

## In Addition to Silk &amp; Ramie Clothes

## Accessories Distinguish Yangban's Hanbok

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Staff Reporter

The traditional Korean dress or "hanbok" is still around in this day and age having undergone only minor changes, and women are still enlivening its quiet mood created by the simple lines and subtle tones with colorful accessories.

Today's "hanboks" are patterned after those worn by the "yangban" (upper class) during the Choson period (1392-1910). While commoners' wives were restricted by law as well as resources to cotton garments at best, "yangban" women used plain and patterned silks, and in warm weather, wore gowns of closely woven ramie cloth or other high grade, lightweight materials.

As for color, the "yangban" could choose from a wide variety of bright colors while commoners tended to wear white and, if they did wear colors, they were dull shades of pale pink, light green, grey and charcoal.

In addition to high quality apparels, women in "yangban" households had their pick of colorful hairpins, pendants and pouch-ornaments.

They used to wear "norigae," suspended from "otkorum" or the long ribbons of the jacket. These ornaments come in many different forms and sizes. Large ones consisting of three pendants are used for ceremonial or festive occasions while small "norigae" with a single pendant are for everyday use.

A "norigae" consists of three parts; a loop on the top, the main decorative part in the middle and a long tassel of gold, silver or silk thread.

The middle part may take the form of a butterfly, cicada, eggplant or other object of nature or be a small knife or gourd-shaped ornament. It

## In Search of Korean Beauty

usually is made of jade, coral or open-worked gold.

Praises inscribed in the middle part were related to womanly wishes such as longevity and good health for the family and the blessing for a baby boy.

Unlike Silla women who wore necklaces and earrings of gold women in the Choson era adorned themselves with delicate hair ornaments made of gilt metal with semi-precious stones, pearls and cloisonne.

The hairpin with fluttering ornaments called a "toljam" is worn in a set of three, one in the center and one on each side of a ceremonial wig hairdo called "kummori." The delicate form of flowers, butterflies and bees on the "toljam" flutter with just a small movement of the woman's head.

Another type of hairpin called "twitkokji" is inserted into fist-size buns of the top-knots worn by married women.

Meanwhile, accessories for men include beaded strings for the high horse-hair black hats and elaborately woven silken cords called "sejodae" worn around the chest just below the armpit around the coat as well as the golden, silver or amber buttons tied to the jacket worn under the long coat.

Since the hanboks have no pockets, women used to carry a small pouch suspended from the sash of a skirt and men, from the belt of their trousers. These pouches, of many different shapes, were occasionally embroidered with symbols such as the 10 longevity

symbols of sun, cloud, rock, bamboo, water, pine tree, mushroom of immortality, turtle, crane and deer.

Pouches called "obang-nangja" shows the use of the five directional colors standing for east (blue), west (white), south (red), north (black) and center (yellow). The system of five colors is based on the yin-and-yang theory of ancient Chinese cosmology.

Examples of these pendants, hairpins and pouches are on public display at the IBM Gallery of Science and Art in New York for six months. The show opened April 14.

Over 300 "hanbok" items and "pojagi" (wrapping cloths) are also showcased at the special event dubbed "Korean Costumes and Textile Exhibition." It takes place for two months till June 13 under co-aegis of the Korean Overseas Information Service and the International Business Machine.

While "Five Thousand Years of Korean Art," a U.S.-touring exhibition at the turn of the 1980s, emphasized Korea's traditional fine arts, this one features clothes, personal ornaments and traditional items for daily use in the latter half of the Choson kingdom.

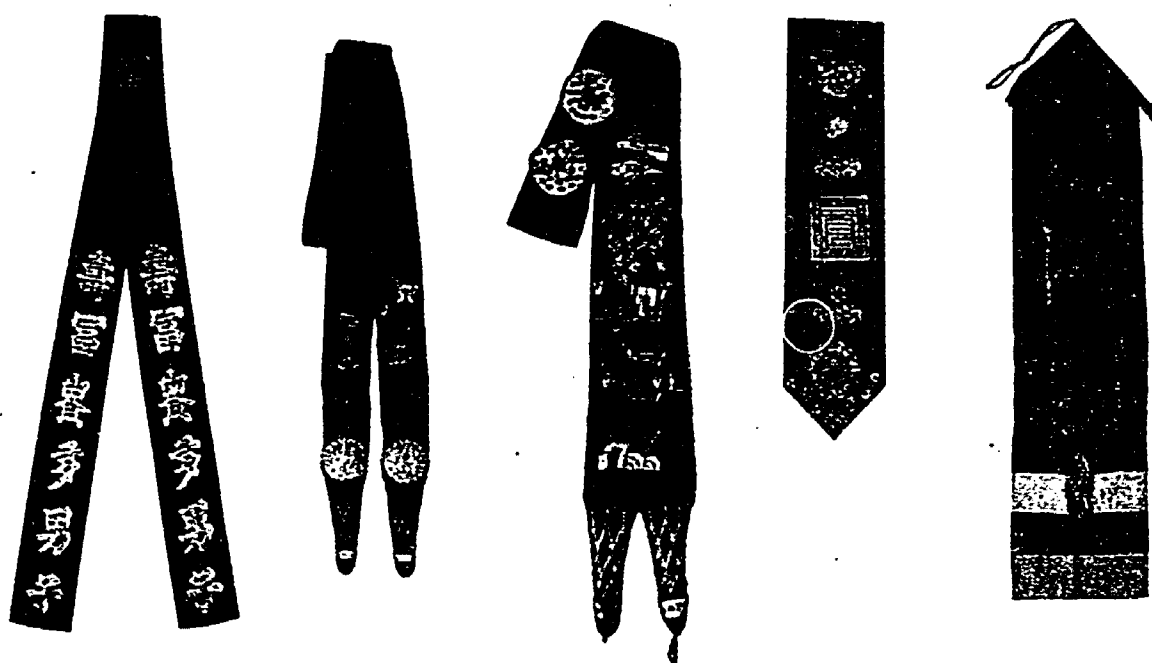
Thus, it will be an excellent opportunity for Americans to gain insight into the traditional life style of the Korean people.

The exhibits are on loan from a number of museums and collectors such as the Dankook University Museum of Korean Folk Arts, the privately-run Museum of Korean Embroidery, the Oryundae Memorial Museum of Korean Martyrs, the National Museum of Korea and Prof. Chang Sook-whan of Kyungwon University and Kim Hi-jin who is a government-accredited artisan of "maedup" knots.



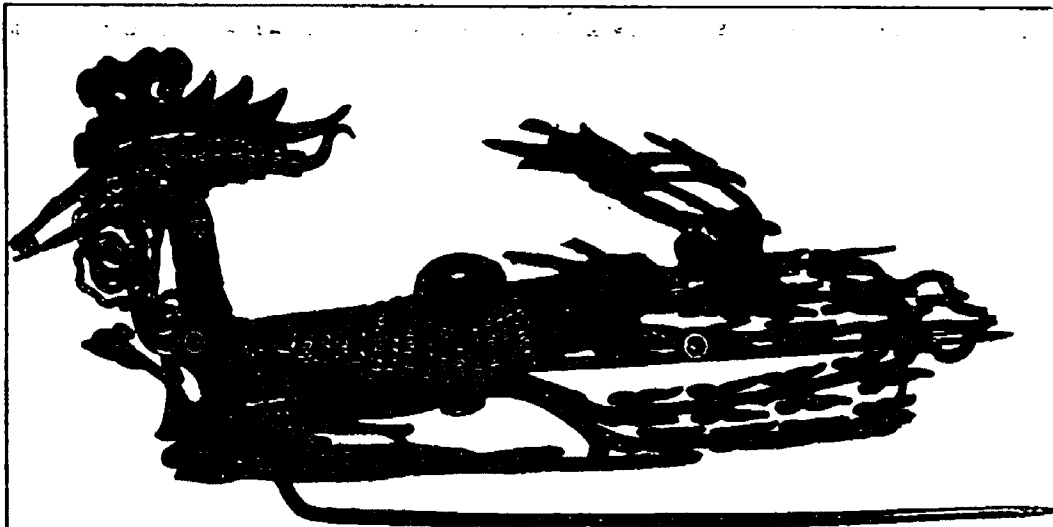
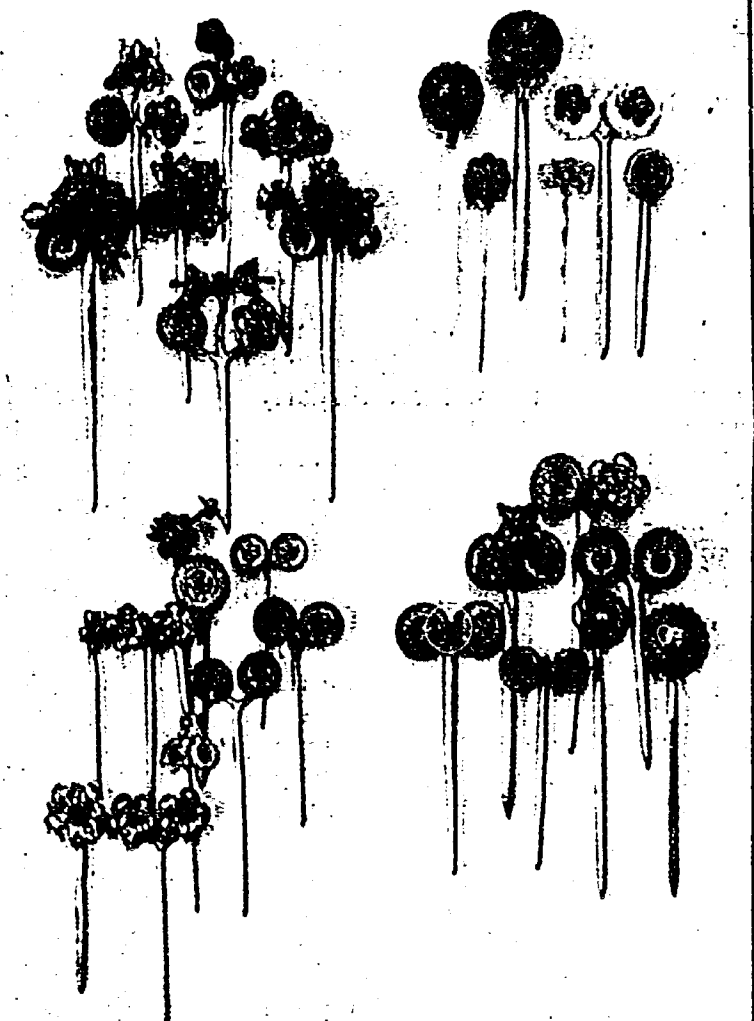
Since traditional Korean costumes have no pockets, women carried a small pouch suspended from the sash of a skirt like this patchwork pouch ornament in five directional colors such as blue standing for east, white for west, black for north, red for south and yellow for center. The pouch is gathered shut by a pair of drawstrings ending in decorative "maedup" knots and tassels. Ten symbols of longevity are embroidered over this silk pouch.

An eyeglass case is embroidered with the 10 symbols of longevity (deer, crane, turtle, sun, cloud, water, rock, pine, bamboo, mushrooms of immortality) though not all of them are visible. The case is tied at the top and bottom with decorative "maedup" knots and trails silk cords.



These hair ribbons for pigtails are embroidered with satin stitches. The second and third from left are called "kot taengki" commonly used in the northwestern region of the Korean peninsula while the first from left is decorated with a gold stencil design of Chinese characters for longevity, wealth, nobility and many male offsprings.

These hairpins termed "twitkokji" of floral motifs, some with a butterfly and a bird forming a larger top, are mostly silver with an enameled decoration and dotted with coral in the center. The upper right hand group has a white jade top and mother-of-pearl with coral decorations.



The hairpin is shaped like a phoenix, the symbol of the king and queen. Though decorated with filigree, amethyst and kingfisher feather, much of the original feather is worn out and now blue paint is applied in its place.

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