

# **The Inheritance and innovation of Chinese Traditional Costume from the Perspective of Intangible Cultural Heritage ——a case study of APEC Leader's Dress**

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**Keywords:** Inheritance, Cultural Heritage, Traditional costume.

**Abstract.** Textile intangible cultural heritage is the treasure of Chinese culture. It is a problem that inheritance and innovation of Chinese traditional costume, which is needs to be solved and discussed in the clothing industry. This paper takes APEC leader's clothing as an example, and discuss it in the perspective of intangible cultural heritage. It also analyses the present situation of the origin and characteristics of Chinese traditional costume and APEC leaders fashion design ideas, structure, pattern, color and fabric.

## **Introduction**

Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation in the twenty-second meeting held in Beijing in November 2014 . On the Water Cube's dinner reception, all leaders and their spouses were dressed in Chinese costume , caused widespread concern of the Chinese people in traditional costumes. As a representing of national costume culture, Chinese costume is no longer limited to traditional Cheongsam or Tang - style suit . It combines the practical functions of the present dress and the traditional aesthetic connotation this time. What is the development trend of today's Chinese traditional costume? How to protect and flourish the traditional dress culture ? What is the development goal of Chinese clothing in the new era ? These are problems that every garment industry insiders should be thought seriously.

## **The present situation of textile intangible cultural heritage**

### **The origin and characteristics of Chinese traditional costume**

Chinese history and civilization had achieved a wealth of national cultural resources during the thousands of years. Populated area including Han nationality, Miao nationality and Dong Nationality form a rich and diverse intangible cultural heritage.It is the unique history and culture of the Chinese people. The textile intangible cultural heritage is closely related to people's life. This kind of heritage is produced in a special way of life and national customs under certain circumstances. It fully reflects various national life wisdom and skills.

According to the classification standard of China's intangible cultural heritage, intangible cultural heritage of textile is contained in three intangible cultural heritage category. They are the folk, folk art and traditional handicraft. Textile intangible cultural heritage consists of 86 items announced the four batch of national intangible cultural heritage by country. In the first group, the 5

items are included in the Miao dress, the Hui nationality costume; the 10 items of folk art are included in the Gu embroidery, the Su embroidery, the Xiang embroidery; the 16 items of traditional handicrafts are included in Nanjing brocade wood machine makeup flower hand weaving skills, Song brocade weaving skills. In the second group, the 11 items of folk custom are Included in Mongolia nationality costume and She nationality costume; the 13 items of folk art are included in Dui brocade and Huang Zhong Dui embroidery; the 14 items of Traditional craftsmanship are included in silk weaving techniques and traditional cotton textile technology. In the third group, only 1 items of folk custom is included in the Tajik nationality costume; the 6 items of folk art are included in Shanghai woolen embroidery and Ningbo cannetille embroidery; the 2 items of traditional technology are included in Blue Jiaxie skills and Chinese costume making skill. In the fourth group, the 6 items of folk custom are included in the Ewenki nationality costume and Yi nationality costume; the 2 items of folk art are included in Beijing embroidery and drawn work. It concludes that most folk intangible cultural heritage for the cultural space in the ethnic costumes . Folk art mainly contains all kinds of embroidery skills . Traditional crafts mainly contains weaving and printing and dyeing skills.

The definition of Chinese costume is the characteristic of Chinese traditional costume or the characteristic of Chinese ethnic costume. It also was well-known as the "china costume",or "national costume". It represents a Chinese national identity and national identity or belonging to the identification of clothing. It is an important part of the national culture displaying some symbolic value and cultural meaning of social attribute.

**China ancient costume background is the patriarchal culture including Confucianism** .Taoist thought and the feudal ethics. The nature of " social class" in Chinese ancient clothing was created at the beginning. “Yellow Emperor, Yao Emperor and Shun Emperor conquered the world after showing their costume down.”Zhou Yi said. Costume hierarchic rank system defined by ruling class at the beginning of Xia Dynasty and Shang Dynasty. It matures in Zhou Dynasty. The ancient Chinese costume system ignored the human body, and suppressed the personality of the people. Ruling class trying to consolidate their dominance.

**Chinese clothing culture is relatively independent conservative and pay attention to the effect of plane decoration.** Chinese culture originates from the Yellow River civilization. The Chinese nation live and work in peace. They cultivated, planted and made sericulture. The United Nations and highly developed cultural system in the formation of multi ethnic groups in china because the geographical environment is relatively closed and long feudal rule. Chinese ancient clothing express cultural characteristics mentioned above in the form of a plane. The most prominent feature is the comprehensive innovation of painting art and embroidery pattern, and gives the design to the symbolic meaning.

**China pursues cover and parcel dress Philosophy.** China pursues the dress culture of the lenient clothes which cover people's whole body but in Tang Dynasty. A woman can show her chest in Tang Dynasty. Around tenth Century, people misunderstanding aesthetic standards by parcel. The parents forced their daughter Foot - binding for their future. They paid the price of blood and tears for meeting their aesthetic standard even compressed with slate and beaten by sticks. However, the feet are never exposed.

## **The inheritance and innovation of Chinese traditional costume**

A wide variety of Chinese traditional costume clothing has experienced thousands of years. What is the starting point of our traditional costume design in China today? Is it based on the characteristics of the costumes of a certain dynasty or the clothing of a certain ethnic groups? It

Should mastery in different periods and different ethnic Chinese traditional costumes instead of adhering to the costumes of a certain nation in a certain historical period. It is necessary to explore the cultural gene of Chinese costume in thousands of years of Chinese traditional culture system. More important and more difficult is to change the culture of these genes then recombine With the method of modern innovation. The goal is not only to show the Chinese traditional aesthetic spirit, but also to make it adapt to the contemporary Chinese people's aesthetic and dress style. All the designers are thinking about the same problem, how to inherit and how to innovate?

**The overall design concept.** Aesthetic value is a core component of traditional Chinese costume. It pursues the spiritual ideal higher than the existence For thousands of years, the form of Chinese clothing is changed according to the Chinese culture spirit behind of the surface form. Fashion design and decorative patterns are only the form of traditional clothing which including Caftan, Ru Costume, Pan Kou and Unlined Clothes. China cultural spirit is graceful and arrogant. This "inherited tradition" is a terrible thing if we just simply imitated the style of traditional costumes or no longer understand this both open, firm and indomitable ideal. So we need to go back to the root of Chinese traditional culture then mining, arrangement and innovative design . A designer who need to understand how to use our traditional weaving process, dyeing process, sewing process and pattern of meaning especially in the clothing culture. On the basis of understanding these it's necessary to combine the modern life style including Structure design, fabric weaving, special technology of high technology from Advanced concepts in some clothing in the West with our traditional classics tocreate a new Chinese style and reproduce the cultural heritage of the Chinese people today.

**Analysis of leader's clothing design.** (1)Structure: Clothing design for APEC male leader is a basic model with three slight changes in the same series according to the principle of "harmony but not Sameness". The basic model consist of stand – collar, The cardigan ,raglan sleeve which Still leave a mark in the history of the development of Chinese clothing and has a certain degree of recognition. There are 4 series design such as stand “stand collar-cardigan”, “stand collar-open cardigan”, “Cross collar”, “Cross-stand” collar.

**Color.** The color selection is gorgeous and not dazzling drawing lessons from the color system of Chinese ancient court dress with thick color. On the basis of the Imperial Palace red , it developed about 4 kinds of color: deep purple, indigo, golden brown and dark brown color. This is based on Chinese traditional color aesthetics with dignified, mellow qualities in tradition. The saturation and brightness are not high color also avoid some countries for high saturation color taboo.

**Patterns.** The body and sleeves filled with a swastika pattern. The hem of the dress, collar and cuffs, decorative pattern is selected with” water wave pattern” from the Song Dynasty. It used to decorate the ancient court dress. On the one hand, the Chinese traditional costumes are often used in auspicious patterns, on the other hand, pattern is widely applied to not only clothing, but also including china, building, furniture and other aspects. A swastika pattern is representative of the extending China traditional patterns, typical of life and growth in nature. At the same time, the pattern of orderly tough style is also very suitable for male leaders’ costume in fabric dark streaks of backing. “Water wave pattern” is mainly composed of cloud, water and rocks. Cloud-water pattern is composed of curve and wavy lines. It looks like the water flow representing harmony and good fortune in china. Mountain pattern is a symbol of happiness, longevity and harmony. What's more, these imply that the APEC meeting of the 21 economies are interdependent, friendly and cooperative spirit of the meeting.

**Fabric.** Song brocade Known as one of China's three famous brocade was chosen as the male leader of the clothing fabric. After the improvement of modern technology, it has the characteristics of matte and reserved elegant. In 2009, Song brocade as a traditional Chinese handicraft weaving art was listed as "intangible cultural heritage of mankind" by UNESCO. However it is facing extinction dilemma because of small market demand, high labor cost and low manual production. Winning clothing in "The leaders of the APEC clothing design" is made of modified Song brocade fabric. The traditional handmade Song brocade has a very high aesthetic value. Of course, there are certain limitations such as thin, low production efficiency and high cost. Clothing used during the APEC conference held in Beijing in November in winter should have a certain thickness and warmth. Ding Sheng company has improved the efficiency of weaving Song brocade and reduce cost by improving the technology of computer jacquard. This technology is very suitable pattern for the rapid repeated changes. Longitude and latitude shown the pattern at the same time during the complex production process, its is the main characteristic of Song brocade. In weaving, a weft by silk instead of wool fiber, then wool fiber was also on the two layers of silk wrapped. In this way, the fabric is still in the face of silk fabric presented, but also enhance the warmth. The brocade moderately reduce the luster. Finally, this dress is very low-key and subtle beauty. In addition, In the deep purple Song brocade weaving process, it used with 5 different deep purple in different yarn, lightness and saturation. Finally, the finished product will be subtle changes and differences from different angles and light.

To review the thousand years of Chinese clothing historical changes, it has been ongoing with heritage, blending and innovation. Chinese civilization is broad and rich in different periods of the aesthetic spirit. The characteristics of Han Dynasty and Tang Dynasty is ambitious and luxurious, meanwhile it became simple and elegant in Song and Ming Dynasty. There is not a style which is fully representing Chinese traditional costumes until now. The intangible cultural heritage of textiles is a treasure to us by Chinese civilization in five thousand years. Nowadays, with the development of cultural diversity, Chinese clothing should promote the traditional Chinese culture on the basis of inheritance and innovation. We should adhere to open and inclusive attitude, absorbing the traditional aesthetics spirit, in place of invariable traditional form. At the same time, we should absorb the world's other outstanding achievements then create more diverse rich style of Chinese costume. It's necessary to show the new era of Chinese national spirit and cultural self-confidence.

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