



Transformation of Hanbok Baji, Pants in Traditional Korean Dress

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This design work is to explore and re-interpret *baji* of *hanbok*, pants of Korean traditional dress. The design work consists of a yellow asymmetrical top and a pink jumpsuit of which the original form comes from *baji*.

Baji is a generic term for baggy pants that are part of Korean traditional dress. A pair of *baji* in man's attire remains as outer garments, while Korean women had worn *baji* as undergarments for centuries. The pattern and the construction of *baji* are distinctive: Pant legs consist of six pieces of fabric and a wide waist band is made with four pieces. When the ten pieces of pattern are laid down and cut, little fabric is wasted. The unique pattern work and construction was highly efficient when fabric was produced with a narrow loom. When it is put on the body, *baji* creates a generous volume, particularly having a lot of room under the crotch. It serves the traditional lifestyle of sitting on the floor very well. *Baji* is tied on the waist and at the hem. All excessive fabric on the waist is grabbed and folded to the right. Then, the folded fabric is sent to the left, making a large diagonal pleat. A fabric belt wraps around the waist. Pant legs moderately taper and are tied with a band called *dae-nim*, which allows blousing for movement.

There are no side seams, center front seam, and center back seam in *baji*. A rectangular piece is folded half in vertical direction and the folded sides are located on the side. Two oblique pieces are located between the rectangular pieces as if they are leaning against each other forming an inverted V-shape. A large oblique piece covers part of the right leg and around the crotch and a small oblique piece covers part of the left leg.

Interestingly *baji* carries non-Euclidean geometrical characteristics of hyper-space (Lee & Kim, 2010). The shapes of the two oblique pieces are obtained from Möbius band. When you make a Möbius band by attaching a twisted end to end of the long side and cutting the band diagonally, you will obtain the shapes of the two oblique pieces. The process of connecting lining and shell of pants resembles Klein bottle, which is an example of a non-orientable surface. When connecting the two layers, a lining piece is laid over a shell and the pant hem is sewn to that of the shell. Then, one puts a hand through the unsewn waistline of the shell. One pulls the lining pants through the tunnel that the shell makes until the lining piece is completely aligned with the shell. Lee and Kim (2010) discusses that this unique sense of space reflects deconstruction of symmetry and boundaries in the body and the surrounding space.

The current design work transformed *baji*, capitalizing on its characteristics including extremely low crotch lines, ample but accidental pleats, and cutting with nearly zero-waste. As

Lee Young Hee, a Korean designer known as “the clothes of wind,” transformed hanbok skirt into evening dress (Lee, n.d.), *baji* was transformed into a sleeveless jumpsuit in the present work. Drafting the pattern and draping was experimental. The flat pattern of *baji* was elongated to the extent the narrow width of *Myoungjoo* allows. *Myoungjoo* is 15 inch wide silk fabric used in traditional Korean dress. The waistline of *baji* was raised up to the level above bust line. Then diagonal pleats are made and tacked to fit the body well. Seams connecting a rectangular piece and an oblique piece is hidden behind pleats and the right bottom picture below shows a glimpse of the seam connecting the two oblique pieces. A narrow string is tied in the waist. Portraying the indeterminate space of *baji*, the overall shape of the jumpsuit is asymmetrical and the waist band wraps passes through the inside and the outside of the jumpsuit. The left side is naturally draped and hung down.

A shoulder strap is applied to the right side. The strap is made with *dongjeong*. *Dongjeong* is originally a white band collar. Attaching *dongjeong* is the last finish of making a jacket in Korean dress. For the current design work, three pieces of silk *dongjeong* was hand-painted in gradation of hot pink to create a visually interesting decoration. The decorative pink object was attached to the strap to add an impression of Möbius band.

The yellow top underneath was transformed from *joki-heori*, which means *vest-waistband* in Korean. *Joki-heri* looks like an upper part of vest attached to the waistband of hanbok skirt. *Joki-heri* is the trace of cultural acculturation. When the Western culture came in with foreign Christian missionaries in the late nineteenth century, the upper part of skirt was changed to *joki-heri* embracing the influence of the Western clothing pattern. *Joki-heori* has replaced the older form of the waistband because it became more comfortable and easy to wear hanbok. Hanbok skirt with *joki-heri* has become common nowadays.

The originality of the design lies in the new and blurry aesthetic effect. The overall aesthetic of the work is neither Korean nor Western, reflecting the current interpretation of Korean dress. While it is as voluminous as traditional hanbok, a question might be raised if it is traditional Korean because of the exposure of shoulder and arm. One contribution would be that the experiment with patternmaking of *baji* presents a new way of patternmaking jumpsuit.

Lee, D. (n.d.). Lee Young-hee: “I have a vision of setting *hanbok* as one of the world’s top luxury choices,” Korea Focus. Retrieved from http://www.koreafocus.or.kr/DEV/interview/view.asp?volume_id=102&content_id=103258&category=j

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