

The Republic of South Korea, a country that prides itself in its culture, music, and especially its skincare. It is no wonder they are one of the most advanced when it comes to their skincare technology, putting themselves 10-12 years ahead of the rest of the world. (OhLolly). They dominate the skincare industry, with South Korean skincare being worth over \$13 billion. Even more so, South Korean women spend more money on skincare than any other women in the rest of the world. And a lot of that has to do with the history and importance of beauty in ancient times. Throughout the periods of Korea, many citizens used different ingredients and methods to assist in hydrating and keeping their skin youthful.

One such trend that is still currently being done today and has migrated over to the western world, is the "10-Step Korean Skincare Routine." The routine consists of numerous products used on the face in several steps targeting different skin issues. This includes cleansing balm/oil, toner, essence, emulsion, serum, sheet mask, eye cream, moisturizer, sunscreen, and sleeping mask. Product by product, layer after layer, this ritual or process wasn't just a trend that started years ago. Its roots date back all the way to BCE, a time when citizens there, had to use the stuff around them. Regardless of status and wealth, all citizens prided on their skincare. And whilst South Korean women coined the name, the products do not have to be Korean.

Its popularity rose mainly due to social media and YouTube. It was the only type of format able to present anything in a large amount of time. Instagram wasn't yet focused on videos/reels and TikTok didn't exist. Thus, it was easier to show trends, products, etc there. Additionally, the beauty industry on YouTube had a significant number of influencers that would showcase products, makeup, and trends. And one such trend that gained popularity was the skincare routine. Using up to 10 products, it would help heal and hydrate the skin. This was important in the Joseon Dynasty, a period where inner beauty was much more important than

outer beauty. When products there were used to help the skin, it was less likely that women had to cover their skin issues. This meant that makeup was used less and thus showcased the inner beauty of women. (OhLolly) Thus, in the modern age, many influencers and consumers were trying to replicate this so that their skin would glow from within, revealing smooth, supple, and hydrated skin.

While it may seem excessive for someone to use all ten products, each product has historical significance tied to it. Cleansing was important in ancient times for hygienic reasons. In the Goryeo Period, ground mung beans mixed with water created a soft exfoliant on the skin, cleansing it of impurities. This allowed the skin to be ready to take other products. In the Gojeoson and Jeoson era, lard, which was the animal's fatty tissue, was used to warm the bodies of the citizens in the wintertime and soften skin. Essence, a watery moisturizer made from apricot and peach oils was used in ancient Korea to help the skin glow and hydrate. Emulsion, made from plant juices in the Goryeo period, was slightly heavier than essence, able to sit on the skin to moisturize it. Serums in ancient Korea were used as a massaging agent, increasing circulation in the skin to plump the skin, and soften it. Sheet masks which were cloth dipped in herbs and flowers added more moisture. Eye cream was followed by consumers as the "Dongui Bogam", a book written by a royal physician in the Joseon Dynasty to prevent fine lines and wrinkles. Moisturizer made from safflower oil was used to increase skin moisture and dry skin. Sunscreen was important, and ancient Koreans used mugwort/garlic and umbrellas to shield themselves from the sun. This helped prevent aging and kept the purity of the skin. Finally, sleeping masks which are used as a final moisture barrier before sleeping, sealed all the vitamins and minerals in that time.

A lot of the products may seem redundant and counter-intuitive, but the emphasis of ancient Korean citizens was looking healthy and making sure the skin was hydrated and youthful. Glowing and dewy skin made you look young. And that was seen highly in their community. Nowadays though, many people don't use all the products at once, and just cater products to their specific needs. Many consumers have figured out that 10 products aren't always necessary. But it just goes to show how products have significantly transformed into what they are now. And that we have always tried to do everything to make ourselves look beautiful and young.

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