

The Analysis of Different Chinese and Western Dress Culture

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Abstract: *With the impact of global economic and cultural development, intercultural communication is becoming more and more frequently. This paper will analyze the differences in dress culture between China and the West from structural features, dress sense, and functional consciousness. And the reasons of geographical environment, aesthetic conceptions, religious beliefs, and historical origin are described.*

Key Word: *Chinese and Western dress; difference; reason*

I. Introduction

There is no one denying that dress is not only a tool to cover our body, but also a kind of culture. As a type of culture, dress throughout the history of the East and the West. In the long process of human development, Chinese and Western dress culture go on a different development direction. To dress, on the one hand, it can reflect the degree of development of civilization of a nation's cultural quality, mental outlook, and material civilization. On the other hand, it can reflect one's social status, cultural accomplishment, and aesthetic taste. What's more, it can be a way to manifest one's attitude to oneself, to others, even to the life or the society. Appropriate clothing has a sort of invisible charm, which can help a person to be more bright and fair. Along with the country and country, the human and human exchanges are increasingly frequent as well as the communication and collision between eastern and western cultures, as a result, cultural customs in all over the world continue to merge and develop. Therefore dress plays an essential role in intercultural communication.

II. The differences between Chinese and Western dress

There are many differences between the Chinese and Western dress. Three aspects: structural features, dress sense, and functional consciousness are as follows.

2.1 Structural features

The first part is the difference in structural features, Chinese clothing not only attach more importance in the shape of two-dimensional space effect, than emphasize the clothing and the body parts to maintain consistency, but also pay less attention to the human body with the curve of the performance. In virtue of Chinese clothing attach more importance in the shape of two-dimensional space effect, the mediums of decoration are several traditional processes, for example, inlay, edge, coil, embroidery and so on. Using the method of plane embroidery to decorate the surface space of clothes is a conventional manipulation of Chinese dress design in all ages. Take the method of a plane cutting in the garment structure, shoulder undertake the task to bear the entire jacket, which is a necessary point of contact. All these means do a favor to form a large gap between the body and the fabric. Consequently, it looks like loose and obese has a kind of "composition of natural wear." This sort of composition does not occupy a large amount of importance in the style or design however it lay more emphasis on the appearance of the fabric itself, for instance, the pattern of the dress, and processing technology of consummate handmade. In conclusion, the pursuit of the Chinese clothing is wearer's personality connotation, what's more, to embody the spirit of human beings.

Nevertheless, in the West, the view of dress is totally different from Chinese. Clothing is often seen as part of the art of the human body in the West. And Western dress pays so much attention to three-dimensional space effect in clothing modeling that it can be called "soft sculpture." As for the structure processing, the three-dimensional cutting is the key point, and that lay stress on "try sewing", "revise" and "supplement and correct" for the purpose of maximum degree of fit, the minimum gap between the body and the fiber cloth, furthermore showing the beauty of the curve of the human body with clothing. Instead of

aspire the wearer's personality connotation Western clothing give more attention to the outer contour line of clothes, and lay more emphasis on the accuracy of overall performance, which is according to the different requirements in diverse periods to underline, to pile it on the distinct part of one's body for instance, chest, shoulder besides buttocks and so on. As a result, the modeling concept of Western dress bring about the variability, abundance), complexity, and innovativeness of the clothing shape. The ornament of Western clothing is drawing support from a wealth of three-dimensional objects, such as knot which looks like a wheat, gold or silvery silk ribbon and so on to embellish the surface of dress. At the very beginning, inflorescence and decorative border are used a little for the sake of ornament the surface of dress moreover to enrich surface effect. However, The Rococo Period witnessed a generation that some ceremonial robe or dress were piled up with three-dimensional inflorescence. It was amazing, inscrutable!

2.2 Dress Sense

The second part is difference in dress sense, a famous writer in China YuTang Lin once write in his book that “Maybe the philosophical differences between Chinese and Western clothing, is that suit is intended to express personal form, and the other is intended to cover it”, which powerfully demonstrate the most obvious difference between Chinese and Western dress. As we all know, Chinese are a representative of the conservative country, but the Western country is on the contrary, in another word, they are more open than Eastern person. Because of the influence of Confucianism, and emphasis on social ethics function of clothes, Chinese dress always maintain an oriental reservation tight and hide the skin in a rigorous way, Chinese costume culture can be said is a kind of "cover" culture, not only can't “manifest” one's type, but also can't “expose” one' skin at random. There is a large space between the clothes and body, on the other hand, the whole dress demands to maintain precise modeling. There are three main characteristics of Chinese traditional costume culture are good at expressing a form of beauty that owns both shape and color, to pay attention to a grand and prudent style and to focus on the national character of clothing culture.

Western dress is opposite to Chinese's. They exaggerate to show the size of one's body. Especially since the Gothic times of the end of the Middle Ages when human beings would like to strengthen the gender peculiarity on the size of the two sexes in a barefaced way, for instance, to enhance the shoulder and chest in the men clothing with stuffing, or use tight pantyhose to model and manifest the mould of the lower limbs. Apropos of woman, slim waist is supposed to help the bodice for slenderer, and buttocks would be plumper due to the use of bustle. All these try to strengthen the physiological feature of a woman. The grandiloquent way of Western dress impel the changes to it furthermore, the structure of dress appear plenty of factitious innovativeness. There are existed four main peculiarities Western dress. At first, Westerners uphold the beauty of the curve of the human body. Then they think the purpose of the dress is attracting the opposite sex. Besides, they prefer to represent one's individuality.

2.3 Functional consciousness

Chinese attach great importance on the social ethics function of clothing since ancient times. They defined the function not only concerning warm and decorative features but also more concerning social status. For example, in ancient China, specialized in dynasty Qing people in different social status are requested to wear distinct clothing, the common people are supposed to dress in a robe or mandarin jacket worn over a gown for male and longuette for female belongs to the Han nationality or cheongsam for female belongs to the Manchu. Though the styles are most the same in dynasty Qing, the fabric and pattern of clothing are almost totally different. On the one hand, the clothing of officer is more exquisite and expensive, what's more, officers in distinct class are also different. According to the peacock plume, we can judge the rank of one's position. While Westerner is far behind from Chinese in this term, although the Romans laid great importance to identity function of clothing, and do have introduced a variety of apparel ban in feudal times. They are still pursuit their personal characteristic without pay little attention to the status, for instance, the nobleman can wear a neat suit or elegant swallowtail, the populace can dress in that either. This phenomenon suggests the equality, freedom, and harmony view that they have advocated.

Although there are many differences between Chinese and Western countries in respect of dress, they are still much common ground. Furthermore, with the development of information technology and globalization, cultural exchanges between Chinese and Western countries have become more and more closely. As a result, the fashion styles of countries in the world also appeared the trend of integration. Many Chinese elements has been joined to the Western style clothing, and in same, the Chinese style clothing is becoming more and more international. For example, the well-known clothing brand Armani apply lace and tassels, textile printing and embroidery with Chinese characteristics, luxuriant silks and satins fabric into their design at one time which full display the Chinese sentiment from shape to hue. There is no denying that it is good to learn from each other but what we should pay attention to is based on our own features than to draw on the experience of western dress. Only in this way can we do better.

III. The reasons between Chinese and Western dress

These reasons that geographical environment, aesthetic conceptions, religious beliefs, and historical origin had come into being the differences in dress culture between China and Western countries.

3.1 Geographical conditions

Geographical environment is an important reason for forming these differences. And the truth is, the Aegean Sea is often called the origin of Western civilization. However, their civilization of development took place in the Mediterranean; therefore western civilization is also called Marine. It results from the westerners' export-led character: open, active. They have the curiosity of the outside world. Thus Western costume's show is making widely known, seek strong effect. And the Western climate conditions and terrain are suitable for growing linen. They would elect wool and velvet as the fabric of costume. Most of the Western people have their own manor. Thus they will feed animals. On the contrary, the Chinese geographical condition is enclosed. The top of the staircase is the Qinghai. Tibet Plateau, with an average elevation of more than 4000 meters knows as "the Roof of the world." The Chinese east coastline is faced sea without mainland and multitudes of islands. Therefore the transportation is inconvenient. China is a vast country with affluent natural resources. Most of the people were self-sufficient, so they did not need to go out. These gave rise to the closed character of Chinese people. Performing in the dress was hidden in dressing. China is absorbed in farm activities from time immemorial. Farmers planted cotton and bred silkworm. These resulted in hence differences in a dressing of China and Western.

3.2 Aesthetic conception

Chinese costume aesthetic concept performed a kind of structure of the image in woman dressing. It used plane and curve cutting so that the dress was comfortable and incomplete formfitting, unbounded and unrestrained. Then it expressed implicitly smooth and graceful, softhearted and fluent line of beauty in hazy clothing. Modeling concept was rhythmed. The point of sight can be moved according to its own willing. Therefore it will show artistic conception between close and removed costume. Chinese traditional dressing shows space shaping using virtual and actual, dark and bright cadences. Chinese people did not pursue clear geometrical forms and exaggerated body effects. Chinese loose dress was smooth just as picture scroll and drapery when it was hung. It was clear at a glance and had a panoramic view. Thus it shows the decent tolerance and broad mind. However, trying to show the body stereo dress was given birth in molding aesthetic conception. Whatever the dress was hung in the wardrobe or put on the body or walked, it had not less obvious change and maintained relative rest geometrical effect. The western concept in dress space formed after the Mid Ages. It mirrored the western mentality on space exploration. They are anxious for more space. Thus they increase the volume of costume. They thought the dress as a tool of broadening body. This kind of exaggerated dress modeling keeps a particular distance between people and nature, people and people. It also reflects western cosmology and contrariety in between people and nature, spirit and

environment, subjectivity and objectivity. On account of different aesthetic conception between China and Western, there result in basic sculpt in dress and it also expresses different spirits

3.3 Religious beliefs

Chinese five thousand years of history witnessed the fusion of Confucianism and Taoism interdependently, and they became an essential aspect of ancient philosophy. Our ancestors create a rich, loose dress culture, and there is a special aesthetic and philosophic conception that is different totally. Therefore, woman loose clothing modeling shows the Chinese manner and charm and reveals ethnic potential spirit and inner cultural soul. It gave expression to Chinese woman virtuous Shukutoku fairness, unsophisticated and unambitious personality and moral cultivation. It can be conveyed implicit and smooth, soft and flexible quiet temperament and individuality. Human beings and dressing, human beings and culture, clothing and nature are harmonious and frictionless. The dress cannot restrain or do harm to the body. People also can not destroy natural law. It pursues a natural covered body, and it is not aimed at advocating self and showing off. The dress makes the body and minds free and unconstraint when the dress has distanced the body. There will produce a relax and a pleased feeling. Chinese belief is Confucianism that people must be modest to everything and everybody so that we are blended to integrating infuse nature. Western belief is Christianity which emphasizes the separation between subject and object. It definitely believed that “I” am subjective and objects are objective. Object and “I” are the opposite. This made them that they were used to observe the world and explore rules rational and also came into being a way of pursuing natural laws to gain truth. Therefore, their dressing performed a rational and scientific attitude towards clothing. Western people treat the dress as a part of body art. They stressed the effect of three-dimensional space, so it called soft sculpture. In the structure, western costume try the best to make the dress fit, and it was based on stereo tailoring, then the interval is tiny between body and cloth. Their clothing paid attention to body line of body, and they laid emphasis on profile outside of dressing, which make the dress become the comprehensive reflection of artistry and science. When they center on the body for creating costume art, on the one hand, it makes dress fit body curve so that it can become a different outline. On the other hand, the dress will mould the body so as to produce change factitious. It can stress and exaggerates different parts. Christian played a very important role in the western dress model that it gave changeability, rich, complexity and creativity to the costume. Most forms of dressing are changeable with age changing.

2.4 History origins

If we think the whole European as a big part, when we talked about the history, the western history was filled with conquests and dominations between nations and people. If there is a nation that is strong and occupies a dominant position, their culture and reflecting the costume of the culture will have a very important affect on the other peoples and nations. Such as the Spanish government implements the dress of Spanish style, and the most typical dress is Raff collar, corselet, and bustle. And both men and women add a lot of filler in clothes to model a stiff and mechanical appearance; it is beginning with Spain that men’s dress advocates black. Under the influence of the spirits, the dress attached great importance to the human body’s natural characteristics at the same time; the dress was changed which was tight. British men’s costume has been thought of as a classic. With the society of western countries developing, their dress was changing. On the contrary, the development of Chinese history is basically a vertical development of the various dynasties, little change in territory. This determines the traditional Chinese dress is not too much change, although concentrating on Minority dress in the history, the dominant position is always Han costume and culture, even as the Qing Dynasty which compels implementation of the Manchu costume with the power of the government, but in fact, Manchu is ultimately the same as Chinese in political culture, so the Han dress culture is originated from the same origin, it is historical continuity, and it decides that Chinese dress could not have happened very unexpected change. Most of Chinese history is in an age of unity, and it begins with

one person who rules the world from the Yellow Emperor. The China has a strict hierarchy from time immemorial. The biggest role of the dress is to distinguish the class in ancient China, people of each hierarchy have agency in fashion and dress is given strong political and theoretical colors, even the aristocracy would not easily make changes to the clothing, because it pays attention to moral and ethical issues. It pursues naturally covering the human body, spontaneously feeling a casual pleasure, comfort, and ease.

IV. Conclusion

All in all, it is inevitable to have differences between the Chinese dress culture as well as the western countries, because there are a lot of differences in cultures. Western culture is good at expressing contradiction and conflict which emphasizes stimulation and extreme form in apparel structure, but Chinese culture is a harmonious culture, and it pays attention to the equilibrium, symmetry and unified dress mold method, they are beautiful for rule and stable. Western culture performs the characteristic of the western countries that they are open personality. In contrast, a Chinese character is conservative. However, they have something in common as well, since they are components of the human culture. Nowadays, economic globalization, political multi-polarization, and cultural diversity co exist. It is necessary for us to absorb the advanced technology and cultural qualities. In the meanwhile, our national culture should be protected and conveyed. It is significant to promote and develop our own civilization of five thousand years instead of belittling ourselves.

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