

Hanji Unfurled One Journey Into Korean Papermaking

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with a history of well over 1 500 years korean handmade paper known as hanji is familiar to koreans but a mystery outside its home country this lustrous paper that comes in a wide array of thickness color dimension and translucency was once a coveted item inside and beyond korean borders made by farmers and artisans during bitter cold winters hanji was a noble marker of the literati who demanded high quality paper for books documents calligraphy and painting hanji also played a sacred role as the support for illuminated sutras the body of temple decorations and spirit of rituals where it was burned in hopes that its ashes would rise to the sky fashioned into objects that ranged from kites to armor to shrouds to chamber pots there was seemingly no end to the possibilities of the combination of human ingenuity and paper through the transformation of

natural fibers until forces of history and industrialization collided and left this once celebrated substrate and its related craft practices near extinction in this first english language book about hanji aimee lee shares her experience as a korean american artist and fulbright fellow on her search for a traditional korean papermaking teacher of the handful of american hanji researchers she is the only one to have interacted with koreans in their own language while simultaneously learning the craft this book follows her journey as she met papermakers scholars and artists from bustling cities to traditional korean villages to buddhist temples to island outposts not only did she encounter the few remaining papermakers who still practice webal tteugi the indigenous korean sheet formation method but she found teachers of a whole array of allied crafts that include jiseung cording and weaving hanji joomchi texturing and felting hanji natural dyeing and calligraphy she traveled from the studios of living treasures to the homes of ordinary koreans illuminating an often misunderstood culture through stories from its keepers of traditional heritage book jacket

abstract this study investigated the history of traditional korean papermaking within its historical context the relationship with the development of papermaking techniques in neighbouring countries were examined though primary focus was given to the development of materials and tools used in order to understand the characteristics of historical korean paper and the development of tools and materials used over time surveys on korean and japanese collections at the british library and a private korean collection were carried out korean objects dated between the 12th and the 18th century were examined the data collected from the surveys was compiled in a database and analysed the data analysis revealed that the thickness of paper was closely related to the thickness of bamboo splints used in manufacture of papermaking screens research also included a summary of morphological characteristics and photomicrographs of fibres from nine indigenous plants which were used for traditional korean papermaking these standard fibre samples were used as reference to identify the fibres of unknown paper objects surveyed this fibre identification confirmed the main material to be paper mulberry and additionally provided information on supplementary materials including rice straw reed hemp and mechanical wood pulp of coniferous origin a material that has not been recognised as one of the common supplementary materials in previous studies in order to provide a better understanding of the materials and tools used in traditional papermaking in korea three papermaking experiments were carried out firstly a papermaking experiment was conducted using a mucilaginous substance derived from the roots of hibiscus manihot which has been employed as a formation aid for considerable time in korea and japan paper samples were then analysed to investigate the physical influence of the substance on the sample sheets secondly a fixed laid screen was designed and sheets were produced using it the intention here was to support a hypothesis which was proposed by the author in order to explain a possible chronological development of papermaking mould structure in china and its potential spread to neighbouring countries the last experiment was conducted to simulate a technique of papermaking with reclaimed paper although the use of reclaimed paper was recorded in early literature details of the process were unknown

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the classic work on papermaking this book traces the craft s history from its invention in china to its introductions in europe and america the foremost authority on the subject covers tools and materials hand moulds pressing drying and sizing hand and machine made paper watermarking and more over 320 illustrations reprint of the second revised and enlarged 1947 edition

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