

The Relationship between Traditional Embroidery of Gubang Craft and Modern Fiber Art in Korea⁺

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Abstract

The creative energy of the Korean women who pursued spiritual artistic practices under the limited situation of male-dominated confucian society in the Chosun Dynasty(AD 1392 - AD 1910) constituted the background for the development of Gubang Craft. Gubang Craft represented their artistic abilities, moral and family values, and the pursuit of self-esteem. Especially embroidery successfully showed four main elements of Gubang Craft such as embellishment, diversity, femininity, and craftsmanship. This paper is designed to explore how the traditional elements of embroidery works are restored and have influence on the modern Korean fiber art.

Key words: Gubang Craft, Embroidery, Cultural Background, Modern Fiber Art

I. Introduction

1. The Purpose of Study

Korean Gubang art represents the traditional embroidery. The Gubang art is recognized as a traditional cultural legacy with high practicality and embellishment. Today, its artistic value is also reevaluated in the fabric art. In the late 20th century, fabric art focused on its experimental model and artistic works. In the 21st century, fabric art began to incorporate technology and cultural identity. One of the main trends is to receive traditional arts such as embroidery with new methods.

The purpose of this study is to explore the

consciousness, habits, moral, religion, philosophy, and culture of Koreans and to explain to what extent these characteristics are expressed in contemporary Korean fabric art. It also aims to develop a systematic foundation of traditional Korean embroidery art.

2. The Scope and Method of Study

The method of this study is to explore the historical development of traditional Korean embroidery. To illustrate the specific examples of traditional embroidery used in the contemporary Korean fabric art the following materials in the museums are analyzed: embroidery for clothing, embroidery for daily life, Buddhist embroidery,

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books and dissertations on embroidery, a variety of pictures and books, and journal on embroidery. Internet sites on embroidery are also explored.

The scope of this study includes the origins and development of traditional embroidery to explain the characteristics used in contemporary Korean fabric art. A variety of forms of embroidery, its characteristics, and concepts are analyzed in the first part of the study. The second part of the study includes the examples of traditional embroidery used in fashion, accessories for daily life, and objects in the contemporary Korean fabric art.

II. Theoretical Background on the terms of Gubang Craft

1. Origins of Gubang Craft

Gubang means women's quarters and living rooms in the house where women are only permitted to stay. Confucianism in the Chosun dynasty put strict limits on women's social activities. The segregation of women had direct impact on their social and artistic life. Chosun women's social conditions constitute sharp contrast to those in the Goryeo dynasty prior to the Chosun dynasty. Gubang was the only place for Chosun women where they were free to do what they wanted to do. Their works included reading, writing, and artistic activities.

The creative energy of Chosun women under socially restricted conditions provided the background for the emergence of Gubang craft in the Chosun dynasty. There were seven friends of Gubang called Gujung Chilwoo(關中七友). The seven materials of needlework for Gubang craft

included thread, needle, thimble, scissor, measuring rule, flatiron, and iron. In Gubang Chosun women regarded the seven materials as their imagined friends. With these tools Chosun women did needleworks as part of artistic activities.

The needlework as a basic skill meant an important virtue all Chosun women were required to possess. Chosun women' hard works with all their heart showed the beauty by itself although enormous physical pains were given to them in the process of needlework. Chosun women elevated their needleworks to artistic activities and contributed to the development of Gubang craft into an independent artistic field called Gubang craft.

Cubang craft is a collection of artistic and practical works made by Chosun women. New attempts are currently being made to find and utilize traditional characteristics of Gubang craft for the development of new artistic and design forms in Korea. Especially the plastic elements of Gubang craft are rediscovered and applied for modern fiber art in Korea. This article is designed to explain the characteristics and types of Gubang craft with special emphasis on traditional embroidery and on its impact on modern fiber art.

2. Characteristics of Gubang Craft

Gubang craft has its own original concept and plastic forms which result from the combination of idea, culture, and art in the Chosun dynasty. Painters and potters in the same era thought that leaving a blank space on canvas or on the surface of white porcelains was one of the most important factors to finish their works. They emphasized aesthetic aspects deriving from

simplicity and neatness in their artistic works. In contrast, the women who created Gubang craft expressed their artistic creativity through very splendid and decorative handicraft art works.

The social atmosphere of the Chosun dynasty was imbued with Confucian values which had direct influence on artistic works. The artists in the other field pursued non-technical, non-artificial, and unplanned artistic techniques consistent with Confucian moral values. Yet the women who was separated from outside society and stayed inside Gubang followed their own artistic sensitivities and imaginations. They could also get a variety of domestic materials for their craft. As a result, Gubang craft is characterized by splendid, decorative, and ornamental handicraft artistic works with its own original plastic forms.

The characteristics of Gubang craft result from Chosun women' artistic creativity, senses of moral and family values, and the realization of self-esteem. Four main characteristics

can be identified in Gubang craft: embellishment, inheritance of craftsmanship, diversity, and femininity.

First, embellishment is easy to find in Gubang craft works. They include embroidery sewed with splendid threads, colorful patchwork, seven treasure accessories, and paper craft works. Chosun women sought to make house comfortable, cozy, and joyful for children and other family members. They used bright, brilliant, and delight colors to decorate interior parts of the house because the rest part of the house was decorated with either dark or monochrome colors without any accents. Chosun women recognized that too simplified a color would bring depressed conditions to the family although they stayed in Gubang. The recognition contributed to the development of embellishment in Gubang craft.

Second, one of the most important characteristics of Gubang craft is the transmission of skills from generation to generation. Gubang craft was handed down to a daughter from a mother or to the daughter-in-law from the mother-in-law. In the process techniques and trained expertises peculiar to each family were inherited to next generations. From early ages most Chosun women learned to do needlework for their family and cultivation for themselves. They weaved and knitted fabrics to make costumes and everyday goods. They also embroidered splendid patterns to make wishes for bringing health and happiness to their family. The techniques and skills inherited by ancestors helped to improve the qualities of Gubang craft and to make ordinary Chosun women to be experts.

Third, the characteristic of diversity derives from the tradition of self-sufficiency in the Chosun dynasty. The people in the era made daily goods for housing, food, and clothing by themselves. The women could not get a systematic social education. They were taught by either their mother or other family members. Chosun women could develop independent and individual skills and techniques of needlework representing peculiar family culture and customs. They were free to choose artistic forms and concept for their works and did not follow dignified and formative high artistic categories. This freedom gave Gubang craft artistic richness and diversity.

Fourth, the character of femininity comes from the feministic factors in Gubang craft. Gubang craft showed the feministic senses of elegance, gorgeousness, and warm feeling rather than those of braveness, prowess, and decisiveness. The femininity also appears in the size of Gubang works which mostly consist of small craft works. Gubang craft expresses Chosun women' desires

to bring peace and happiness to their family.

III. Categories of Gubang Craft

Gubang Craft can be divided into three categories: housing, food, and clothing. Each category can be subdivided into two parts by function. (see the table 1).

The clothing category includes Hanbok(traditional Korean costumes, Fig. 1), Jasoo(embroidery, Fig. 2), Noobi(quilts, Fig. 3), and the seven treasures(七寶) accessory(Fig. 4). It was subdivided into ordinary Hanbok, Hwalwot(ceremonial dress, Fig. 5), Hoosoo(same as hood, Fig. 6), Hungbae(special decoration refers official rank, Fig. 7), Noobiwot(quilted dress for winter, Fig. 8), embroidery and seven treasures accessory,

embroidery pouch, embroidery eyeglasses case, embroidery shoes, hats(Fig. 9) and embroidery bag.

The food category includes embroidery or patched table cloth, tray cover(Fig. 10), food container case, spoon case, and medicine case.

For the housing category, it was classified into embroidery stuffs, quilts, and paper works.

Embroidery for housing includes decorative curtain, drapery for the door of the house and cart, and coverlet. Noobi was originally made for winter costumes, but it was also used for coverlet for bed and wrapper for storage. Paper craft pieces(Fig. 11) are characterized by the diversity because they were created by each family with strong family tradition and regional speciality. The paper works were made for storage box like tool case of needlework, thread case, accessory

<Table 1> Categories of Gubang Craft

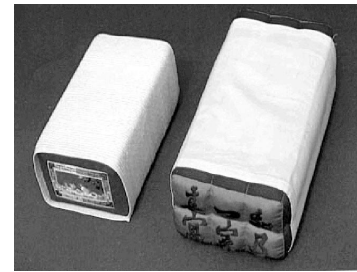
| Clothing | | | Food | | | Housing | | |
|--|---------------------------|--|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|--|
| Classification | Function | Usages | Classification | Function | Usages | Classification | Function | Usages |
| Boksik Jasoo (Embroidery of Costumes) | Hwalwot | Ceremonial Dress | Bojagi (Patch Work) | Bobsangbo | Table Cloth | Jasoo(Embroidery) | Chimjang | Embroidery Drapery for the Door in the house |
| | Hungbae | Special Decoration for Costumes which Refers Official Rank | | Dubgaebo | Tray Cover | | Gyoryum | Embroidery Drapery for the Door of the Cart |
| | Hoosoo | Hood, refers Official Rank | | Shikjibbo | Food Container Cover | | Sooeebul | Embroidery Coverlet |
| | Soosamji | Embroidery Cigarette Pouch | | | | | Soobaegemo | Embroidery Pillow Case |
| | Ggotshin | Embroidery Shoes | | | | | | |
| Accessory | Soo Norigae | Embroidery Fashion Accessory | Jasoo (Embroidery) | Soo Yak Jomoney | Embroidery Medicine Case | Noobi (Quilts) | Eebul | Quilted Coverlet |
| | Soo Jumoney | Embroidery Wallet | | | | | Bojagi | Quilted Wrapper |
| | Boochaeh | Fan | | | | Paper Craft | Bangigori | Needle Work Tool Case |
| | Soo Danggi | Embroidery Hair Accessory | | | | | Silchub | Tread Case |
| | Soo Ankyungjib | Embroidery Eye Glasses Case | | Jittong | Paper Container | | | |
| | Seven Treasures Accessory | Hair Pin, Fashion Accessories, etc. | | Soojajib | Embroidery Spoon · Chopstick Case | Paemulham | Treasure Box | |
| | | | | | | Hwabyung | Vase | |
| | | | | Wotsangja | Closet | | | |



<Fig. 1> Hanbok; traditional Korean dress for ordinary women(19C)



<Fig. 2> Chasoo; embroidery(ten longevity symbolic objects pattern pouch, 19C)



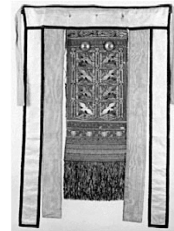
<Fig. 3> Noobi; quilts (pillow cases, 19C)



<Fig. 4> The Seven Treasures Accessories(19C)



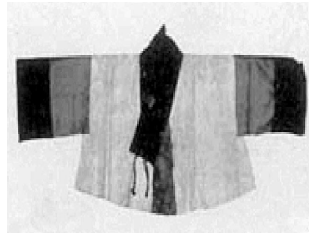
<Fig. 5> Hwalwot; ceremonial embroidery dress(19C)



<Fig. 6> Hoosoo; hood(express official level, 19C)



<Fig. 7> Hungbae; special decoration of costume refers official rank(19C)



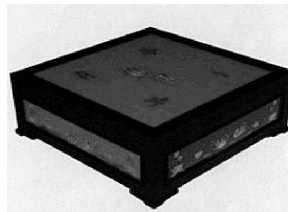
<Fig. 8> Noobiwot; quilted winter jacket for women(19C)



<Fig. 9> Decorative Embroidery Hat for Upper Class Children(19C)



<Fig. 10> Embroidery Tray Cover(19C)



<Fig. 11> Paper Craft; needle-work tool box(19C)



<Fig. 12> Embroidery Dragon Robe for King(19C)

case, treasure box, cosmetic case, and even vase for flower.

Embroidery is one of the most distinguished art works in Gubang Craft although there are a variety of art pieces in the categories of housing, food, and clothing. Chosun women practiced basic skills for their needleworks from early age and mastered themselves. They produced daily goods and used their skills and techniques on the fabric with a variety of artistic expressions. These artistic practices contributed to the development of embroidery. Embroidery craft can be construed as Chosun women' efforts to reach artistic completion and to realize their self-esteem as women by means of cultivating in male-centered confucian society. Chosun women sought to achieve their artistic and social objectives through embroidery works.

IV. Features of Traditional Embroidery in Gubang Craft

1. Historical Background

Embroidery has continued to develop with costumes and fibers used for human beings in Korea as well as in other countries. Primitive people used the skin of animals, leaves, and some fibers from plants to cover their body. They invented tools and simple sewing skills for practical reason. They began to develop new sewing techniques for their costumes to make them look better. The concept of embroidery appeared as human concern for better appearance increased.

Korean people used embroidery since the ancient time. With the development of weaving and sewing techniques, embroidery began to

develop as an independent artistic form to decorate textiles and to exhibit Korean nation's living environment, costumes, and religion. Embroidery is a method of cultivating beauty in everyday life in Korea. Korean people calls embroidery "Jasoo" in Korean.

Jasoo began to become popular and luxurious in the Goryo Dynasty although it existed in prior dynasties.

According to *Goryeo Dokyung*¹⁾, embroidery in the Goryo Dynasty can be classified into Boksik Jasoo²⁾, Jangsik Jasoo³⁾, and Buddhist Jasoo.

Boksik Jasoo means embroidery used for decorating some parts of the clothes. The King wore embroidered dragon robe(Fig. 12) with royal crest. The symbols of state and king such as flags, fans, and pendants were embroidered. The Queen and noble women also wore red clothes with Jasoo decoration(Fig. 13). To prevent extravagance the types of embroidery were strictly regulated according to status and aristocratic ranks by the state.

One of the most interesting developments of embroidery in the Goryo Dynasty was Jangsik Jasoo as a type of artistic piece. Jangsik Jasoo was widely used in folding screens(Fig. 14) as ornamental objects in the rooms and banquet curtains. With the wide usage of embroidery, Boksik and Jangsik Jasoo became extremely delicate, refined and luxurious.

Buddhist Jasoo was flourished in the Goryo Dynasty because Buddhism became the state religion. Buddhism was promoted as a means of defending the nation and achieving the prosperity of the kingdom. Buddhist Jasoo was used for decorating Buddhist temples and making special clothes for monks.

In the Chosun dynasty which was erected after the collapse of the Goryo Dynasty, the



<Fig. 13> Embroidery Robe for Queen (for special occasion, 19C)



<Fig. 14> Embroidery Folding Screen(18-19C)



<Fig. 15> Gungsu; embroidery for the family of the king(16-19C)

development of embroidery was greatly influenced by the types of the Goryeo Dynasty. Chosun embroidery is classified into three categories; Gungsu⁴⁾, Minsu⁵⁾, and Buddhist Jasoo⁶⁾. Chosun women took all the responsibility for the whole process of Gungsu and Minsu. Minsu is called 'Gubang Jasoo(閨房刺繡)' in Korean. Gubang Jasoo was emphasized as a prerequisite virtue for any ordinary woman in the Chosun era. Clothes and other ornaments such as book cover, folding screen, pendant, purse, shoes, pillow, hair accessories, and fan were decorated with embroidery called Gubang Jasoo.

2. Techniques and Classifications of Traditional Embroidery in the Chosun Dynasty

1) Techniques

In the early period of the Chosun Dynasty, the use of embroidery was limited to the royal class of the society. Political, economic, social, and cultural situations became different from those in the Goryeo Dynasty. Confucianism became the

state religion and provided for the moral standards for social activities. Women were prohibited to run their own businesses outside the house and stayed in Gubang(閨房), that is women's quarters of the house. They were encouraged to make clothing for family members. The most skilled women in the field of embroidery selected on the nation level entered the palace to work at Subang⁷⁾ and were registered.

The major designs and patterns of embroidery in the Chosun Dynasty were the four gracious plants(plum, orchid, bamboo, and chrysanthemums), lotus, turtle, duck, tiger, phoenixes, peonies, clouds, wave, water fall, mountain, Chinese letters, geometric patterns, and other living creatures.

For traditional Jasoo, Chosun women usually embroidered on silk fabric with twisted silk threads. Depending on patterns and designs, they chose an appropriate embroidering method from three types of Jasoo. The first type is the method of joining the line; the second is the method of covering the space by the specific

pattern; the third is the method of making delicate touch for detail. Three main types of embroidering method had a variety of techniques by figures and functions.

First, the techniques for joining the line are Jumsu⁸⁾, lemsu⁹⁾, and Jingkumsu¹⁰⁾.

Second, for the method of covering the space by specific patterns, Chosun women used Pungsu¹¹⁾, Garumsu¹²⁾, Guansu¹³⁾, Munimoksu¹⁴⁾, Samipsu and Solipsu¹⁵⁾, Byulmunisu¹⁶⁾, and Chilbosu¹⁷⁾.

Third, For the type of making delicate touch for details, they used Jaryunsu¹⁸⁾, Soksu¹⁹⁾, and Saetulsu²⁰⁾²¹⁾.

2) Classification of Traditional Embroidery in the Chosun Dynasty

Embroidery of the Chosun Dynasty is classified into three groups; Gungsu(宮繡), Minsu(民繡), and Buddhist Jasoo.

First, Gungsu(Fig. 15) is embroidery for clothes and miscellaneous materials for the king and its family. There existed a special organization called Subang(繡房) in the palace.

Selected women at Subang from all over the country were responsible for the production of clothes and other textile products and embroidery decorations used for the royal family and the nobility. They created Jasoo to satisfy the demands from the royal family and the bureaucracy.

The Hyungbae system in the Chosun era contributed to a significant development of Gungsu as embroidery. Hyungbae refers to the embroidered emblem symbolizing the ranks of the royal family and officials. According to *Tanjongsillok*²²⁾, the first implementation of the Hyungbae system was announced in the second year of King Tanjong(AD 1454)²³⁾. The system

continued to develop and make the emblem luxurious after a series of modifications in the Chosun era.

The main patterns of embroidery of Hyungbae were mostly abstract symbolic designs signifying longevity and authority. The color scheme of Hyungbae was characterized by its simple look and delicate aesthetic appeal.

Gungsu includes not only Hyungbae but also a great variety of designs such as large screens, ceremonial clothes, room and cart draperies, flags, and pouches.

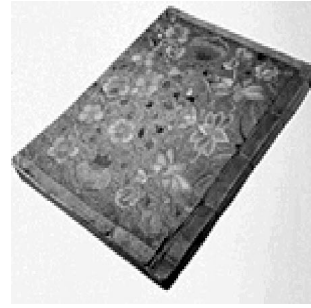
The Gungsu tradition continued until the end of the Chosun Dynasty. The professional painter designed the drafts, skilled dyers created clothes and threads, and a person in charge of embroidery performed the actual embroidery. Because of the standard drafts and the advanced skills of the artisans and experts, Gungsu had very refined elegance of embroidery with its technical perfection²⁴⁾.

Second, in contrast with Gungsu, Minsu(Fig. 16) was made for the need of the common people from gentry to farmer. Unlike specialized Gungsu, Minsu was done by women in the house. Minsu was a domestic skill passed down through the family, from mother to the daughter. As a result, Minsu did not have its standard rules. Minsu had the characteristics of each woman who created it.

There are a great variety of Minsu including screen and thimble. In contrast to Gungsu, Minsu lacks in artistic skills in its design or color schemes. Yet it successfully represented the simple sentiment of the common people. According to its function, Minsu can be divided into many categories: Byungpoong (folding screen), Boksik (related to the clothes and accessories), and decoration items in the house.



<Fig. 16> Minsu; embroidery for ordinary people(19C)



<Fig. 17> Buddhist Jasoo; the embroidery for the buddhism(**Hyunyoogyung**: Cover of 'Goryo Daejangkyung'(高麗大藏經, 16C)

For practical and artistic reasons, folding screen Jasoo, that is Byungpoong, was developed in all three Chosun embroidery, that is Gungsu, Minsu, and Buddhist Jasoo. Because folding screens were widely used for banquets, anniversaries, and ceremonies. It was also used in each room of the gentry house, the room for royal family, the hallway and meeting room of the palace, temples, and shrines.

Boksik Jasoo of Minsu relates to embroidery on clothes and accessories. It includes Hwalot (the ceremonial dress for the women in the palace and for the ordinary women at their wedding), shoes, Norige (women's accessories like pendant), hat, pouch, purse, Danggi(women' hair accessories like ribbon), and fan. The ordinary people were not allowed to wear embroidered clothes except for Hwalot.

Embroidered decorate items used in the home include spoon cases, eyeglass cases, pillow, cushions, and Bojagi(襪; wrapping cloths; it was also called Jogakbo). Minsu has various color harmonies, refined patterns, and characterized designs.

Third, Buddhist Jasoo(Fig. 17) had religious purposes to decorate temples and to show Buddhist status. Few examples of Buddhist

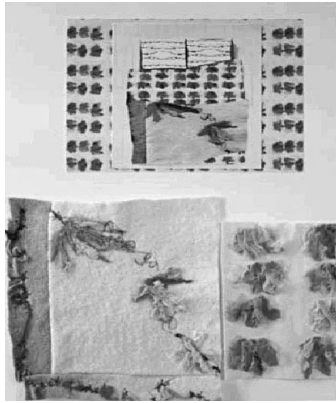
Jasoo are found. An example is the illustration called 'Bubhwakyung Bulkyung(法華經佛經 Cover' in the 15th year of King Taejong(AD 1415). The widow of Ryu Kwun(劉根) made seven sheets of covers for the book and offered it to the temple called Raesosa(來蘇寺) to pray for her dead husband. It is kept in the Junju Provincial Museum in Korea²⁵).

Other Buddhist Jasoos showed extraordinary expertise, artistic skills, and refined execution. Religious Buddhist Jasoo has the donator's name embroidered.

V. Embroidery Tradition of Gubang Craft in Modern Fiber Art in Korea

Recently fiber artists in Korea are trying to find various ways of expression for its artistic diversity to keep up with rapid changes in arts. Especially fiber art calls for much more abundant medium to overcome its limits. It tries to improve artistic levels by borrowing aesthetic values and forms from traditional handicrafts.

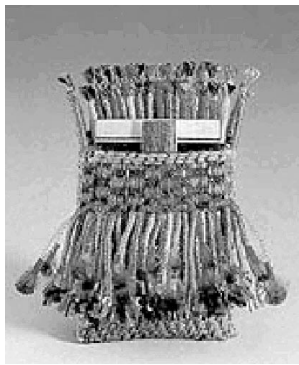
Modern Korean fiber works get insights from the aesthetic traits of traditional Gubang Jasoo with emphasis on natural beauty, plasticity, and



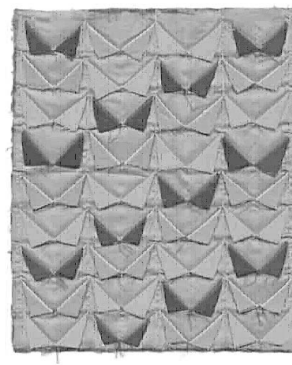
<Fig. 18> the modern korean fiber art I: take the nature as subject, by Yunjung Lee, 2002. 'Flower'



<Fig. 19> the modern korean fiber art II: choose naturally dyed fabrics and threads, by Yunhyung Sul, 2002. 'S.F.A.A.'



<Fig. 20> the modern korean fiber art III: use bold and advanced skills on traditional item, by Jungsook Lee, 1999. 'Hair Comb Case'



<Fig. 21> the modern korean fiber art IV: use symbolic diagram, by Yunjung Lee, 2002. 'Origami 2'

femininity. Although embroidery originated from the development of textiles, it is also used as means for decorative effect. Decorative embroidery reflects ethnic trends in fiber art.

The tradition of Korean embroidery is characterized by refinement, elegance, and symbolization formed during the Goryeo and Chosun dynasties. Embroidery tradition implies a method of creativity and an idea of pattern inherited from generation to generation.

Chosun embroidery, that is Jasoo, is classified

into three major groups. Gungsu and Buddhist Jasoo was specialized in ideological, prosperous and delicate format and performed by professional experts. Minsu did not have any standard rules and revealed the simple and unique feelings of the common people.

Minsu called Gubang Jasoo was the product of nameless women with individual tastes in embroidery in which devotion, perseverance, and fine disposition of woman can be found.

Traditional values of Gubang Jasoo are the

result of the Korean women' ideas, traits of their like, and artistic views. The beauty of Gubang Jasoo may be said to be consistent with naturalism²⁶⁾. This may be said to originate from not only Korean women but also from Korean people's love for and attachment to natural phenomenon. For example, most of the subject matters for traditional embroidery depict nature and represent a longing for auspices. Some of the modern Korean fiber artists have developed the Korean ethnic style in recent works to depict natural beauty with no artificial affection.

Once the beauty of traditional embroidery disappeared under the situation of Japanese colonial rule at the end of the Chosun Dynasty, Japanese embroidery prevailed for fifty years in Korea. And after liberation in 1945, western embroidery was widely introduced and spread in Korea. The inflow of western culture has resulted in rapid change in all the fields of the Korean society. Embroidery was also changed in the direction of expressing artist's own perceived world from an individual subjective point of view²⁷⁾. Embroidery almost neglected in history now occupies a new position in the history of Korean culture.

Traditional embroidery elements identified in modern fiber art in Korea are the choice of free materials, individual coloring, daring techniques, and a wide variety of modes. To express their inner world several characteristics in traditional Gubang Jasoo reappears in modern fiber art in Korea.

First, major designs and patterns of traditional Gubang Jasoo depicts and symbolizes a variety of natural objects such as clouds, waves, mountains, trees, water falls, flowers, insects, and animals. Modern fiber artists also choose its subject matter from nature. The choice of

abstract materials are increased in modern fiber art(Fig. 18).

Second, silk, golden, silver thread and naturally dyed fabrics were mainly used in traditional Gubang Jasoo. Modern fiber artists use naturally dyed fabrics and threads although artistic fabrics are available(Fig. 19).

Third, the technique of Gubang Jasoo was the realistic revival of advanced skills with emphasis on size. Modern fiber art adopts individual bold techniques and adapts itself in formative fiber art(Fig. 20).

Fourth, an original color scheme of the artist with a wide range of color tones forms the main trend in modern fiber art because of industrial development. For primary colors, modern artists dyed fabrics with natural dye by using many different types of flowers and herbs as was the case for Gubang Jasoo.

Fifth, the expression of Gubang Jasoo was influenced by oriental paintings and became schematic and realistic. Modern fiber art is characterized by the individual expression of artists's social opinion as seen in the other fine and formative arts. Modern fiber artist use symbolic diagrams borrowed from traditional embroidery(Fig. 21).

Traditional Gubang Jasoo and modern fiber art coexist despite difference in characteristics. They undergo steady changes for the expression of new version of ethnic styles due to the development of new materials, modelling senses, and aesthetic consciousness of the age with plane and even three-dimensional effects in unlimited formative extent.

The sonorous plasticity of Gubang Jasoo such as the construction of patterns, the combination of colors, a correct sense towards beauty, the passion, sufficient techniques, and the creativity,

needs to be continuously handed down to establish a high level of modern fiber art in Korea.

An analysis of traditional Gubang Jasoo's influence on modern fiber art in Korea also shows changing notions of femininity expressed in embroidery art from the fifteenth century up to the present.

Gubang Jasoo was a plane art that was performed only on fiber with needle and thread. It represented femininity as passed down through the family and women in the household. The expression of femininity of Gubang Jasoo put emphasis on aesthetic effects of Korean traditional embroidery as composition factors for clothing, ornaments, and other decorative items in the house made by women.

Embroidery in modern fiber art in Korea has remained not as a traditional handicraft itself but as precious data which serves as the sources of new ideas and reflect modern feministic points of view.

Attention to the art of the East has been increased. The artists and designers in the world are interested in traditional handicraft in the oriental embroidery. They are also interested in the social and cultural backgrounds of embroidery.

Embroidery as traditional handicraft of women reflects women' role and social mobility, cultural points of view, economic conditions, and the level of technological development. The expression of femininity in traditional embroidery in Korea, Gubang Jasoo, helps to understand women' issues and relates to the subject of modern fiber art.

For example, in Korea the traditional embroidery costume 'Hwalot(Fig. 5)' was the ceremonial dress for the women in the palace and was not allowed to ordinary women except

wedding ceremony. The function of Hwalot helps us to understand the fate given to certain level of women. Sensuality was conveyed through the dialectics of concealment and exposure in costume. 'Hwalot' patterns of various flowers such as peonies, chrysanthemums, fungus of immortality, herbs as well as various lucky omens and designs of longevity were luxuriously embroidered. In contrast, the clothing of males in the royal family and government officials did not have embroidery on the surface of the cloth. Instead, 'Hyungbae(Fig. 7)' decorated patterns of cranes or tigers on everyday clothing.

Embroidery makers among lower classes of women who were the most skilled people in the nation can take the position in either the palace or the central governmental offices and devote themselves to this field. Making embroidery well would be the only way to have an opportunity of an increase in status in the Chosun Dynasty.

Cooperation among various artisan organizations and professional embroidery makers contributed to the development of embroidery with artistic originality and technical perfection. Both traditional embroidery creator in the palace and in the Gubang of the ordinary house during the Chosun Dynasty exhibited elaborate skills, representing sonorous quality aesthetic values.

Traditional embroidery, Gubang Jasoo, in modern fiber art in Korea has fame characteristics according to differences in social status and classes and were expressed in various modes following individual tastes for arts by women creators.

As a result, the notions of femininity expressed in Gubang Jasoo in modern fiber art can change according to the cultural milieu and consensus of each class. This circumstance helps us to

understand the history of power relations embodied in embroidery as well as the potentials of women to actively use fiber art's signifier to overcome repressive relations.

VI. Conclusion

Modern fiber art needs to find new method and new materials to express artist's inner world. Their efforts help to create diversified, creative, and independent works. It is necessary to study traditional techniques and styles to develop such diversified forms of expression and to keep up with new changes in art we are facing. An analysis of traditional Korean embroidery can contribute to understand new trends in modern fiber art in Korea.

The rapid growth of arts due to time passing have had an effect even on fiber art, and so, the current fiber art calls for the best method, development of new materials and expression of a true inner world to create much more diversified, creative and independent works.

It is urged to newly recognize such traditional techniques or styles, in order to develop such diversified forms of expression keeping pace with new changes now we are facing. And the expression of embroidery art can be activated by examining trend of embroidery art in fiber art category in Korea.

Endnotes

- 1) 高麗圖經: Custom Guide of Goryeo
- 2) Boksik(服飾): for clothes
- 3) Jangsik(裝飾): for decoration
- 4) Gungsu(宮繡): royal court embroidery
- 5) Minsu(民繡): folk embroidery
- 6) Buddhist Jasoo(佛教刺繡): Buddhist Embroidery
- 7) Subang(繡房): embroidery room in the palace
- 8) Jumsu(點繡); it appeared with tiny continued points, usually indicated the outline of the figure.
- 9) lemsu(線繡); it is similar with outline stitches in Western embroidery techniques and emphasizes the outline of the figure.
- 10) Jingkumsu: it is similar with coaching stitches in Western embroidery techniques and using special textured threads such as golden, silver, and other metallic or thick twisted threads.
- 11) Pungsu(平繡); filled the inner space of outline figured stitches and left same traces upside and downside of fabric.
- 12) Garumsu: it usually applied for description of leaves.
- 13) Guansu(關繡); skip one or two steps of stitches and led the horizontal lining inner space of the figure to bring the softness of cloud, wave, and water.
- 14) Munimoksu(文樣目繡); made different angle stitches by regularly and the results showed dark and brightness of embroidery space.
- 15) Samipsu and Solipsu: it applied for leaves of pine tree.
- 16) Byulmunisu(星繡); it applied to fill the large space of the costume with star shape stitches.
- 17) Chilbosu(七寶繡); to make geometric pattern with repeating oval shapes, usually used golden and silver threads.
- 18) Jaryunsu: to show realistic images with overlapping stitches.
- 19) Soksu(內繡); using cotton, paper, or strings between the fabrics to make three dimensio-

nal objectiveness.

- 20) Saetulsu(羽繡): just for describing the feathers of bird and animal.
- 21) Young Hwa Han, Traditional Embroidery, Daewonsa, 1999, pp. 87-94.
- 22) 端宗實錄: The book refers on the activity of King Tanjong(AD 1452 ~ 1455).
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