

# **The Study on the Decorative Factors of Korean Traditional Skirts: Chima**

**Kyoung-Hwa Lim\* · Soon-Che Kang\*\***

Ph.D. Candidate, Dept. of Clothing and Textiles, The Catholic University of Korea\*  
Professor, Dept. of Clothing and Textiles, The Catholic University of Korea\*\*

## **I. Introduction**

Chima, one of women's basic costume, traditionally had been expressing their identity as well as forming beauty of Hanbok. This thesis surveyed decorative factors of Chima in the directions of color, patterns, construction, sewing and silhouette to find out how Chima had been changed enforcing its beauty.

Before Choseon Dynasty, mural paintings in tumulus, clay figures, Buddhist paintings were studied with documents and for the Choseon Dynasty excavated articles, literature and documents and pictures were referenced.

From the civilization to current times, various materials such as pictures in newspapers and magazines were added to analyze. This study is to recognize Chima's esthetic and symbolic meaning from women's Hanbok in which Chima take a big part, to infer its changing process in future.

## **II. Decorative factors of Chima from the period of Three Kingdoms to the period of Goryeo**

### **1. From the period of Three Kingdoms to the period of United Shilla**

In this period there had been various decorative materials since the social status were represented with costume and clothing materials. From the mural paintings there can be seen many forms of Chima such as Sun(襖) around bottom with narrow or wide pleats<Fig. 1>, multi colored Chima<Fig. 2> and Front Chima on multi colored Chima<Fig. 3><sup>1)</sup>.

The painting of parade of Anak tomb No.3(安岳 3號墳) looks like a special ritual and it has red Sun(襖) on red spotted fabric<Fig. 4>.

From the period of United Shilla different wearing manners were coexisted : Dang Dynasty's manner which worn Chima over Jeogori<Fig. 5><sup>2)</sup> and our traditional manner which worn Jeogori over Chima. Two Sun(襪) at the bottom of Chima<Fig. 6> is considered to be a upper classes's formal wearing manner who wear Chima by double.

In the period of Three Kingdoms, as seen from the mural paintings, various kinds of decoration methods were used with lines, pleats and with stripes of many colors wearing a longh Chima. In United Shilla period materials for decorations were various<sup>3)</sup>, costume and clothing materials were different depend on the social status.



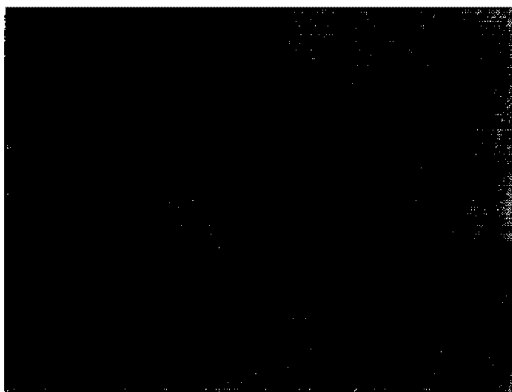
<Fig. 1> 舞踊塚



<Fig. 2> 修山里 古墳



<Fig. 3> 龕神塚



<Fig. 4> 安岳 3號墳



<Fig. 5> 龍江洞 土俑



<Fig. 6> 角抵塚

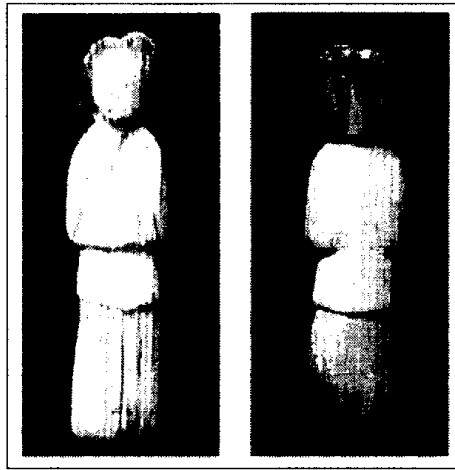
## 2. The Period of Goryeo

The width of Chima was widened with rich silhouette according to Goryeodogyeong(高麗圖經), and women wore yellow colored clothes. The upper and lower classes made little difference. But for the royals, red colored painting and embroidery were used but it was forbidden to common people<sup>4)</sup><Fig. 7, 8, 9>. It is seen that for the color of Chima yellow and red were used, and painting and embroidery were added to Chima.

In portrait of Joban's wife(趙胖婦人像)<Fig. 10> and Hayeon's wife(河演婦人像)<Fig. 11>, it is inferred that the two manners of wearing Chima : Dang Dynasty manner and our traditional manner. The different aspect from the period of Three Kingdoms as shown in portrait of Joban's wife(趙胖婦人像) and buddhist paintings, is that the front string had been lengthened. It is thought to be used to tie the Chima after putting Chima around the waist.



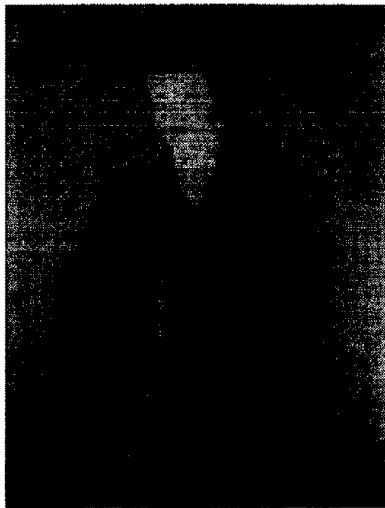
<Fig. 7> 朴翊墓



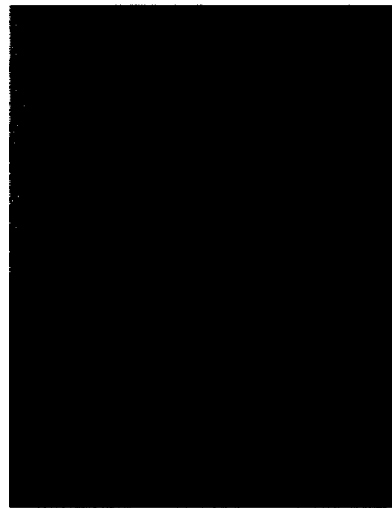
<Fig. 8> 高麗木偶像



<Fig. 9> 高麗佛畫



<Fig. 10> 趙胖婦人像



<Fig. 11> 河演婦人像

### III. Decorative factors of Chima in Choseon Dynasty

#### 1. Early period of Choseon Dynasty

According to Taejongsillok(太宗實錄)<sup>5)</sup> women's costume had followed traditional

costume, and in this period a lot of strict restrictions on color were prevailed. But on special occasions such as wedding ceremony common people wore colored costume<Fig. 12, 13, 14, 15>.

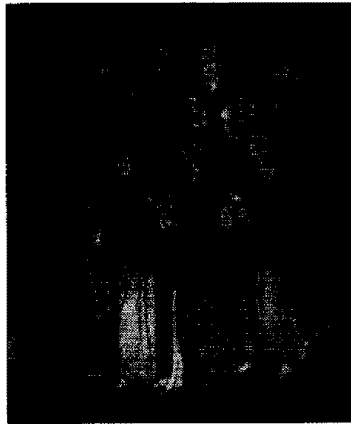
According to Seongjongsillok(成宗實錄)<sup>6)</sup> the width of Chima was pretty wide and it was a little bit depended on social ranks. Chima formed H-type silhouette. It had uplifting front after folding the bottom like double skirt<Fig. 16> and lifting front folded.

Seuran in Yeonsangunilgi(燕山君日記)<sup>7)</sup> can be seen in excavated antiquities of Ms. Han(清州韓氏)<Fig. 17, 18>.

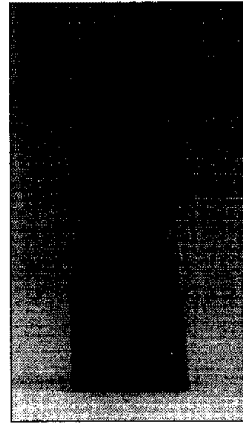
In early period of Choseon Dynasty social status and ranks were represented by fabric's color and weaving pattern. Expect for the decoration using for Seuran(膝襪裝飾) which used in the Royal court, they expressed the beauty by weaving the decorations with fabric<Fig. 19> instead of adding decorations to the fabric directly.



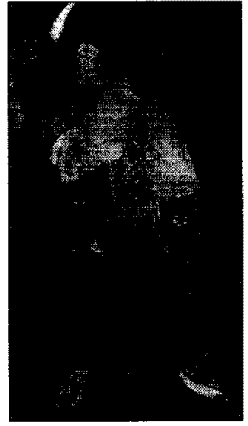
<Fig. 12> 十老圖像圖



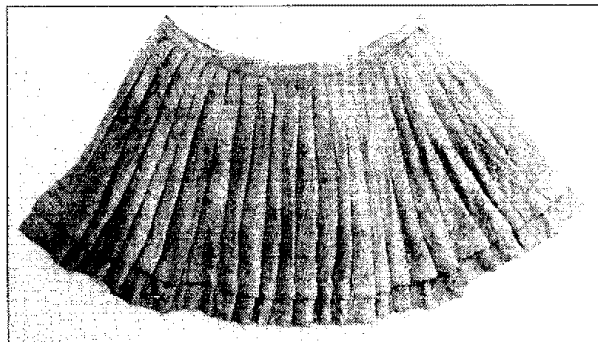
<Fig. 13> 甘露王圖



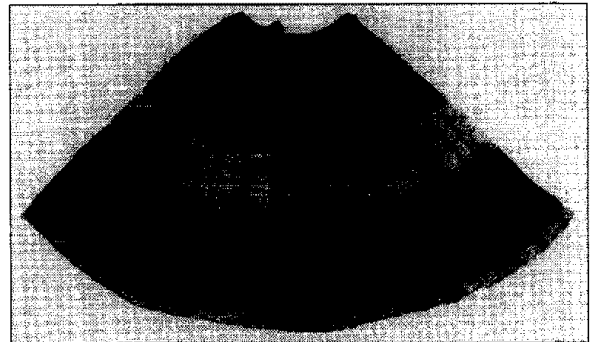
<Fig. 14>  
原州邊氏墓 出土



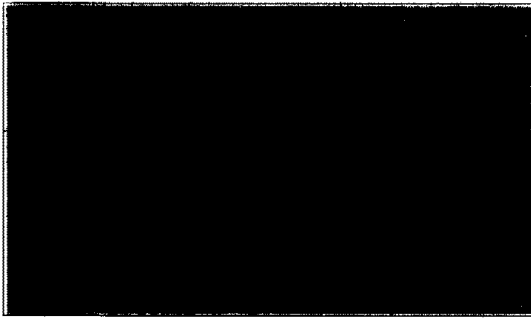
<Fig. 15>  
大德寺



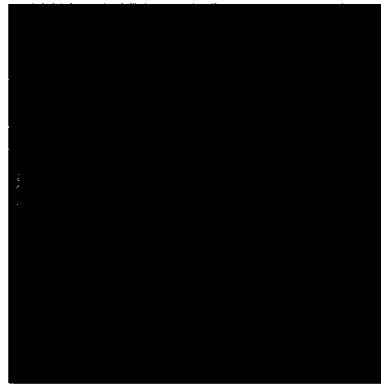
<Fig. 16> Jeobeum-hem(접음단) Chima  
長髻鄭氏



<Fig. 17> Seuran Chima (清州韓氏) 衣



<Fig. 18> Seuran Chima's textile 衣



<Fig. 19>  
Chima's textile(驪興閔氏)

## 2. Later period of Choseon Dynasty

According to Garyedogamuigwe(嘉禮都監儀軌) and Balgi(衣櫛件記), in Royal Court by using Seuran(膝襪) and Daeran(大襪) on red and blue Chima they expressed their dignity.

In the Chima of Garyedogamuigwe(嘉禮都監儀軌), cloud and floral designs were mainly used for weaving pattern using various fabric materials such as spun tabby Ju(紬), twill weave Reung(綾), thin tabby Gyeon(絹), gauze Sa(紗), satin damask Pildan(匹段) used as fabric materials<Fig. 20, 21>. It is written on the Jibongyuseol(芝峯類說)<sup>8)</sup> that even to the low ranked man Saraneungdan(紗羅綾緞) were used. But according to Sangbangjeongnye(尚方定例), Toju(吐紬) and Baekjeopo(白苧布) were used for Daewangdaebi(大王大妃), Junggung(中宮), Bingung(嬪宮) and it seems that it reflected King Yeongjo(英祖)'s policy on garment which forbid luxury and regarded frugality as important.

In this times restrictions on colors were rare and on the documentary paintings various of colors were seen, and many vegetable designs were used. In the early period of Choseon Dynasty Seuran(膝襪) were used on the knee part but in this times it was lowered to the bottom. The widened Chima was prevailed to this times from the early period. As shown on folk paintings Chima became longer as Jeogori became more tightened and shortened<Fig. 22>. As the length of Jeogori became shortened they wear a girdle of a skirt(치마허리) to cover the breast between the Jeogori and Chima. There were two ways to wearing Chima. One is the downward using a girdle of a skirt(치마허리), and the other is tightening the Chima on the breast. These were used according to personal tastes showing how people expressed their instinct for beauty<Fig. 23, 24, 25>. Common people used short Chima but on a special ritual they used long one<Fig. 26, 27>. With various ways they wear Chima revealing under pants<Fig. 28>, and a way revealing breast was introduced<Fig. 29>.

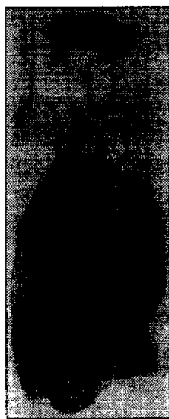
Oval silhouette made main stream and the decorative brassiere were appeared creating various wearing manners. With various shortened Jeogori, Choseon clothings expressed strong eroticism.



<Fig. 20> 英祖貞純后 嘉禮都監儀軌



<Fig. 21> 南池耆老會圖



<Fig. 22>  
美人圖



<Fig. 23> 路上托鉢



<Fig. 24> 納涼漫興



<Fig. 25>  
挾籠採春



<Fig. 26> 浮碧樓  
宴會圖



<Fig. 27> 回婚禮圖



<Fig. 28> 路上風情



<Fig. 29> 女人

By conclusion, in Choseon Dynasty they expressed ranks with restrictions of color and fabric. The shape of Chima changed gradually from former period in which long, pleat and stripe colors were its main shape and color to the various wearing methods diversified design, decoration, color and construction method. Through this women expressed their instinct for beauty and fulfilled themselves.

#### IV. Decorative factors of Chima from the period of Civilization to the present

##### 1. The period of Civilization~under Japanese Imperialism (1890's ~ 1945)

In this period, wearing white color garments was forbidden by Japan. Many new fabrics were imported and manufactured and foreign fabrics were used in Hanbok. Flower designs were used<Fig. 30, 31> and garments made with see-through fabric were appeared through which the inside was could be seen<Fig. 32>. In early period the short Tong-Chima had been popularized to students and westernized young female while ordinary women wore long Chima. Reformation of clothes had become an important issue, and the girdle of Chima(치마허리) changed to vest form of Chima(조끼허리). Made Jeobeum-hem(접음단)<Fig. 33, 34> uplifting the bottom of Chima after fold it, Which made it looked like a double skirt, and put a white line around the bottom which symbolizing the school<Fig. 35>. And a wearing Chima on the Jeogori tightening the brest was appeared<Fig. 36, 37>. They show H-type silhouette. Under Japanese imperialism, training-style trousers(뽀빠이) became increased while wearing of Chima were decreased.



<Fig. 30>  
韓國女性洋裝變遷史



<Fig. 31>  
1908 student



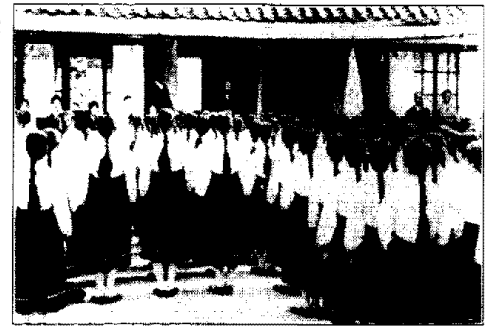
<Fig. 32> 官妓  
Choeson 1892 seen through photos



<Fig. 33> 1940 students



<Fig. 34> Sisters of St Paul de Chartres in Korea 1888-1988



<Fig. 35> school uniform of Jin Myeong high school  
韓國女性洋裝變遷史



<Fig. 36> Choeson 1892 seen through photos

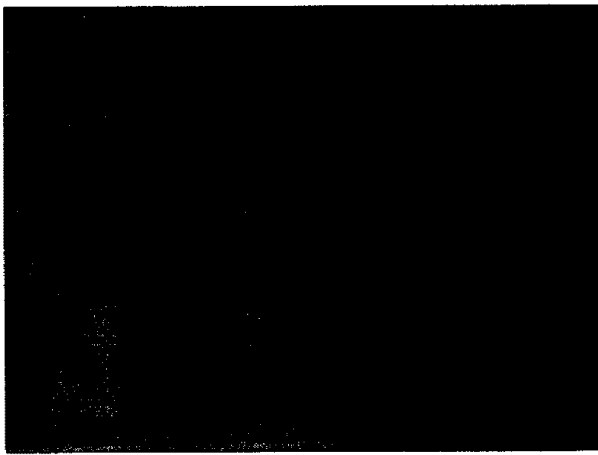


<Fig. 37> Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres in Korea 1888-1988

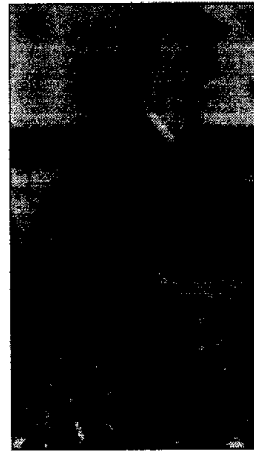
## 2. After Independence from Japan(1945~1960's)

Due to the shortage of clothing materials and economic difficulty they wore cotton Chima in the early period<Fig. 38>. But in later period the industry of textile had developed new materials which pursued exterior beauty of solid fabric<Fig. 39, 40, 41>. Seuran Chima of gold foil which were used in Royal Court become popular and Su(繡), multi colored decoration(色同裝飾) were used<Fig. 42>. After the war, western style clothes had gradually generalized as every day wore short Chima while in formal occasion they wore long one. Female student wore pleated Tong-Chima reaching to knee<Fig. 43, 44>. Daily life they wear short Chima while in ritual occasion they wear long one. But as wearing western style garments had become generalized Hanbok became ceremonial cloth and A-type silhouette had developed.





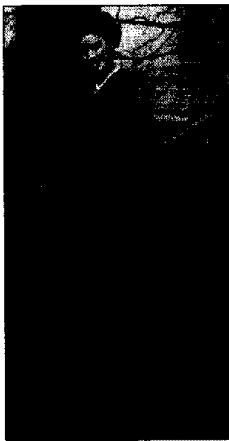
<Fig. 38> 主婦生活 1957



<Fig. 39> 1960's  
Beautiful our  
clothes



<Fig. 40>  
主婦生活  
1959



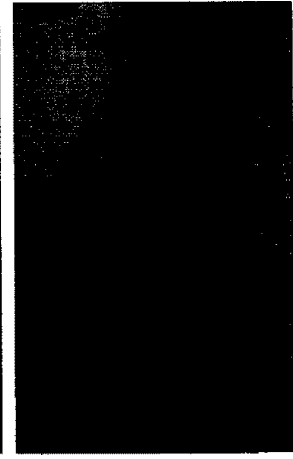
<Fig. 41> 1969  
主婦生活



<Fig. 42> 女性生活 1960



<Fig. 43>  
30years Modern  
history of Korea

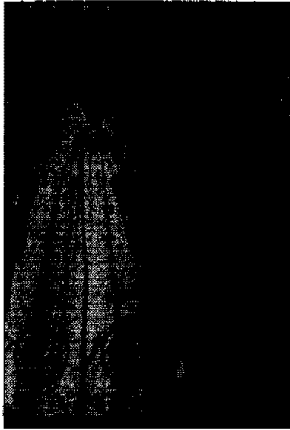


<Fig. 44> 1957  
主婦生活

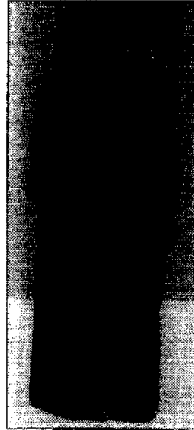
### 3. 1970's ~ 1980's

After 1970's, Hanbok had certainly become the formal clothes wearing on special occasions. The width of Chima had widened and excessive decorations were appeared. Various decorative schemes, such as golden foil, embroidery with golden thread, paintings had been used<Fig. 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50>. Many pastel colors were appeared and gradation method was used. In 1980's, fabric that can be worn for four season(사철깨끼) was introduced. The wide part of Chima changed to the surface decorations mainly with paintings<Fig. 51, 52, 53>. Using fabric that can be worn for four season(사철깨끼) changed the sewing method : sew outer fabric separately from

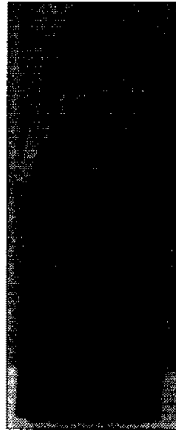
lining. In this period as Hanbok become ceremonial cloths, A-Line cutting method was adopted and it made the wearer taller than real.



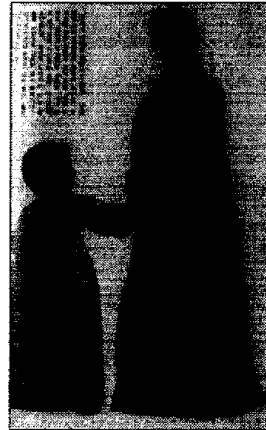
<Fig. 45>  
女苑1975



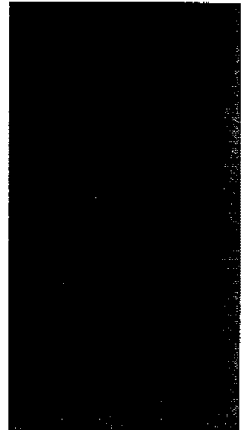
<Fig. 46>  
主婦生活  
1973



<Fig. 47>  
主婦生活  
1970



<Fig. 48>  
主婦生活 1972



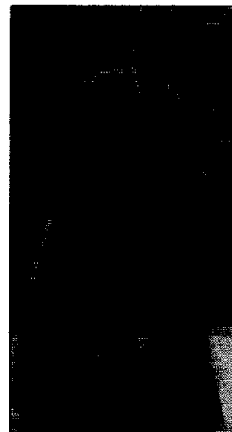
<Fig. 49>  
主婦生活 1978



<Fig. 50>  
主婦生活 1981



<Fig. 51> 1982  
li Lija Hanbok



<Fig. 52>  
Beautiful our  
clothes 1989



<Fig. 53> 女性中央  
1988

#### 4. 1990's - to the Present

As Hanbok frequently introduced to the world, modest colors and designs were used frequently to revitalize its traditional beauty. With people's growing interests for our traditional things Hanbok become casual one for every day life and it made Hanbok business growing rapidly<Fig. 54>. Casual Hanbok became easy to wear on waist by narrowing the bottom or shortening the length. Also old-fashioned fabric had been reintroduced. In mid 1990's decorations enforced with Line become popular such

as adding vertical line to look taller than real<Fig. 55, 56>, and making double hem as if worn two pieces of Chima. The decorations of Chima were modest using small design in part and using fabric itself without decorations<Fig. 57, 58>.

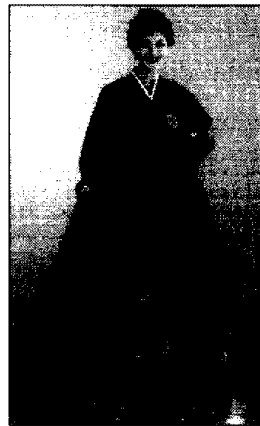
Hand made decorations such as Piping, decoration using Jat(잡 물리기)<Fig. 59>, making hem double as if worn two pieces of Chima. This period were mainly used and natural materials and natural dyeing were popular<Fig. 60, 61>. A-Line silhouette become more reinforced and 6width and 7width Chima were introduced.



<Fig. 54>  
Dalmajee 2002



<Fig. 55> 1996  
Beautiful our  
clothes



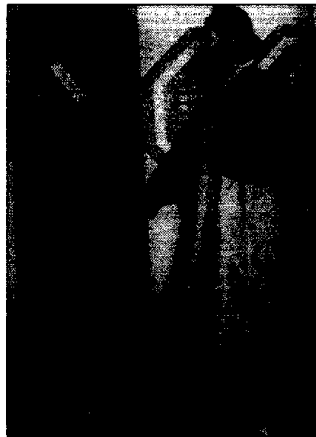
<Fig. 56> 1995  
Beautiful our  
clothes



<Fig. 57> 2001  
東亞日報



<Fig. 58> Kim  
Hyesun Hanbok



<Fig. 59> 1996  
Beautiful our clothes



<Fig. 60> 1991  
主婦生活



<Fig. 61> Natural  
Dyeing

## V. Conclusion

Decorative factors of Chima focusing on colors, weaving patterns, construction

and sewing and silhouette had been surveyed. The ancient style of Chima, enforcing Sun(襪) and pleats and multi colored decoration had been changed through United Shilla to Goryeo with changing materials, colors, wearing methods. In early period of Choseon the color had been differenced to express the social status. Various wearing styles, patterns of textile and colors, not by explicit decorations were used to express the sense of beauty in later Choseon Dynasty. After the Civilization period, composition method and easiness of wearing had been focused. Variations of textile were enforced after independence from Japan, Various decorative methods were created after 1970's, and traditional materials and hand-made schemes were developed in 1990's. Currently, Chima displays politeness and elegance by development of natural dyeing and natural materials. H-type silhouette had changed into Oval-type in later Choseon Dynasty, and changed to H-type in Civilization period. After Independence A-type silhouette was introduced and had been enforced maintained until now.

## References

- 1) The Compilation Committee of "The illustrated book of ruins and relics of Korea"(2000). *Cultural Assets and Sites in North Korea*. Seoul National University Press.
- 2) Kyongju National Museum(1999). *Kyongju National Museum*. p. 40.
- 3) 三國史記 卷33 雜誌 色服.
- 4) 徐兢. 宣和奉史高麗圖經. 卷第二十.  
 婦人  
 女子之服白紵黃裳上自公族貴家下及民庶妻妾一槩無辨項歲貢使趨闕獲  
 貴婦  
 秋冬之裳間用黃絹或深或淺公卿大夫之妻士民游女其服無別或云王妃夫人以紅爲尚益加繪  
 繡國官庶民不敢用也
- 5) 太宗實錄 7年 4月 壬寅.
- 6) 成宗實錄 2年 12月 壬申.  
 成宗實錄 3年 正月 己未.
- 7) 燕山君日記 10年 5月 壬子.  
 燕山君日記 10年 8月 辛酉.
- 8) 芝峯類說, 卷三, 君道部 法禁, ...今則井市倡賤皆服紗羅綵段...