

Modernity and traditional seoul, korea

[Parts of the World, Asia](#)



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Geography

Seoul is the capital city of South Korea. Located in the north-western part of the country, it's approximately 50 km from the Demilitarized Zone with North Korea. The capital Seoul itself covers about 600 km square. Population: Covering only about 12% of the country's area, the Seoul Capital Area is home to more than 48. 2% of the national population, and is the world's fifth largest urban area. The Greater Seoul has almost 23 million inhabitants, while almost 10 million residents are in the capital Seoul city itself. Currency: The currency used in Seoul or South Korea in general, is won. For reference, 1 US dollar would be equivalent to 1, 114. 90 won. Time Zone: The time zone of Seoul, South Korea would be GMT +9 hours, past meridian from Greenwich Mean Time. Modernity vs. Traditions in Architecture:

Seoul is composed of both modernized and ancient architecture. There are countless industrialized buildings, modernized structures as well as skyscrapers being constructed throughout of Seoul. Most mentionable, the Lotte World Tower standing at an astonishing height of 1, 819 ft, consisted of

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123 levels, as well as the famous Namsan Seoul Tower. The two buildings are considered as some of the most well-known and visited constructions throughout Seoul. These towers can also depict the modernized aspects of Seoul as outcomes of industrializations. Among the renovated constructions, various ancient, traditional and cultural architectures can also be found in Seoul, enduring its existence within this seemingly modern city.

The 5 Grand Palaces, Bukchon Hanok Villages, along with other religious temples are among one of the most ancient and traditional buildings in Seoul. These constructions not only lasted for centuries but they have also been under several restorations and perseverance in effort to educate Korean kids, in terms of historical knowledge. Since religion plays a vital role within the Korean society, it's comprehensible that there are still numerous temples and pagodas under perseverance and restoration for religious purposes. This clarifies the idea that although Seoul is one of the most industrialized city in Asia, various traditional and cultural aspects within this contemporary city are still preserved. Since it's crucial to preserve cultural customs as they are the roots of a race and what defines a unique group of people. Culture is like a set of guidance that defines us who we are.

Modernity vs. Traditions in Ethics and Moral

Corresponding to the topic we discussed above, ethics and morality within this city also shared both modernized and traditional aspects. Most noticeably, the expectations, restrictions and what rights women attain has evolved. Nowadays, Korean women are allowed to dress in Western and fashionable clothing as well as participating in late night parties, in which

they are granted with the capability of having affairs and drinking sessions with other men. (Ranjit, 2017) Let alone this open-minded expectation, there are still rigorous and severe aspects towards this tolerance, where Korean society won't accept unmarried women or single mothers of which their children will be considered to be illegitimate and would live among ignorant by the surrounded community (Ranjit, 2017).

This nonacceptance regarding to single mothers is a traditional Korean ethic that had been taught and transferred from generations to generations. As a result, the city of Seoul obtain the existence of both modernity and traditional within the same scenario. Despite the fact that Korean ideas and thoughts become more intricate, there were still limitations and restrictions due to their traditional ethics nonetheless. This is seen through the analysis of their modern education systems. Specifically, Koreans nowadays are more focused on modernized education systems that mainly involve rational understandings as well as critical thinking skills. In which the education systems establishment have undergone tremendous influences by academic programs in the Western parts of Europe. This can be seen through the highly acceptance of the international school systems within Seoul.

Parents who have the ability to afford and insist their kids on participating. This is because they believe that by giving them this opportunity to interact with Western education systems, their kids can have high chances of success as well as social mobility. On the other hand, the traditional Korean academic curriculums failed to establish an efficient and modern system. Whereas their current education system were still strongly influenced by

Confucian ethics such as the need of “ conformity towards norms and the society as a whole.” (Ranjit, 2017) Since Confucianism were originated and heavily worshipped in, it’s comprehensible that this belief system has ended up in Korea’s education system. This clarify the fact that although Korean education system has begun to acknowledge and incorporate Westernized ideas, numerous schools are still influenced under traditional Confucian beliefs and ideas.

Modernity vs. Traditions in Clothing

South Koreans are widely known to establish some of the most trendy clothing movement nowadays. Despite that, the majority of clothing in Seoul was actually modernized or more specifically, westernized. Following up with the lifestyle in Seoul, a lot of visitors would be astonished just how much Western clothes have influenced clothing in Seoul on regular basis. Most noticeably, Korean idols, who heavily rely on trendy and Westernized clothes whenever they make their public appearances.

Likewise, many Seoul citizens of whom would follow these widely broadcasted styles and trends would try to find themselves in these sets of cloth that are tremendously influenced by the Western cultures in effort to get along with the movement. This amplifies the fact that Seoul clothing is massively influenced by Western fashion. Despite this, while visiting Seoul, you would still be able to find numerous shops to rent the ‘ hanbok’, which is also known as Korean traditional dresses. The hanbok (한복), the most well-known form of traditional Korean clothing, is one of the most idolized and well-preserved elements of Korean culture. Known for its elegance, definitive

lines, full curves, and dynamic color schemes, the culturally rich and aesthetically pleasing elements of the hanbok reflect the true beauty and structure of Korean tradition.

Although the term literally means “ Korean clothing”, hanbok today often refers specifically to clothing during the 20th century and is seen in traditional festivals and celebrations. It’s understandable that Hanbok is undoubtedly an substantial determinant that shape up their cultural identity. Regarding to this, people in Seoul continues to preserve the Hanbok through traditions and special festivals, for example the ‘ Hi Seoul Festivals’, which mainly occur for several months a year. During special events like these, visitor can have opportunities to witness people in Seoul wearing Hanbok, not only that, you can try it if you’d prefer to in rental shops. People wear the Hanbok as an expression of appreciation for a preserved part of Korean culture which has survived both turmoil and victory. On top of that, these practices can be seen as perseverance so these important and historic rituals won’t be obliterated over time. Along with that, these traditions are also deep rooted within the aspects of Seoul’s people life whereas children wear hanbok on their first birthday and adults wear it for their wedding ceremony or major events within the family.

Compromised Traditions as results of industrialization

The biggest transformation within the Korean traditions is the Confucianist idea of filial piety, where Koreans were taught to respect their parents and take care of them both financially and emotionally as they descend into old ages. However, this tradition soon obliterated as Korea renovate through

industrialization and modernization. Specifically, huge percentage of Korean kids who actually took care of their parents drastically decrease from 70% to only about 31%. This is because they rely more on the government to take care of their parents instead. (Herald, 2016) Overtime, more and more Korean elders are forced to do harsh labors in effort to sustain their life from poverty and sickness among their old ages and sickly health. (Shushan, 2017)

In other words, Korean nowadays are mainly at denial towards the Confucian ideology of filial piety, as resulted through modernization. Rather than taking care of their parents as traditionally taught, instead, they hand over their parents and the elders to government services and other welfare packages. All in all, the idea of filial piety heavily portrayed within their responsibility to take care of their parents and elders has gradually decreased among the renovated city where later steps of westernization took place.

As a result, Koreans started refusing to take care of their parents and leave it to the authorities as if it's the government's responsibility. This is the unavoidable outcome of modernization due to the fact that as a city become more industrialized, the government provide more welfare packages and aids to the disabled and elderly. This results in irresponsibility among Koreans and dependent towards the government to take care of their parents and elders. Moreover, it is observable that as a city renovate and adopt modern ideologies, parents and their children began to separate in great margins due to the independence within each citizen and individual.

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