

Dress and Ideology during the late 19th and early 20th centuries Korea, 1876~1945

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Abstract The late 19th and early 20th centuries of Korea were the times when the Confucianism (性理學) ideology was shaken heavily under the influences of modernism and capitalism by Western and Japanese military and political-economic forces. Under such circumstances, alteration of clothing was much influenced by ideologies than changes in social structure or technological advance. In this study, an ideology was defined as "the force which drives people into a particular social order". Ideologies were postulated as an ongoing process of socialization with dialectic features rather than being a static state. Comparative analyses on conflict structures and different clothing patterns symbolizing the ideologies of the Ruling (支配) and the Opposition (對抗) were conducted. Investigating dresses as representations of ideologies is to reconsider the notion of dichotomous confrontation between the conservatives (守舊派) and the progressives (開化派) and a recognition of Koreans' passively accepting modernity during the Japanese occupation. This may also have contributed to enlightening Koreans about modernization. Here are the results. First, the theoretical review found that ideologies were represented by not only symbols of discourse, but also dresses, and that dresses embodied both physical and conceptual systems presenting differences between ideologies and their natures. Second, during the late 19th century Korea, conflict between conservatives' Hanbok (韓服) and progressives' Western suits (洋服) was found. Moderate progressives showed their identity by "Colored Clothing" (深色衣), and radical progressives by black suits with short hair (黑衣斷髮) or by western suits (洋服). The ultimate goal of both parties was a "Modern Nation". With these efforts, pale jade green coats and traditional hats symbolizing the nobleman class was eliminated within 30 years from 1880 to 1910, and then simple robes and short hair emerged. However, the powerful Japanese army had taken over the hegemony of East Asia, and Korea was sharply divided into modernization and pro-Japanese camps. Third, during the time of Japanese colonial rule, the dress codes having set by the modernization policies during the time of enlightenment were abandoned and colonial uniforms for the colonial system was meticulously introduced. During this period, Western or Japanese-style uniforms were the symbol of the ruling ideology. In the mean time, Hanbok, particularly "White Clothing (白衣)," emerged as a representation of the opposition ideology. However, due to Japan's coercive power and strong zeal for "Great orient (大東亞)," white clothing remained as a mere symbol. Meanwhile, Reformists (實力養成論者) movement toward improving quality of

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life followed a similar path of the Japanese policies and was eventually incorporated into the ruling ideology. Fourth, dresses as representations of ruling ideologies were enforced by organizational powers, such as organizations and laws, and binding policies, and changes in such dresses were more significant when the ruling ideologies were stronger. Clothing of the opposition ideology was expressed as an aggregation of public consciousness. During the period, the subjects of ruling ideology and the objects who were granted modernization benefits were different although their drives for colored clothing with short hair (色衣斷髮) for modernization were similar.

Key words Ideology, Dress, The time of enlightenment (開花期),
The time of Japanese colonial rule, Colonial uniform, White Hanbok

Opposite worlds collide violently and then mesh in fashion. Social conflict and contradiction are displayed ... and diffused. Resistance and conformity coexist within "the mirror of fashion."

-Stuart & Elizabeth Ewen(1982)

Introduction

As Neo-Confucianism, the ideology deeply rooted in the late Joseon Dynasty of the 19th century, was being shaken by modernized western powers and Japanese military, political and economic forces, the existence of Joseon as an independent state was threatened. Then, heated debates over the directions of the nation's future ensued. However, when the nation was annexed by Japan in 1910, the value of the debates and the participants also faded. During the annexation period, Joseon Chongdokbu (the Japanese Government-General of Korea) succeeded in obliterating Korean culture and identity through assimilation policies (Neff & Cheong, 2009). Changes in the clothing style also emerged during the time, which cannot solely be explained by changes in social structure or technological advance, but by the concept of "ideology" (Kim et al., 1993).

What is the ideology that exists at the top of the cultural concept of White (1969), and how the ideology was realized in the form of clothing during the times of Enlightenment and Japanese occupation? What caused the conflict between black suits and white clothes during the period? How have dresses been changed when existing and new ideologies contradicted each other? This series of questions led to a perspective that considers an ideology a more flexible and open concept than a ruling idea of a society; and a dialectic view that interprets an ideology as a conflict between existing and new ideas, i.e. confrontation and conflict, and assimilation and complement between the ruling and the opposition. An ideology as a frame to look at culture and dialectic views to look at ideologies have remained as something of a taboo on the divided Korean peninsula that experienced an ideological war in the mid-20th century. However, in this era of diversity and hybrid, ideology is a critical term to cultural studies, and thus it is expected that investigating dresses that represents ideologies will contribute to un-

derstanding the modernization of Korean dress of the times of Enlightenment and Japanese colonial rule in the cultural-political context.

This study is to compare dresses as representations of ideologies of the late 19th century, “the time of Enlightenment,” and the early 20th century, “the time of Japanese colonial rule,” from dialectic perspectives, in order to identify 1) how the ideologies of the two periods were represented by dresses, 2) messages of dresses and what cultural-political messages were reflected in them, 3) how ideological conflicts were represented by dresses, and 4) how the two periods were differed. To examine the topics stated above, archival study on dresses and ideologies were first undertaken through primary data including the Annals of the *Joseon* Dynasty of the periods of Enlightenment and Japanese occupation, the official gazette of the Greater Korean Empire, the official gazette of *Joseon Chongdokbu*, diplomatic documents, newspapers, magazines, photo albums and movies, and secondary data such as books and theses.

General Consideration on Dress and Ideology

The Concept of Ideology

Definition of Ideology

Ideology is a controversial term that encompasses deceptive thoughts, fanaticism, mystification, dogma, heresy and secular faith in an idea, or an ideal state (Gerring, 1997). The ideology of the French revolution of the late 18th century was associated with liberal and democratic values. At that time, ideologues were recognized as human rights advocates who resisted absolutist states. Later, the term, ideologue, began to bear the notion of “unrealistic” due to B. Napoleon and C. Marx. In the first half of the 20th century when fights against Fascism and Communism took center stage, Democracy was the opposite concept of Totalitarianism, which was a confrontation between the good and the bad. Adolf Hitler and his followers were another group of ideologues who opposed both capitalism and communism, and pursued returning to the pre-modern world to establish an idea, or an ideal state (Knight, 2006). The behaviorist revolution enhanced the concept of ideology into a belief system, and the Cold War between the Capitalist world and the Communist world lasted for an extended period of time. From the 1960s when uniforms were worn by Beatles, who led the pop culture of the time, and Mao Suits were worn by Americans to satirize “hardheads,” ideology became a laughing stock. At that time, Geertz (1973), a symbolic anthropologist, utilized the concept of ideology in analyzing culture, and Althusser (1969) postulated a state system as a representation of ideology and analyzed this idea to paradoxically demonstrate the possibilities of the ideology of the governed. These perspectives that considered an ideology not a fictional or imaginary concept, but a tangible and visible representation presented a new possibility of ideology serving as a frame for cultural studies. Today, the concept of ideology became critical to the field of cultural studies (Kim, 2006). In the late 20th century, Shils (1974) insisted that an ideological group acted toward a single ideal for people in general, and that ideologies competed with each other for the ideal. Therborn (1980) claimed that an ideology was a medium operated by consciousness and

meaningfulness, an aspect of a human being living as a conscious actor, and a force maintaining and concurrently changing a governing system of a society. McLellan (1995) suggested that an ideology was a conviction for the ideal state of human society and that it had been endorsed by Francis Bacon, the empiricist philosopher of the 16th century. In the same context, Britannica (2010) defines an ideology as “a system of thoughts that explains and/or changes the world,” and Chun (2005) “the force which drives people into a particular social order.” Meanwhile, Nishikawa (1983), who focused on the establishment of modern states after the French Revolution, defined an ideology as a discourse to establish a modern state.

To sum up the definitions of ideology discussed so far, an ideology is an agreed-upon conviction

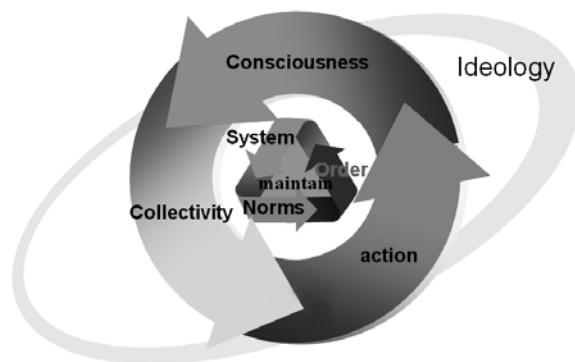


Figure 1.
Concept of ideology

of a society to seek for the idea, or the ideal state, by human reason, sometimes realized as an action by a conscious doer, and a discourse that provided the foundation of modern states. When one or more ideologies are integrated into a unified discourse that forms a society, the ideology allows establishing social orders and norms and/or changing existing orders and norms to meet the demands for change. Meanwhile, those who tried to change the world viewed an ideology as a deceptive thought and a system

that perpetuated the ruling class, and thus attempted to revolutionize the world through new ideologies. In other words, the governing class regarded an ideology as a riot, disorder or treason while change-seekers saw it as liberalization and democratization. In sum, ideology can be conceptualized as <Figure 1>.

Dialectic Features of Ideology

Therborn (1980) criticized the static nature of Althusser (1971)’s “ideological state apparatus,” and insisted that, in order to understand how an ideology works in society, it should be seen as an ongoing social process rather than a possession or text of a society. This idea led to conflict theory. Coser (1956) and Rudé (1959), who converged structural functionalism and conflict theory, discovered functions of social conflict, and claimed that conflicts within and/or across social groups could induce generally isolated individuals into active roles. Dahrendorf (1959) agreed to the idea that conflicts were the inherent nature of social activities, and believed that class struggle positively affected society. Rudé (1959) verified that the public who participated in dramatic changes of history was not an irrational gang or an



Figure 2.
Dialectic feature of ideology

insane social group, but a rational group of people who were driven by motives, goals and ideologies, contributing to positively changing the image of the public. Christenson et al. (1981) cited that a certain ideology should not remain as it initially was, or be fixed as a revolutionary idea, but revolutionary ideologies may become a ruling ideology as with the passage of time. In Korea, which has been divided by an all-out war triggered by ideology confrontation, it became possible to deal with an ideology as a concept of ruling-opposition confrontation only after the mid-1990s (The Institute for Korean Historical Studies, 1994).

This study regards an ideology as an ongoing social process with dialectic nature, not a static state. <Figure 2> conceptualizes the dialectic features of ideology.

Dress and Ideology

According to the concepts of ideology stated above, an ideology is a product of human conscious (reason, spirit) that emerged in the process of modernization of human society, has played important roles in forming states, people and nation, and has served as the fundamental energy to maintain or change human society. Studies on dresses and ideologies have viewed a clothes wearer, not socio-environmental changes or external influences, as a conscious being, and focused on the relationship between human society and dress.

The view focusing on the relationship between human society and dress is influenced by Giddens (1991), whose study scope included a matter of existence that had been institutionally excluded by modernity. The concept of “life politics” is related to self-actualization on both the individual and collective levels. In this process, dresses do not merely protect bodies of wearers, but represent symbols and self-identities of the wearers, and thus are an externally-functioning key component of life politics.

An ideology is actualized when human beings express it in the form of language or other symbols. This has been the focus of symbolic anthropologies, a branch of modern anthropology. It has been widely acknowledged that clothes play communicative and cultural roles in society since they express similar traits of the wearers in terms of social status, age, gender, class, occupation, marital status, religion and other aspects. Therefore, different ideologies held by conscious individuals or groups within a society are also expressed and distinguished by what they wear. Clothes form a system of corresponding physical differences, and thus deliver a system of conceptual differences. The signs of clothes also symbolically prove how the two categories differ from each other. In short, clothes not only demonstrate differences between categories, but also specify different natures of each category. Clothes are a symbolic expression

of cultural category that they distinguish (McCracken, 1988).

Clothes' role of identity expression was interpreted by Simmel (2005) as differentiating and socializing force, and euphemistically expressed by Douglas & Isherwood (1979) as fence and bridge. In particular, a uniform refers to a single shape used in a group, i.e. the same clothing, helping understand the relationship between identity and clothing.

Confucianism that sustained the Eastern world of the previous era also considers clothes an important representation and symbol. According to the semiotic study on body by Lee (1999), who verified that, in the Eastern world, clothes had been a symbol of individual and/or group identity; a human body had been a communication mechanism between oneself and the world; and the ruling class expressed their status and authority by wearing corresponding clothes, gestures and faces, while the ruled expressed their obedience and subordination by lowering themselves or by not wearing the colors and clothing items that only ruling class was allowed to. *Liji*, a collection of ritual observances, dictates that as one's clothes, not to mention one's eyes and face, are the outward expression of one's spirit, clothes are not simply to protect one's body but to represent one's status, and ultimately to show one's spirituality. *Liji* warns against ostentatious clothing without one's spirituality, and stipulates that when a person wears clothes, he/she must have virtue corresponding to the clothes, which Confucius called "congruence of expression and foundation."

Regardless of region, humans as social beings have used the cultural material of clothes to represent their identities and ideologies. Among scholars who explained a change in dresses as a change in ideologies and/or conflict phases, Mazrui (1970), a scholar from Kenya that underwent the British colonial rule, examined how African dresses related with the coercion of the colonial regime or the resistance of the nation; and Lauer and Lauer (1981) suggest that ideologies conflict each other in the form of clothing by looking into the introduction process of bloomers to American society, and compete each other to widely spread the style of each ideology. In Korea where the term, "ideology," has long been something of a taboo due to its political-military situation, Kim et al. (1993) in the late 20th century suggested that an ideology was a key factor that drove the changes in the fashion culture of the 20th Korea, citing "the increase of *Hanbok* wearers after the Japanese annexation of Korea and the trend of wearing reconstruction suits must be viewed as ideological matters rather than political changes."

Therefore, this study examines dresses representing ideologies, to understand how ideologies conflicted and competed each other during the times of Enlightenment and Japanese colonial rule, which were two ideological conflict phases in Korean history; and to identify the conceptual and physical aspects the ideologies, and differences of the two periods.

Conceptual Framework

<Figure 3> is a conceptual framework of this study. In the course of modernization, an ideology played important roles in forming states, people and nations. It was also a critical component when Korea was establishing a modern state from the late 19th century to the early 20th century. The year of 1876 was

the time when Korea was forced to sign the Kanhwa Treaty with and by Japan, which had already been transforming itself into a modern state. It is a symbolic and historic year when Korea first signed a modern treaty after it had closed its door to the wave of modernization. Around this time, conflicts emerged between the conservatives who clung to Neo-Confucianism, the ideology that had sustained *Joseon* Dynasty, and the progressives who tried to adopt modernization of the West. This conflict was also represented by dresses of the period. At that time, *Joseon* was engaged in fierce debates over how to transform itself into a modern state of the Greater Korean Empire. However, the debates were all put to an end by the Japanese annexation in 1910. The annexation also annihilated the value of Korea's independent efforts toward modernization. During the occupation period, Japan obliterated Korean identity and culture through assimilation policies. At the same time, Koreans re-discovered their nation during and by the Japanese colonial rule, the re-discovered nationalism and patriotism led to symbolic dresses resisting *Joseon Chongdokbu*, and conflicts between two clothing styles took place. This study is to investigate dress as a representation of ideology of the times of Enlightenment (1876~1910) and the Japanese occupation (1910~1945) in accordance with the framework suggested above.

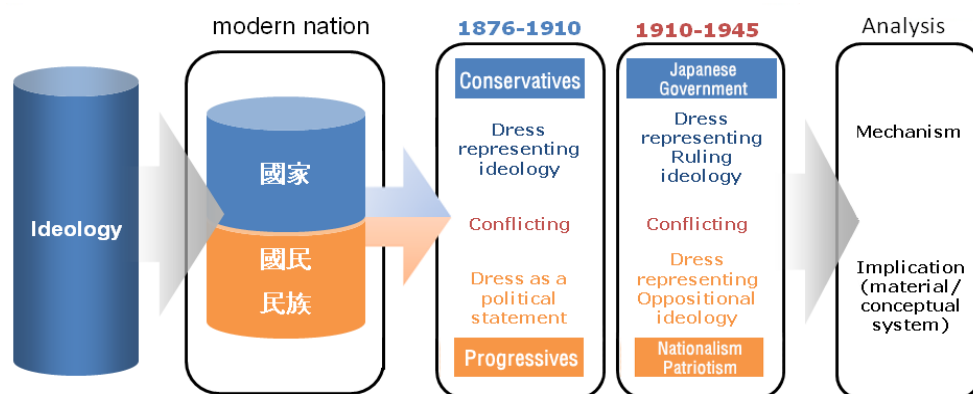


Figure 3. Conceptual framework

Analysis and Result

Dress and Ideology in 1876-1910

Heungseon Daewongun, who acted as regent from 1863 to 1873, strengthened the centralized authoritarian rule and tightened political discipline. He had the sleeves of *Dopo* (a white attire of ruling-class gentlemen) narrowed, and recommended narrow-sleeved and short *Durumagi* (a traditional outer coat);

banned white clothes, and encouraged people to wear colored-clothes instead; and had the brim of *Gats* (Korean traditional hats) narrowed to weaken the authority of the noblemen. In addition, he allowed people to smoke only short tobaccos by cutting the previous long ones. However, he undertook a closed-door policy that prevented western civilization and ideology, which in turn delayed the enlightenment of the nation.

In 1873 when *Gojong* finally took over the power, the country became ready to open the door. In 1880, he ordered to eliminate the monuments of *Cheok-hwa* (literally translated as rejection of peace) that had been planted across the country by his father (*Heungseon Daewongun*) and shifted the nation toward opening its door in pursuit of national prosperity and military power. Around this time, dress of the people began more simplified. In the photo of *Bobingsa*, a diplomatic delegation dispatched to the United States in 1883, it is found that *Jeonbok* (a type of sleeveless long vest) and *Dopo* were already shortened <Figure 4>. Modern suits were primarily accepted by political progressives and students who had studied abroad. The *Dopos* worn by students having studied abroad in 1883 were narrow-sleeved, and their *Jeonboks* were dark-colored. Such clothing was became an official style in 1884 by the reform of dress regulation in *Gapshin* (The Annals of the *Joseon* Dynasty: *Gojong*, on 24-25, May of lunar leap month in the 21st year of *Gojong* - The reform of dress regulation in *Gapshin*).

The reform of dress regulation in *Gapshin* designated *Heuk Danryeong* (Black ceremonial robe) as official robes, replacing the previous style of *Hong Danryeong* (red ceremonial robe) that was a showy representation of public officials' masculinity and status. Changing the multi-layered clothing of *Daesoopo* into a unified narrow-sleeved *Durumagi* implies strengthening usefulness of clothes and suggests an equal clothing style by abolishing of class discrimination in the dress. However, when The *Gapshin* Coup of the same year failed, the reform was also annulled. *Gojong* abolished any and all reform acts that he had announced, citing "Institutionalized dresses directly go against the norm of our customs ... let the people wear what they find convenient." (The Annals of the *Joseon* Dynasty: *Gojong*, on 21, October of lunar month in the 21st year of *Gojong*)

Despite the failed the top-down reform, from the *Gapshin* Coup of 1884 to the *Gabo* Reform of 1894, driven by progressives who had been enthusiastic about enlightenment, bottom-up reforms took place by voluntarily accepting modern civilization and simplifying their dresses. Early students of foreign language schools often wore narrow-sleeved *Durumagis* with narrow-brimmed *Gats*, or sometimes wore *Gaehwa* vests (western-style vests) and *Magojas* (outer coats) on top of trousers and *Jeogoris* (traditional jackets) <Figure 5>.

With modeling after western vests, people of the time made *Gaehwa* vests with pockets attached on them, and wore them on top of their *Jeogoris*. The *Dopos* did not have a pocket, so people had to keep their possessions in the wide sleeves. That is why people call the pocket "*Gaehwa Pocket*." (Lee, 2003).



Figure 4.
The Photo of *Bobingsa*.
Taken by Foulk (US chargé d'affaires and
acting minister in the 1880). From Chosunilbo.
(2009). <http://playculture.chosun.com>



Figure 5.
Early students of a Russian school. From
Rosseti (1904), p.161.

The *Donghak* Peasant Revolution (1894) and the First Sino-Japanese War (1894~1895) gave a rise to more diplomatic pressures on the *Joseon* Dynasty to open its door by the militant Japan, and progressive bureaucrats, including *Yu Kil-chun*, re-entered politics. However, they were hardly able to actively run the government. The reform of dress regulation in *Gabo* (1894) was implemented around this time, based on the reform of dress regulation in *Gapshin* (1884). The *Gabo* reform reorganized the governmental office in pursuit of an Empire, but changed only the names of official robes: *Gwanbok* to *Daeryebok* (special ceremonial robe), and *Sabok* to *Tongsang Yebok* (routine official robe). (Lee Gyeong-mi, 2008). The reform of dress regulation in *Eulmi* (1895) removed *Dapho* (a long and sleeveless official robe) from the official dress code; made ordinary people wear black *Durumagi*; designated Black *Danryeong* as *Daeryebok*, and *Chaksupo* Black *Danryeong* (narrow-sleeved black *Danryeong*) as *Soryebok*; and made all noblemen and ordinary people wear black clothes. Dress codes for the military and the police were also enacted around this time. [Army Uniform Code: Edict 78, April 9, 1895; *Gyeongmu-gwan* (Deputy Assistant Commissioner's office) Code: Edict 85, April 19, 1895] In addition, *Sangtu* (topknot of hair), the legacy of old days, was also eliminated. Instead, *Gojong* promoted short hair, a symbol of enlightenment, and had his own and his son's hair cut on November 15, 1895 of the lunar calendar (December 30, 1895 of the solar calendar). On the day, *Gojong* issued a royal edict prohibiting topknots, and, from January 1, 1896 of the solar calendar, crackdowns of *Sangtu* were launched. About two thirds of Seoulites had their hair cut within a week, and more and more people, including *Baejae Hakdang* (school) students, inspectors, officials and *Iljinhoi* (Pro-Japanese club) members. However, local societies centering on Confucian scholars were strongly against short hair, and thus a symbolic war represented by *Sangtu* and short hair began between the conservatives and the progressives (Kim Eoh-jin, 2003).

After the Greater Korean Empire was officially proclaimed as a modern independent state in 1897,



Figure 6.
Gojong and Sunjong wearing western-style military uniforms. From *Corea e Coreani* (2009), p.45.

government officials were prohibited from wearing pale jade green coats from April, 1899, but made to wear dark *Jeonbok* (*Tongnip Sinmun*, April 13, 1899 edition). As the Regulations of *Wonsoo-bu* (the then-Defense Ministry, June 22) and the Constitution of Greater Korean Empire (大韓國國制, the first modern Constitution of Korea, August 14) were declared in 1899, the emperor and the crown prince began to wear western-style military uniforms, a symbol of the head of state who dominates the military < Figure 6>. In April 1900, the country adopted western-style court dress with the pattern of the rose of Sharon that symbolized the independent sovereignty of the country (Lee Gyeong-mi, 2009). From 1903, the government started to promote aniline-dyed dark color clothes, rather than the pale jade green, in order to develop the domestic dyeing and chemical industries; and the aniline dyes were mostly imported from Germany (*Hwangseong Sinmun*, March 13 - 14 edition). The government recommended dark colors, such as dark purple, dark blue, dark black and dark navy, not a single color of black. Black clothing actually represented radical progressivism, and was sometimes subject to police crackdowns (Bourdaret, 2009).

Japan seized the hegemony of East Asia when it won the Russo-Japanese War, which broke out in February 1904. The pro-Japanese *Ijinhoi* were a strong supporter of Japan during the war, and wore western suits with short hair, a symbol of radical progressivism. The members always wearing western suits with short hair led the Japanese annexation of Korea, and made the general public think that western suits symbolized foreign powers (Kim Jin-sik, 1990). In September 1904, *Jinbohoi*, another radical progressive group organized by the *Donghak* religious body, also embraced black suits with short hair. As Japan interfered in the national affairs of Korea, it tried to ease the regulations on white clothes that were related to the interest of Japanese merchants. From January 1906, Japan opted for more coercive schemes, such as writing with ink and brushes on white clothes worn by Koreans, to ban white clothes; and *Ijinhoi* also joined the banning efforts of Japan by spraying black water to Koreans who wore white clothes (*The Daehan Maeil Sinbo*, January 7, 1906 edition; *The Chosun Ilbo*, Page 4 of the March 22, 1972 edition).

After the *Eulsa* Treaty of 1905, Japan established *Tonggambu* (the Japanese Residency-General) in Korea, took over the Korean police authority, disbanded the Korean military, and usurped the judicial power of Korea. Under such circumstance, educated Koreans organized public enlightenment groups to provide public education, to develop national power and ultimately to lay the foundation for the country's independence. Among many, *Kookmin Yebok Uijeonghoi* (the National Ceremonial Dress Committee) was organized on January 28, 1908 by intellectuals like *Ji Seok-young* and *Yoon Goryeo* to adopt more advanced ceremonial clothes for the general public. This was a representation of their commitment to

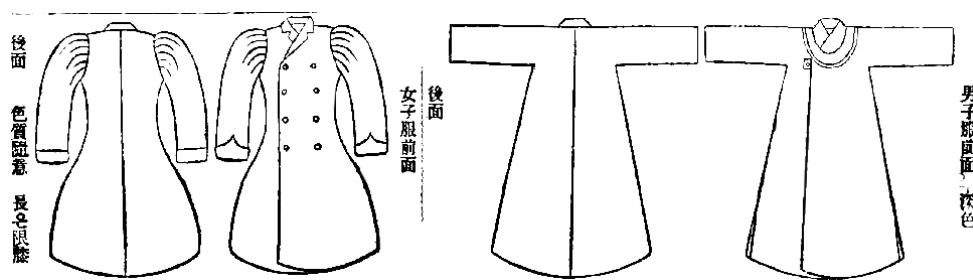


Figure 7. Ceremonial clothing designs for men and women designated by *Kookmin Yebok Uijeonghoi* in 1908. From Hwangseong *Sinmun*(1908)



Figure 8. Yu Kil-chun, putting on *Danryeong Durumagi* (Ceremonial dress). From Yu Kil-chun exhibition at Korea university museum.

driving this country to a more civilized nation through dress codes. Among intellectuals and their wives, ceremonial clothing designs < Figure 7 > were developed and submitted to *Joongchoo-won* (the advisory board to the government) on August 4, 1908 as a policy agenda. However, *Joongchoo-won* refused to enact such a law, citing that what the public wears should be decided by themselves. The *Danryeong Durumagi* worn by *Yoo Kil-chun* in the photo is men's ceremonial clothing developed by the intellectuals <Figure 8>.

Women's clothing was also westernized. Such change was driven by the urban upper class and those who had studied abroad as they had westernized views and participated in social activities. Among Korean women, those were aware of gender equality refused to wear *Jangot* or *Sseugaechima* (veils to cover women's faces), but chose to wear *Chaksu Durumagi* as men of the time did. (*Tongnip Sinmun*, 1899) An article published by *The Mansebo* in its November 23, 1906 edition claimed "If women are to recover their equal rights and to engage in social activities, it is necessary to reform the dress codes. Abolishing *Jangot* altogether and letting women show their face in public is to conform to the norm of today." Then, many women began to use parasols, dramatically driving up the demands for parasols (Nam Yoon-sook, 1990). In 1907, *Sookmyung Women's College* where most students came from the upper class adopted the Edwardian-style uniform of one-piece and hat, a style created in the United Kingdom <Figure 9 and 10>. This college is the first school that introduced a western-style uniform, and thus caused a great sensation.



Figure 9.
Uniform of *Sookmyung* women's college in 1907.
From Geum et al. (2002), p.48.



Figure 10.
Edwardian Style
From Photobucket (2010).

From the Port Opening period to the Japanese annexation of 1910, ideologies had been represented by dresses: 1) the progressive-dominated period from the Port Opening of 1876 to the *Gapshin* Coup of 1884, 2) the retro period from 1884 to 1894, 3) the *Gabo* Cabinet period from 1894 to 1897, 4) the autonomous modernization period of the Greater Korean Empire from 1897 to 1905, and 5) the initial period of *Joseon Chongdokbu* from 1905 to 1910. During the progressive-dominated period, the progressives and students who had studied abroad actively introduced simple and dark-colored clothes and thereby dresses of the period were being modernized. Such trend was officially adopted as a policy by the reform of dress regulation in *Gapshin*. The focus of the reform was to change the previous *Hong Danryeong* and *Daesoo* to *Heuk Danryeong* and *Chaksu Durumagi*. However, the root of Neo-Confucianism that had sustained the *Joseon* Dynasty for over 500 years was not easily shaken. Furthermore, as the progressive politicians who tried to proceed with a dramatic reform and to change the minds of the public by changing what they wore were losing their ground, they planned the *Gapshin* Coup. When the Coup failed, the retro period arrived and lasted until 1894. Then, the *Gabo* Cabinet launched another round of dramatic reform from 1894 to 1896. This reform was mainly about having all the people, regardless of their class, wear black clothes with short hair, and faced with strong resistance from the conservatives and the civilian armies both of who wore white *Hanbok* (traditional dress of Korea). In 1897 when the Greater Korean Empire was proclaimed, the people were no more forced to wear unified black-colored clothes. However, different ideologies, including the government's, the conservatives', the radical progressives' (or the pro-Japanese'), and Japan's, embodied by different dresses and colors were in conflict. While the conservatives stuck to white *Hanbok* and *Sangtu*, the Government that pursued a gradual and autonomous modernization embraced dark colored-clothes, and the radical progressives who advocated black suits and short hair conformed to the same style and color of the Japanese ideology <Figure 11>.



Figure 11.
Dress and ideology between 1876~1910

Dress and Ideology in 1910-1945

After the forced annexation, *Joseon Chongdokbu* plundered the Korean Peninsula for Japan's capitalist economy and turned it into a military base under the guise of modernizing and enlightening *Joseon*. As a result, Koreans were sharply divided into two groups: those who followed the Japanese modernization, and those who maintained their national identity.

Joseon Chongdokbu introduced Japanese-style uniforms in order to firmly establish its colonial regime. Symbolically, it decided to treat the royal family of *Joseon* as military officials on February 17, 1911, and announced that they should wear the Japanese Army uniform and be affiliated to the Japanese Army. Following the announcement, the regime enacted or revised the dress codes for Korean police officers, firefighters, soldiers, public officials, public school faculty, prison guards, military polices and their assistants, ship crew, railroad workers, post officers and port crew. Public school teachers wore uniforms with the sleeve- ends and shoulders gilded, gilded hats and swords to show off the power of the

Japanese militarism <Figure 12>. Although *Joseon* had accepted western-style uniforms through its autonomous modernization efforts over the periods of the *Gabo* Reform and the Greater Korean Empire, the Japanese colonial regime meticulously introduced its own uniforms to Korea from 1910 so that the ordinary Koreans became to wear the uniforms in their day-to-day lives. When the uniforms first introduced, they were mostly black or navy. However, over the periods of *Meiji* and *Daisho* (1912~1926), yellowish khaki uniforms were introduced, and from 1938 (year 13 of *Sohwa*) greenish khaki uniforms were introduced.



Figure 12.
The Japanese Governor-General, wearing a uniform
From Nakata & Nelson (1997), p.64.

Since the March 1st Movement of 1919, school uniforms became mandated <Figure 13>. Dark *Durumagis* were allowed as part of school uniforms. As Japan was hit hard by the Great Depression, it brought about the *Manchurian* Incident and strengthened the assimilation policy to pillage physical and human resources. The movement to eliminate white *Hanbok*, or

Dress and Ideology during the late 19th and early 20th centuries Korea, 1876~1945

white dress, was initially led by Enlightenment advocates. As the movement was in the same direction as the Japanese assimilation policy, it was spread throughout the country with the strong support of the Japanese regime. The movement was fueled by the Japanese-led dyeing seminars and found to have peaked between the years of 1933 and 1934 based on the news articles(*the Dong-a Ilbo*, *the Sidae Ilbo*, *the Chosun Sinmun*, *the Buksunilsinmun*, *the Jeosunjoongang Ilbo*) on the dyeing seminars from 1921 to 1939 <Figure 14>.



Figure 13.
Hansung High School and the Students' Clothing.
From Gyeonggi high school (1981).

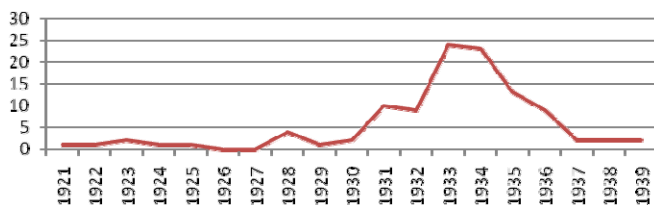


Figure 14.
Frequency of dyeing lectures advertised in newspapers during 1921-1939

As *Joseon Chongdokbu* that was deeply involved in the Koreans' voluntary movements toward modernization aggressively drove the assimilation policy, Koreans' clothing of the time was getting darker. This is well reflected in the clothes of the members of the Korean Language Society (*Joseon Eohakhoe*) in 1935 when the assessment meeting on *Joseon* standard language was held <Figure 15>. In this photo, all but one member wore dark-colored *Durumagis*. After the Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1938, all uniforms from officials' robes to school uniforms were being assimilated to the khaki army uniform. Gaiters were also introduced to the military training. As Japan introduced *Gookminbok* (national dress) to ordinary Japanese people in 1940, Koreans were also forced to wear *Gookminbok* <Figure 16>. Even Korean women were force to wear *Mompe* (the traditional Japanese-style loose work pants) so that they could be mobilized to work for the Japanese colonial regime <Figure 17>.

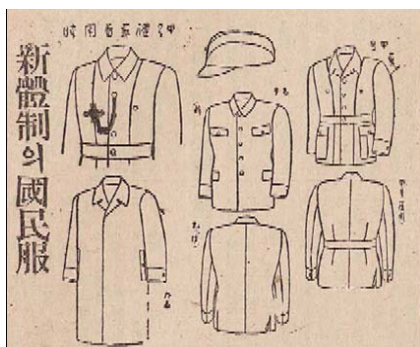


Figure 16. Gookminbok Gapho and Eulho (National dress version A and version B). From Maeil Sinbo (1940).



Figure 15. Members of the Korean Language Society (*Joseon Eohakhoe*) in 1935. From Ministry of patriots and veterans affairs. (2010). <http://blog.naver.com/mpva/60115848640>



Figure 17. A day of Aegookban (Patriotic Club) – Women in *Mompe* (loose work pants) cleaning their neighborhood. From the colonial *Joseon* and war art exhibition: lives of ordinary people in wartime (2006), p.71.

During the Japanese occupation, Koreans were getting modernized. Independent activists who carried out a reformist cultural movement, artists and female intellectuals all advocated competence improvement as part of the cultural movement, and the modern lifestyle to improve quality of life. Among many agenda, reforming clothes was discussed mainly over the patterns and colors. However, the reformist cultural movement became pro-Japanese by *Joseon Chongdokbu*, and adaptive and/or cooperative to the regime and ultimately absorbed by the ruling ideology.

Meanwhile, the ordinary Koreans, whether it was intentional or accidental, maintained their identities. When Korea lost its sovereignty by The Korea-Japan Annexation Treaty of 1910, western suits began to lose its popularity while *Hanbok* was re-gaining its popularity among ordinary Koreans. This trend represented patriotism of ordinary Koreans who desperately wanted to recover their country and thought western suits as something of luxury or embarrassment. Influenced by this trend, school uniforms were changed to *Hanbok* (Oh, 1964). After the March 1st Movement of 1919, westernized nationalists who received modern educations emerged as social leaders and promoted public-driven independent movements. As a result, ordinary people began to change their attitude toward western suits, from flat denial to selective acceptance (Yoo, 2002: re-cited by Geum, 2002),

which provided the people the opportunity to reaffirm the firm existence of the nation. In addition, at

the funeral of the last emperor, *Sunjong*, in 1926, the wave of white mourning clothes was witnessed. Seeing the white wave, people recognized that white *Hanbok* was the symbolic dress of the nation, representing their shared sorrow about the lost country <Figure 18>. Choi Nam-sun, who was the owner and editor of *Sidae Ilbo*, likened Koreans to white clothing people (白衣人) in an article published in the newspaper on May 6, 1924. As *Joseon Chongdokbu* strengthened the policy of white *Hanbok* abolishment from 1930, two Confucian scholars took their own lives in order to demonstrate their commitment to protecting the Korean identity by white *Hanbok* (*The Dong-a Ilbo* February 13, 1934; *Gaebyeok New Edition*(3) 1935). The Independence of 1945 was a cause for the resurrection of white clothes, the symbol of the nation <Figure 19>.



Figure 18.
Citizens and Cavalrymen at the June 10 *Manse* Independence Movement.
From courtesy of the Seoul municipal government (2008).



Figure 19.
A celebration wave for the independence in *Mokseong-ri, Gwangyang-eup, Jeollanam-do*, August 16, 1945. From Lee (2004). <http://blog.naver.com/carrotcamdy?Redirect=Log&logNo=4888203>.

After the Japanese annexation, voluntary and autonomous modernization efforts of Korea were forced to stop. Then, the colonial Japan introduced Japanese-style clothes to Korea, and the Japanese uniform was the ideological symbol of the ruling power. The resistant ideology of Koreans was embodied by “white clothes (白衣).” However, the white clothes became to only remain as a symbol after the 1930s due to the relentless and coercive power of Japan, which once seized the hegemony of East Asia. In the meantime, advocates of competence improvement launched a clothing reform campaign as part of modernization efforts; but their ideology was eventually absorbed into the ruling ideology of *Joseon Chongdokbu* due to the similar nature and directions of the two ideologies. <Figure 20> shows the relationship between dresses and ideologies of the Japanese occupation period from 1910 to 1945.

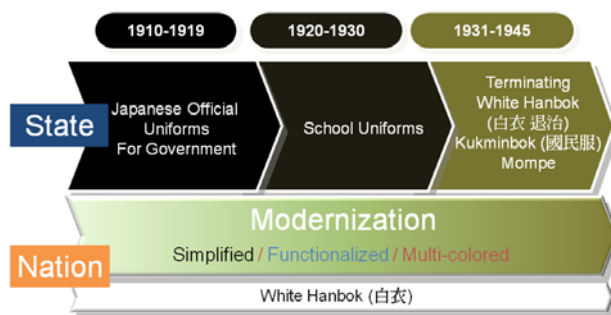


Figure 20.
Dress and ideology between 1910~1945

Conclusions and Suggestions

This study has investigated dresses as representations of ideologies during the times of Enlightenment and the Japanese colonial rule (from 1876 to 1945), based on the analysis framework described in the paragraph III, and found that fierce ideological conflict over modernization was not a simple dichotomy between the ruling and the opposition. Dresses as a representation of the ruling ideology were set forth by laws and policies, while different ideologies as representations of public consciousness were incorporated and embodied by their clothes.

In the late 19th century and the early 20th century, the world was witnessing the great wave of modernization that started from the West, and this wave of the time was hard to avoid. Modernized clothes were simple, functional and dark-colored. The governments of the *Joseon* Dynasty and the Greater Korean Empire implemented a series of timely reforms in pursuit of autonomous and independent modernization, but failed due to strong oppositions. Still, dresses of the time were gradually more simplified and darker-colored. The dresses of the Empire and his officials of the Greater Korean Empire were also westernized, but they tried to maintain the national identity by at least adopting the patterns of the robe of *Sharon*. However, such autonomous and independent movements withered as Korea was forcefully annexed by Japan, the then-hegemony of East Asia, and the Japanese uniform took over the trend. *Joseon Chongdokbu* prohibited Koreans from wearing white *Hanbok* but forced to wear *Gookminbok* and *Mompe*, so that it could obliterate the national identity of Koreans, assimilate them into Japanese and ultimately mobilize them for war.

As such, dresses as a representation of the ruling ideology were enforced by laws and policies in the forms of uniforms or of the kind. Despite the clothing styles were similar before and after the Japanese annexation, their implications were completely different. The ruling ideology of the Enlightenment period was modernization that maintained the autonomy and identity of the nation and pursued a strong and wealthy state, while the ruling ideology of the Japanese occupation period was

modern colonization.

Meanwhile, the opposition ideologies as aggregations of public consciousness were represented by white *Hanbok* and *Sangtu* by the conservatives who tried to maintain the Confucian identity; reformed *Hanbok*, *Gookmin Tongsang Yebok* (dark colored-clothes and western-style national ceremonial dresses), dark colored-clothes and western-style national ceremonial dresses by the gradual progressives who pursued independent enlightenment of the nation. The radical progressives wore western suits or black suits with short hair, and their appearance conformed to the Japanese policies. During the Japanese occupation of Korea, the progressives and reformists were integrated into the ruling ideology of *Joseon Chongdokbu*, while the national identity of Koreans was maintained by the symbolic white *Hanbok*.

This study reconsidered the notions that dresses of the time of Enlightenment were in dichotomous conflict between the conservatives and the progressives and that Koreans passively accepted the dresses enforced by the Japanese colonial rule; and shed light on Koreans' autonomous and independent efforts toward modernization in those times. However, this study has its limitation in that it used a retrospective approach based on the artifacts, photos and literature of the times, and thus it may not have been able to examine dresses as representations of ideologies that have been lost. It also failed to include changes in female dresses in accordance with the changes in public awareness about gender equality and women's social participation, or the dresses of anarchists during the time of Japanese occupation.

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