Development of Fashion Art Design with Jogakbo, a Korean Traditional Wrapping Cloth

Moon-Ja Kan
Professor, Dept. of Fashion Design, Honam University

ABSTRACT

In this study, we will analyze the artistic character of Jogakbo as a component of fashion art design. Korean traditional Jogakbo is a common homemade item made from clothing remnants and is a part of the culture of women's quarters. Currently, Jogakbo is highly regarded for its artistic value and it finds a variety of uses in fashion. In particular, it is striking how its modern-style geometric lines and color composition are congruous with abstract art. In applying Jogakbo to fashion art design, we study the artistic expression of Jogakbo in 4 aspects; namely, line, color, material, and technique; and analyze the 4 artistic characteristics; beauty of naivety, simplicity, moderation and freedom. 8 dresses designed based on these 4 characteristics are presented as examples.

Key Words: Jogakbo, fashion art, beauty of naivety, simplicity, moderation and freedom

I. Introduction

After initially fulfilling basic human needs such as warmth or covering, clothing came to occupy a more meaningful position in different human cultures, because of its ubiquitous importance we could say that clothing is an essential part of the human psyche.

This is illustrated by clothing’s progress from an indicator of gender, status, role or wealth to that of a beacon of individual expression, artistic taste and experimentation.

A new non-traditional way of designing, known as the Art to Wear movement began in the US at the end of 1960’s. Textile artists influenced by this movement started to design 3-dimensional clothings like their sculpture. After that textile artists from the 1980’s tried to add different artistic shapes with experimental attitude. The ‘Art to Wear’ movement has dramatically developed since it came to Korea at the end of the 1980’s and the quantity of work has increased thanks to active designing by fashion designers and related professors.

Fashion art, also known as ‘Art to Wear’ is an artpiece worn on the body using different techniques. Fashion art is more readily identified as art in pursuit of artistic quality and uniqueness, rather than as fashion items popular with the public because it expresses the designer’s philosophy, spirit and understanding of the body in a creative way.

The techniques used mainly in fashion art are manual textile-art skills such as dyeing, knit, weav-
ing, felt, and patchwork. This skill allows the production of creative new 3-dimensional materials and present free and unique works which are totally different from traditional ones. Art to wear now signifies fashion art which gives us a feeling of artistic beauty through the combination of shapes and satisfies a cultural need.

The researcher has tried to design something which is a fashion art but is still wearable in a longstanding artistic goal of expressing traditional Korean emotions through clothes. And since many Korean designers express their artistic philosophy or taste in a different manner from wearable art from the U.S., the researcher has tried to make body-oriented clothing which is quite flexible and wearable. Also, we have tried to use recyclable materials wherever possible, in consideration of the quite serious issue of environmental protection.

Drawing on a culture and mindset where women created an art form by never wasting even one tiny piece of cloth, in the present day situation where environmental protection can be realized through recycling materials, it seemed appropriate and timely to incorporate this tradition of Jogakbo into our fashion art.

The researcher’s methodology consisted of an analysis of the cultural characteristics of Jogakbo, thus allowing us to express its artistic values without losing its identity or cultural integrity.

II. Considerations about Jogakbo

Jogakbo is a simple, traditional craft from women’s quarters made of a number of tiny pieces of cloth that our ancestors collected and joined together with fine stitching even smaller remnants of this material was regarded as quite valuable. Jogakbo is the result of the traditional wisdom of our ancestors who taught us never to waste resources and it has also been used as an everyday product among ordinary people. However, now its perceived art value has been enhanced considerably since traditional times. Jogakbo has a modern sense of beauty and this is why this traditional craft can provide fresh ideas to designers of cultural items. This modern sense of beauty which Jogakbo displays is similar to the beauty of modern abstract artists such as Mondrian or Paul Klee, and Jogakbo’s combination of color construction represents a sense of original public order and the balance of existence. The abstract space of Jogakbo, consisting of lines, sides and colors, reveals a beautiful artistic world made by women in the Choseon era—far predating Mondrian.

One important type of Jogakbo is a cloth primarily used for covering, called a Bojagi. Bojagi covering symbolizes Korean traditional shamanists’ belief that one can capture good luck by covering it, which is also expressed in cognitive connections between the word for Bojagi and good luck in the Korean language. In addition, Jogakbo symbolizes the extension of long life, for it is made by attaching one cloth to a collection of small cloth pieces, like adding years to one’s life.

The women of the Choseon era superstitiously equated producing Bojagi with producing fortune and thus Jogakbo was usually used when they needed to save something precious or send it to their social or religious superiors.

Jogakbo doesn’t just imply the covering of fortune, but also has a variety of practical decorative uses.

1. Jogakbo artistic methods

1) Line

Jogakbo can be divided into two basic types:
those consisting of fixed shapes of triangles, regular squares, rectangles; and the applied type that consists of different shapes of triangles and squares.

The lines used for Jogakbo are usually straight lines in Bojagi’s basic shape and thus pieces are composed of many regular squares, rectangles and triangles. An example of using curves is Youijoo shape, which consists of four parts where circle of the some size overlap consistently.

Some Jogakbos consist of identical shapes such as triangles or regular squares. In addition, there are also Jogakbos composed of clothing remnants themselves which come in a variety of shapes like triangles or regular squares and they evoke a sense of modern art with dynamic feeling instead of a regular pattern.

2) Color

Jogakbo has many different colors clothing scraps are used that are leftover from the production of Korean traditional clothing (hanbok). Although it was probably not easy to match colors with clothes scraps, Jogakbo displays a beauty of freedom and innocence. Some pieces show an intense contrast of primary colors and other pieces show tension by using strong color contrasted well with neutral color.

Usually a traditional contrasting combination of five colors (Ohbang-saek), a faint combination of similar colors or the same color with different hues and shades are used for the color matching of Jogakbo. The single-color Jogakbo is composed mostly of achromatic colors such as white, black and cream (so-sae), and is usually made of ramie and hemp cloth.

3) Material

Popular materials for Jogakbo are remnants of clothing made of various silk, hemp, ramie clothes and so on. They are usually similar kinds of fabric having similar thicknesses that makes it easier to keep the feeling regular throughout the whole. Jogakbo made of thin silk fabric like gauze is very fine and faintly transparent. Jogakbo made of thick silk fabric like silk feels very soft and flexible. Jogakbo made of ramie fabric is delicate, sophisticated, yet light and stiff. On the other hand, Jogakbo made of hemp fabric is rough, shapeless and has a natural feeling. Jogakbos made of silk or hemp fabrics yield a feeling of lightness, fineness and clarity.

4) Needlework technique

Needlework techniques for producing Jogakbo include tacking, hemming, backstitching and whipping, among others, and are the same as those used for producing Korean traditional clothing (hanbok).
cases where Jogakbo is a single layer of materials such as thin gauze, ramie, or hemp that are usually used in summer time, it’s double-tacked or hemmed so as to not loosen a strand of a margin or seam. When it’s tacked for the second time, thread of a different color is used in order to allow it to be clearly distinguished. The line naturally decorates and highlights a modern sense of constructive beauty.

Double-layered Jogakbo with a lining cloth is usually used in winter time and colorful thread is used when hemming after folding both sides so as not to favor one side too much. We can see from the distinct colors that this was also a method of decoration.

2. Artistic characteristics of Jogakbo

Jogakbo made of castoff clothes scraps is a creative art piece reflecting Korean traditional women’s simple artistic beauty. Jogakbo smoothly expresses their simplicity, humility, and moderation without exaggeration, and we feel the freedom of their spirit in strict social confines. Accordingly, this study analyzed the artistic notions of frugality, simplicity, moderation and freedom as follows:

1) Beauty of Frugality

Korean traditional women saved and collected even the smallest piece of cloth after producing dresses and then they used them to make Bojagi, which was put to utilitarian tasks around the home. In some cases they produced Jogakbo with regular shapes of fabric but mostly they used irregular shaped pieces reflecting the actual shape of the leftover scraps. They regarded these as expressing natural beauty.

Although there are Jogakbos with a variety of colors, there are also Jogakbos made of ramie or hemp fabrics with a single color and they also express the frugality of Korean traditional women.

2) Beauty of Simplicity

The straight lines used for Jogakbo are not exaggerated or elaborate and express simplicity in a modern sense of beauty. Of course there are some Jogakbos with colored decorations but usually Jogakbos achieve simplicity by attaching square pieces repeatedly, resulting in an artistic effect comparable with modern contemporary art works.

The well-known Korean poet ‘Kim Choomsoo’ admired Jogakbo for its minimal artistic values of being simultaneously functional, practical and magnificent.

3) Beauty of Moderation

In ancient times, clothes were quite valuable because a person making clothes had to do all related processes like weaving, cutting and sewing by themselves when they wanted to produce even one dress. Thus the virtue of frugality relates to moderation in this life style which would not waste even one tiny piece of cloth, and this moderation is uniquely reflected in Jogakbo, expressing moderation of design by removing unnecessary decoration lines. The implied moderation of Jogakbo implies both senses of internal and external moderation.

4) Beauty of freedom

Mondrian’s color composition, considered by some to be a representative of modern abstract art in the 20th Century, but Korean Jogakbos were designed by anonymous women in ancient times. This traditional precedent of abstract beauty in western art is a source of Korean pride in Jogakbo. While western modern art divides sides and combines colors accurately with near scientific calculation while designing, Jogakbo is an art of combining random
clothing scraps with careful skill and an artistic eye.

Since it's made of tiny scraps leftover from clothes, there are no two Jogakbos that look the same. Jogakbos have great color composition such as the harmony of similar colors or the light tension caused by intense colors. There are many different Jogakbos as each woman chose pieces of cloth carefully instead of picking them at random. This personal touch results in a variety of Jogakbos with different feelings when women chose their favorite color and material among many kinds of fabric remnants.

We assume that the women of this era expressed the private, internal freedom of spirit by joining small scraps in artistic combinations at home even if they were not allowed to go out freely under the strict social mores of the day.

III. Designing fashion art with in the artistic spirit of Jogakbo

To design fashion art with traditional Jogakbo’s artistic character, I tried reflecting on its spirit as much as I can during the preparation of material. So, in keeping with ancient tradition, I produced the works with scraps of fabric actually left over from making Korean Traditional clothing (hanbok). In fact, nowadays we don’t need to collect fabric scraps anymore and usually cut new fabrics into shapes, but I used clothing scraps to keep true to Jogakbo’s spiritual significance. These days as a material for Korean traditional clothing (hanbok) we use mostly silk because it is too smooth and good quality to throw away. Even if today’s Korean traditional clothing (hanbok) is produced by machine, different from ancient hand sewing methods, it still manages to demonstrate the beauty of traditional color and composition and reminds us how valuable our clothing heritage is.

Through working with recycled clothes, I also have occasion to reflect on environmental protection, a serious issue all human beings are facing currently, and try to reflect my desire for the renewal and resurgence of Korean tradition since the clothes scraps are left over from the production of Korean traditional clothing (hanbok).

Fashion should be worn on the body to make humans look more beautiful, satisfy artistic desires or give physical or psychological comfort. With such an idea, I try to design dresses comfortable to wear and incorporate Korean traditional beauty which is simple & peaceful.

Being always interested in environmental protection, I use recyclable materials as much as I can and try to reinvent cast-off clothes beautifully. Although these dresses reflecting the inspiration of traditional Jogakbo are fashion art, at the same time they are wearable and flexible. Just as traditional Bojagi can be used in a practical way and also for decoration, fashion art clothing can be wearable by exchanging the shirt part and pants part or separating 2 pieces or tie with string or being united.

The inspiration of these clothes derives from traditional Jogakbo’s beautiful pieces & colors. I tried to keep the sense of beauty of Korean traditional color and material by combining colors freely with clothes scraps just like the original Jogakbo. Since every fabric was going to be used for Korean traditional clothing (hanbok), I used the same needlework technique as for Korean traditional clothing (hanbok); and using a sewing machine was necessary as manual technique is too difficult. Recently popular fabrics for making Korean traditional clothing (hanbok) have been classified into thin, used for Spring or Summer time and silk for winter time. With thin fabrics, I used narrow seams with
triple-reinforced dual stitching on a sewing machine and with silk, I sewed a margin on the seam after folding one side so that it has the feeling of a deep stitch.

1. The work 1

   Item: Jacket
   Material: Silk
   Artistic characteristics: Beauty of frugality, simplicity, moderation
   Technique: Reinforced dual stitching

This work is a jacket sewed by reinforced dual stitching with a variety of blue silk pieces. The narrow line of the stitch is quite apparent since thin silk pieces are attached by triple-reinforced dual stitching. The designer tried to draw attention to the narrow stitch of this ramie Jogakbo.

The beauty of casual clothes is presented in a simple, moderate way, avoiding excessive decorating factors on color composition and design.

2. The work 2

   Item: Jacket
   Material: Silk
   Artistic characteristics: Beauty of frugality, simplicity, moderation
   Technique: Reinforced dual stitching

This work is a casual jacket showing off the stitch by using reinforced dual stitching with relatively big pieces. It displays a simple, moderate image through a composition of faint colors and traditional-imaged material.

3. The work 3

   Item: Jacket
   Material: Silk
   Artistic characteristics: Beauty of simplicity, moderation
   Technique: Reinforced dual stitching

This work is designed as a one-piece rectangle-shaped fabric on which cuffs are sewed on by using thin silk pieces of cloth for Korean traditional clothing (hanbok). Although it’s a moderated design of a one-piece Bojagi with cuffs, when it’s worn it
becomes a single layer-jacket coat which is presented with draped shawl colors. It shows the beauty of simplicity in collars & bodice produced by a minimized, simple technique of cutting and modern design with a narrow, fine attaching line. Soft pastel colors feel very light & clear and thin & stiff material feels clear enough to evoke the delicacy of ramie Jogakbo even if it is produced with silk.

4. The work 4

Item: Dress
Material: Silk
Artistic characteristics: Beauty of simplicity, freedom
Technique: Reinforced dual stitching

This work was produced by reinforced dual stitching carefully selected blue colored pieces of Korean traditional clothing (hanbok) and is simply composed of 2 pieces of rectangle shaped cloth. One piece in the back is longer which is dragged over and you can wear it flexibly in a different way as a dress buckled up on your shoulder or 2 pieces of shawl unbuckled.

Its line and color are as simple as classic Jogakbo should be; designed to be freely styled as a dress or shawl as Jogakbo is quite normally used in a variety of ways. Narrow and fine lines can function as a decorating factor reflecting the stitching and attaching methods of Jogakbo.

<Figure 4> The work 3, Jacket

5. The work 5

Item: Short jacket
Material: Silk organza (Nobang)
Technique: Backstitching
Artistic characteristics: Beauty of moderation, freedom

This work is a straight lined jacket produced by attaching silk pieces and it demonstrates the beauty of moderation & freedom. Using the same needlework as that used for Korean traditional clothing (hanbok), one seam/margin has been folded up before sewing. One appropriate change is demonstrated by using thin collars which are made of transparent silk organza (Nobang). This jacket can be freely worn inside out, allowing the colors made of silk organza to show underneath and this can create a different feeling.
6. The work 6

Item: Coat  
Material: Silk  
Technique: Reinforced dual stitching  
Artistic characteristics: Beauty of simplicity, moderation

This work expresses Jogakbo’s beauty of moderation by removing possible design lines and using only purple colors. A seam line of reinforced dual stitching of thin, purple colored silk fabrics produces the silhouette of a straight line, demonstrating the beauty of simplicity and moderation.

7. The work 7

Item: cropped jacket, trousers  
Material: Silk  
Technique: Reinforced dual stitching  
Artistic characteristics: Beauty of freedom

This work shows a young, free feeling with baggy pants and short jacket reminiscent of a Korean traditional (hanbok) jacket or trousers. It was made by collecting only olive green scraps of Korean traditional clothing (hanbok) rendering an impression of the hues of green tea. It presents a feeling of motion by using oblique lines with a free image instead of straight lines and it also evokes a light and free feeling by pointng transparent decorating lines.

8. The work 8

Item: Dress  
Material: Silk  
Artistic characteristics: Beauty of simplicity, freedom  
Technique: Reinforced dual stitching
This work is a dress designed with a skirt of Korean traditional clothing (hanbok) and it has only a skirt element but it can be worn as a dress, demonstrating the artistic character of freedom. It’s a wide and long skirt dress designed to be simply by removing decorations and can be worn in different ways such as wrapping it like Korean traditional clothing (hanbok) or wrapping it from the shoulder or head.

![Figure 9] The work 8, Dress

V. Analysis of Jogakbo's artistic characteristics and fashion art design work

During the creation of this fashion art, I tried to present Jogakbo’s artistic characteristics by using techniques similar to Jogakbo traditional methods. I analyzed Jogakbo’s artistic characteristics into the beauty of frugality, simplicity, moderation, freedom and summarized the fashion art design work using the artistic characteristics of Jogakbo in <Table 1> below.

After designing all the works, the author regretfully felt that there were several parameters of Jogakbo left undone: Straight lines or oblique lines were used extensively but there was no use of a variety of shapes like triangles or curved lines; nor was there an example of the traditional color composition of 5 colors (oh bang sae), and finally there were not a great variety of monotone color compositions. Also, not many diverse kinds of material are employed since choices were limited by the constraint of using only leftover clothing scraps and needlework techniques were not terribly varied either as the works were not produced entirely by hand in a traditional way like the original Jogakbos.

V. Conclusion

Fashion art is an art work which is worn on the body in a variety of ways and an artistic mode of clothing that is creatively presented by the designer’s philosophy or psyche.

For this study, I used Jogakbo’s image to present Korean traditional emotions and analyzed Jogakbo’s contemplation and artistic techniques in order to create a fashion art appropriate to Jogakbo’s image. Jogakbo’s artistic characteristics can be summarized in 4 different types.

Jogakbo is artistically presented by line, color, material and technique. Lines are generally straight lines and oblique lines which compose squares, rectangles and triangles. An example of using curved lines is the shape of Yo-ee-joo. Although there are some Jogakbos made of identically shaped fabric scraps, the other Jogakbos that use randomly collected scraps show the natural beauty of lines in the sense of modern beauty.

Since Jogakbo is produced from clothing scraps, colors were not initially chosen considering their combination and yet, beautiful compositions result using only collected materials. The contrast of in-
<Table 1> Analysis of artistic characteristics of fashion art design and Jogakbo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fashion art design work</th>
<th>Artistic characteristics</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Material, Technique, Silhouette</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beauty of frugality</td>
<td>The frugality of using original shapes by themselves, The simplicity of removing decorations and reducing unnecessary lines</td>
<td>Material: blue colored thin silk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>simplicity moderation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Technique: reinforced dual stitching, patchwork of pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Silhouette: box silhouette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beauty of frugality</td>
<td>The frugality and simplicity of removing decorations, reducing unnecessary lines</td>
<td>Material: pastel colored silk organza</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>simplicity moderation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Technique: reinforced dual stitching, patchwork of pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Silhouette: box silhouette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beauty of simplicity</td>
<td>The undecorated or exaggerated simplicity of modern art.</td>
<td>Material: Pale tone, transparent silk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>freedom</td>
<td></td>
<td>Technique: reinforced dual stitching, patchwork of pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Silhouette: rectangle shaped clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beauty of moderation</td>
<td>The simple shape of a rectangle, the free feeling presentation of various ways of wearing it.</td>
<td>Material: Blue colored, transparent silk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>freedom</td>
<td></td>
<td>Technique: reinforced dual stitching, patchwork of pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Silhouette: 2 pieces of rectangle shaped clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beauty of simplicity</td>
<td>Reducing unnecessary lines, presenting free feeling with different ways of wearing it.</td>
<td>Material: Gold colored silk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>moderation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Technique: folded stitch, patchwork of pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>freedom</td>
<td></td>
<td>Silhouette: squares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beauty of simplicity</td>
<td>Simplified shape, reducing unnecessary decorating lines</td>
<td>Material: Purple colored transparent silk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>moderation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Technique: reinforced dual stitching, patchwork of pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Silhouette: rectangle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beauty of freedom</td>
<td>Presenting a flexible color composition and disposal by using limited kinds of cloth</td>
<td>Material: Khaki green and light purple colored transparent silk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Technique: reinforced dual stitching, patchwork of pieces</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Silhouette: Korean traditional clothing (hanbok) silhouette</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beauty of simplicity</td>
<td>Simplified shape, presenting a free feeling with different ways of wearing it.</td>
<td>Material: Light pink colored transparent silk</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>freedom</td>
<td></td>
<td>Technique: reinforced dual stitching, patchwork of pieces</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Silhouette: Skirt of Korean traditional clothing (hanbok) silhouette</td>
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</table>

Tense colors, combination of neutral tints, and the single color of monotone are exemplary of this
genre and the works read as beautiful as today’s artistic compositions even though they were designed & produced by traditional women from early Korean clothing history.

Although various kinds of silk fabrics and hemp clothes like cotton or ramie are used as material for Jogakbo, I tried to use the same kind of fabrics with similar thicknesses when I produced the dresses to increase their tactile smoothness.

Needlework techniques include tacking, hemming, backstitching, and crossstitching; and in cases of two layered fabric, tacking or hemming is doubly done.

I analyzed Jogakbo’s artistic characteristics and divided them into the beauty of frugality, simplicity, moderation and freedom. Beauty of frugality is exemplified by using original shapes without alteration, beauty of simplicity is modern taste not exaggerated or too much decorated, beauty of moderation is presenting a moderational spirit in shape by removing unnecessary decorative lines and beauty of freedom is free color composition and the disposal of shape.

Eight pieces were produced reflecting Jogakbo’s artistic characteristics based on the above analyzed artistic characteristics.

To stay true to Jogakbo’s original spirit, the works produced through the subject study are actually made of cloth scraps which were going to be discarded after making Korean traditional clothing (hanbok).

Since recent Korean traditional clothing (hanbok) is mainly made of silk, fabric scraps are mostly silk pieces. With thin silk I produced a single piece dress by reinforced dual stitching using a sewing machine and with normal silk I made a dual piece dress by sewing and ironing after folding a margin to the seam.

It is regretful that the works displayed lack the full variety of needlework techniques or color compositions even if they do reflect a sample of Jogakbo’s artistic characteristics. However, the works are made of discarded in reality and it gives me a chance to participate in environmental protection while partaking in the spirit of my ancestors.