Study on the Design Methods of Chinese Style Clothing
Integrated with Tradition and Fashion

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Abstract. Although the suit has become the clothing standard in public occasions in a relatively formal way, on the other hand, the appearance of the Chinese style clothing full of traditional elements in the APEC meeting, surges a fashion trend for Chinese style clothing. The design methods of the Chinese style clothing are analyzed from the perspective of integrating with tradition and fashion in the paper.

The Development and Evolution of Chinese Style Clothing

Speaking in contrast to western style suit, the Chinese style clothing is China’s inherently traditional style clothes, which belongs to plane-type structure. Its biggest feature is to make shirt and skirt separate, fly opening, mainly in forms of side opening and double-breasted, as well as putting the front of crossed collar at right, featuring loose and well-cut.

With historical development and the alteration of dynasties, particularly the emergence of the minorities such as Manchu and Mongolian as the ruling class, the Chinese style clothing was fully stepping out of the development mode with the core of solely in Han culture. After integrating the elements from the minorities, it makes the development of Chinese style clothing more diversified.

However, since some of the clothing manufacturing is too complicated, and doesn’t suit to wear in daily public occasions, in terms of the current Chinese style clothing, basically two of the existing forms of Tang-style suit and Hanfu are the main direction.

The Design Errors of Chinese Style Clothing

Because of the influence by the special historical period, the “fault” really happens in the development of Chinese style clothing that the dress designing regard it as the “forbidden zone”. With the steadily deepening of the reform and opening-up, especially after the protection idea by the mass to the traditional culture is becoming penetrating, the Chinese style clothing design tends to be normalized gradually. But in spite of this, there still exist some design errors:

Firstly, Chinese style clothing can’t integrate fashionable elements. When many ground dress designers are choosing clothing design base materials, they intentionally avoid Chinese style clothing, because in many of their eyes, Chinese style clothing can’t integrate fashionable elements at all, and its position and overall design plan are fixed. In my opinion, this is totally wrong understanding, which is caused by the incomplete basic knowledge of Chinese style clothing. There are indeed certain basic requirements for Chinese style clothing, which is in fact having no difference to the basic rules of the suit design. After eliminating the quantitative factors, the variable factors can totally integrate with fashionable elements. To get it far, for the knowing and understanding of the fashion, the ground junior designers still can’t master flexibly. The so-called fashion, don’t position it in a totally open platform, as long as the market has certain demands and society has certain needs, factors within can be totally and fully utilized and these are totally some kind of fashionable elements and can be integrated and used in dress designing. No matter it is Tang-style suit or Hanfu, there are great variable factors to be cooperated and integrated.

Secondly, Chinese style clothing keeps to traditional style. When some dress designers who have rich experience and certain understanding of the dress designing design Chinese style clothing, although their designed dress can be accepted by market, but the consumer group positioning is
extremely unitary, mostly in middle and old ages, totally not considering the requirements by the young and middle ages to the Chinese style clothing. The reason for it to happen is the deviations by these dress designers to the positioning and understanding of the traditional style. It seemed to them that the characteristics of the traditional Chinese style clothing needs to be prominent and its style needs to be kept, only this is the traditional style of Chinese style clothing. The author thinks that the original intention of designers is good, but the way of doing things by designers is slightly extreme, and can’t really embody the flexible and dynamic characteristics of the Chinese style clothing. But just these flexible and dynamic features are the fundamentals of the fashionable elements of dress designing.

The Integration Plan of the Fashionable Elements with Traditional Ideas in Chinese Style Clothing

After the amazing appearance of the Chinese style clothing with extremely Chinese traditional cultural characteristics in APEC meeting, it makes the integration of the development of Chinese style clothing with fashionable elements be upgraded to a brand new height. A lot of dress designers are rethinking their existing rigidity of the thought ideology to the Chinese style clothing and hoping an obvious breakthrough in designs of Chinese style clothing.

Based on the formation of this idea, it makes the integration of the fashionable elements in designs of the Chinese style clothing with the traditional ideas step on the “fast track”. While the dress designers are fully demonstrating their talents and skills, they have designed clothes manifesting different fashionable elements together with traditional styles.

Firstly, the “stand collar design” is stressed in men’s coat. No matter it is the traditional Tang-style suit or the Hanfu, the open type is highlighted in the design of the men’s coat collar. However, men’s coat collar basically finishes the transformation from open type to stand collar. Don’t look down on this minute difference, for it shows a lot of things. Firstly, the stand collar design projects men’s decisiveness and firm. The stand collar design is generally is based on 2-2.5cm, if without the open type collar, a lot of restrictions are missing around men’s necks. The able style has been projected to people’s first impression, which is extremely important to many middle aged persons. Particularly the “narrow shoulder” designed on both sides of the stand collar, which to some extent upgrades the lifting effect of the shoulders to the coat, making the overall modeling of the dress appears to be upstanding and prominent. For men with somewhat short necks, this stand collar has hidden their physiological defects and can project their necks in closing in. For men with longer necks, the stand collar projects their head flexibility, and totally belongs to the design form of “in a position to advance or retreat as the opportunity offers”. The stand collar of the men’s coat in the autumn collection of the “Full Dragon” in Seven Wolves is just this typical design. The designer also adopts a slightly small range of groove angle treatment, making the stand collar remaining some of the flexibility in its rigidity, which is totally Chinese style clothing with extremely fashionable element.

Secondly, the men’s trousers collocation is tend to be “mix and match style”. If it is defined according to traditional dress, the coat and trousers have strict model. This rigid ideology can’t suit the market, especially after can’t suit the fashionable elements, designers begin with mix and match to modify men’s trousers modeling design. At first, they integrate the bloomers modeling into trousers. For the lap of the men’s trousers in Tang-style suit is relatively small, which may suit tall men, but for men with obvious “short legs”, it doesn’t suit that much. After designers designed the trousers as the bloomers modeling, although the lap doesn’t have obvious alteration, but the relatively loose modeling hides the deficit of men’s short legs, which satisfies the dressing requirement by men who prefer Chinese style clothing but can’t satisfy their hopes because of their physiological defects. What needs particularly point out is since the closing in is obvious in the foot angle in the bloomers’ modeling, large amplitude of dynamic style may obviously appear during men are walking, which is extremely highly looked upon by men who prefer sports, adding some kind of jaunty in the slightly rigorous style and the fashionable air of the overall modeling of the dress is fully embodied. The “Chinese style” series of men’s trousers under the brand YU/JI is just
this typical design. And designers add some leisure elements, slightly uplifting half the palm place and making the coat covers the trousers pocket entirely. In this way, no matter if the small objects are put into the pocket or not, it will not affect the overall wearing effect.

Thirdly, the lady’s cheongsam design exaggerates the advantage of women’s figure. Cheongsam has always been a key breakthrough for the Chinese style clothing integrating with fashionable elements. In this area, efforts made by designers are also the most. The overall modeling beauty is mainly manifested during the design process of the traditional Chinese style cheongsam. But to the young females, when their advantages in figures and shape characteristics are not fully stressed, the fashionable feeling is not obvious. To make up the deficit, lots of designers attach importance to alterations in this respect when they design cheongsam. First of all, the sleeveless design plan is mainly adopted in shoulders; so far this design form is used in most of cheongsam. Comparing with the long sleeve design chosen by traditional cheongsam, it had made big alterations. This sleeveless cheongsam can show female’s strong flexibility in shoulder aesthetics. Considering some of the females’ facial features, designers also highlight a kind of extra short sleeve cheongsam, in this way, when some females with round face wearing it, they look more cultivated. During the dynamic and static alternation, the fashionable elements are fully integrated into it. As a matter of fact, it is waist design. For a long time, the waist design plan hadn’t got attention in cheongsam design, since the stature characteristics of the oriental woman is not so prominent, if the waist design is too much, the too tight modeling is not beneficial to women’s actual wearing. However, with the cheongsam shine in international stage, more and more foreign friends also regard wearing cheongsam as a fashionable beauty. After designers consider the difference among body shapes, they also increase designs in waist. Generally speaking, waist is considered about over 15-20cm of the skirt, the overall is mainly with “I shaped” modeling collaborating with “S shaped” modeling. In this way, female’s different figure characteristics are reflected, and some of the lively and flexible feeling is added into the sereneness, making women both have the classical beauty with the dynamic beauty. Finally is the ornament collocation. Basically, the traditional cheongsam ornaments don’t have too many choices, but after integrating with fashionable elements, for the ornament collocation for cheongsam, there are different varieties of choices from scarf to ornaments. No matter females are in what age groups, they can choose ornaments matching with their age group to collocate, so as even to project the fashionable elements of the dress.

It is particularly necessary to emphasize here that female’s cheongsam design and alteration is slightly different from male’s Chinese style clothing. To better highlight female's figure characteristics, the best plan is to tailor-made corresponding dresses according to female’s actual figures. Especially for cheongsam, it should not only tally with female’s figure, but also the reformed cheongsam integrates artistic temperament with life element. For instance, patterns full of Chinese classical elements, such as the wash painting, blue and white porcelain etc, they perfectly integrate Chinese classical culture with modern civilization, and the low keyed as well as simple but elegant colors rather suit to wear daily. Although modern women wear cheongsam less, the traditional taste is still remained in many places of modern cheongsam; meanwhile the beauty of fashion can be reflected. This is the advantage and feature in men’s popularized clothing accessories. Also just because of this, in the dress designing studios of the established private custom service so far, requirement by female of integrating fashionable elements into cheongsam is radically increased. In the author’s opinion, this is a significant breakthrough and advancement in Chinese style clothing integrated with tradition and fashion.

The Future of Chinese Style Clothing Moving towards Studying and Judging

If Chinese style clothing wishes to shine more in international arena, the design ideas and plans should be adjusted with the times, in this way the fashionable elements in Chinese style clothing can be richer. In future’s design, three aspects should be emphasized to start with: firstly, the design is moving to younger men’s clothing according to different distribution of age groups. At present, for men’s clothing, no matter the models or the pattern, choices are still biased towards conservative, with not-so-strong fashionable elements integration. So their acceptance by the youth still needs to
be upgraded. Secondly, the Hanfu can be transformed according to times characteristics. Whatever it is men’s or women’s clothing, the contemporary alteration and design samples are basically coming from men’s Tang-style clothing and women’s cheongsam, and not so many alteration design to another Chinese style clothing—Hanfu, where there’s big operative space there. Thirdly, colors and size collocation of cheongsam can be designed according to different occasions. Right now, female’s cheongsam design is basically either biased to colors, or biased to the actual wearing purposes, there’s still much operative space of fully integrating both. This needs designers constantly accumulate experience in their work and custom made more proper clothing to customers by further integrating fashionable elements.

**Conclusion**

The Chinese style clothing design has completely got out of its slump, and it fumbled a road that suits its own development. Based on the prominent ethnic flavor and unique expression of the Chinese traditional costume culture, with the awakening of the Chinese national consciousness, Chinese elements extracted from Chinese culture are increasingly favored by people. Although the Chinese style clothing is restricted by factors such as effective carrier, product range and market development etc, however, analyzing in terms of commercial operation, if designers can fully think of customer needs and the fashion trend of the fashionable elements of the market by effectively neutralizing the existing quantitative factor and variable factor, in this way, the Chinese style clothing can have more ideal development.

**References**


