

## **A study on the uniform design based on Korean image<sup>+</sup>**

- Centering around specialty restaurants of Korean food -

**Yoon Sook Nam\* and Bok Hee Kim**

Professor, Division of Fashion Industry, Silla University\*,  
Instructor, Division of Fashion Industry, Silla University

### **Abstract**

The object of this research is to develop the designs with aesthetics and function for making the uniforms of specialty restaurants of Korean dishes in pursuit of the image of excellent dignity and its result is as follows:

As for designs, this research chose the traditional image as the basic concept and made visual Korean lines, colors, and patterns.

As for lines, it made visual the curve of the eaves, the straight line of polls, and the fret of windows and doors represented in architecture and applied them, as for color tones, it chose traditional 'Obangsaek', five direction colors.

As for the patterns, it symbolized 4 trigrams( Geon, Gon, Gam, and Yi), the cloud pattern, also it tried to get the formative beauty from traditional patchwork wrapping cloth and windows and doors.

The expectant effects on the design of Uniform are as follows:

First, it offered basic clothes for male and female employees working in the hall and suggested two kinds of skirt and pants for the latter. It tried to find out both the function of pants and the female beauty of skirts by wrapping on pants to eliminate the feeling of rejection towards the style of them, the use of which have been recognized for man only in spite of many merits of them.

Second, it sought for the characteristics of shape on collar, breast-tie, and fold etc. of Korean clothes and designed clothes according to each employee's role and finally emphasized their traditional aesthetics.

**Key words:** Korean images, Uniform, Korean line and pattern, Obangsaek

### **I. Introduction**

#### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to design uniforms for the male and female employees of Korean

food restaurants. The importance of uniforms is increased in that it plays a crucial role in forming images of individual, company and state.

Recently more and more foreigners are visiting Korea to attend international events or as tourists, and the restaurant is a place they are most likely

---

<sup>+</sup> This article was supported by the research grant 2002 of Silla University

to drop by. Images of restaurants lead to the competitiveness of the industry. So restaurants are trying to represent their characters and peculiar images with uniforms to improve their images and increase their competitiveness.

Accordingly I adopted Korean-style design concept in designing uniforms for male and female employees of Korean restaurants, because I believe that the design which modernized traditional Korean beauty fits well with the image of Korean restaurant and can improve the image of Korea internationally.

## **2. Method**

In this study to design uniforms for employees of Korean restaurant, I investigated and analyzed uniforms for employees of 9 Korean restaurants in B city, and presented a uniform which I designed on the basis of the result.

## **II. Investigation & Analysis of Existing Uniform Design**

### **1. The Role of Uniform**

Uniforms should have symbolism, functionality, aesthetics, etc. to represent characters and image of the restaurant, because it notifies others of employee's status and reaffirms the role of employee(Eun yeong Lee, 1995).

Symbolism should be considered so that a good image can be formed by shape, color and detail of uniform, because customers recognize the image of a restaurant through uniform.

As for functionality, aspects of somatic engineering and morphology should be considered for smooth job implementation of

uniform-wearing employees.

Aesthetics is supposed to promote mutual sympathy between employees and customers, because it reflects aesthetic sense in uniform. Fashionably beautiful uniforms not only satisfy uniform-wearing employees, but also give customers positive image and impression that they are being attended on with high regard.

## **2. Analysis of Uniform Design**

To design uniforms for employees of Korean restaurant, I made an investigation into existing uniform design. As objects of investigation, I selected 9 restaurants: 3 hotel restaurants, 3 big posh restaurants in urban area, and 3 small restaurants. The investigation was carried out through random visits from March to May, 2003. The results are analyzed as follows:

Uniforms were basically either Western clothes or reformed Korean clothes, and traditional Korean clothes were not found in this investigation. I believe that it was because there was a problem in the functionality of traditional Korean clothes, which was replaced with reformed Korean clothes.

Female's Western clothes consisted of skirt, shirtwaist and vest or tailored jacket, while male's Western clothes consisted of trousers and shirt or tailored jacket. Female's skirt and male's trousers were mostly either black or dark blue, and shirt was bright pastel such as white, ivory, sky blue, mustard, etc., forming a striking contrast to skirt or trousers. There were no details other than small ribbon tie.

Female's reformed Korean clothes consisted of shortened Korean skirt, lengthened Korean jacket with buttons or short strings, and apron, while male's reformed Korean clothes consisted of

reformed Korean trousers and Korean jacket. They were mostly ivory or mustard, and details were piping and knot.

Pattern was generally not emphasized, while details were small ribbon and piping and knot. It seemed to me that limited details made clothes look tidy.

In some restaurant, employees were wearing easy clothes instead of uniforms. They were wearing either blue jeans, T-shirts and aprons, or just T-shirts or aprons of same color, thereby distinguishing employees from customers.

### **III. Uniform Design & Presentation**

On the basis of design analysis through above-mentioned investigation, I adopted image of Korea as a basic concept, and designed and presented 13 uniforms for employees of Korean restaurants.

#### **1. Image of Korea**

Image of Korea means a design to express identity of Korea or Koreaness, and can be connected with the tradition of normative mental trend or characteristic which evolves from historical development of a certain group.(Hee Lac Cho, Young In Kim,1996) Accordingly I tried to grasp the characteristic beauties of line, color, and pattern of traditional works of formative arts and apply them to design, because this study is for designing uniform by applying image of Korea.

##### **1) Line**

Formative arts by line include many things, but the character of Korean formative arts lies in

curve or circle, and the tradition of curvilinear beauty is distinctive in architecture. Decorative design of Korean architecture is linear. The horizontal of platform and the vertical of column, flexible curves of eaves and ridge, and lattice in window or door are in both contrast and harmony, and lead to uniformity. Curve has an inseparable relationship with line, and it is a start toward a circle, which is a symbol of universal energy with mental characteristics and includes the ideology of eternal harmony.

##### **2) Color**

Color, as optical medium, delivers social cultural symbols first of all, and is recently being emphasized as emotional aspect becomes more important in fashion. Colors used in stripes of many colors, Korean national flag, and brass chafing dish are excellently expressing our traditional sense of color. Traditional colors used here are 'Obangsaek', five direction colors - blue, red, yellow, white, and black - and based on Korean traditional ideology of Yin & Yang and 5 Elements. In most traditional works of formative arts, 'Obangsaek' is generally used. Because 'Obangsaek' represents identity and tradition of Korea, they are, among other cultural traditions, especially important in delivering image of Korea.

##### **3) Pattern**

Patterns such as the Great Absolute, 4 trigrams(Geon, Gon, Gam and Yi), rose of Sharon, Japanese apricot, lotus, foliage, cloud, etc. are Korean people's favorite traditional patterns. The pattern of the Great Absolute evolved from the wave pattern and was symbol of the harmony of Yin & Yang. It represents the truth of nature which evolves and develops from interaction of universe. 4 trigrams(Geon, Gon,

Gam and Yi) represent the change and development of Yin & Yang through the combination of rods. Geon represents sky and Gon represents earth, while Gam represents water and Yi represents fire.

Patterns of plants such as rose of Sharon, Japanese apricot, lotus, and foliage contain natural beauties which suit daily lives well. Rose of Sharon is a national flower of Korea and has a symbolic meaning, while Japanese apricot is one of 4 favorite traditional artistic subjects(Japanese apricot, orchid, chrysanthemum, and bamboo) of Korea. Lotus has a Buddhist characteristic, but represents purity because it blossoms beautifully from muddy water. The pattern of foliage has many variations and has an expression of curve. Though they were traditionally ceremonial and symbolic, they are now being used as decorative elements.

## 2. Design Concept

As with <Fig. 1>, <Fig 2>, <Fig. 3>, <Fig. 4>, <Fig. 5>, <Fig. 6>, <Fig. 7>, <Fig. 8>, and <Fig. 9>, I drew image of Korea from flexible curve or line in traditional Korean formative arts, 'Obangsaek', the Great Absolute, 4 trigrams (Geon, Gon, Gam, and Yi), rose of Sharon, Japanese apricot, lotus, picture of many colors and designs, cloud, traditional patchwork wrapping cloth, etc., and adopted them as a main concept.

## 3. Types and Division of Uniform

Paying due consideration to job efficiency and aesthetic aspect, I designed two-piece uniforms, and divided them into Western clothes and

reformed Korean clothes. For females, I designed 4 skirts, 1 trousers, and 2 mixed pieces of trousers and wrap-around skirts. For males, I designed 6 trousers. In total, 13 pieces were designed.

## 4. Presentation of Design Plan

6 plans, just 13 uniform designs were presented, in which each employee's role and harmony in working environment were considered. Paying due consideration to functionality and characteristics of Korean restaurant, I designed two-piece uniforms and divided them into Western clothes and reformed Korean clothes. Current design research showed that two-piece style was more popular. It facilitates dressing and undressing, is easy to keep, makes various coordination possible, and lifts sense of beauty.

### [Design Plan I]

Design Plan I presents Western clothes, to which traditional Korean curve, harmony or red and blue, the Great Absolute and flowers are applied. Neckline is borrowed from the collar of Korean clothes. Red is applied to female's clothes, while blue is applied to male's clothes. On one hip line, 4 trigrams(Geon, Gon, Gam, and Yi) are imprinted in curvature, whose line and color lead to unity.

Female's clothes of Fig. <I-1> and Fig. <I-2> have 70%-length sleeves and full-length trousers, which facilitate action. Especially in Fig. <I-2>, the translucent wrap-around skirt attached to the trousers has flower patterns on it. The wrap-around skirt on the trousers represents femininity. Trousers have long been rejected as uniform



<Fig.1> column



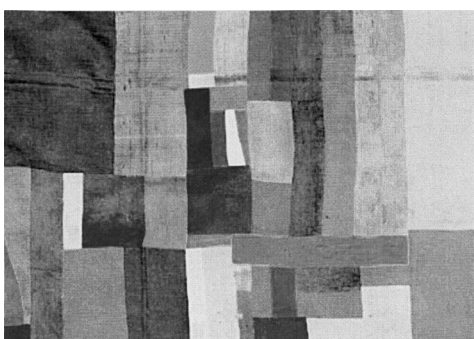
<Fig. 2> eaves



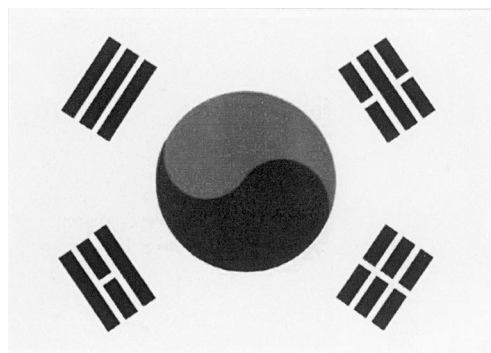
<Fig 3> window and door



<Fig. 4> red and blue



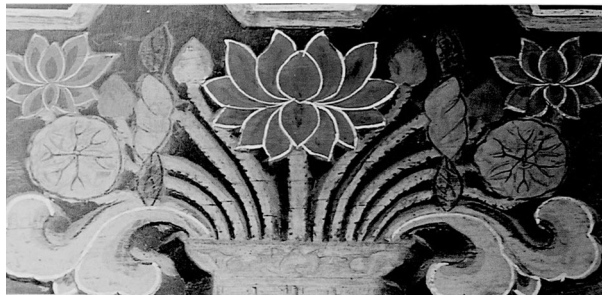
<Fig. 5> patchwork wrapping cloth



<Fig. 6> the Great Absolute



<Fig. 7> Japanese apricot



<Fig. 8> lotus



<Fig. 9> foliage

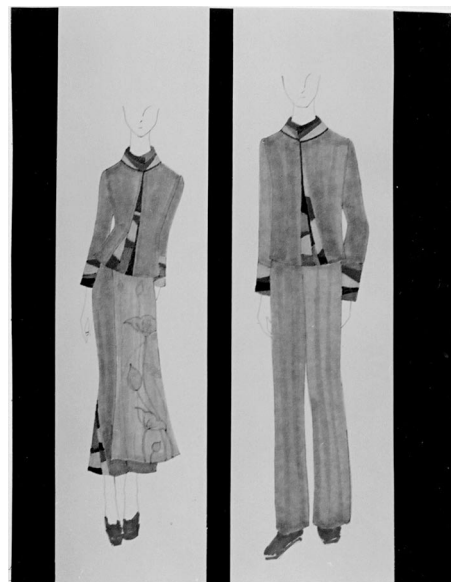


<I-1>

<I-2>

<I-3>

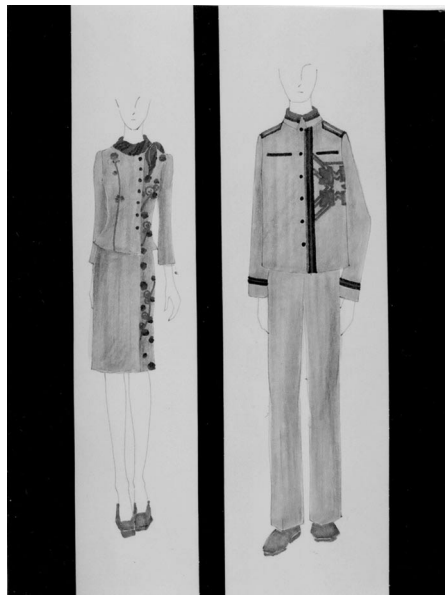
[ Design Plan I ]



<II-1>

<II-2>

[ Design Plan II ]

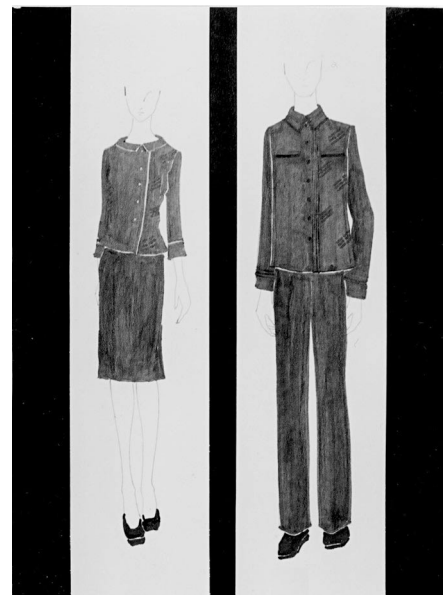


<III-1>      <III-2>  
[Design Plan III]

despite many merits because of the less feminine image. Therefore, in this study, I tried to dissolve rejection symptoms to trousers and facilitate action by attaching wrap-around skirt to trousers thereby groping for both femininity and functionality. Male's clothes of Fig. <I-3> have red patterns against blue background which is in harmony with the red tone of female's clothes.(Diagram I)

#### [Design Plan II]

Design Plan II shows the application of Obangsaek' and flower patterns of traditional patchwork wrapping cloth. Division of space of traditional patchwork wrapping cloth using mainly blue, red, yellow, and black is applied to collar, frontal center, sleeve edges and cuffs of female's trousers. Female's clothes of Fig. <II-1> consist of trousers and wrap-around skirt. Trousers slightly bell-bottomed down the knees facilitate action



<IV-1>      <IV-2>  
[Design Plan IV]

and represent femininity. Vivid color division of space is applied to one side of cuff of trousers in accordance with a jacket. Image of lotus is imprinted against yellow background on wrap-around skirt, which expresses the beauty of Korea. Its translucent material expresses femininity. Male's clothes of Fig. <II-2> show the strong contrast of colors(black, red, yellow and blue), which pursues brighter image and harmony and unity with female's clothes. (Diagram II)

#### [Design Plan III]

Design Plan III shows red and blue patterns against yellow background, which is the application of a picture of many colors and designs and the Great Absolute. Yellow represents sunpower and has a cheerful, powerful image, and has a positive meaning such as wealth and authority(Mi gyeong Kim,

2002). The positive image of yellow is deeply involved in restaurant business. Male's clothes of Fig. <III-2> have a picture of many colors and designs, and stripes of blue, red and black. Female's clothes of Fig.<III-1> show the Great Absolute of red and blue through various water drop patterns, while red scarf carries modernistically designed 4 trigrams(Geon, Gon Gam, and Yi)(Diagram III).

#### [Design Plan IV]

Design Plan IV presents clothes with red line and yellow line against blue background, and 4 trigrams(Geon, Gon, Gam, and Yi) and the Great Absolute are diagonally placed on a jacket. The image of blue represents purity, fidelity and youth, while that of blackish blue represents honesty, diligence and credit which are related with service spirit of restaurant business(Mi gyeong Kim, 2002). National flag of Korea left a

powerful impression to the world in Seoul World Cup Games. I believe that the patterns of the Great Absolute can well represent the beauty of Korea(Diagram IV).

#### [Design Plan V]

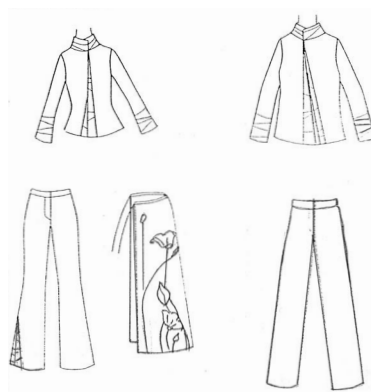
Design Plan V shows reformed Korean clothes which include not only traditional colors and patterns of Korean clothes, but also patterns of Western clothes. I facilitated action by simplifying collar, sagging underpart of sleeve, jacket, trousers and skirt. I pursued harmony of colors by putting blue, red, yellow and black into neck line, upper chest, sleeve, frontal center, etc. And patterns of cloud and lotus on male's and female's jackets lead to the sense of unity. Female's clothes of Fig. <V-1> have small decorative coat string on bust line adding to traditional beauty, while the pattern of Chinese grass on the hem of skirt emphasizes



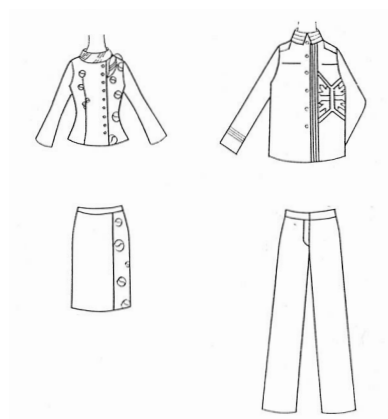




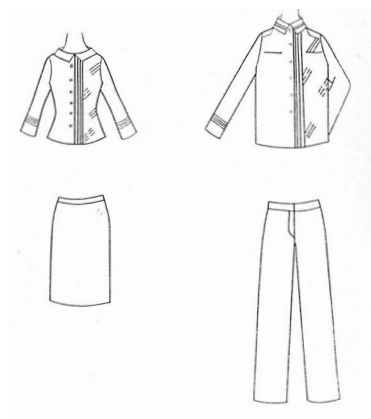
Diagram I]



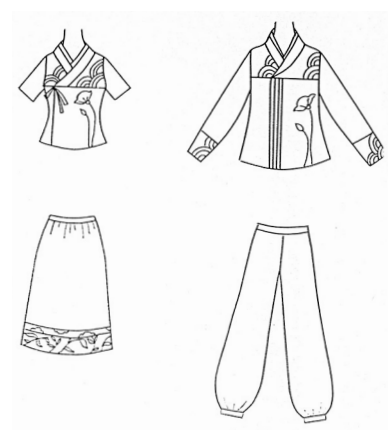
[Diagram II]



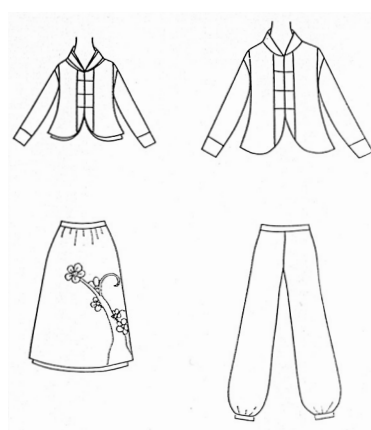
[Diagram III]



[Diagram IV]



[Diagram V]



[Diagram VI]

femininity.(Diagram V)

#### [Design Plan VI]

Design Plan VI presents reformed Korean clothes, to which 'Obangsaek' and traditional patterns of windows and doors are applied. Female's clothes of Fig. <VI-1> have a traditional eaves-shaped hem, and patterns of windows and doors in frontal center, while the pattern of Japanese apricot is placed on skirt thereby representing tradition and femininity. Male's clothes of Fig. <VI-2> have narrowed sleeves and trousers for functionality, and lattice patterns of yellow, black and red on the frontal center are borrowed from patterns of windows and doors(Diagram VI).

### IV. Summary & Conclusion

Summary and conclusion on the uniform design for employees of Korean restaurant on the basis of the image of Korea are as follows:

I adopted two-piece style for both male and female employees, and after paying due consideration to symbolism, functionality and aesthetics, I presented 6 design plans, just 13 pieces of uniform.

Uniform design for male is based on trousers style, while uniform design for female is based on both trousers style and skirt style. To the trousers style uniform for female, wrap-around skirt is attached. Though trousers have many merits, they have been considered for men's clothes, and to dissolve the rejection symptoms, wrap-around skirt is attached. By doing this, I pursued both femininity of skirt and functionality of trousers.

As for reformed Korean clothes, the functional problems of traditional Korean clothes are remedied from the aspect of shape. I also pursued traditional aesthetics and functionality by modernistically interpreting traditional patterns and 'Obangsaek'.

As I mentioned above, newly designed uniform which modernized the image of Korea provides restaurant with specified image thereby lifting its impression and improving its competitiveness.

### References

- Eun yeong Lee.(1997), Fashion Design, Gyomun Company.
- Hee Lac Cho · Young In Kim.(1996), Study on Korean Design based on Traditional Striped Clothes(Saikdong)(1), Journal of the Korean Society of Clothing and Textiles, 20(5), 718-727.
- Heo Geun.(2000). Traditional Pattern, Daewon Company.
- Jin Young Park, Sook Hi Yang(2001). Development of design of Korean Policewomen's Uniforms, Journal of Fashion Business, 5(1), 117-130.
- Jo Gyu Hwa.(1984). Costume Aesthetics, Soohak Company.
- Kim Mi Kyung.(2002). A study on Eastern and Western Colors Focusing the Five Colors in Modern Fashion, Ma., Dept. of Fashion Design Graduate school of Sejong University.
- Kyung Ae Jeon.(2003). Evaluation of Korean Mail Carrier Uniforms for Improvement of Essential Aspects, Journal of the Korean Society for Clothing Industry, 5(3), 221-226.
- Kyung Ok Jin, Min Jung Lee.(2003). A study on Uniform Design Applied Orientalism, Journal

- of the Korean society for Clothing Industry, 5(5), 443-452.
- Lee Sim.(2002). Recovery of Korean-style house, Jutek Moonhwa company.
- Leena Yang.(2002). A study on the Development of Uniform Design for the Food Service Industry Employees-Focused on Family Restaurants-,The Research Journal of the costume Culture, 10(2), 132-145.
- Min Won Lee.(2001), Emperor of Korea, Daewon Company.
- Nam Yoon Ja, Kim Kyung In, Lee Yoon Jung.(1997). A survey on Uniforms and development of New Design, Journal of the Korean Society of Costume, 33, 229 -253.
- Nam Yoon Ja, Kim Kyung In, Lee Yoon Jung.(1997). A Survey on Uniforms and development of design(I), Journal of the Korean Society of Clothing and Textiles, 21(2), 455-470.
- Nam Yoon Sook etc. (2003). Zen of Korea, Seminar in Beijing of Korea-China.
- Patchwork wrapping-cloth, from <http://www.bojagii.com>.
- Rina Yang, Nayeong Choi. Korean Fashion Design expressed in works of Korean designers. Baejae Nonchong from <http://www.paichai.ac.kr>.
- ObangsaeK.(2003. 6. 23). from <http://www.contest.co.kr>.
- Sin Young Hoon.(2000). Fragrance of Korea, Daewon Company.
- The Great Absolute, from <http://www.hanbokzip.com>.

---

Received 13 October, Accepted 15 November.