

Original Paper

The Evolution History of Han Costume and Aesthetic Value

Heng Zhang^{1*}

¹ Shanghai University of Engineering Science, Shanghai, China

* Heng Zhang, Shanghai University of Engineering Science, Shanghai, China

Received: March 26, 2018

Accepted: April 28, 2018

Online Published: May 24, 2018

doi:10.22158/wjssr.v5n2p167

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/wjssr.v5n2p167>

Abstract

Han Costume, traditional costume of Han nationality, has carried thousands years of clothing and manner system. Han Costume has been developed by every generation or ruler in ancient China. What's more, Han Costume is a cultural system full of beauty value, practical value and research value, connected with national spirit and culture in many ways. Because of the blending of cultures of other nationalities, the style and system have been changed. In this paper, the changing history of Han costume is introduced with the line of Chinese history, and the aesthetic value of Han costume is also discussed.

Keywords

Han Costume, evolution history, aesthetic value

1. Introduction

Han costume refers to the traditional costume of Han nationality. Nowadays Han Costume is only seen in performances or during certain festive occasions, but during the last decade, there has been a movement in China to revive traditional Han Chinese clothing and reintroduce it to modern life. To study of changing history of Han Costume is significant for Chinese to learn Chinese culture and Han Costume. In this way, the artists can be inspired from the discussion and readers can learn more about Han Costume.

2. Han Costume and an Aesthetic Value

Its distinguished features include long and loose sleeves and crossed collars, with the lapel on the right. It is often bound by belts around the waist. Cultural China breaks down the pieces of a typical Han Costume: Yi (衣): Any open cross-collar garment, and worn by both sexes. Pao (袍): Any closed full-body garment, worn only by men in HanfuRu (襦): Open cross-collar shirtShan (衫): Open cross-collar shirt or jacket that is worn over the yiQun (裙) or chang (裳): Skirt for women and men Ku

(裤): Trousers or pants. Generally speaking, it has a cross collar and the front of the garment looks like a letter “y”, it is comfortable with a loose robe and big sleeves, natural and beautiful with the streamline figure. This loose style is a good expression of Chinese’s generosity. Also it isn’t tight to body, to let body move freely, to go after nature, which is an important rule of Chinese philosophy. Han Costume usually contains a waistband, on which various little decorations are hung, including Yu (jade) and Chinese knots. These hung decorations, together with the long ribbons and relatively wide sleeves, can sway as one walks. Its idea is to cover up any imperfections and to accentuate the bodily beauty of an East Asian woman.

There are three basic makes of Han Costume, Clothing, Robe, and long gown. Clothing is separated into a top and a bottom piece of clothing. Robe is long clothing where the top and bottom are sewn together into a whole piece. Long gown is what the top is extended into a long shirt. Because silk is hard to store for long time, it is hard to study the real Han Costume in history. The only way to learn Han Costume is through literatures and status. Han Costume has changed with the changing of dynasty. Especially when China was ruled by empire of other nationality, Han Costume was heavily influenced by its culture. Generally, the “Y” shape collar remains thought the whole changing period.

3. Changing History of Han Costume

3.1 Early Development of Han Costume

As for the birth of Han costume, the earliest record is from book of precepts. From the beginning of its history, Han clothing (especially in elite circles) was inseparable from silk, supposedly discovered by the Yellow Emperor’s consort, Leizu. There is a part of description of “yellow emperor, yao shun hung clothes and the country ruled”. The clothes refers to the earlist Han Costume in history. The earliest time of Han Costume is probably the “three emperor five emperors period” in our country, namely new stone Era. With the improvement of social productivity, the state’s form and system were also constantly changing. During the period of shang dynasty, people have mastered the silk weaving technique skillfully. What’s more, the invention of jacquard technology laid a strong foundation for the silk weaving process in China, which also made great contribution to the development of Han Costume. On the basis of this, there was a great development in Han Costume, which was unearthed in anyang. The costumes on the terracotta warriors in Anyang City have many forms, including not only the right collar, but also the headscarf, the dress, the belt, shoes and so on. You can tell the difference of wealth of a person only by clothes. In the zhou dynasty, the ideology of the state changed further, during this period. The Han Costume also experienced a qualitative change and development. With the change of land ownership, the establishment and development of the separation system, the formation and perfection of class, a system of Costume and Hat was formed. It is the original form at he beginning of the long-lasting system of Han costume. As for spring and autumn and warring states, Han Costume

had greatly been developed. The most important reason is that during the age when contention of a hundred schools of thought, people's debate on clothing was also quite fierce, because the class thought of people of different stratum is inexhaustible. In the same way, there were different opinions about the dress system, which leads to the differences in clothing. In that age, the most representative one is ancient Chinese robe. Robe is the combination of top and bottom and easy to get dressed. So robe was soon becoming popular.

3.2 The Further Development of Han Costume

Qin and Han dynasty is the most important developing period of Han Costume. First Qin empire unified China and settled completed rules to make his rule solid. The system of Han Costume was confirmed in this dynasty, and became mature. Qin and Han dynasties were the champions. Different classes needed to wear certain type of costume according to different occasions and different identity. During the qin dynasty, and han dynasty, Han costume was dominated by robes, while the han dynasty is dominated by deep clothing. The characteristics of the deep clothing are cicada crown, zhu yi, square heart, collar, red shoes. This kind of robe is usually long and wide, quite popular with officials and citizens. In the three Kingdom period, the costume did not change a lot. There was a new item, called the yarn, and it's a kind of cloth woven with ribbon, also called a zhuge yarn. Because Zhuge liang was wearing yarn, the silk scarf became elegant decoration, and people of all social positions loved to wear yarn. Wei and Jin dynasties were a special period in Chinese history. It is the most chaotic, the most painful of times, the freest time in the history and the wisest, the most passionate age.

Because of the mental liberation, especially the kind of opposition to bondage, the advocacy of freedom, there was a great influence on Han Costume as well. What's more, because of the habit of eating "five stones", the effect of dispersion on constitution also indirectly resulted in the very wide form of robe in this period. The Han costume was especially big, elegant and wide.

The Han costume was wide open in Tang dynasty; the round collar robe was preferred in Tang dynasty. The robe also developed and was named Lanshan (襴衫). This kind of Lanshan was accepted until Song dynasty. It was divided into long sleeve style and wide sleeve style, quite convenient. The most sparking was female costume in Tang dynasty. However, the most famous part of the tang dynasty costume is the collar down to the chest. The length of the skirt lengthened to the chest, the skirt is longer than waist band in the bosom. Under the armpits, the hem of the skirt covers the feet, and some will be laid on the floor. Compared previous generation of costume, the one in Tang dynasty exposed female muscle and skin more. This kind of costume also showed the beauty of women body actively. Later, the federal judged on the costume for its waste of cloth, and inconvenience of wearers. But it has to be said that the women's clothing in the tang dynasty is the most open in the whole history of China. With fall of the tang dynasty, the establishment of the song dynasty, the rise of neo-confucianism, and the gradual opening of clothing was turned back to the conservative, headed to the solemn and implicit

classical beauty direction. Besides, in Song dynasty, the costume was influenced by the development of industry. The mostly common costume were Zhizhui (直缀) and Duanhe (短褐), they were similar with robe but thicker. Duanhe was the choice for poor people, made of cloth. The color of Han costume in Song dynasty was quite light and plain.

3.3 The End of Han Costume in History

Costume in the song dynasty, due to the influence of neo-confucianism. Han costume gave up the pursuit of gorgeous texture, return to the classical beauty of the solemn and implicit. After the war of Yashan, the Han nationality was almost destroyed, with establishment of yuan Mongolia and its clothing style. In Yuna dynasty, the system of Han Costume was destroyed to some extent.

After the suppression, Han Costume system received a more serious damage. The Ming dynasty was a special dynasty, the last of China's feudal dynasties, a dynasty ruled by Han nationality. The clothing system of the Ming dynasty was greatly affected after the Yuan dynasty. Therefore, Zhu yuanshang ordered the ban on Hu Clothing in the first year and take back Han costume. The costume in Ming dynasty was basically adapted from the costume style in Tang dynasty. To mark the level of position, the color and collar was designed to be different. The scholar wore Y collar and wide sleeves. Farmers wore coat and trousers because they needed to work in the fields. The costume for female did not change a lot, including horse side skirt, Long scarf and blouse. The Ming dynasty was over, Qing become the federal ruler of China. The eight flags of Qing had deep influence on Costume and afterwards, the empires of Qing dynasty aimed to prevent the coming back of Ming dynasty and make their govern solid, he made people cut their hair and changed their clothes to Manchu Costume, which made the Han costume system destroyed dramatically. During the Qing dynasty, Manchu style clothing was only required for scholar-official elite such as the Eight Banners members and Han men serving as government officials. For women's clothing, Manchu and Han systems of clothing coexisted. Throughout the Qing dynasty, Han women continued to wear clothing from Ming dynasty. Neither Taoist priests nor Buddhist monks were required to wear the queue by the Qing; they continued to wear their traditional hairstyles, completely shaved heads for Buddhist monks, and long hair in the traditional Chinese topknot for Taoist priests

4. Conclusion

As a summary, in this paper, the Han costume and its changing history are introduced. The aesthetic value and the historical research value that Han costume has brought to us is inestimable. It was discovered in modern times and many people tried to revive it, which is worthy of encouragement. but still there are some scholars who maintain suspecting the existence of Han costume. Therefore, to learn about the ancient clothing, appreciate the charm of Han costume, regain history of the Chinese is significant.

References

- Ashabi, G. (2009). The culture implication and aesthetic meaning of Chinese traditional costume. *Journal of Zhengzhou University of Light Industry*.
- Dong, X. D., Liu, L., & Da-Li, M. A. (2003). Theoretical research on Chinese costume nationalization. *Journal of Tianjin Institute of Textile Science & Technology*.
- Han, J. (2016). *The Historical and Chemical Investigation of Dyes in High Status Chinese Costume and Textiles of the Ming and Qing Dynasties* (pp. 1368-1911). University of Glasgow.
- Kai, Z. (1997). Chinese Costume Culture and Confucianism. *Journal of Suzhou Institute of Silk Textile Technology*.
- Scott, A. C. (1958). *Chinese Costume in Transition*. Moore.