of periodicals, newspapers, reference works, and books on Korean history, politics, culture, economy, and science.


This encyclopedia briefly presents the subject of hanbok in an informative, balanced manner. This article provides a valuable introduction for researchers new to the field.

Journal Articles, Reviewed


This article offers a comprehensive summary of the symbolic and practical significance of the design, fabric color, and aesthetic influences of hanbok. It includes useful statistics, informative diagrams, and an extensive bibliography.


This article discusses the trend of Korean female legislators’ preference for traditional hanbok over Western style clothing. The author suggests that female politicians are still adhering to Korea's traditional images of women in order to be elected by the public.
Books and Monographs

General Works


This book discusses the multifaceted characteristics of hanbok in the context of the historical development of Korea. This landmark publication thoroughly covers the progressive development of the hanbok during the Three Kingdoms Period (57 B.C. - 668 A.D.), the Koryo dynasty (918-1392 A.D.), and the Choson dynasty, which is also referred to as the Yi dynasty (1392 A.D. - 1910 A.D.). Yang includes the cultural relevance of hanbok in contemporary society. This book is also a valuable resource for photographs, illustrations, bibliography, hanbok designers in Korea, and even instructions on how to properly tie the front bow (goreum).


The unique quality of this article is its discussion of the style of hanbok during the Koryo dynasty (13th century). The article includes a photograph of tomb mural from the 5th century B.C. of two Korean men dressed in white clothes and black hats.


This book is useful for learning more about traditional Korean fabrics, including silk, cotton, ramie, and hemp. In this work, the author discusses the reemergence of Choson dynasty hanbok in South Korea and explains the symbolism and meaning of pojagi (wrapping cloths). This book includes a bibliography and an index.


This book provides deeper discussions of different elements of hanbok, such as the shoes (shinbal) and the hat (kat). Photographs are included.


This book discusses the textile industry and its contribution to the export industry of South Korea during the 1960’s and 1970’s. Photographs of employees inspecting silk fabrics are included in this publication.


This book is a valuable source of specific details about Korean dress, shoes, hat, and the symbolism of embroidered insignias. At the time of this publication, Osgood was Professor of Anthropology at Yale University. The book includes a very accessible index and bibliography.


The data in this book are derived from archaeological excavations. Traditional clothing is represented in tomb murals of 1,500 years ago and older. Tomb paintings from the Koguryo kingdom depict traditional Korean traits in clothing, hair styles, housing, and food preparation. This book includes an extensive bibliography. The author is a professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Denver.
Emroidery


The strength of this work lies in its comprehensive discussion of embroidery. One section focuses on the characteristics of traditional Korean embroidery, pattern designs, and the types of threads used in Korean embroidery.

Choson Dynasty


This essay provides in-depth coverage of the form and structure of women’s clothing in the middle (1470-1494) and last periods (1674-1776) of the Yi Dynasty. The relationship of form and structure of hanbok to women’s social status is discussed.


This insightful work provides a detailed examination of excavated garments from the 16th and 17th century. It includes a discussion of a unique aspect of hanbok called “po,” which is an outfit worn during the winter or formal occasions. Both authors serve as faculty in the Department of Clothing and Textiles at Inchon University in Seoul, Korea.


Pojagi is a wrapping cloth made from scraps of fabric left over from the construction of hanbok. The act of precise wrapping reflects a folk belief that good fortune can be secured inside a pojagi. These wrapping cloths historically served an important function in wedding preparations. This book provides numerous vivid color photographs of pojagi. Min-Jung Kim is Assistant Curator of the Powerhouse Museum.

Analysis of dress structure


In this study, the author utilizes the linguistic theories of Saussure and Geoffrey Leech to examine the structure of hanbok. Myung Sook Han is a professor at Sang Myung University and the vice-chairman of the Costume Culture Association in Korea.

Autobiographical memoirs

The following works are included for their historical significance and to enhance a deeper understanding of the cultural context of Korean history.

This book is an authoritative translation of the autobiographical memoir of Lady Hong of Hyegyong Palace (1735-1815), a Korean noblewoman during the Yi dynasty. Her record is one of the few works during her time period written in han’gul, the Korean written alphabet. Lady Hong was the wife of Crown Prince Sado (1735-1762), the twenty-second king of the Yi dynasty.


This book is another translation of the autobiographical memoir of Lady Hong of Hyegyong Palace.


This literary piece is a translation of the first book on Korea to be published in Europe. This original account was written by Hendrik Hamel (1630-1692), whose Dutch trading ship, the Sparrow Hawk, shipwrecked in 1653 on Cheju Island (Quelpart) in Korea. Hamel returned to Holland after living in Korea for thirteen years. Illustrations, a bibliographical essay, and an index are included in the book.

Exhibition


This work presents tomb murals from the first century A.D. Differences between men’s and women’s hanbok are addressed. This exhibition was supported by the National Endowment for the Arts.

Nineteenth Century and Early Twentieth Century Periodicals and Publications

The following publications were obtained with the help of Poole’s Index to Periodical Literature, fourth supplement (January 1, 1897—January 1, 1902), and fifth supplement (January 1, 1902 - January 1, 1907).


In this article, the author describes important characteristics of bridal hanbok and family dynamics in Korea. The symbolic significance of white clothes, predominantly worn during this time period, is also discussed.


John Harwick was a missionary who visited Korea to attend the funeral of Queen Min Yi. He describes the funeral ceremony and presents his recollections of his first meeting with Queen Min Yi. A photograph of the late Queen Min Yi dressed in traditional hanbok is also included in the article.

Dissertation


This work provides a comprehensive overview of hanbok from a historical perspective and a thorough analysis of hanbok. The author discusses factors affecting form and functions of Korean dress.
Museums

The Museum of Korean Embroidery
89-4 Nonhyon-dong Kangnam-gu
Seoul, Republic of Korea
Phone: (02) 515-5114

The Museum of Korean Embroidery is Korea’s only private museum devoted to embroidery and objects, which reflect the lives of traditional Korean women. Among its most valuable items are a 13-14th century embroidered folding screen depicting the four seasons (Treasure No. 635) and an embroidered wrapping cloth once used by a Choson Dynasty queen.

Metropolitan Museum of Art
The Arts of Korea Gallery
1000 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10028-0198
Phone: (212) 535-7710
Homepage: http://www.metmuseum.org/home.asp

The Arts of Korea Gallery displays the museum’s collection of Korean art spanning 1,500 years. Support from The Korea Foundation and The Kun-Hee Lee Fund for Korean Art made possible the opening of The Arts of Korea Gallery in June 1998.

The National Museum of Korea
Sejongno 1-ga
Jongno-gu, Seoul(zip code : 110-050)
Korea
Phone: (02)398 - 5000
Fax : (02)398 - 5070
Homepage :http://www.museum.go.kr/eng/index.html

The National Museum of Korea houses a vast collection of approximately 26,000 volumes of books and 145 videos and films covering different genres of Korean culture, including archaeological artifacts of the Paleolithic age, traditional music, and ceramics.