



5-6-2021

Traditional Korean Wig: Ga-Chae(가채) - The Queen Style: Eoyeo hair(어여머리)

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Recommended Citation

Jung, Daniel, "Traditional Korean Wig: Ga-Chae(가채) - The Queen Style: Eoyeo hair(어여머리)" (2021).
Theatre Arts Posters and Presentations. 1.
<https://commons.und.edu/ta-pp/1>

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Traditional Korean Wig: Ga-chaе (가체)

The Queen style: Eoyeo hair (어여머리)

Daniel Jung



Historical & Reference Images

Queen Chuleen
철인왕후
(1837~1878)



Queen Myeongseong
명성황후
(1851~1895)



Queen Soonjung
순정효황후
(1894~1966)



Ga-chaе is the name of the traditional Korean wig, which was very popular during the Joseon Dynasty (1392~1897). In Korean, it is written as 가체, where "가" means "add" and "체" means "hair chunks". Yes, it literally means "Added hair chunks"!

Conclusion & Things learned from this research:

- These historical wigs are also used very often in Korean historical drama shows which proves it is possible for the Ga-chaes to be used on theatre stages as well, as long as the performer with this wig does not require to involve with drastic head movements. Since the wig itself was made for Queens who did not have to move much since her servants did everything for her, the wig is extremely heavy and difficult to move the head freely.
- However, if the production is aimed to be a comedic show and for instance the Queen of Joseon suddenly becomes a dancing pop-star, the wearer can easily take off the loop of braid wigs off and dance without the heavy wig pieces.
- The Cassia oil has a very strong smell that could negatively affect the cast members during preparation of the wig, so when using for theatre productions, highly recommend to use hair smoothing cream as a replacement.

Acknowledgments:

- This research is funded through the College of Arts and Sciences Undergraduate Research/Creative Activity Fund.
- Camilla Morrison is my instructor who taught me how to do wigs and guided me with her advices and pro tips when I was stuck with certain problems. Her creativity towards problem solving is just immaculate.

Step 2 :
Add Cassia oil over the combined extensions. They were used historically too in order to make the hair smooth and easy to braid together.

Front

Behind

Step 4 :
Set the 어염족두리 on top of the head and place the braid loop over it. Do the same thing for the second layer of braid too.

Step 1 :
Boil water with tomato powder. (a modern equivalent ingredient for the cochineal insects that were used for dyeing hair during the Joseon Dynasty)
Dye the hair extensions and the wigs (in order to make them more rich black) and rinse the remaining tomato powders after this process.

Step 3 :
Connect the two braid pieces by inserting the tail of the braid through the other braid on the top side and create a loop of two braids connected together.