

The Application of National Costume Elements in Modern Fashion Design

Fei Hong, Xuan Wang

Institute of Art & Fashion, Tianjin Polytechnic University, TJPU Tianjin, China

Email: hf523940598@sina.com, xuan.w@163.com

Abstract: With the rise of Chinoiserie over the world, the national costume is gaining more and more attention from the designers. It has become the key issue of the design practice how to combine the national costume elements and modern elements. This paper will first define national elements; then make an analysis and research on the practice of national costume elements in modern fashion design, such as the design, the fabric, handicraft and so on; finally search a perfect method to combine the national costume elements and modern elements together.

Key words: national costume, fashion design, application

Nowadays, there arises a “Sinomania” among international fashion. Chinese national costume has stood out in national costume over the world with the help of 5000-year sinic civilization. China is multinational state, different life styles accumulate unique national culture, and these unique cultures cultivate into national costume with ethnic features. However, China’s national costume, with special decoration and aesthetics, always has complex style and form and diverse decorates, and it differs a lot with our modern pace of life and the public psychological needs. While, it’s the gorgeous colors, unique style, meaningful clothing pattern and sophisticated crafts like knitting, dyeing and embroidering that initiate the designers’ inspiration in design creation. The profound culture and design elements of national costume are spreading widely towards us in the designer’s fashionable novel design technique. It also proves that, national costume can’t grasp its new chance to develop if not combined with modern fashion concepts in global fashion, and China’s fashion can only obtain long vitality based on Chinese culture in global fashion.

1. The Definition of National Costume Elements

From the aspect of design element, national costume elements always borrow some features such as fabrics, style, modeling, color, pattern or decoration. While national costume requires absorbing the left elements into modern fashion design to show the national style through the design rules of modern fashion based on modern people’s way of dressing and aesthetic taste.

People always pay more attention to the visual national costume elements than to the inherent and spiritual elements because the former is more intuitive. Each minority nationality in our country has its own traditional dress and every national costume contains its unique cultural essence. So the works full of modern feelings will never turn up unless the designer is well familiar with this cultural background, absorb and borrow good

ideas from costume design of ethnic minorities and integrate them with fashion elements.

2. The Practice and Communion of National Costume in Modern Fashion Design

2.1 The Practice of National Costume in Modern Fashion Design

Creativity’s time-bounded extension and symbolic shift occupy an irreplaceable position in the practical application of traditional costume design. On the one hand, the design may try to liberate traditional costume design’s constraint in culture and structural approaches and expand the application field. For example, the successful application of phoenix on men’s garment is a best illustration. On the other hand, the communion of traditional costume design, modern structural design and fashionable aesthetics endows today’s design stage with fashionable trend. As a special costume design, traditional costume design enjoys its unique principles in its collocation with clothing style, fabric and layout. They have to incorporate costume’s style and modeling, structural treatment and theme so that the design shows as an important part. At the same time, the designer can also choose one bright spot like color, pattern or decorative effect to integrate with modern design. Besides these, the specific dressing and clothing styles must be taken into consideration, otherwise the traditional costume design can’t be fully put into use. For example, the design of sport clothes must be cautious. For one thing, the design can’t collide with the host’s national customs and conditions, for the other, it must comply with the event, its incidental music and arranged structures so that the clothes with traditional costume design can construct sense of wholeness and series in laws, rhythm, density and coherence.

Time and again, today’s aesthetic ideas of costume have returned to the origin of the traditional aesthetics of ethnic minorities on some level. The designers prefer to

recreate embroidery on national costume of ethnic minorities, and the original embroideries are reputed and designed in the fashion. Jean—Paul Gaultier, the famous international fashionable designer, combined Chinese floral design of ethnic minorities in embroidery, elegant fringe and golden mink fur edging together, and the clothes seemed splendid and sophisticated with eastern and western flavor.

On the international costume stage, the design similar to the absorption of the traditional costume design of ethnic minorities is nothing new. Its style, color, and the crafts have attracted many designers from the whole world, and relative design has been on the leading edge. In a way, the designers' absorption of the national costume shows their love for national element, and their craze has reached the summit.

2.2 The Practice of National Costume's Fabric in Modern Fashion Design

Most of modern costume's fabric is textile like cotton and wool, jute, satin, synthetic fiber. Traditional costume design can always find the most appropriate point and the fullest presentation in the use of fabric, such as the variation of fiber, jacquard, hollow out, and texture treatment, and all these elements will have an influence to the ultimate effect and visual feelings of the traditional costume design directly or indirectly.

For example, woman clothes made of silk can highlight female's grace and tenderness and clothes made of traditional cotton cloth and Blue Calico looks classical and rustic. We can directly absorb the national elements of traditional fabric into design to stick out the work's national style. So, if the designer chooses these fabrics as design material and combine it with modern aesthetics and innovation, he can create works of fashion and national style.

2.3 The Practice of National Crafts in Modern Fashion Design

By tracing the origin, it's clear that internationalized costume also started with hand work in ancient times and experienced a long period of development. The costume industry went to the path of industrialization since British industrial revolution sprung up in the 18th century brought the technological innovation of garment and textile industry. Since the latter part of the 20th century, national costume with nostalgic flavor has gradually stepped into fashion field.

Today, these traditional crafts are still the designers' favorite no matter in east or west. Its various styles, elegant, plain or generous disposition are the inexhaustive source of designer's inspiration. Modern design with tradition crafts is a recreation of traditional crafts, and also an inheritance and development.

Both eastern and western traditional costume crafts mainly contain spinning, knitting, dip dyeing, color painting, embroiling, beading, American quilting, knotting and many other jewelry technologies. Among which, the most outstanding are Indian ikat, Iranian carpet, Chinese embroidery, American quilting recording European immigrants' life in America in the 18th century, knitting needle or crochet hook introduced into China in later 19th century and renowned Chaozhou beading and so on. All these crafts share strong practicability in both popular fiber art and costume's decoration.

From human structural anthropology, it still can't be verified whether people from different nations communicate with each other, but there exists amazing similarities in their artistic creation which is more obvious in costume crafts. For example, cross stitch is not only traditional North European craft, but also eastern embroidery'. American quilting appeared in American hand Quilt and *Shui-tian* clothes in China's Ming and Qing Dynasty and civilian Bai-na clothes are also made by connecting cloths together. This shows that worldwide costume crafts are all human wisdom of every nation no matter whether they affected each other or not, and it has surpassed national boundary and turn into a formal beauty with eastern and western thoughts when we use it.

3. Conclusion

In order to realize the communion of national costume elements in modern fashion design, national costume elements like modeling, color, pattern, fabric and crafts and other elements have to be connected with modern aesthetic psychology and design rules, and then the designer makes an innovative design and blend national costume elements and modern design elements together. Besides innovation, the designers has to give a new understanding and explanation of national elements on the base of modern version to make the works not only reflect traditional culture, but also fit in with the functional needs and aesthetic psychology of modern people. Moreover, the designer should learn to fuse national and modern elements together so that the essence of traditional and modern culture can melt and collide with each other to develop harmoniously. It's the only way to manifest national and modern beauty in modern fashion design in today's China and create national costume with eastern charm.

References

- [1] Song, Kexin, The Culture of National Costume and Research on its Pattern Design [D], Tianjin Polytechnic University, Paper for Master Degree
- [2] Wang, Yanping, Tang, Wenlin, Pure Colorful Miao Costume[J], Journal of Chifeng College, Vol.29, No.2

- [3] Dai, Chengping, View on China's Auspicious Culture from the Pattern of National Costume [J], Journal of Dalian University, Vol.27, No. 5
- [4] Zhou, Zhengang, Cultural Analysis on Traditional National Costume [J], Research on Nations of Guizhou, No.4, 2007
- [5] Li Jun, Analysis on Pattern Style and Dyeing Technology of Batik and Tie-dye Art [J]. Trade Unions' Tribune, Vol.5, No.2, Mar 2009