A 16th Century Joseon Korean Man’s Hanbok

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Barony of South Downs
Kingdom of Meridies
A TYPICAL HANBOK

The term *hanbok* (한복) refers to traditional Korean clothing, and is used as a general term to describe an entire outfit rather than an individual piece of clothing. The basic hanbok forms emerged during the Three Kingdoms period (first century BCE - 7th century CE), and evolved slowly through the Unified Silla (654-935), Goryeo (918-1392), and Joseon (1392-1910) eras. These changes were brought about by foreign influence, religious changes, and expression of wealth through fashion. The style of the Joseon period was influenced by both the clothing of the Ming Dynasty in neighboring China and Confucian ideals of formality and dignity.

The elements of a man’s hanbok of the Joseon era may contain a number of different pieces and layers, depending on the social class of the wearer, the weather, and the situation. The *hanbok* I made is intended for a member of the *yangban* (양반) class, civil and military officials who were expected to study and display Confucian principles.

The pieces I chose to include are the following:
- **Jeoksam** (적삼) – undershirt
- **Baji** (바지) – pants
- **Beoseon** (버선) – socks
- **Haengjeon** (행전) – gaiters
- **Jikryeong** (직령) – coat with straight collar
- **Sejodae** (세조대) – cord belt with tassels
- **Manggeon** (망건) – headband
- **Gat** (갓) – hat
- **Gatkkeun** (갓끈) – beaded hat string

This outfit would be appropriate for everyday wear outside the house in a non-official setting. In an official or court setting, a *danryeong* (round collared robe) would be added as an outer layer, and the *gat* would be replaced by a rounded *samo* (사모). At home, a tiered *jeongjagwan* (정자관) would replace the *gat.*

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1. Yi, et al., *Traditional Korean Costume*, pp 7-8
2. Yi, et al., pp. 8-10
3. Lee, “Yangban”
**FABRICS**

The main fabrics used in Joseon clothing are silk, cotton, ramie, and hemp. Silk and hemp were documented in the Korean peninsula by the 1st century CE\(^4\), and by the Goryeo era ramie was being exported.\(^5\) Cotton was famously brought to Korea from China in 1363 by a Korean diplomat.\(^6\) As ramie is hard to find, linen is a reasonable substitute, though ramie has a much stiffer hand.

**JEOKSAM**

The *jeoksam* (적삼) is an under layer worn by both men and women, and is fairly simple in construction. There is a wide variety of methods for constructing the collar, underarm gusset, and sleeve available.\(^7\) I based the proportions for my jeoksam on the pictured example, but with a wider collar and without the pleats in the crossover panel in the front. The underarm gussets are squares cut in one piece with the sleeve and folded in half. While the pictured example is from the early 17th century, all of the construction techniques are very common in 16th century examples.

I opted for cotton for my *jeoksam*. The collar is doubled, but otherwise the garment is a single layer. The construction is mostly by machine, with French seams (*tongsol*: 통솔 \(^8\)) where it was easy to do so. Hems and final collar attachment were done by hand.

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4 Seth, A Concise History of Korea, p.22  
5 Seth, p. 85  
6 Seth, p. 110  
7 Park, “Excavated Jeoksam”  
8 Pak, Chimseon, p. 59
The outermost layer for this outfit is the *jikryeong* (직령, pronounced “jingnyeong”). This is a coat with a straight collar and pleated sides.

I created my pattern based on an example from Dankook University SeokJuseon Memorial Museum, dated from 1524-1582 (Fig. 4). This example is made of silk, padded and possibly lined with cotton. There are two examples of ramie *jikryeong* in the tomb of Choi Gyeong Seon (1561-1622). I opted to make my *jikryeong* out of teal linen lined with cotton. Indigo dyeing has a long tradition in Korea, so it should be a reasonable color.

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10. Kim, *Traditional Natural Dyeing*
I allowed for plenty of extra length when patterning so there was ample room for hemming. One of the distinctive features of the jikryeong (and other robes like the danryeong) is the slits at the sides. The wide panels at the sides are pleated once inside the body of the garment, and the remaining width of each flap is folded in half back on itself. When worn, the corners of the flaps tend to fold down, forming a sloped angle at the top of each flap.
After the lining was cut out, I cut the outer layer the same way. I sewed the sleeve seams on each layer starting from the cuff through the gussets, leaving the lower sides open.

The next step of the process was to finish the lower side panels. I was able to turn it inside out enough to access the edges I needed and sew these seams by machine.

Next I had to tackle the collar. To give it some extra body, I cut two more strips of the teal linen (one without seam allowance) and machine quilted them together with zigzag stitches. I cut the curve on the end and then sewed the quilted piece to the outer and lining layers at the top edge. I then folded over and pressed the seam allowance on both layers. I basted the folded edge of the outer layer around the quilted interlining and then laid out where the collar would go on the front of the body.

At this point the body panels had not been trimmed at all. The goal was to line up the collar so the bottom point hit at the top of the diagonal panel (in line with the side gusset below the sleeve) and the top hit the edge of the neck opening.

As you can see in the diagram, the collar just barely covered the point where the main crossover panel attached to the body. In the future, I will add a couple inches to this panel for safety.

The edge of the body lining didn’t quite match up with the outer layer, so I trimmed the lining to match and then slip stitched the diagonal edge. I could probably have done this by machine, but I didn’t want to risk throwing the collar out of alignment.

I then trimmed the body panels back under the collar and stitched the outer layer of the collar to the body. I cut a slight curve in the back of the neck opening and then continued sewing the collar down around the back of the neck.
I followed a similar method to attach the collar to the other side of the body. This part was simpler because there was only one crossover panel and the collar was square at the end. I had planned for extra length on the collar piece, and once I had it laid out I trimmed off the extra. Before attaching the collar here I sewed the edge of the crossover panel on the machine. Once the collar was attached all the way around, I sewed the lining down on the inside of the body.

Next I trimmed the lining at the cuffs and hand finished those edges. Finally, I made some silk ties (goreum: 고름) for the front and a heavy linen tie for the inside.

Once the collar was attached to the body of the jikryeong, I added a white band to the edge called a dongjeong (동정). This is a typical feature of Joseon\textsuperscript{11} clothing, and is meant to be removable for laundering. I made this one from heavy ramie.

At this point I was ready to sew the hem. Looking at the extant piece I used as my inspiration, the hem of the front is straight, curving very slightly upward at the ends. The inner crossover panel rises slightly so it won’t peek out from underneath the top layer. Both diagonal panels of the crossover sections are angled upward. The rear hem is longer than the front and has a consistent curve throughout. The edges are about 1.5” longer than the front, while the center is about 4” longer.

As this garment is lined, marking and sewing the hem is challenging if a sagging lining is to be avoided. First I hung the whole garment on the rack and used some scrap fabric to pin the side panels out straight.

\textsuperscript{11} Lee, \textit{Traditional Korean Costume}, p. 10
I folded the hem up to where I wanted it and pinned it along each section, trimmed the seam allowances, then hung it back up to even up the lining and pin it in place for sewing.

The next step was to pleat the side panels in. First each panel was pleated to the inside where it met the body, then the remainder of the panel was folded in half and sewn at the top. When worn, the corners of the panel tend to fold down to show a diagonal silhouette.

The final element was the reinforcing patches at the top of the side panels. Looking at the original, I could see a seam in the middle of the patch, so I constructed it as two rectangular pieces sewn halfway together, leaving a slit at the bottom. The patches were attached using a small back stitch.
Joseon men wore their hair in a topknot called a *sangtu* (상투). To keep the lower part of the hair in place, they wore a headband-like article called a *manggeon* (망건). The *manggeon* is commonly seen in dramas as a narrow band made of woven horsehair, with a more see-through window in the center front.

Here you can see the upper and lower ties used to secure the *manggeon* to the head, as well as the button-like ornaments (*gwanja* – 관자) on the sides that help secure the ties. Since the Joseon era extends far past the SCA period, it’s important to look at specific dates and look at the changes in garments over time.

The *manggeon* worn by Yi Jeon (1599-1615) (Fig. 6)\(^{12}\), a member of the royal family in the middle Joseon period, shows some of the changes that happened during the latter Joseon period. You can see many of the same features in this example: woven horsehair, upper and lower strings, and temple ornaments. The major difference is the overall shape and height. As befits Yi Jeon’s status, the elaborate weaving and red horsehair section are unusually extravagant.

A similar shaped *manggeon* was found in the tomb of an official named Choi Gyeong Seon (Fig. 7)\(^ {13}\). Again, it covers a larger amount of the head than the later headband style *manggeon*. It is less elaborate than Yi Jeon’s, but still displays impressive craftsmanship.

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\(^{12}\) Gyeonggi Museum, “Manggeon”

\(^{13}\) Song, et al.
In a paper from Seoul Women’s University describing the tomb find, the authors provide this analysis of Choi Gyeong Seon’s *manggeon*¹⁴ (Google translation):

… it is a good resource to know the shape and shape of a man’s head in the early 17th century as he wears a manggun made of horsehair … In particular, this is the first case of wearing a horsehair [manggeon].

This seems to imply that the horsehair *manggeon* is either relatively new in the early 17th century, or that there are no previous extant examples. In either case, it may be useful to delve further back into the origin of the *manggeon*.

The Encyclopedia of Korean Folklore Culture says this about the *manggeon*¹⁵ (Google translation):

Manggun originally originated in the Ming Dynasty and was made of silk. However, as it entered the Joseon dynasty, the material was changed to horsehair instead of silk, and the shape was simplified and recreated in the Joseon style. In Joseon, horsehair, a material for mangeon, was collected from Jeju-do or Pyeongan-do, where there were many horse ranches. … Through the relics unearthed from the tomb of [Yi Jeon] (1599–1615) … the form of the Chinese mangan can be confirmed.

The Chinese ancestor of the *manggeon* is called *wangjin*. These are typically made as a net of silk thread, and share the same shape and features as the early *manggeon*¹⁶. The *wangjin* pictured in the 1607 Ming encyclopedia *Sancai Tuhui* (Fig. 8)¹⁷ is very similar to the two early 17th century Joseon tomb finds pictured above.

Some *wangjin* are made from silk cloth (Fig. 9)¹⁸, though it doesn’t seem to be the most common form. People of all social classes are depicted wearing the net style *wangjin*.¹⁹ However, from a reconstruction standpoint cloth gives me an easier starting point. There are also extant 18th century *manggeon* that are made from straight strips of fabric (Fig. 10)

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¹⁴ Song, et al.
¹⁵ Encyclopedia of Korean Folklore Culture, “Manggeon”
¹⁶ Yang, et al., *Jin Ping Mei*
¹⁷ Yang, et al.
¹⁸ Yang, et al.
¹⁹ Yang, et al.
Given all of these examples, my conjectural attempt at a passable manggeon is made from a linen rectangle with casings for drawstrings at the top and bottom. The gwanja are plastic mother of pearl colored buttons, and the strings are made from synthetic dahoe (Korean knotting cord).

The lower strings are looped around the gwanja and then tied at the back of the head. This causes the edges of the manggeon to overlap and cover any gap. Some instructions say to then tie these strings around the top-knot. I cinched up the top edge with the upper string and then tied those ends around my topknot, again causing the edges to overlap.

This is a usable first attempt, but I already have plans to change it based on looking at more examples. Rather than casings with drawstrings (which are not really seen in a Korean context), I would replace the lower string with narrow strips of fabric attached to the corners and run the upper string through the fabric at the top like a large running stitch as seen in the 18th century examples. This method of running drawstrings is also seen in extant pouches. I may also experiment with a fabric manggeon with a shape more like the mid-Joseon examples and a curved seam in the front.

Rough as it is, this first try does the job of covering my hair and providing a comfortable surface to wear my hat.
One of the most distinctive features of the hanbok is the gat (👑), more specifically the type of gat called the heukrip (흑립, “black hat”). The heukrip is made of thin strips of bamboo, lacquered and stiffened with fish glue. The crown may also be made from horsehair, and sometimes the crown and brim are covered with silk.

Gat, Traditional Headgear in Korea has this to say about the development of the gat:

Examples for the use of the term heukrip can be found from as early as the 16th year of King Gong-min’s reign [r. 1351 – 1374] during the Goryeo Dynasty, and can be said to originate from the production of heukrip decorated with jewelry befitting governmental status. The heukrip prevalent at this time, however, differed from those of the Joseon period, and the hat-top decorations on Goryeo-era heukrip allow the speculation that they may have been close in origin to the balip of the Yuan Dynasty. The shape of the heukrip was finalized during Joseon, and soon settled as the hat of choice for classes of prestige.

Although the precise form of early Joseon gat is indeterminable, records exist regarding the gat, heukrip, gojeonglip, jungnip, and chorip. The shape of the gat was first discussed during the reign of King Seongjong [r. 1469 – 1494], when it was named the ibche-wonjeong-icheomgwang, meaning that it had “a round top and broad brim”. It was decreed that all gat would be produced to follow this format.

It would appear that following King Seongjong, the gat neared its stage of completion. From the hemispherical crown and broad brim of the balip, the gat was altered to have a more cylindrical crown with a narrow top and broader base, and was produced using a more diverse range of materials. Having undergone phases such as the pyeongnyangja and chorip, headgear in Korea culminated in the heukrip, which is representative of the Joseon period.

From the chronology of changes made to the gat, it is evident that the headgear was initially round at the crown with a broad rim, with the crown becoming gradually higher and the rim remaining broad. During the reign of King Myeongjong [r. 1545–1567], the crown was excessively low to the point of resembling a small plate atop a larger plate, while the brim resembled a small umbrella. This trend was mocked for its similarity to the hat worn by monks (seungnip); the variation created to compensate for this shape was, in turn, ridiculed for its disproportionately high crown and narrow brim. Alterations such as these show the effect of the cultural trends of the period upon the development of headwear. Indeed, the gat of the 16th century towards the end of Yeonsangun’s reign [r. 1494–1506] showed many changes regarding the height of the crown and width of the brim. Headgear policy during the reign of King Jungjong [r. 1506–1544] was variable to the point of frivolity. The gat of this period began with a tall crown and wide brim, to the end of this period, when the hat became even higher while the brim became narrower. King Myeongjong’s reign saw the crown lowered and brim broadened again.

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20 Ch’oe, et al., Gat: Traditional Headgear in Korea, p.22
21 Ch’oe, et al., p.25
22 Ch’oe, et al., p.26
By the 16th century, the crown of the gat had become tall and tapering, but still round at the top (Figs 12-15). By the end of the 16th century, the crown had become a tapered cylindrical shape and remained so through the remainder of the Joseon period (Fig. 16).²³

A properly made gat is highly specialized and labor intensive, and would cost several thousand dollars, with no easy way to replicate it. The gat I have is a purchased costume piece, and it is in the style seen in the 17th century and onward. It is plausible that the cylindrical style gat would have come about by the end of the 16th century, so it’s a reasonable substitution but not ideal. The 16th century portraits also show the hat sitting lower on the head than later examples. I have found one hat available online that is the rounder 16th century shape, but it’s likely that it would still sit fairly high on my larger-than-average-Korean head.

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²³ Ch’oe, et al, p.22-23
The tie holding the gat to the head is called gatkkeun (갓끈). These straps were sometimes decorated with beads to help weight the hat down, and these beaded strings eventually became a separate article. Materials mentioned as being used for these beads include gold, jade, agate, amber, coral, lapis lazuli, ivory, and bamboo.24

The gatkkeun varied in length based on wealth and fashion, sometimes becoming quite long or being held together partway down by a connecting bead. A variety of forms can be seen in the examples owned by Ryu Seong-Ryong (Fig. 17).25 A common form is alternating oblong and round beads with a larger central bead, which is also seen in the portraits in Fig. 14 and 15 above. The alternating long narrow bead (made from wood, bamboo, or other materials) and round bead form is also seen often throughout the Joseon period. The form of small beads all the same size seems less common, though there are paintings that seem to be alternating large and small round beads (Fig. 18).

I was unable to find a suitable oblong bead, so I opted for alternating large and small beads for my gatkkeun. The beads I chose were of unidentified material, some of them probably colored glass. I strung them on metal beading wire, attaching jump rings on the ends with crimp beads.

I sewed loops of thread around the junction of the crown and brim of my gat, just in front of the straps. I fashioned S-hooks from wire and hooked one end through the thread loops, leaving the other end free to attach the beads.

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24 Ch’oe, et al., pp.27-28
25 Cultural Heritage Administration, “Treasure No. 460”
Traditional Korean socks are called *beoseon* (버선). They are the same for men and women, and have two overall shapes. *Goteun beoseon* (곧은버선) have the foot portion in line with the ankle, and *nuin beoseon* (누인버선) have the foot at a right angle to the ankle.\(^{26}\) The *nuin* shape is found in earlier examples, and up through the 18th century. I have not found an example of the *goteun* shape before 1600.

In addition to shape, *beoseon* are classified by construction method. *Beoseon* that are lined but not padded are called *gyeop beoseon* (겹버선) (Fig.19)\(^ {27}\). *Som beoseon* (솜버선) are padded with cotton, while *nubi beoseon* (누비버선) (Fig. 20)\(^ {28}\) are padded and quilted. *Hot beoseon* (招商引�) are unfined and are worn as a liner inside other socks. *Beoseon* for all social classes were white, and usually made of ramie.\(^ {29}\)

The *beoseon* I made were patterned using a proportional method that is traditional but not pre-1600 (from a class taught by Seong Myeong Su Daegam). This technique produces a *goteun* shape. I have not yet attempted *nuin beoseon*. I made *hot beoseon* from a single layer of heavy linen and *nubi beoseon* from two layers of cotton broadcloth and a layer of cotton quilt batting.

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1. Baste the padding to one layer of the shell.
2. Sew the shell layers together, leaving the top edge open.
3. Trim the seam allowance and clip curves.
4. Turn through the top edge opening and baste through all layers.

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\(^{26}\) Wikipedia, “Beoseon”  
\(^{27}\) Cultural Heritage Administration. “Artifacts Excavated from the Tomb of Go Un.”  
\(^{28}\) “Important Folk Cultural Property No. 209.”  
\(^{29}\) Wikipedia
The *nubi beoseon* are worn with the *hot beoseon* inside and are quite comfortable and warm. I intend to make a pair of *gyeop beoseon* when the weather is warmer. I was able to find leather ballet flats in my size that are a reasonable approximation of Joseon shoes. I bought another pair of shoes one size smaller for when I am wearing unpadded *beoseon*.

5. Quilt with a running stitch.
6. Attach the two halves with a whip stitch and bind the top edge with a strip of cotton.
**SEJODAE**

The *sejodae* (세조대) is a narrow cord belt with tassels. The cord is made from a round braid (*dahoe*: 다회), typically finished with strawberry tassels (*ddalgisul*: 딸기술) on the ends. Colors may include red, purple, green, darkish blue, black, and white. The *sejodae* I made is synthetic paracord, which is similar in weave to *dahoe*. The ends are finished with a tiger’s eye bead and a simple tassel made from cotton embroidery floss. This is at best a rough approximation of a proper *sejodae*.

![Fig. 21 - a 19th century sejodae - Chang Pudeok Memorial Gallery](image)

**BAJI**

*Baji* (바지) are pants worn as an under layer. They may be made of ramie or cotton, and may be padded. During the 16th century men and women wore the same style of wide legged, pleated *baji*, though toward the end of the 16th century men also wore a narrower legged style. The crotch seam may be either closed or open, and more than one layer of *baji* may be worn.

I purchased a pair of white cotton/linen pants to serve for this layer until I get a chance to sew proper *baji*. While it is not a very close approximation to the actual garment, it does not detract significantly from the overall look of the outfit.

![Fig. 22 - a drawing of baji from the tomb of Choi Gyeong Seon](image)

**HAENGJEON**

*Haengjeon* (행전) are tubular cotton or ramie gaiters that are tied below the knee to contain the volume of the *baji*. I have not yet made a satisfactory set of these, but will complete them once I have wider *baji* to tie up.

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30 Kim, *Morphological Characteristics and Manufacture of Jodae*, pp.118-119
## Glossary

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<th>Meaning</th>
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<td>pants</td>
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<td>socks</td>
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<tr>
<td>dahoe</td>
<td>round braided cord</td>
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<tr>
<td>danryeong</td>
<td>round collared robe, worn with a rank badge as part of a government official's uniform (pronounced “dallyeong”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ddalgisul</td>
<td>strawberry shaped tassel</td>
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<td>dongjeong</td>
<td>white strip sewn on the collar of a robe</td>
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<td>gat</td>
<td>hat worn outdoors in casual settings</td>
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<td>gatkkeun</td>
<td>hat string</td>
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<td>goreum</td>
<td>cloth ties</td>
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<td>Goryeo</td>
<td>kingdom in Korea from 918-1392</td>
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<td>goteun beoseon</td>
<td>sock shape with the foot in line with the ankle</td>
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<td>gwanja</td>
<td>manggeon ornaments</td>
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<td>gyeop beoseon</td>
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<td>haengjeon</td>
<td>gaiters</td>
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<td>hanbok</td>
<td>traditional Korean clothing for either gender</td>
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<td>heukrip</td>
<td>black gat worn by yangban</td>
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<td>hot beoseon</td>
<td>single layer sock</td>
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<td>jeoksam</td>
<td>unlined jacket that can be worn as an under layer</td>
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<tr>
<td>jeongjagwan</td>
<td>hat worn by men at home</td>
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<tr>
<td>jikryeong</td>
<td>straight collared robe (pronounced “jingnyeong”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joseon</td>
<td>dynasty in Korea from 1392-1897</td>
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<td>manggeon</td>
<td>headband worn by men to hold hair when wearing a topknot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ming</td>
<td>dynasty in China from 1368-1644</td>
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<tr>
<td>nubi beoseon</td>
<td>padded and quilted sock</td>
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<tr>
<td>nuin beoseon</td>
<td>sock shape with the foot at a right angle to the ankle</td>
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<tr>
<td>samo</td>
<td>hat worn by men in official settings</td>
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<td>sangtu</td>
<td>topknot</td>
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<tr>
<td>sejodae</td>
<td>narrow cord belt with tassels</td>
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<tr>
<td>Silla</td>
<td>kingdom in Korea from 57BC-935AD</td>
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<tr>
<td>som beoseon</td>
<td>padded sock</td>
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<tr>
<td>tongsol</td>
<td>a two-step seam finishing that encases the raw edges, essentially a French seam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wangjin</td>
<td>Chinese precursor to the manggeon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yangban</td>
<td>Joseon era ruling class, civil and military officials who were expected to study and display Confucian principles</td>
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